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ON THE MIDNIGHT TRAIN TO GEORGIA: AFRO-CARIBBEANS AND THE NEW
GREAT MIGRATION TO ATLANTA

by

LATOYA A. TAVERNIER

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Sociology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

ON THE MIDNIGHT TRAIN TO GEORGIA: AFRO-CARIBBEANS AND THE NEW GREAT MIGRATION TO ATLANTA

by

LaToya A. Tavernier

Advisor: Vilna Bashi Treitler

In the 21st century, Atlanta, Georgia has become a major new immigrant destination. This study focuses on the migration of Afro-Caribbeans to Atlanta and uses data collected from in-depth interviews, ethnography, and the US Census to understand: 1) the factors that have contributed to the emergence of Atlanta as a new destination for Afro-Caribbean immigrants and 2) the ways in which Atlanta's large African American population, and its growing immigrant population, shape the incorporation of Afro-Caribbeans, as black immigrants, into the southern city. I find that Afro-Caribbeans are attracted to Atlanta for a variety of reasons, including warmer climate, job opportunities, higher education, lower costs of living, and opportunity for homeownership, but the most salient reason is race. Being black plays a significant role in Afro-Caribbean's decision to migrate to Atlanta and in their experiences living there. Atlanta is a 21st century Mecca of black wealth, higher education, and power. These characteristics, and Atlanta's large black population, especially its large number of black professionals, are attracting Afro-Caribbeans from traditional immigrant destinations in the US (i.e., New York City, Boston, Miami), the Caribbean, and other cities abroad. Afro-Caribbeans are developing their own communities, organizations, and spaces in Atlanta; however, they are also using their experiences and networks from their former communities to adjust to their new lives in Atlanta. Afro-Caribbeans' reception and incorporation are greatly shaped by the presence of "visible"

immigrants, particularly Latino immigrants, and by their relationship with the city's large African American community. Though Afro-Caribbean's shared racial status with Atlanta's African American population has allowed them to seamlessly integrate into Atlanta, unlike the city's growing Asian and Latino immigrant populations, it has not automatically granted them access to networks long-established by the city's African American middle class. Over the past two decades, the influx of Afro-Caribbean immigrants, and a large, diverse group of other migrant newcomers from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the United States, to Atlanta has triggered an unprecedented series of changes in the social, cultural, economic, political, and ethno-racial landscapes of the southern metro and has ushered in a new era in its history.

Preface

Migration is in my blood. I was born in Boston, Massachusetts, the oldest child of two black immigrants from the small Caribbean island of Dominica. When I was 18 months old, my maternal grandmother took me back “home” with her as a surprise for the family which then sparked four years of traveling back and forth between Dominica and Boston, spending months at a time in each place, until I was 5 years old. Since then, I have seen my “home” in Boston become a first stop for several family members emigrating from Dominica to the US, as my mother served as hub for those looking to start a new life in the “states.” At an early age, I learned the processes involved in obtaining family-sponsored immigrant visas and US citizenship. I remember vividly when my parents each became naturalized United States citizens. My migration history and experiences have had a significant impact on my life, as they inspired my interest in migration stories and fueled my desire to further our understanding of the experiences of Afro-Caribbean immigrants through scholarly research.

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both at this stage in my life and career, as well as for the free room and board, dinners, life histories, and Caribbean words of wisdom. Not to be forgotten, I want to thank my countless friends that have provided their support and entertainment over the past 9 years, lending me a shoulder to lean on, an ear to talk into, food and drinks in my belly, a place to sleep, and a good laugh to remind me of the many wonderful things and people in my life outside of graduate school. To my best friends Thu Tuyen To and Aisha Cort, I am truly blessed to have met such amazing, loving, patient, and funny women in my lifetime. Thank you for listening to me, sticking with me, and willing me through the darkest parts of this journey.

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On the Midnight Train to Georgia: Afro-Caribbeans and the New Great Migration to Atlanta

On May 20, 2009, after months of planning, gathering funds, making housing arrangements, and packing as many clothes, books, and personal items as possible into three suitcases, I stepped off a plane at Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport and embarked on a journey to study the new migration of Afro-Caribbean immigrants to Atlanta, Georgia. Although my move “down South” was greatly motivated by my research project, I also moved for personal reasons. After living in New York City, for eight years (four years each for college and graduate school), it had become emotionally, spiritually, and financially draining. I was ready to leave the city and experience something different.

I loved Atlanta, since my first visit in 2003: its mansion-style homes and gated communities that looked like they belonged on “Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous;” the delicious southern cuisine that caused me to lick my fingers after eating; the bass-thumping music rhythms that called me to bounce my head, stomp my feet, and shake my booty; and the many black faces I saw in and around the city that made me feel like I belonged there. Atlanta was one of my favorite places to visit. Yet, when it came time for me to leave my brownstone apartment in Brooklyn and move to Atlanta, I wasn’t sure what I would find. Three of my friends of Caribbean-descent had moved to Atlanta from New York and Boston in the first 10 years of the 2000s; however, when my friends moved I had no idea they were part of a movement of Afro-Caribbean people relocating to Atlanta *en masse*.” I later learned that my father had friends who preceded mine in moving to Atlanta in the 1990s.

Before embarking on my dissertation research, even on visits to Atlanta I failed to see anything that indicated to me that there was a rapidly growing Afro-Caribbean community in

Atlanta. I saw no Caribbean restaurants or businesses, no flyers announcing *fetes* or other dance parties, nor the flags of Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Grenada, or any other island nation—these things had clearly marked the Caribbean communities and spaces that I knew intimately in New York and Boston. I had regularly heard the complaints made by one of my Atlanta-based Afro-Caribbean friends; she had lived in the city between 2005 and 2008 and regularly complained about her inability to find Caribbean foods, events, and people in the area. All these things assured me that I was right to assume that Atlanta had little Afro-Caribbean community to speak of, and certainly there could not have been one large enough to point to Atlanta as a major Afro-Caribbean destination.

But in 2008, I taught a course I titled “West Indians in America,” and while preparing the syllabus I read the works of several scholars who mentioned that Afro-Caribbeans had begun to move to Atlanta (Green and Wilson 1992; Logan 2007; Vickerman 1999). My surprise at learning this led me to read everything that I could find that referenced “Afro-Caribbeans” and “Atlanta.” I looked at data from the US Census Bureau, conducted Internet searches, and spoke with as many informed people as I could (whether they were academic scholars or experienced family members or friends). I found that the Afro-Caribbean population in Atlanta grew 323.3 percent between 1990 and 2000—making Atlanta the decade’s fastest growing Caribbean destination (See Table 1). I wondered how this happened. What was drawing Afro-Caribbeans to Atlanta? From where were they migrating? Were they moving to Atlanta from other US cities, as my friends had, or, were they emigrating directly from their Caribbean islands of origin to the southern city? Where were they settling in the Atlanta area? Were they developing distinct Caribbean neighborhoods like those in New York, or intermingling with American-born black people? And why did they choose Atlanta? Did Atlanta offer to Afro-Caribbeans something that

other cities did not have? How are Afro-Caribbeans, as black immigrants, being received in Atlanta? As I asked myself more and more questions, I knew that I had to find the answers.

NOTES ON TERMINOLOGY

Afro-Caribbean

Before I continue, I need to clarify some of the terms that I use throughout this study. I use the term *Afro-Caribbean* to describe all participants in this study, including those who were born in the Caribbean and those of Caribbean parentage who were born in the US, UK, or Canada. My use of the term Afro-Caribbean implies a pan-ethnic group identity held by all of the migrants that I studied. As noted by sociologist Vilna Bashi (1998), people have both racial and ethnic identities. The migrants' ethnic identity of being Afro-Caribbean differs from their racial identity of being black, although my respondents also claimed a racial identity as well. Kasinitz (1992) argues that "black" as a racial identity is problematic because it is a socially constructed term that changes across time and place and is commonly based on physical attributes. Ethnicity, on the other hand, is a social construction based on the idea that "a group shares a real or mythological common past and cultural focus, the central defining characteristic of ethnic groups is the belief in their own existence as a group" (Kasinitz 1992: 4). An ethnic group is thought to share a common history, language, customs, and behaviors (Waters 1999).

Bashi (1998, 2013) argues that the creation of the pan-ethnic group identity is part of the racialization process. As Afro-Caribbeans arrive in the US, they are categorized into the existing American racial system. They are categorized as black and placed in a racial group with African Americans. Afro-Caribbean immigrants, as the population grew, adopted a pan-Caribbean identity formed through their shared experience of movement from the Caribbean to the US, which has been a way for them to counteract the isolation that can be experienced in the act of

moving to a new place. As a person of Caribbean parentage, I have personally observed how a pan-ethnic identity can serve as a way to connect to a Caribbean community, or other Caribbean people in a place where they are widely dispersed geographically across a metropolitan area, across the US, and across the world. The adoption of a pan-ethnic group identity allows people to feel connected to their families and friends, even when separated from them. I found that it was especially true among those who lived in areas with low Caribbean populations or that had few daily or weekly interactions with other Caribbean people in Atlanta. Afro-Caribbean pan-ethnicity precedes migration to the US. Following emancipation throughout the region in the 1800s, many of the former slaves moved to other Caribbean islands, mainly in search of work (Bashi 2007: 47). This occupationally driven migration trend has continued to present day. Thus, many Afro-Caribbeans who have lived and worked previously in the Caribbean would have met and formed a pan-ethnic identity with others from various islands, prior to their arrival in Atlanta and the US. Politically, Afro-Caribbeans have adopted a pan-ethnic identity to show power and solidarity, particularly in cities with a large concentration of Afro-Caribbeans like New York City (Rogers 2006).

Though I use the term Afro-Caribbean to describe the migrants in my study I do not mean to say that Afro-Caribbeans are a monolithic group. Afro-Caribbeans in the United States are made up of many communities and peoples from different Caribbean nations, which have different histories, languages, and cultures. By focusing on only black migrants from the English-speaking Caribbean in this study, I leave out certain groups from my discussion of the Caribbean migrant experience in Atlanta, such as those who are of Indian, Chinese, or European descent or from the Spanish, French, or Dutch-speaking Caribbean islands (e.g., Cuba, Haiti, or

Aruba). In truth, these groups are typically left out when researchers discuss Caribbean or West Indian immigrants.¹

During the research process, I encountered a few scholars that questioned my use of the term Afro-Caribbean and not the terms West Indian or Caribbean. There has been much debate over the use of terms West Indian versus Caribbean. The term Caribbean is commonly identified as encompassing all nations in and bordering the Caribbean Sea, including all of the islands, the Central American country of Belize, and the South American countries of Guyana and Surinam, while the term West Indian has often been identified as referring mostly to the former British colonies, which includes Guyana and Belize.² The terms Caribbean and West Indian are defined by geography but they are also defined by language. With the term West Indian, mostly seen as referring to the English-speaking Caribbean, and the term Caribbean seen as referring to the Spanish, French, and Dutch-speaking islands, along with the English-speaking countries. The Afro-Caribbean migrants that I encountered often referred to themselves as black, Caribbean, or West Indian and used these terms interchangeably with an island-specific nationality, such as Jamaican or Trinidadian (Waters 1999).

¹ Although I focus here on ethnics of African descent and from the English-speaking Caribbean, my idea of who belonged to the Afro-Caribbean community in Atlanta was challenged by respondents sending to me potential respondents from Haiti and Panama, which are normally considered part of the French- and Spanish-speaking Caribbean, respectively. Although I did include two Haitian participants in my study (because I found out their national origin only while interviewing them), I chose to focus my research here on black migrants that descended from the English-speaking Caribbean because they collectively make up the largest portion of Caribbean people in the United States, and they congregate in cities with already heavy concentrations of the ethnic group (with the exception of Miami, which has a heavy concentration of those from the Spanish-speaking Caribbean).

² Though they are located in South America and Central America, Guyana, Surinam, and Belize are identified as Caribbean or West Indian because of their shared history of European colonialism and slavery with the Caribbean islands (Waters 1999).

I use Afro-Caribbean when speaking of my respondents in general, but where they themselves used a specific title, I adhere to that specific term. In addition to Afro-Caribbean, I use the terms West Indian and Caribbean, since these are the most common terms used to discuss migrants from the Caribbean.

African American

I use the term *African American* to describe native-born black Americans, distinguishing them from Afro-Caribbeans (Caribbean-origin blacks) and Africans (Africa-origin blacks). I use the terms *black* or *black American* to describe all people of African descent in the United States, including African Americans, Afro-Caribbeans, and Africans.

Immigrants versus Migrants

I use the term *immigrant* to describe a person who moves to the US permanently from a foreign country. The majority of the foreign-born Afro-Caribbeans in this study were born in the Caribbean; however, there were also a few born in Canada and England of Caribbean parentage. Since Caribbean-born immigrants make up about half of the participants in this study, I use the terms *first-generation* and *second-generation* to distinguish between those who were born in the Caribbean and those who were born in the US, UK, and Canada of Caribbean parentage, respectively. Throughout this study, I use the terms *migrant*, *newcomer*, and *transplant* interchangeably to describe a person who moves to Atlanta from another city, state, or country.

AFRO-CARIBBEAN MIGRATION WITHIN THE US

Since they began migrating to the United States in the early 1900s, Afro-Caribbean immigrants have been heavily concentrated in a few cities along the Eastern coast of the United States. The largest concentrations have settled in and around New York City, Miami, Boston, and Washington, D.C.—collectively home to more than half of the 2.5 million Caribbean-born migrants in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2010 American Community Survey).³ In the 1990s, a growing number started moving to areas outside these traditional concentrations (Vickerman 1999; Logan 2007; Foner 2005; Hintzen 2001; Palmer 1995). Unlike their prior migrations, this new (post-1990) migration has developed a southeastern U.S. pattern.

For the majority of the 20th century, Afro-Caribbean immigrants largely bypassed the South due to its struggling job markets and long history of violence and discrimination against people of African descent. Florida's proximity to the Caribbean seems as if it would have encouraged Afro-Caribbean migration, yet Afro-Caribbean transplants only became significant in number in the 1980s. The number of Afro-Caribbeans in the South has greatly increased since 1990. Demographer John Logan (2007) finds that six of the top ten US metropolitan areas with the largest Afro-Caribbean populations in 2000 were located in the South.⁴ Among these metropolitan areas, Atlanta experienced the greatest increase in its Afro-Caribbean population, quadrupling from 8,342 to 35,308 between 1990 and 2000 (See Table 1). According to the 2010 US Census, Atlanta's Afro-Caribbean population has more than doubled in the last ten years, now numbering over 90,000 (see Table 3; Table 4).

³ In 2000, the ten metropolitan areas with the largest Afro-Caribbean populations were (in descending order): New York, NY; Miami, FL; Fort Lauderdale, FL; Boston, MA-NH; Nassau-Suffolk, NY; Newark, NJ; West Palm Beach-Boca Raton, FL; Washington, D.C.-MD-VA-WV; Orlando, FL; Atlanta, GA.

⁴ In 2000, the ten metropolitan areas with the largest Afro-Caribbean populations were (in descending order): New York, NY; Miami, FL; Fort Lauderdale, FL; Boston, MA-NH; Nassau-Suffolk, NY; Newark, NJ; West Palm Beach-Boca Raton, FL; Washington, D.C.-MD-VA-WV; Orlando, FL; Atlanta, GA (See Table 1).

In my scholarly readings I found that researchers had only tangentially discussed the movement of Afro-Caribbean immigrants to the southern city of Atlanta. Sociologist Milton Vickerman (1999) states briefly in his book *Crosscurrents* that Afro-Caribbeans were starting to move out from New York City in the 1990s to new destinations such as Atlanta, Georgia, Silver Springs, Maryland, Richmond, Virginia, and Houston, Texas, because they viewed them as offering a better quality of life and better opportunities for blacks. However, he neither elaborates upon which Afro-Caribbeans were moving to these new areas, nor why they moved, nor does he explain what they experienced in the communities that they entered. In a study comparing Afro-Caribbeans, African Americans, and Africans in the US, demographer John Logan (2007) takes note of a rapidly growing Afro-Caribbean population in Atlanta and provides some demographic information about the group. He found that Afro-Caribbeans in Atlanta in 2000 were faring better than their counterparts in New York City for they had a higher median household income, a higher rate of homeownership, and a higher proportion of college-educated individuals compared to those in New York. In 2000, Afro-Caribbeans had a median household income of \$50,911, compared to \$35,758 in New York City, a rate of homeownership of 61.9%, compared to 35.1% in New York City, and a percentage of college graduates of 29.9%, compared to 18.2% in New York City (Logan 2007). These studies by Vickerman and Logan suggest that Afro-Caribbeans participating in the migration to Atlanta are predominantly middle-class, and that the migration is heavily driven by economic factors. The search for a better life (e.g., employment, education, homeownership, etc.) has been a driving factor in Caribbean migration. However, economic factors do not fully explain why they are gravitating specifically to Atlanta, rather than other cities with similar opportunities. I argue here that there are a number of other factors—social, cultural, and political—that have shaped this migration to Atlanta. The

rapid increase of Atlanta's Afro-Caribbean population, the city's immigration history, and the presence of a large African American population provides a context that is wholly different from other destinations (like New York, historically the most popular destination for Caribbean immigrants in the US), and this difference is of great social and political difference to black migrants' racial and sociopolitical incorporation in the US. We know little about this new context of incorporation because the information published on Afro-Caribbean immigrants' US-internal migration to Atlanta (and other cities outside of traditional destinations) remains scarce.

NEW IMMIGRANT DESTINATIONS

Since the 1990s, a growing number of immigrant newcomers have settled in non-traditional immigrant gateway cities, or "new destinations," such as Phoenix, Charlotte, Portland, and Atlanta, which have little or no previous history of immigration. Over the past two decades, these new destinations have seen their foreign-born populations more than double. Atlanta is a prime example of a new immigrant destination. For most of its history, it, like most of the South, experienced very little immigration. Today the southern metropolis has over a half million foreign-born residents, more than 30 percent of whom arrived after 2000 (Singer 2008). Several researchers have begun to examine the increasing gravitation of immigrants to new destinations and the impact of new immigrant settlement on the destinations and on the immigrants (Gozdziaik and Martin 2005; Massey 2008; Odem and Lacy 2009). Though Afro-Caribbean, Asian, and African immigrants are settling in various new destinations across the US, studies of new immigrant settlements have focused heavily on Latino immigrants, specifically Mexican immigrants. This imbalance perpetuates an ongoing trend in immigration studies that overlooks the migration and experience of Afro-Caribbeans and other black immigrants.

Over the past two decades, Atlanta has emerged as a major destination for a diverse group of domestic and international migrants. Between 1980 and 2010, the foreign-born population in the Atlanta metro area more than doubled, from around 47,000 to over 700,000 (1980 Decennial US Census; 2010 American Community Survey; Table 3). The recent arrival of these immigrant newcomers has significantly changed the ethnic-racial landscape of Atlanta, which, like rest of the South, was a biracial society that consisted of mostly whites and African Americans for most of its history (Odem 2008).

RETURN MIGRATION (TO THE SOUTH)

In recent years sociologists and demographers have noted increased internal migration of native-born black Americans who relocate from northern to southern destinations; and increased black migration to Atlanta is part of this trend. Black migration to the South has increased each decade since the early 1970s, when the economic boom that attracted African Americans from the South to the cities of North, Midwest, and West ended (Dodson and Diouf 2004; Population Reference Bureau 2000).⁵ By 1970, the number of African Americans moving to the South surpassed the number migrating out. A report by the Population Reference Bureau (2000) stated, “By the 1990s, the South was experiencing a net increase in black migrants from all other regions.” New black communities have been emerging all over the South due to the mass migration of African Americans to the region (Morehouse 2009). Researchers have referred to the migration as “return migration” or the “New Great Migration,” since in some cases, migrants were returning to the hometowns of their parents or grandparents who left the South during the

⁵ World War II and the availability of jobs in factories and plants in the cities of the Midwest, the North, and the West heavily generated the economic boom (Dodson and Diouf 2004).

Great Migration of the early 1900s and the Second Great Migration of the World War II-era (Dodson and Diouf 2004; Frey 2004; Morehouse 2009). However, this flow may be misnamed, for many of these internal migrants have no roots in the communities where they settle (Dodson and Diouf 2004; Falk, Hunt, and Hunt 2004).

Studies of the return migration offer a variety of reasons for the movement of African Americans to the South. Howard Dodson and Sylviane A. Diouf (2004) report that return migration was initially generated by familial reasons, such as having to care for a sick or elderly relative or wanting to be closer to family, but as the migration grew, it became largely influenced by economic and nonfamily-related social reasons. The deindustrialization of northern cities in the 1970s, coupled with the South's growing job market and its improved racial climate, has attracted hundreds of thousands of African Americans to the region. Dodson and Diouf (2004) assert that some migrants were also moving to the South to escape the crime and the worsening conditions of the urban North, and that some were moving to the region to retire in a place with a better quality of life than they had experienced in the North⁶. Anthropologist Carol Stack (1996) argues that the migrants are drawn by a "call to home" from the South, which holds a definitive place in the history and collective memory of African Americans, as a place where their roots run deep. Atlanta, in particular, has received a significant portion of the return migrants.

Atlanta has long been known as a center of black wealth, higher education, political power, culture, and entrepreneurship in the US (Dodson and Diouf 2004; Leung 2003; Whitaker 2002). The Atlanta University Center, consisting of four highly accredited schools (Morehouse College, Morehouse School of Medicine, Spelman College, and Clark Atlanta University), is the largest consortium of African American higher education in the world. The 1973 election of the

⁶ Frey (1999) finds that states that received a large number of migrants during the Great Migrations to the North are among the top donor states in the return migration to the South.

city's first black mayor, Maynard H. Jackson Jr., ushered in a new era in city politics; since then, African Americans have had significant power over the city's government, shifting power from Atlanta's white elite to its growing black middle class. Nearly 160,000 black Americans moved to Atlanta between 1990 and 1999, leading some to refer to the city as "the Harlem of the 1990s" (Dodson and Diouf 2004) or the "New Black Mecca" (Leung 2003; Whitaker 2002).

Research on black migration to the South has mostly followed a "return home" model that assumes the migrants have southern roots, solidifying the perception that this migration is a "return migration" (Dodson and Diouf 2004; Frey 2004; Morehouse 2009; Stack 1996). However, this model ignores that many of the "return" migrants have never lived in the South before they moved there, or have no familial ties to the region. By using the return home model, scholars overlook the intra-racial ethnic diversity of black migration to the South. Afro-Caribbeans are among the southern-bound black migrants that do not fit the return home model; yet, they are most likely included in the research data of "return" migrants to the South. It is a mistaken assumption rooted in methodology, since the census numbers most researchers look at for "race," not ancestry, makes it hard to distinguish southern-origin African Americans from others.

AFRO-CARIBBEAN IMMIGRANT INCORPORATION

Since the first wave of immigration to the United States in the late 1800s, scholars have debated how rapidly immigrants join the American mainstream. The debate was revisited with the creation of the National Quota system in 1924, and again with the new immigration restrictions of the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act, and refueled once more with the resurgence of

immigration after the passage of the Hart-Cellar Immigration Reform Act of 1965 that is credited with allowing significantly increased emigration from Asia, Latin America, Africa, and the Caribbean and changing the face of American immigration and the composition of major US cities. As the turn of the 21st century ushered in a new era of immigration, the settlement in new destinations, particularly those with little prior experience with immigration, has fueled new debates on how these immigrant newcomers will be incorporated into new areas that are experiencing significant levels of immigration for the first time.

Social science research offers several theories to explain the process and quality of immigrant integration, and the most prominent and durable of these has been the assimilation model (Alba and Nee 1997; Alba and Nee 2003; Gans 1979; Gordon 1964; Park 1926). The assimilation model “envisions the process as one in which immigrants gradually begin to absorb and influence the cultural values and norms of the majority society, a process sometimes called cultural assimilation” (Bean and Stevens 2003: 97). Milton Gordon (1964) argues that there are several stages of assimilation: cultural, structural, marital, and identification, that occur at different rates among different groups. The assimilation theory model, however, is based mostly on the example of European migration to the United States who were in the end racially incorporated as white, and does not completely fit the experience of Afro-Caribbeans and other non-white people.

Another commonly used model to describe the integration of minority immigrants is the segmented assimilation model (Portes and Zhou 1993; Portes and Rumbaut 2001; Zhou 1999), which suggests that there are different pathways to integrate into the American mainstream depending on the group’s characteristics, such as skin color, their history of immigration to the US, and their reception. This model would predict that Afro-Caribbeans would likely experience

downward assimilation because they share a racial categorization with African Americans, who have experienced a long history of race-based discrimination, prejudice, and violence. In his study of the incorporation of Dominican immigrants into Providence, Rhode Island, Jose Itzigsohn (2009: 14) uses a different theoretical approach, which he calls, stratified ethno-racial incorporation model, which emphasizes “class and race as dynamic social forces that shape the trajectories of immigrants and their children”. The stratified ethno-racial incorporation model provides a view that takes into account the roles of race, ethnicity, and class in the incorporation of Afro-Caribbeans into the communities they have entered.

Analyzing their integration into Atlanta cannot be solely based on their race or on the assumption that they are being incorporated into a monolithic black community. Atlanta’s black community is divided into class-based segments and boasts a large black middle and professional class that middle-class Afro-Caribbean migrants can potentially be incorporated into, based on their race and class. Also, the emergence of Atlanta as a major destination for two large non-white migratory streams—the migration of immigrant newcomers from Asia, Africa, and Latin America to “new destinations,” and the return (or reverse) migration of African Americans to the South—must be taken into account when looking at how Afro-Caribbean migrants are being incorporated into the southern metropolis. Being both black and immigrant, Afro-Caribbean are a significant part of both of these (non-white) migration streams to Atlanta. Their move to, and incorporation into, Atlanta is worth researching because it speaks to the ways that agency is a determinant in migrant incorporation. Afro-Caribbean migrants to Atlanta are not merely accepting their position in the US racial paradigm in traditional immigrant gateway cities (i.e., New York, Miami, or Boston), where they are large in number. That is, being among a large number of ethnic compatriots are not enough. As I discussed earlier in this chapter, everyone has

both a racial and ethnic identity. Afro-Caribbean migrants may have ethnic incorporation in traditional destinations, but perhaps large numbers of ethnic compatriots do not sufficiently protect them from the worst effects of racial incorporation as a black ethnic group. Thus, they seek also to better their racial condition by moving to places, like Atlanta, that appear to be kinder to black people in general.

SAMPLE AND METHODS

In this study, I address the following two questions: First, what factors have contributed to the emergence of Atlanta as a new destination for Afro-Caribbean immigrants? Second, how has Atlanta's large African American population, and its growing immigrant population, shaped the incorporation of Afro-Caribbeans, as black people and as immigrants, into the southern city?

I employed qualitative data, using in-depth interviews, participant observations, and analyses of the US Census. For the interviews, I gathered a snowball sample of Afro-Caribbeans who had moved to the Atlanta metropolitan area, starting with a convenience sample of those who volunteered to be interviewed. That is, friends and family gave me contact information of Afro-Caribbeans living in Atlanta, and those interviewed were asked to refer others to be interviewed. In this manner, I was able to interview Afro-Caribbean migrants that lived all across the Atlanta metro area.⁷ Between June 2009 and August 2010, I conducted in-depth interviews

⁷ The Atlanta metro area consists of ten counties: Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, and Rockdale. Participants in this study lived in nine of the ten counties. None lived in Cherokee County, a northern county that borders Cobb County. According to the 2010 US Census, Cherokee has the lowest black population of the ten-counties, with blacks making up 0% to 13.3% of its residents. The rest of the counties have areas where blacks make up at the least 13.4% to 29.7% of its residents. One participant lived in Newton County, which borders the counties of Rockdale and Henry.

with thirty-three Afro-Caribbean migrants, ages twenty-four to sixty-five. Eighteen of the migrants were first-generation—born in the Caribbean—and fourteen are second-generation—born in the US, UK, or Canada of Caribbean parentage.⁸ In terms of nationality, the participants represented a wide range of Caribbean nations. The majority came from Trinidad (ten) and Jamaica (nine); of the remainder, three were from Barbados, two from Guyana, one from Dominica, two from Haiti, one from Montserrat, two from St. Kitts, and one from the US Virgin Islands (St. Thomas).⁹ Most interviews were conducted in public places, such as restaurants, coffee shops, and the Auburn Avenue Research Library, some at the participants' homes, three at their workplaces, and two over the phone.

Questions were honed and organized into a protocol of open-ended questions that were used in interviews conducted in a semi-structured style according to the method proposed by Robert Weiss (1995). Weiss recommends a conversational style of interviewing that does not involve a rote repetition of identical questions for each respondent. Instead, the researcher follows a “substantive frame” that outlines the information to be gathered. Unlike a survey, the frame is a list of themes, issues, or questions for the interviewer to keep track of (not to be explicitly posed to the person being interviewed) to ensure that key elements are covered during the course of the interview. I used knowledge gained from the participant observation and Census-data analyses phases to refine the substantive frame before I proceeded with the interview portion of the study. I began all of the interviews by simply asking the participants to tell me the story of how they came to live in Atlanta. The subsequent line of questioning was designed to gather answers to the following: What did you know about Atlanta before you

⁸ One participant was third-generation, whose grandparents had emigrated from Guyana and Jamaica.

⁹ Two of the second-generation participants were of mixed Caribbean background. One was of Jamaican and Guyanese descent and the other was of Trinidadian and Barbadian descent.

moved there? How would you compare living in Atlanta to where you lived before? I also asked questions, like the following, to understand how Afro-Caribbeans' relationship to native Atlantans and other migrants has affected their experiences of incorporation into Atlanta, such as: How important was the presence of a Caribbean community in your decision to move to Atlanta? How often do you interact with non-Caribbeans? How do you think the city is treating its growing immigrant population?

In the participant observation phase of the data analysis, which took place over the course of a year, from 2009 to 2010, I observed Caribbean events and spaces in the Atlanta metro area to supplement my interviews. I attended the Atlanta Caribbean Carnival, Caribbean nightclubs, Caribbean-themed nights at Atlanta nightclubs, and Caribbean American Heritage Month events, including an opening reception and weekly film screenings. I ate at local Caribbean restaurants and shopped at stores and grocery stores that sold Caribbean foods and products.

Soon after I arrived in Atlanta, I found that most of the Caribbean events and spaces were located outside the city in the surrounding suburbs, which were accessible mostly by car. Because I did not own a car until May of 2010 (a full year after I arrived in Atlanta), I was not able to attend as many Caribbean events in the Atlanta area as I wanted. To get to and from my interviews and Caribbean events and spaces, I rented cars, received rides from friends, and rode public transportation (on very few occasions).¹⁰ My lack of a car greatly influenced my experience living in Atlanta. Besides limiting the number of Caribbean events and spaces that I

¹⁰ See Keating (2001) for the history of MARTA, Atlanta's subway system, which was developed to enhance the city's image as major metropolis rather than to address its transportation needs. From my experience of living in Boston and New York City—cities with old and extensive public transportation systems—I picked my apartment in the Atlanta neighborhood of Buckhead based on its proximity to a MARTA station. I later learned from talking to Atlanta residents that MARTA was useful for transportation to Atlanta's international airport, the Braves (baseball) stadium, and the downtown area, and not to the city's neighborhoods.

could observe, it also made me aware of how the geographic dispersion of Caribbean people, spaces, and events across the Atlanta metro area played a significant part in the experience of Afro-Caribbean newcomers and the development of a Caribbean community in Atlanta. I quickly realized that if I wanted to meet other Afro-Caribbeans in Atlanta and have a “Caribbean Atlanta,” I had to be proactive and willing to travel across the metropolitan area.

I learned about the majority of the Caribbean parties, clubs, restaurants, and businesses that I observed for this study from my Afro-Caribbean friends that lived in the Atlanta area. I did learn about a few Caribbean spaces and events, particularly the Caribbean American Heritage Month events, from the Afro-Caribbeans that I interviewed for this study. If my respondents mentioned a store or business that they frequented to get Caribbean foods or products or a Caribbean event or festival they attended or planned on attending, I wrote it down and tried to observe those places and events. For example, several of my respondents told me that they shopped at the DeKalb County Farmers Market when they were looking for Caribbean food, that they were not commonly sold in the local supermarkets, such as goat meat, oxtails, plantains, and mangoes. A few times, my respondents have emailed me about Caribbean events that they thought I would be interested in attending for my study, such as a Caribbean professionals networking event and a Caribbean food festival. I also performed Internet searches and collected Caribbean event flyers, business cards, and newspapers at the local Caribbean restaurants to learn about Caribbean businesses and events in the area.

I started my participant observations in May 2009 with the annual Atlanta Caribbean Carnival. I wanted to start my study by observing the Carnival because I viewed it as the greatest sign of Afro-Caribbeans’ presence in the Atlanta area, and I thought that Afro-Caribbean migrants to Atlanta would view it as an important Caribbean event. I thought that it would allow

me to get a glimpse of the size of the Caribbean community in Atlanta, learn about some Caribbean businesses in the area, and see how the event was received by the larger Atlanta community—for example, I wanted to see if local politicians attended the Carnival in effort to gain Afro-Caribbean votes, like I had seen at the Carnivals in Boston and New York.

I wrote down notes about the Caribbean events and spaces that I observed while I was in the field or within three days of my observation. I used my field participation to gain an understanding of Caribbean life in Atlanta and to see how Caribbean culture and people were being incorporated into the rapidly growing southern metropolis.

I conducted a descriptive analysis of US Census data from 1990 to 2010 to trace over time demographic changes in Atlanta, particularly in relation to the Afro-Caribbean population in the area. The 1990s marked a surge in Afro-Caribbean migration to Atlanta and is thus an appropriate starting point from which to trace the history of their migration there. Census data are used primarily to analyze changes in: population numbers, racial/ethnic composition, age distribution, gender, educational attainment, settlement patterns, and homeownership.

The dissertation project has been as much a research endeavor as it has been a personal journey. I believe that my own migration history and experiences deepened my observations and analyses and helped me to relate with my respondents and to understand what it meant to be Afro-Caribbean in Atlanta. Although I cannot say whether my observations and experiences are representative of all Afro-Caribbeans in Atlanta, I tried my best to allow the voices of the participants of this study to lead my writing, in hopes to provide a better understanding of the migration and a glimpse of the lives of Afro-Caribbeans moving to, and living in, Atlanta.

PLAN OF DISSERTATION

How unique is Atlanta as a Caribbean immigrant destination? How—and in what ways—is the new migration to Atlanta distinctive in the Caribbean migration experience and history? In Chapter 1 I give a brief overview of the history of Afro-Caribbean migration within and away from the Caribbean. I focus on the large Afro-Caribbean communities in New York, as well as a few of the US gateway cities where Caribbean immigrants have been settling in recent years. This leads into a discussion of the importance of place and (the type of) migrants that settle in a place (e.g., age, education, socioeconomic class, and migration origin) in shaping the migration experience. Chapter 2 and 3 both address the question of why Afro-Caribbean immigrants are moving to and settling in Atlanta. In Chapter 2, I look at migrants' prior knowledge of Atlanta, and of the South, and how it influences their reasons for moving to the southern city. I also look specifically at how the migrants' reasons for moving to the southern city intersect with their socioeconomic status, gender, age, education, place of birth, and migration history to create a distinctive Afro-Caribbean Atlanta experience. Race was common element in the reasons that they gave for moving. Being both black and immigrant has significantly influenced, in various ways, the Afro-Caribbeans' migration experience—including their decision to move to Atlanta, where they settle in the southern city, and the social networks they form, among other things. In Chapter 3, I look specifically at how “blackness” plays a major role in the migration to Atlanta. I also look at how Afro-Caribbeans' understandings of race, shaped by the places that they migrated from and by the length of time they have lived in the US, influences their decisions to migrate to Atlanta and their experiences there. I explore the idea and image of Atlanta as a black Mecca and what this means for Afro-Caribbeans there.

Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 focus on Afro-Caribbeans' relationships and community-

building efforts in Atlanta. Chapter 4 examines the relationships formed among Afro-Caribbean migrants in Atlanta and the ways that they have created a Caribbean ethnic identity and community in the region. I also examine the Caribbean spaces that they have created in the southern metropolis, focusing specifically on the suburban town of Stone Mountain, which was once the stronghold of the area's Ku Klux Klan and is now the center of the Atlanta Caribbean community. The development of Atlanta's Annual Caribbean Carnival and several Caribbean cultural organizations, businesses, and events has helped them foster connections among Atlanta, New York, the Caribbean, and other global cities, while building bonds among the migrants themselves. They are using cultural practices and institution-building to create community among each other and to claim a space in Atlanta that fosters and reinforces a distinct Caribbean identity and culture—a "Caribbean Atlanta." In Chapter Five, I explore Afro-Caribbean immigrants' experiences of incorporation into Atlanta. Immigrant incorporation can occur along multiple paths with different segments of the population, and at varying rates, depending both on the characteristics of the immigrant group and how the group is received (Vickerman 1999; Lorick-Wilmot 2010). I argue that Afro-Caribbeans' reception and incorporation into Atlanta may be shaped by the presence of other "visible" immigrant newcomers, particularly Latino immigrants, and even more so, by their relationship with the African American community in Atlanta. The size and the influence of the African American population in Atlanta play a major factor in the incorporation of Afro-Caribbeans. Though local attitudes and policies towards immigrants have become more and more hostile in recent years, Afro-Caribbean immigrants may be protected from the hostile anti-immigrant attitudes and policies brewing in the region by their relationship with the African Americans in Atlanta, particularly their ability to racially "blend" into the region's large African American community.

This study draws on the varied perspectives of the people I interviewed, including the migrants and other people involved in the Atlanta Caribbean community to describe what has caused a large and growing number of Afro-Caribbeans to migrate to Atlanta and their experiences living and developing a community presence in a rapidly changing multi-ethnic Atlanta. This study explores the intersections of race, ethnicity, class, and migration in the incorporation of Afro-Caribbeans, as both black and immigrant, into a changing Atlanta. I intend that it advances the literature on new immigrant destinations and on African American “return migration” to the South, and also contribute to the literature on racial inclusion. It responds to the imbalance in the sociology of migration, which has typically focused on Hispanic and Asian immigrants. Because Afro-Caribbean migration to Atlanta is new, I sincerely hope my dissertation is able to highlight the challenges that black immigrants face in Atlanta, the critical role of race in immigrant incorporation, and the way black immigrants are helping to re-shape ideas of race, and of immigrants, in an increasingly multi-ethnic South. Understanding the migration and the migrants can help policy makers and community leaders gain a broader sense of the communities and their needs.

CHAPTER 1: ON THE MOVE: THE AFRO-CARIBBEAN MIGRATION EXPERIENCE

Jefferson's migration story is like many Caribbean immigrants in the United States. By 2010, he had lived in the United States for 32 years. When he was 24 years old, he left his home on the small Eastern Caribbean island of Dominica and immigrated to New York City in 1978. He lived there for about for two months and moved to Boston, where he attended college for four years. In 1982, after he received his bachelor's degree, he moved again to Connecticut to attend law school. Jefferson lived in Connecticut with his wife and children for seven years before he moved out of the Northeast to a new destination in the US. In 1989, a year after his wife went down to visit friends and fell in love with Atlanta, Jefferson researched the city's job prospects, housing, and schools, accepted a job with the Social Security Administration as a staff attorney, and moved his family to Atlanta, Georgia. In many ways, Jefferson's migration story follows the same pattern as many migrants in this study and others. He emigrated from his Caribbean homeland to a major American city, along the East coast, that had a large concentration of Afro-Caribbean residents, looking for better socioeconomic opportunities and better quality of life, and lived there for over a decade before moving to a new city/destination, a new place outside of the traditional Caribbean immigration concentrations. What makes this migration story different is its destination. In this story, and the stories of many others described in this study, Jefferson's new destination/new home/new city is the rapidly growing southern metropolis, Atlanta.

At the turn of the 21st century, new trends in Caribbean immigrant settlement patterns emerged, transforming communities across the United States. Prior to the 1990s, Caribbean immigrant settlement had a predictable pattern and was limited to a select few cities along the

East coast, including metro New York, Miami, and Boston. By the century's end, immigrants were increasingly settling outside well-established immigrant gateways in a new group of cities and suburbs. Unlike their previous destinations, Atlanta has little history or identity with immigration prior to 1990. As Afro-Caribbean immigrants spread out from traditional immigrant destinations to new destinations across the United States, the importance of place in the immigrant experience has increasingly come to the fore.

How unique is Atlanta as a Caribbean immigrant destination? How—and in what ways—is the new migration to Atlanta distinctive in the Caribbean migration experience and history?

This study is not a simple story of Afro-Caribbeans moving from one place to another. Atlanta is developing a distinct place in the group's migration history. To begin this chapter, I provide an overview of Caribbean migration history to set the stage for a discussion exploring and highlighting the growing social, cultural, and political significance of Afro-Caribbean immigrants in Atlanta. I devote attention to looking at the Afro-Caribbean communities in New York, as well as other gateway cities where Caribbean immigrants have been settling in recent years. In looking at contemporary migration to Atlanta compared with other US cities, I spotlight how distinct Atlanta is as a Caribbean migrant destination. This leads into a discussion of who these Afro-Caribbean transplants are and from where they come. The migrants' personal characteristics—including socioeconomic status, gender, age, education, place of birth, immigrant generation (i.e., first-generation versus second-generation Caribbean immigrant), and migration origin—combine to create a distinctive Afro-Caribbean migrant experience in Atlanta.

BRIEF OVERVIEW OF AFRO-CARIBBEAN MIGRATION HISTORY

Migration is an important part of Caribbean culture and history. In *Survival of the Knitted* (2007), sociologist Vilna Bashi outlined the history of Afro-Caribbean's migration patterns. Movement within and away from the Caribbean has been a way of life for those seeking better job opportunities and financial stability for themselves and their families, due to the economic underdevelopment of the region, since the abolition of slavery (as described in Bashi 2007). Between 1835 and 1885, workers from the smaller islands were recruited to work in the larger Caribbean territories that had a labor shortage, particularly Trinidad and Guyana (then known as British Guiana) (Bashi 2007). The 1850s saw Caribbean emigration extend beyond the region into Central America. Some 50,000 Afro-Caribbean workers migrated to Panama to construct railroads in the 1850s, and then thousands more poured into the Central American country to work on the Panama Canal (the first attempt by the French), beginning in the 1880s (Palmer 1995; Vickerman 1999; Model 2008). From 1885 to 1920, Afro-Caribbean migrants went to Cuba and the Dominican Republic to work on sugar cane plantations, Bermuda to work on the dry docks, Costa Rica to construct railroads and to work on banana plantations, Mexico to construct railroads, Venezuela to work in the oil fields, and Panama to resume and finish the construction of the Panama Canal (under American leadership) (Bashi 2007; Henke 2001; Vickerman 1999).

During this period, the first of three distinct waves of Caribbean immigration to the United States began (Kasinitz 1992; Owens-Watkins 1996; Henke 2001; Foner 2001). The first wave lasted from 1900 to 1920 and was a large group of between 19,000 and 73,000 people. The second wave of Caribbean immigration to the US lasted from the late 1930s to 1965 and drew the smallest group of Afro-Caribbean immigrants. The exact number of Afro-Caribbeans to enter during this period is unclear, due to the frequent use of British passports, but Kasinitz (1992)

puts the total at less than 3000 a year. Between 1930 and 1940 emigration from the Caribbean slowed down significantly, and many migrants returned back to their Caribbean island homelands, due to the lack of economic opportunities caused by World War I and the Great Depression (Vickerman 1999: 61). In fact, more Afro-Caribbean immigrants returned to the Caribbean than those who moved out of it (Reid 1939; Vickerman 1999). Legislation that restricted the numbers of immigrants from the Caribbean that could enter the US reduced the size of the second wave. The Johnson-Reed Act of 1924 limited the number of immigrants allowed entry into the United States, by creating a national quota system that assigned each sending country a quota. The quota provided immigration visas for each country at 2 percent of that nation's total population in the United States according to the 1890 US Census (Bashi 2007). A small number of mostly middle-class Afro-Caribbeans was able to enter using the underused British quota (Kasinitz 1992). The passage of the McCarran-Walter Act of 1952 separated the Caribbean territories from their mother countries and gave each island an annual quota of one hundred (Bashi 2007; Model 2008). The law decreased the flow of Caribbean immigration to the US and redirected it towards Britain (Bashi 2008).

Emigration from the Caribbean to Britain began with post-World War II labor shortages. In 1948, the British government passed the Nationality Act, which allowed all subjects of the Commonwealth to enter Britain freely. By 1951, more than 17,000 Afro-Caribbeans had moved to Britain, and the numbers continued to grow after that (Model 2008). "Between 1955 and 1959, 20, 000 to 33, 000 migrants per year moved to the United Kingdom" (Bashi 2008: 61). But, this period of unrestricted movement from the Caribbean to Britain was short-lived. Afro-Caribbean immigration to Britain slowed down in 1962, after the Commonwealth Immigration Act

restricted immigration from former British colonies and “made the United States once again the target destination for black migration” (Bashi 2007: 61).

The third and largest wave of Caribbean immigration to the US began in the late 1960s and continues to the present. The Hart-Cellar Immigration Reform Act of 1965 partially removed the quota system of the 1952 McCarran-Walter Act, which gave preference to northern European immigrants (Kasinitz 1992; Waters 1999). The reform lifted country quotas and replaced them with a system that emphasized family reunification and employment. “Under Hart-Cellar, 20 percent (later 30 percent) of quota visas were reserved for persons with particular skills; those entering under these preferences had to be certified by the U.S. Department of Labor. The remaining 80 percent (later 70 percent) of quota visas were reserved for relatives of American citizens or relatives of permanent residents of the United States” (Ngai 2004 as cited in Model 2008). This drastically changed the face of American immigration, opening the way for a surge in “non-white” immigrants from Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Since the start of the third wave, emigration from the Caribbean has increased exponentially, and Afro-Caribbean migrants have formed large, culturally distinct neighborhoods in several major US cities, along the East Coast (Crowder and Tedrow 2001; Foner 2001; Kasinitz 1992; Vickerman 1999). Meanwhile, intra-Caribbean migration continues to this day but on a smaller scale. Most migrants move back and forth between their home islands and working abroad as a way to improve their status at home (Kasinitz 1992).

PLACE MATTERS: AFRO-CARIBBEANS IN NEW YORK AND OTHER US CITIES

New York City is the most significant destination for Afro-Caribbean immigrants in the United States, since the first wave of numerically substantial Caribbean migration to the US began in 1900 (Foner 2001). Movement to the city began with the development of the Caribbean's banana and tourism industries, as steamships that originated in New York regularly transported tourists and bananas between the islands and the city (Foner 2001: 4). Since 1965, more than half a million Afro-Caribbean immigrants have settled in the New York metropolitan area (Foner 2001). The influx has had an enormous impact on the city, and on the lives of the Afro-Caribbeans living there (and to some extent on those living elsewhere).

No other American city has such a large concentration of Afro-Caribbeans. In 2009, Afro-Caribbean immigrants constituted about 7 percent of New York's population, making it the largest immigrant group in the city (US Census Bureau, 2009 American Community Survey). Continued migration to New York has resulted in the Caribbeanization of the city's black population, and some of its neighborhoods (Waters 1999; Foner 2001; Rogers 2006; Henke 2001). In 2000, Afro-Caribbeans made up 25.7% of New York City's black population (See Table 1). Afro-Caribbean immigrants have developed vibrant and distinctive neighborhoods in sections of Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx. Throughout the New York City area, Caribbean stores, restaurants, and bakeries, Caribbean-oriented newspapers and radio programs, Caribbean nightclubs featuring reggae, soca, calypso, and other music from the region, and yearly cultural festivals and celebrations, such as the New York Caribbean Carnival (that takes place on Brooklyn's Eastern Parkway and attracts over a million people annually on Labor Day), mark the group's presence and create a "safe haven" or a "Caribbean outside of the Caribbean" for the Caribbean immigrants living there (Henke 2001). For many Afro-Caribbeans, New York has

become the symbol of America and a center of Caribbean immigration, culture, and history (Foner 2001).

Where Afro-Caribbeans move to and settle plays an important role in shaping their migrant experiences (Foner 2005; Bashi 2007; Olwig 2007). Not surprisingly, as home of the oldest and largest Caribbean population in the United States, New York is where a great deal of research on Afro-Caribbean immigrants has been conducted (Kasinitz 1992; Foner 2001; Waters 1999; Watkins-Owens 1996; Vickerman 1999). However, studies of Afro-Caribbeans in different cities show that their experiences differ, in varying degrees, from those of their compatriots in New York City (Olwig 2007; Hintzen 2001; Kasinitz, Battle, and Miyares 2001; Johnson 2006; Foner 2005; Bashi 2007). A combination of factors and contexts specific to a place interact to shape Afro-Caribbeans' community formations, settlement patterns, identity choices, reception, and incorporation, creating a distinctive Caribbean migrant experience (Foner 2005). These factors include the culture, geographic location, racial/ethnic makeup, and history of the place, the group's history and relationship with the place, among other things. Each city Afro-Caribbeans move to and settle in reveals something different about the Caribbean diaspora, as it spreads out across cities, countries, and continents.

For a number of migrants, New York is a first stop before they move to other parts of the US. Step migration—a migration process that typically involves a migrant entering through a traditional gateway city (e.g., New York) and then moving to other cities—appears to be the dominant migration pattern for Afro-Caribbeans living outside New York.

The Miami/Ft. Lauderdale metro area has the second largest concentration of Afro-Caribbeans. Many Afro-Caribbeans, largely led by those who moved there after retiring, have

settled in southern Florida, with its warm weather and proximity to the Caribbean region. It makes Miami a very Caribbean-dominated cultural landscape. It is home to second largest Caribbean Carnivals in the US that attracts many Afro-Caribbeans from other US cities and the Caribbean. Miami's large Cuban population provides a very different context than New York, where not one immigrant group dominates (Foner 2001; Kasinitz, Battle, and Miyares 2001). Because of their large population size, great political power, and impressive economic success, southern Florida's Cubans play a significant role in the incorporation of Miami's Afro-Caribbeans and other ethnic groups (Foner 2005). In 2000, the Miami-Fort Lauderdale area was home to 303,731 Afro-Caribbeans, who made up 34.4% and 43.4% of the black populations in Miami and Fort Lauderdale, respectively (See Table 1). Studies of southern Florida show that Afro-Caribbeans have higher median household incomes than other southern Florida residents and a higher level of homeownership than their New York counterparts (Kasinitz, Battle, and Miyares 2001; Logan 2007). Having lower housing costs and a lower cost of living than New York, southern Florida offers Afro-Caribbeans more opportunities for homeownership than New York. There is not a dominant Caribbean neighborhood like Central Brooklyn in New York but there are some residential clusters north of downtown Miami (Kasinitz, Battle, and Miyares 2001).

Afro-Caribbeans outside New York offer yet more variations on the Caribbean immigrant experience in the US (Hintzen 2001; Palmer 1995; Bashi 2007; Olwig 2007; Foner 2005; Johnson 2006; Logan 2007). This can be seen in the Afro-Caribbean community in California. Percy Hintzen's *West Indian in the West* (2001) provides one of the few detailed accounts of Afro-Caribbeans outside of New York. The Afro-Caribbean community in the San Francisco Bay Area is relatively small, with only about 9,000 in 1990 (when he did his study). Afro-

Caribbeans are residentially dispersed throughout the Bay Area, with no distinct Caribbean ethnic neighborhood enclaves. Many of the Afro-Caribbeans in the Bay Area moved there to attend school, to join family, or because they were transferred by their employers or relocated for a job opportunity, or because they stayed after being assigned to one of California's many military bases. Afro-Caribbeans in the Bay Area were mostly middle to upper-middle class, unlike their counterparts in New York. According to Hintzen, the large number of low-skilled Latino and Asian immigrants in the area has diminished the job opportunities for low-skilled or unskilled Afro-Caribbeans and likely discouraged their migration to the region. Hintzen (2001) found that Afro-Caribbeans in the Bay Area have constructed an ethnic identity that revolves around the notion of success and foreignness, exploiting exotic images of the Caribbean and the myth of them as a model minority, in order to distinguish themselves from the region's African American population and large Hispanic and Asian populations. Due to the small size and residential dispersion of the Caribbean immigrant community, Afro-Caribbeans' relations with African Americans are largely class-based, with them distancing themselves from poor African Americans and associating with middle class and professional African Americans in order to access "the social, political, and occupational networks of the African American middle and professional classes" (Hintzen 2001: 92). Another detailed account of an Afro-Caribbean community in California is Christine Ho (1991)'s study of Afro-Trinidadian migration to Los Angeles. Like their counterparts in the San Francisco Bay Area, the Afro-Trinidadians in Los Angeles moved to the region from other US cities, mostly New York. Their experiences in their former communities greatly influenced their experiences, decisions, and community formations in Los Angeles. For example, many of the Afro-Trinidadians in her study reported being attracted to Los Angeles because they viewed it as a better place to raise kids than New York.

The Afro-Caribbean community in Washington, D.C. offers yet another variation in the Caribbean immigrant experience in the US. Ransford Palmer's (1995) book *Pilgrims From the Sun* is one of the few scholarly attempts to document the experiences of Afro-Caribbeans in Washington, D.C. With a relatively small Afro-Caribbean population (about 49,000 according to the 2000 US Census), the D.C. area is home to a large population of Afro-Caribbean college graduates and professionals. Howard University, one of America's historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), is largely responsible for the district's large population of Afro-Caribbean professionals, as many of those who graduated from the university remained in the area (includes parts of Virginia and Maryland). They are no distinct Caribbean ethnic neighborhoods. Afro-Caribbeans are dispersed geographically throughout the DC area and live mostly in African American neighborhoods (Palmer 1995). "In moving to Washington, West Indians come to a city with a majority black population (and black political leaders) and nearby suburbs that are home to a flourishing African American middle class" (Foner 2005: 150). The Washington D.C. area has a large and diverse black population, having substantial African American, African, and Afro-Caribbean communities. Washington D.C. is also home to a large African immigrant population, who along with Afro-Caribbeans create a significant black immigrant presence in the area—making up 9.8% of the DC metro area's total black population in 2000 (Logan 2007).

This brief sketch of Afro-Caribbean immigrants in New York, Miami, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Washington D.C. highlights the diversity among the Afro-Caribbean community in the US. Though the vast majority of Afro-Caribbeans in the US live in New York City, their experiences and characteristics (e.g., education, job, income, class) do not apply to Afro-Caribbeans who live elsewhere (Foner 2005). "Each urban destination is distinct in important

ways, reflecting, among other things, the types of West Indian migrants who move there and the particular social and political context that greets them on arrival” (Foner 2005: 147). Washington D.C., provides a distinct Caribbean migrant experience, for example, due its high share of Afro-Caribbean professionals and college graduates and large, ethnically diverse black population, including a flourishing black middle class and black suburban community. San Francisco, on the other hand, provides a different experience for Caribbean migrants due the origin of its small but mostly middle class Afro-Caribbean community—the majority having moved to the area from another US city rather than from the Caribbean directly—and its large Asian and Latino immigrant communities. This brief overview of the experiences of Afro-Caribbeans in other cities underscore the important ways that “place matters,” as Nancy Foner (2005) argues, in the Caribbean migrant experience and sets the stage for a discussion of the distinctiveness of Atlanta as a destination for Caribbean migration. What makes Atlanta different from other Caribbean immigrant destinations—i.e., New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Miami?

What Makes Atlanta a Unique Caribbean Immigrant Destination?

A host of features make Atlanta unique as a Caribbean immigrant destination. Atlanta experienced the largest growth in Afro-Caribbean population in the US. Between 1990 and 2000, the Afro-Caribbean population in Atlanta grew 323.3 percent, going from 8,342 to 35,308—eight times the growth of the Afro-Caribbean population in New York City (at 40.6 percent) (See Table 1). The overall growth of the Afro-Caribbean population in metro Atlanta has been immense; the population has more than doubled to 90,254 in 2010, making up 2% of the total population in the metro area, and roughly 5% of the southern metropolis’ black residents (2008-2012 American Community Survey). If their numbers continue to grow as quickly as they have

in the past two decades (from 2.9% to 5% of the Atlanta black population in 1990 and 2010, respectively), Afro-Caribbeans will soon become a numerically significant part of the city's black population in the next two decades, and a possible political threat to the area's longstanding African American population (See Table 4). The dense concentration of Afro-Caribbeans in the surrounding metro area has resulted in the creation of neighborhoods with a distinct Caribbean mark. For example, a few Afro-Caribbeans have gained leadership positions in local political offices in these Caribbean-dense areas, but they have yet to gain any major political power in the city of Atlanta, and still depend on African American political representation to address their particular community interests. How the presence of a growing Afro-Caribbean population (and voting bloc) affects black politics in Atlanta in the next two decades is not yet known and requires future study.

Along with experiencing an influx of Afro-Caribbean migrants, Atlanta has experienced significant demographic changes since the 1990s. It is one of the fastest-growing metropolitan areas in the country (Frey 2005; Frey 2010b). Metro Atlanta's population grew 38.4 percent between 1990 and 2000, making it the eighth fastest growing metropolitan area in the US (Frey 2010b; Table 3). During the past few decades, many migrants from within the US and from abroad flocked to Atlanta as the metropolis' economy rapidly expanded with the acquisition of major national and multinational corporations. Domestic migration from other US cities drove the population growth in the Atlanta between 1995 and 2000, with the southern city gaining 246,444 domestic migrants (the highest gains from domestic migration among US metros) (Frey 2005). International migration also contributed significantly to the southern metropolis' growth since the 1990s, with the arrival of 162,972 immigrants between 1995 and 2000 (Frey 2003).

Immigration to the region has transformed Atlanta from a bi-racial society consisting of

whites and African Americans to one of the most diverse metros in the South (Hansen 2005). Both the black and white populations of Atlanta increased between 1990, 2000, and 2010 from 742,770 to 1,999,456 to 1,707,913 and 2,101,441 to 2,460,740 to 2,920,480, respectively (See Table 3). But, the largest increases were of the Asian and Hispanic populations in the Atlanta area with 51,289 to 155,117 to 254,307 and 58,215 to 268,541 to 547,400 between 1990, 2000, and 2010, respectively (See Table 3). The diversity of the population acts as an unspoken challenge to the black-white binary that typically frames how people see the South. The composition, and extraordinary diversity, of immigrant streams to Atlanta have created a racial and ethnic order that is unlike traditional immigrant gateway cities (i.e., Los Angeles, New York, Miami, or Chicago). The movement of immigrant newcomers from Latin America, Asia, and Africa to Atlanta—a place that had little previous history of immigration prior to 1990—has had a significant impact on the southern city. Like most of the South, Atlanta did not attract large numbers of immigrants during the mass immigration era between 1880 and 1920. At the turn of the 20th century, Atlanta had a small immigrant community of Jews, Greeks, and Chinese that comprised less than 4 percent of its population (Adelman and Jaret 2010). Atlanta emerged as a major immigrant destination in the 1990s, long after major immigrant destinations such as New York, Chicago, and Boston. “In contrast to more established central-city destinations and patterns of settlement, trends in 21st-century gateways constitute a new context for the social, economic, and political incorporation of immigrants. All of these places are confronting fast-paced change that has wide-reaching effects on neighborhoods, schools, workplaces, and local public coffers” (Singer, Hardwick, and Brettell 2008b: 1). Atlanta has received one of the highest percentages of immigrants during the past few decades and is distinguished from other new destinations, such as Phoenix or Charlotte, by the size and diverse backgrounds of its immigrant

population and its predominantly suburban settlement (Bump, Lowell, and Petterson 2005; Hansen 2005; Odem 2008; Singer, Hardwick, and Brettell 2008a; Singer, Hardrick, and Brettell 2008b). The city of Atlanta itself is relatively small locality at the center of an expansive surrounding metropolitan area. In 2005, 96 percent of metropolitan Atlanta's immigrant newcomers lived outside the city, in the surrounding suburban areas (Singer, Hardwick, and Brettell 2008).

As a Caribbean immigrant destination, its large African American population and the significant place it holds in black American life distinguish Atlanta from other cities. It was the home of civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. It contains the largest consortium of black higher education institutions, consisting of the historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) Morehouse College, Morehouse College School of Medicine, Spelman College, Clark Atlanta University, Union Theological Seminary, and Morris Brown College. It is a premier destination for black internal migrants who are returning to their historical and family roots in the southern U.S. This is a reversal of the phenomenon called the Great Migration that saw the movement of African Americans from the South to cities in the North, West, and Midwest between the early 1900s and the 1940s. Research on black southern migration has shown that black return migrants have had a significant impact on the South, especially on its black population (Frey 2004; Dodson and Diouf 2004; Stack 1996). African American migrants have contributed to the growth of the black middle class in many southern cities, having on average higher incomes than the South's total black population. Return migrants also have higher levels of education than non-migrants: more than 50% of African American migrants are college graduates. This characteristic of return migrants contrasts with the two Great Migrations, from the South to the North, Midwest, and West, which consisted mostly of agricultural workers

(Dodson and Diouf 2004). About 500,000 African Americans moved to Atlanta between 1990 and 2000, making it the city with the sixth largest black population in the country (Dodson and Diouf 2004). The high rate of black migration has led many to call Atlanta “black mecca” or a “modern day Harlem” (Gallagher and Lacy 2003).

Caribbean migration to Atlanta is especially unique because it coincides and interacts with the two larger migrations of African American return migrants and immigrant newcomers from Latin America, Asia, and Africa to the southern metropolis. Few studies have examined the migrations of different black ethnic groups to the same destination—in this case, Atlanta-bound African American, Afro-Caribbean, and black African migrants to Atlanta. Irma Watkins-Owens (1996) studies the interaction of Afro-Caribbean immigrants and southern-origin African American migrants in Harlem, during the first three decades of the 20th century. She argues “their historic encounter produced an interchange of ideas, people, and institutions that made Harlem, black metropolis, the center of the African world” (Watkins-Owens 1996: 175). The interaction of African Americans, Afro-Caribbeans, and other black immigrants in Atlanta has important implications for ideas about blackness in the region. Atlanta, and the rest of the South, has a distinct black southern culture steeped in its long African American history, stemming from the arrival of enslaved Africans to the region. The increasing number of Afro-Caribbeans (and other black migrants) in Atlanta challenge existing notions of blackness in the region and calls for the creation of new image that includes a culturally and socially diverse black Atlanta community. The Atlanta Caribbean Carnival and Caribbean-American Heritage Month events are two examples of recurring Caribbean events that showcase and celebrate the development of a multi-ethnic (black) Atlanta. With a culturally and geographically diverse pool of migrants of African ancestry, black migration to Atlanta (i.e. Afro-Caribbean migration, return migration,

and migration of other black immigrant newcomers)—truly represents a “New Great Migration” (Frey 2004) to the South that has many implications for social, racial, and political relations in the region and for the development of Atlanta as the center of black America in the 21st century, similar to Harlem in the 20th century.

WHO ARE THE AFRO-CARIBBEANS IN ATLANTA?

The best way to talk about who is participating in the migration is to begin with the story of Kerry, a migrant of Trinidadian descent in her late thirties. Like Jefferson from the beginning of this chapter, she was highly educated and middle class, having a MBA degree and a job in finance at The Coca Cola Company. At the time of our interview, she had been in Atlanta for 15 years, after moving there in 1994 from New York, where she lived in a predominantly Caribbean neighborhood in the Bronx. Like most migrants, she moved in search of better socioeconomic opportunities and a greater quality of life. Before she moved to Atlanta, she had been there many times to visit friends who were attending school at the Atlanta University Center (which consists of the four historically black colleges and universities Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, Spelman College, and Morehouse School of Medicine). From her visits, she fell in love with Atlanta and began planning to move there. Although Kerry’s story is not representative of all participating in the migration to Atlanta, she shares several major characteristics with many of the Afro-Caribbeans in Atlanta: age, education, socioeconomic class, and migration origin.

Women have dominated the flow of Afro-Caribbean migrants to Atlanta. The majority of Afro-Caribbeans that I spoke to were women, making up 63% of my respondents. According to US Census data, women made up more than 50% of the Afro-Caribbean population in Atlanta

since the 1990s, when the migration surge began. The most recent figures show that Afro-Caribbean women are 53.4% of the group's population in Atlanta, while men made up 46.6% (2008-2010 American Community Survey). This characteristic fits with the female-dominated pattern of Caribbean immigration flows to the US. As of the most recent decennial census, women made up 53.8% of Afro-Caribbean immigrants in the US. "In virtually every year since 1967, West Indian women in the legal stream to the United States have outnumbered men" (Foner 2009:8).

My research suggests that young women dominate the flow of Afro-Caribbeans to Atlanta. Almost 50% of the migrants in this study were in their 30s. The available figures show that Afro-Caribbean transplants to Atlanta are primarily younger working-age adults and their children, with the median age being 31.7 in 2010, and with the largest proportions between the ages of five and seventeen (20.6%) and the ages of thirty-five and forty-four (18.6%). There are relatively small proportions of those who are over the age of fifty-five (7%) and fewer over the age of sixty-five (6.1%). These findings matter since southern-bound black migration, especially of Afro-Caribbean immigrants moving from New York and other northern cities, is generally associated as a movement of a large number of retirement-age or retired migrants. In the case of Afro-Caribbeans in southern Florida, for example, the migration surge to the region has been attributed to retirees, who by the 1980s were moving there to take advantage of the warm (tropical) climate, proximity to the Caribbean, and low cost of living, after living and working for many years in northern cities (particularly New York), and who were later followed by younger Afro-Caribbeans (Kasinitz, Battle, and Miyares 2001). Research on reverse migration show that young black singles and families are driving the migration to the South since the 1990s

and suggest that the southward flow will continue with young migrants even after all of the boomers have moved South and/or died (Dodson and Diouf 2004; Falk, Hunt, and Hunt 2004).

I found that Afro-Caribbeans in Atlanta had high levels of education. Among the migrants that I interviewed for this study, 70% had college educations. There were a significantly high number of migrants with graduate or professional degrees. Thirteen of the thirty-three Afro-Caribbean respondents in my study (39%) had either a masters, doctoral, or law degree. Their educational levels were reflected in their occupations: almost all of the migrants in this study were in managerial, professional, or service occupations. Seventeen were in management/professional occupations (e.g., lawyers, business owners, urban planning directors, etc.), six were in service occupations (e.g., teachers, military, etc.), three were in office occupations (e.g., administrative assistants), and two were law school students. Two migrants were not in the labor force: one was retired, while the other was a homemaker. Overall, the flow of Afro-Caribbean immigrants to Atlanta includes a high percentage of professionals and non-manual labor workers. According to the 2008-2010 American Community Survey, 38.1% of Afro-Caribbeans in Atlanta in the labor force were in management, business, arts, and science occupations, in addition to the 15.2% in service occupations and the 28.2% in sales occupations.

Afro-Caribbean men and women in Atlanta are concentrated in similar occupational fields, with large proportions of both women and men working in managerial and professional occupations and sales and office occupations. Their concentration in white collar and service sector occupations may be due to the relatively high education level and socioeconomic status of the Afro-Caribbeans migrating to Atlanta. Previous research has found gender differences in labor force participation in the US, with Afro-Caribbean women and men tending to cluster in different occupations (Bashi 2007; Foner 2009). Afro-Caribbean immigrant women have worked

mostly in health care and domestic work in the three major global cities of Afro-Caribbean settlement—New York, London, and Toronto—while Afro-Caribbean immigrant men have concentrated in transport, in London and New York (Foner 2009). Kasinitz and Vickerman (2001) argue that high levels of concentration in these occupational fields reflect patterns of network hiring and referrals; that is, the social networks of Afro-Caribbean female domestic, health care, and clerical workers facilitate access to these jobs.

My data indicate that the class composition of the Afro-Caribbean migrants in this study is mostly middle class, based on their education levels and occupations. Afro-Caribbeans in Atlanta are overwhelmingly middle class, having a median household income of \$46,267 in 1990 and \$50,911 in 2000 and \$58,427 in 2010 and have high levels of homeownership, at 57.9%, 61.9%, and 63% in 1990, 2000, and 2010, respectively (Table 2). Interestingly, Afro-Caribbean immigrants in Atlanta are faring significantly better than African Americans in Atlanta who had a median household income of \$42,823, a percentage of 22.5% college graduates, and a homeownership rate of 57.4% in 2000 (Diversity in Black and White Report, The Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative Urban and Regional Research 2002). In comparison to other black immigrants, they are faring slightly better. In 2000, African immigrants had a median household income of \$48,614 and a homeownership rate of 49.8%; however, they had a higher percentage of college graduates than Afro-Caribbeans, and African Americans, at 30.5%. This is not surprising since studies have shown that Africa-origin immigrants are among the highly educated immigrants to enter the US. Researchers have found that black migrants have had significant effects on the South, especially its African American population (Frey 2004; Dodson and Diouf 2004; Stack 1996).

Black migrants have contributed to the growth of the black middle class in many southern cities, having on average higher incomes than the South's total African American population. Migrants also have higher levels of education than nonmigrants: more than 50% of black migrants are college graduates. Migration research shows that in terms of socioeconomic status and education, migrants tend to be more advantaged than those who they leave behind and less advantaged than those already living in their destination (Lee 1966). My data reveals that this pattern is not true for Afro-Caribbeans participating in the migration to Atlanta. They are not only faring better socioeconomically than African Americans in Atlanta but also their counterparts in New York City, who have a median household income of \$35,758, a rate of homeownership of 35.1%, and a percentage of college graduates of 18.2% in 2000 (Logan 2007).

The presence of a predominantly middle class Afro-Caribbean migrant population in Atlanta may be a result of positive selection. In her book *West Indian Immigrants: A Black Success Story?*, Suzanne Model offers selectivity theory—"a perspective that expects economically motivated migrants, irrespective of heritage, to be endowed with greater ability and drive than those who stay home" (2008: 143)—as an explanation for the socioeconomic success of Afro-Caribbean immigrants in the US, particularly regarding their (economic and social) advantages over African Americans, which has been the focus of many studies of the two black ethnic groups. It is likely that those who are poor, less educated, or less skilled are less motivated, or find it harder, to move to Atlanta—a destination with significantly fewer established Caribbean institutions and networks than a traditional destination like New York.

The Afro-Caribbeans in metro Atlanta, and in this study, have diverse national origins. The Afro-Caribbeans in this study are overwhelmingly Trinidadian and Jamaican, making up 33% and 30% of my respondents, respectively. This occurrence was likely due to my use of

snowball sampling, with respondents generally referring me to (national-origin) compatriots; in other words, Trinidadian migrants gave me referrals to other Trinidadian migrants in Atlanta within their family/friends network. However, the largest Afro-Caribbean group in Atlanta by far is Jamaican, which is twice as large as the second largest Afro-Caribbean group, Haitian. According to the 2005-2009 American Community Survey, Jamaicans made up 48% of Afro-Caribbean immigrants in metro Atlanta and Haitians formed 21%, while Trinidadians made up 6%; and the rest of the population was made up of smaller groups of other Caribbean countries (e.g., US Virgin Islanders, Dutch West Indians, and Bahamas).

A small percentage of the Afro-Caribbean migrants that I spoke with moved to Atlanta directly from the Caribbean. Most Afro-Caribbeans are moving to Atlanta from other US cities, including other southern cities. According to the 2008-2010 American Community Survey, 52.7% of the foreign-born Afro-Caribbean population in Atlanta entered the US before 1990, suggesting that many of Afro-Caribbeans in the southern metropolis lived elsewhere in the US (i.e., a traditional Caribbean immigrant destination) before settling there (since the migration began to surge in the early 1990s). More than 50% of the Afro-Caribbeans that I spoke to migrated from northern US cities, of which the largest group by far migrated from New York, which was reported by 33% of all migrants as their destination of origin. Surprisingly, the second largest group migrated from other places in the South—namely from North Carolina, Louisiana, Texas, and Florida. I didn't expect any Afro-Caribbean immigrants to be moving to Atlanta from another southern city, particularly from any places in Florida, since Miami and Ft. Lauderdale have commonly been the places to which Afro-Caribbeans moved to escape the cold weather and fast pace of the Northeast—usually after living in New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Connecticut for a decade or more. The published literature on the Afro-Caribbean population

have shown them return to (or retire and return to) their Caribbean homelands but have not shown them moving among places in the American South (DeWitt 1990).

CONCLUSION

Prior to the 1990s, Afro-Caribbean settlement had a predictable pattern and was limited to mostly major cities along the East coast and metropolitan New York, Miami, and Boston. By century's end, Caribbean immigrants were increasingly settling outside well-established immigrant gateways in a new group of cities and suburbs. Between 1990 and 2000, Atlanta saw a fourfold increase in their Afro-Caribbean Atlanta, experiencing the greatest increase among the ten metropolitan areas with the largest Afro-Caribbean populations (Logan 2007). This period is when most of my respondents migrated to Atlanta. The 2010 US Census shows that the Afro-Caribbean population in Atlanta is continuing its rapid growth, with their numbers reaching over 90,000.

Women dominate the flow of Afro-Caribbean migrants to Atlanta. This characteristic fits with the female-dominated pattern of Caribbean immigration flows to the US, since 1967 (Foner 2009). Afro-Caribbeans in Atlanta are also overwhelmingly middle class and have high levels of education and homeownership. This may be a result of positive selection, in that those who are poor, less educated, or less skilled are less motivated, or find it harder, to move to a destination with significantly fewer established Caribbean institutions and networks than a traditional destination like New York. The Afro-Caribbeans in this study have diverse national origins, though Trinidadians and Jamaicans made up 63% of my respondents. I found that most Afro-Caribbeans are moving to Atlanta from other US cities, of which the New York City metro area is the biggest sender. Unexpectedly, I found that the second largest group of Afro-Caribbean migrants came from other southern states. Only a small percentage of the Afro-Caribbean

migrants in my study moved to Atlanta directly from the Caribbean.

What distinguishes Atlanta from other Caribbean immigrant destinations is the city itself. The influx of Afro-Caribbean migrants to Atlanta from other US cities and the Caribbean is seemingly a result of the city becoming a major destination for two large ethnic migrations to the region since the 1990s—the return/reverse migration of African Americans, and the migration of immigrant newcomers from Asia, Africa, and Latin America to new destinations. Being both black and immigrant, Afro-Caribbeans are part of these major migration streams to Atlanta and connect them to each other. They, along with these other non-white migrant newcomers, are helping to shape Atlanta into a new type of ethnic metropolis, with a large and powerful black (middle class) population influencing the development of the city. These factors distinguish Atlanta from New York, Miami, Washington, D.C., and other Caribbean immigrant destinations in the US.

The presence of a large and growing Afro-Caribbean population in Atlanta raises many questions: Where are they settling in Atlanta? Are they integrating into the larger African American community or are they developing their own distinct Caribbean neighborhoods, organizations, and identity in Atlanta? In the following chapters, I address these questions and more.

CHAPTER 2: DECISIONS TO MIGRATE

*“L.A. proved too much for the man,
So he's leavin' the life he's come to know,
He said he's goin' back to find
Ooh, what's left of his world,
The world he left behind
Not so long ago.
He's leaving,
On that midnight train to Georgia,
And he's goin' back
To a simpler place and time.
And I'll be with him
On that midnight train to Georgia,
I'd rather live in his world
Than live without him in mine.”*

-“Midnight Train to Georgia” by Gladys Knight and the Pips¹¹

The excerpt above, from the song “Midnight Train to Georgia”, reflects my observations about how Atlanta, a city that had little history with mass immigration prior to 1990, became a new (major) destination for Afro-Caribbean immigrants. The song’s “significance lies in the story that it tells and the manner in which it tells it. ‘Midnight Train to Georgia’ heralds the return migration of thousands of African-Americans to the South” (Griffin 1995: 143). I became aware of African Americans “moving back” to the South while reading Carol Stack’s (1996) seminal book *Call to Home: African Americans Reclaim the Rural South*, which examines the movement of African Americans to the rural South, and the work by Howard Dodson and Sylviane A. Diouf (2004) for the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture’s exhibition, *In Motion: The African-American Migration Experience*, which documents all black migrations

¹¹ Lyrics taken from www.lyricsdepot.com.

to, within, and out of the US over a 400-year span (with an entire section dedicated to “return migration”).¹² African American migration to the South has increased each decade, following its start in the early 1970s. Researchers have referred to this movement as “return” migration, “reverse” migration, or the “New Great Migration” (Frey 2004), since in some cases, migrants are returning to their hometowns or those of their parents or grandparents, who left the South during the Great Migration (1910-1970).¹³

Atlanta has received a significant portion of southern-bound black migrants. During the 1990s, nearly 160,000 blacks moved to Atlanta, which some call “the Harlem of the 1990s” (Dodson and Diouf 2004). The 1990s also marked a surge in migration of Afro-Caribbeans to Atlanta. Once I learned this, I believed that the Afro-Caribbeans were following African Americans to the South, like Gladys Knight followed her lover in the song. For this reason, I began this study with the intention of exploring the relationship/connection between the two southern-bound black migrations to Atlanta, and decidedly titled my dissertation “On the Midnight Train to Georgia: Afro-Caribbeans and the New Great Migration.”

But I was mistaken. Once in the field, I soon realized that the Afro-Caribbeans that I talked to did not relate their movement to Atlanta to return migration or to African Americans’

¹² See website for Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture Presents In Motion: The African-American Migration Experience (<http://www.inmotionaame.org/home.cfm>).

¹³ The Great Migration was the movement of over 6 million African Americans from the South to the North, West, and Midwest between 1910 and 1970, contributing to the development of major black communities in Philadelphia, Chicago, Detroit, New York (namely Harlem), and Los Angeles, and to almost half of the black population in the US residing outside of the South. It’s debatable whether if black southern-bound migration should be called return migration, since some scholars count “return” differently. In the works of Stewart Tolnay (2004) and William Falk, Larry Hunt, and Matthew Hunt (2004), they count “return” as migrants who return to their home state, not necessarily their hometowns. This would include, for example, a person who grew up in rural Georgia “returning” to Atlanta, which I argue is different than the migrants in Carol Stack’s (1996) work who returned to their hometowns.

concentrated movement to Atlanta. Their decisions to migrate to the southern city, though varied, are tied to/shaped by their status as *black* on the one hand and *immigrants* on the other—two socially distinct groups in the US (Mederios Kent 2007). Researchers have shown how being both black and immigrant has significantly influenced, in various ways, the Afro-Caribbean experience in the US—adaptation to American life, understandings of race, identification, and residential patterns, among other things. In this chapter, I look specifically at how the migrants’ reasons for moving to the southern city intersect with their socioeconomic status, gender, age, education, place of birth, and migration history to create a distinctive Afro-Caribbean Atlanta experience.

AFRO-CARIBBEAN NETWORKS IN MIGRATION TO ATLANTA

A small number of the Afro-Caribbeans migrants I interviewed told me that they were recruited or invited to move to Atlanta; and, among them, all reported being recruited by a family member with whom they resided after migrating there. Beulah, a sixty-year old Jamaican-born migrant who moved to Atlanta in 1998 after living in Australia for a few years, was invited to move by her daughter who had moved to the city from New York. Similarly, Sheena, a migrant from Montserrat in her early thirties, immigrated directly to Atlanta as a teenager in 1992, after being invited by her sister. When I asked her how she came to live in Atlanta, she replied, “I came to Atlanta when I was 15...My sister and my brother moved here, after going to school at Purdue in Indiana...My sister got an internship in Atlanta and she liked it here. Then my parents bought a house there. I moved to Atlanta and finished high school here.” The willingness of many of the earlier Afro-Caribbean migrants to move to Atlanta without the support of a network

in place there supports the idea that there is something distinctive about Atlanta drawing them there. In her study of West Indian nannies in Brooklyn, sociologist Tamara Mose Brown (2011) found that many of the women chose to migrate to New York because they had family already living there and with these connections found it easier to find jobs and to adjust to their new lives in the US. They found it particularly easier to settle in Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx, because these boroughs have distinct Caribbean neighborhoods, with stores and businesses that are owned by Afro-Caribbeans and sell goods that were also sold in their homelands.

Social networks play a major role in immigrants' migration and settlement patterns (Ho 1991; Bashi 2007; Olwig 2007). "For many migrants, it is often through those networks that they obtain knowledge about possible migration destinations, the social and economic opportunities that they offer, and the best modes of access to these places" (Olwig 2007: 10). Through networks, migrants exchange economic and social resources needed to survive in their new environments. In the case of Afro-Caribbean migrants in this study, their social networks in their previous home cities and in Atlanta greatly aided their move to the new immigrant destination.

According to sociologist Vilna Bashi (2007), migration is rooted in the decision-making of social networks, which include family, friends, and compatriots. In her book *Survival of the Knitted*, Bashi (2007) examines immigrant social networks and shows how they function, using the case of Afro-Caribbean immigrants in New York and London. She found many Afro-Caribbean immigrants moved to New York and London because members of their immigrant network were already living there, that first selected, or recruited, them for migration to the destination and then facilitated their moving and resettling process. She describes immigrant networks as consisting of two types of members: those immigrants who have helped another migrant move and adapt to a new environment ("hubs") and those who have received assistance

from another migrant in the migration process (“spokes”). The hub is a central figure in the network because they possess social and economic resources to facilitate the migration process, and choose potential migrants, or spokes, who they believe possess character traits suitable for survival in their new environment. Networks help Caribbean immigrant newcomers to adapt to their new lives and homes, by helping them find jobs, find places to live, gain US residency or evade detection if they are not in the country legally, and other things that they need to settle into their new homes (Bashi 2007).

Several Afro-Caribbeans that I spoke to reported using their Caribbean ethnic networks to help them to adapt to life in Atlanta, after choosing on their own to move there. Jennifer, a Jamaican transplant in her late forties who had three children and was married to a West Indian man, came to Atlanta from the Boston area, after she and her husband had visited the city and fell in love with it. While her husband was finishing graduate school in Massachusetts, she moved to Atlanta with her sons in 1999. When I asked her how she figured out where to live in Atlanta, she said that her brother-in-law lived in Stone Mountain (an eastern suburb of Atlanta with a high concentration of Afro-Caribbeans) and she and her sons had to live with him, since her husband didn’t migrate with them. By staying at her brother-in-law’s house, she was able to get to know the Atlanta area and research the best place for her family to live and for her sons (who were school-age at the time) to attend school. She eventually moved to Lawrenceville (located in the mostly white northern suburbs of Atlanta), after learning from her research that it had one of the best school systems in the Atlanta area. For Afro-Caribbean migrants, like Jennifer, having Caribbean networks in Atlanta prior to their move helped ease their transition to their new life in the southern city by providing them with places to stay, helping them find jobs, providing transportation in the car-dependent city, giving them information about the city, and

giving them the space and time to learn about and adjust to their new environment.

Interestingly, I found that Caribbean networks were not only social networks that Afro-Caribbean migrants were using in their migration to Atlanta. They were also using race-based (or black) social networks. Several migrants that I interviewed reported being a member of a Black Greek Letter Organization (BGLO) and using their black sorority/fraternity network to move to and settle in Atlanta. There are historically nine Black Greek Letter Organizations (BGLOs): Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity, Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, Delta Sigma Theta sorority, Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity, Omega Psi Phi fraternity, Phi Beta Sigma fraternity, Zeta Phi Beta sorority, Sigma Gamma Rho sorority, and Iota Phi Theta fraternity. These BGLOs, founded between 1906 and 1963 in response to exclusionary policies of white Greek organizations, have established chapters throughout the US—especially on the campuses of the historically black colleges and universities in the South—and the world and have been a significant part of the collegiate and post-collegiate life of many black Americans for over a century. For Afro-Caribbean migrants who have membership in these black fraternities and sororities, they were able to access this extensive black social network and receive help from either a “frat brother” or “sorority sister” of their local chapter (in the city that they left) who had connections in Atlanta, or from members of an Atlanta chapter.¹⁴ Dwight, a thirty-five year old Kittitian migrant who moved from New York with his wife in 2007, and who was a member of Omega Phi Psi Fraternity, described how one of his frat brothers (who was also his Guyanese wife’s cousin) had moved to Atlanta from New York in 1997 and helped him use the fraternity network in Atlanta to find a job. He stated, “In terms of job hunting, [my frat brother] was instrumental for me...once I got down, he put the

¹⁴ Notable members of BGLOs are civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. (Alpha Phi Alpha), First Lady Michelle Obama (honorary member of Alpha Kappa Alpha), and comedian-actor Bill Cosby (Omega Psi Phi), to name a few.

word out with the fraternity that I was looking for a job. My first job when we got down here was working with a frat brother who was a main partner at a firm down here.” Similarly, Alana, a transplant of Barbadian descent in her mid-thirties, received help from her sorority sister in finding a place to live, when she first moved to Atlanta in 1995. After graduating college in North Carolina, she received a job offer in Atlanta and didn’t have time to look for housing before she moved there. When I asked her how she found housing, she told me that her sorority sister put her in contact with her fiancé who was living in Atlanta and he told her about an apartment complex near his home which happened to be across from her new job. She picked her apartment sight unseen based on the recommendation.

As I discussed in the preceding chapters, people have both a racial and ethnic identity, which are fluid and interchangeable based on the situation (Bashi 2007, 2013). Afro-Caribbeans are both black and Caribbean. Atlanta-bound Afro-Caribbean migrants’ use of black social networks, like those of black sororities and fraternities, does not prevent them from also accessing Caribbean networks. In their move to Atlanta, Afro-Caribbean migrants with access to both Caribbean social networks and black social networks (e.g. black fraternity/sorority networks) are able to use either networks to get their goals accomplished. In the case of Dwight, he used his Caribbean family network to find a place to live and his black fraternity network to find a job in Atlanta.

While a number of Afro-Caribbean migrants in this study used some form of social network--either an ethnic or race network-- to move to and settle in Atlanta, there were others who migrated without social networks. These migrants tended to have jobs waiting for them upon arrival in Atlanta. Their company either transferred them to an office in Atlanta or they applied for and got a new job in Atlanta prior to their move. A small number of Afro-Caribbean

migrants in this study were able to move to Atlanta without networks because they came to the city to attend college or graduate school. The colleges and universities provided, or helped these Afro-Caribbean migrants to find, housing and also provided financial support to help the migration process. Atlanta is home to several top universities, such as Emory University, Georgia Institute of Technology, and Georgia State University, and to the world's largest consortium of historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs), the Atlanta University Center, which includes Morehouse College, Spelman College, Clark Atlanta University, and Morehouse School of Medicine. A few Afro-Caribbean migrants informed me that many young Caribbean-born migrants directly came to Atlanta specifically to attend one of its colleges and universities and generally stayed in the city after they graduated, instead of returning home to the Caribbean. Atlanta's HBCUs have played an especially significant role in drawing college-aged Afro-Caribbeans to the city. Of all the schools in Atlanta, Morehouse College (an all-male institution) attracted most of the education-driven Afro-Caribbean migrants in this study. Notably, almost all of these migrants were Trinidadian males and had moved directly to Atlanta from the Caribbean island. Simon, a Trinidadian migrant in his late thirties, explained to me how an athletic scholarship brought him from his island home to Georgia in 1992. He told me that he always dreamed of playing college basketball and was fortunate that after he finished playing in a tournament in Jamaica in 1991, as part of Trinidad's national basketball team in Jamaica, he started getting calls from colleges and coaches who saw him play. He had several options but decided to attend Georgia Military College, a junior college located in Milledgeville, Georgia (two hours outside of Atlanta), because they offered him a full scholarship. After a year, Simon then transferred to Morehouse College, which offered to accept him and the other Trinidadian basketball players who had emigrated with him to attend Georgia Military College.

I consider Afro-Caribbeans who moved to Atlanta without networks “pioneers” because they were among the first (of their family and friends) to settle in the region, and contributed, by their presence in region, to the creation of new Caribbean networks/communities in Atlanta for other Caribbean migrants whom arrive after them to utilize during their migration process. For these pioneers, their new jobs or schools, and not an established Caribbean community, provided them with spaces to meet people in their new home and to build new Caribbean social networks. “Networks can become self-perpetuating to migration because ‘each act of migration itself creates the social structure needed to sustain it,’ ” (Olwig 2007: 10, quoting Brettell 2000). These migrant pioneers play a key role in the drawing more and more Afro-Caribbeans, from other US cities, the Caribbean, and abroad, to Atlanta.

Atlanta-bound Afro-Caribbean migrants in this study used Caribbean (e.g., family, friends, and/or co-ethnics) and non-Caribbean (e.g., fraternities/sororities) networks in Atlanta to help them find jobs, find places to live, learn about events and businesses in their new home city, meet other co-ethnics in the area, and obtain whatever else they needed to adapt to their new lives in the southern metropolis. While some Afro-Caribbean migrants used networks to facilitate their migration process to Atlanta, there were others that moved to Atlanta without the aid of networks. This was particularly useful for those who did not have ethnic networks in Atlanta prior to their move like Alana. It shows that just because they are Caribbean they can only use immigrant or ethnic networks. It has been very beneficial for those who were able to use both of them at the same time. They are able to use different networks to get things accomplished.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE SOUTH

When I asked Afro-Caribbeans in Atlanta what they knew about Atlanta and the South before they moved there, most of them told me that they knew very little or nothing about the region prior to their migration. Though they did recognize that there were differences between the South and the rest of the US, what the migrants did know about the region was generally basic information based on its past history—largely its history up to 1965.

When asked what they knew about the South before moving to Atlanta, they listed, for example, slavery, the Civil Rights movement, Martin Luther King Jr., and the region's history of violence and discrimination against all peoples of African ancestry. These responses were common among Afro-Caribbeans regardless of when they moved to Atlanta. Judith, a Jamaican-born migrant in her fifties who moved to Atlanta in the early 1980s, told me that before she moved, she knew very little about Atlanta except for what she learned from history books. She stated, "I was a history teacher in the Caribbean. I knew about the Civil War. But I knew very little about [how] southerners lived today. Most of what I knew was from the history books." Arriving in Atlanta about twenty years later, Karen, a New York-born transplant of Kittitian descent in her early thirties who moved to the southern city from Los Angeles in 2002, similarly told me that she had little prior knowledge about the region except for its past history of slavery and racism. She stated: "All I knew was slavery and racism to be honest...I really didn't know much. I basically came down in faith."

Interestingly, when I asked about their pre-migration knowledge of Atlanta, most of the Afro-Caribbeans that I interviewed started off their responses with this disclaimer of "I didn't know much about Atlanta except for" before proceeding to tell me what they did know. Like Karen, Ashley, a transplant in her forties of Jamaican descent who moved to Atlanta from

Boston in 2007, started saying she knew little about Atlanta and then proceeded to tell me the few things she did know about the city before moving there. She stated, “I didn’t know a whole lot about Atlanta before moving. I knew it was an up and coming city and there were lot of opportunities for black Americans.” This pattern in the migrants’ responses showed me that my respondents knew more about Atlanta than they realized or admitted (to me or themselves). I thought it was very unlikely that any migrant would move to a place without knowing a few things about their new home, unless the move was involuntary, such as in the case of a minor child moving with family, a refugee being resettled, or military personnel being assigned to a new station, and with further questioning my respondents proved to know significant details about Atlanta before moving there.

In his book *Crosscurrents: West Indian Immigrants and Race*, Milton Vickerman (1999) argues that Afro-Caribbeans tend to distinguish generally between the North and the South in the US, ascribing positive characteristics to the latter and the opposite to the former. He states that they tend to view the South as being more similar to the Caribbean than the North, knowing the South to have warmer weather, what they perceive as a more easygoing climate, a deeper sense of community, and “traditional values.” Vickerman argues that their positive views of the South may have influenced the large concentration of Afro-Caribbeans in Miami and their growing movement away from their traditional concentration in New York to southern cities like Atlanta.

Though I did not ask them about their prior knowledge of New York—a major destination for Caribbean immigrants for over a century--, I suspect that my respondents—including those who had lived in New York and those who had never lived there (or in the US) before moving to Atlanta—would have been able to list comfortably and quickly a number of things about the major US metro, such as its climate, major attractions (e.g., Statue of Liberty

and Times Square), and neighborhoods. Previous research has shown that many Afro-Caribbean immigrants arrive in New York with significant knowledge about the city—especially the Caribbean neighborhoods in the Bronx, Queens, and Brooklyn and the long-running and widely attended West Indian Carnival on Labor Day—through stories from friends and family who previously migrated there (Kasinitz 1992). Anthropologist Karen Fog Olwig (2001) found that New York was a central location in some Jamaican family networks and served as place for family members living in the Caribbean, Canada, the US, and elsewhere to meet and get to know each other. Migrants are critical in generating and spreading information about a destination by telling stories of their experiences to family and friends and by providing them with the opportunity and incentive to visit and learn about the place firsthand. Because Afro-Caribbean's migration to, and settlement in, Atlanta is new, and their community there is relatively small (in comparison to the million-plus Afro-Caribbeans in the traditional destination of New York), the information about the southern city is not likely to be as great or as widely known within the Caribbean diaspora as information about destinations that have older and larger Caribbean communities. As I discussed in the preceding chapter, the majority of the Afro-Caribbean migrants in this study were among the first of their family or friends to move to Atlanta and thus didn't have the availability of an established Caribbean network already there to help them learn about the city or to facilitate their migration process.

For those migrants that arrived in the 1990s, the media played a critical role in generating and perpetuating—especially leading up to the 1996 Summer Olympics—positive and attractive images of Atlanta that counterbalanced the negative images (or lack of images) that many of my respondents said they heard of the city prior to moving there. Several scholars have pointed to the Summer Olympics as a turning point for Atlanta, in terms of economic, structural, and

demographic growth, and also as the catalyst for its emergence into an international city. The opportunities that developed in the city for the Olympics greatly attracted Afro-Caribbeans and many migrants from around the US and the world to Atlanta.

Though many of the Afro-Caribbean migrants in this study said they “didn’t know much” about Atlanta before they moved there, they are directly contributing to the information about Atlanta within their own Caribbean social network. A small number of migrants that I spoke to reported knowing a lot about Atlanta before moving there. Those migrants obtained their pre-migration information about Atlanta and the opportunities that it offered through their network connections in city and from visiting the city, sparking their interest in moving there. One such migrant was Dwight, whose story was discussed in Chapter 1. He had visited Atlanta to attend fraternity functions a couple times prior to moving there from New York with his wife in 2007. He also had two network connections in Atlanta—his fraternity brothers, and his wife’s cousin Anthony who moved to the city in 1994 from New York (and who also happened to be his fraternity brother)—that greatly assisted him and his wife with the migration process by providing information about Atlanta, suggesting where in the city he should live, and helping him find a job. Knowing people there prior to moving to Atlanta allowed him to arrive already holding a wealth of knowledge about the city. So, when I asked him what he knew about Atlanta before he moved, he quickly listed a number of things about the southern city; comparing it to New York, he told me that he liked that Atlanta had a slower pace, a lower cost of living, a more open and friendly environment, and a larger selection of large, affordable homes. In contrast, when I asked Dwight’s wife’s cousin Anthony the same question, he replied: “I didn’t know much about Atlanta. It was around the time of the 1996 Olympics and I knew it was an up-and-coming city and that many opportunities were starting to surface.” Dwight and Anthony’s stories

demonstrate the important role networks play in helping the migration process and helping new Afro-Caribbeans transition to their new lives in Atlanta, but it also reveals that Afro-Caribbeans were moving to Atlanta regardless of whether they knew a little or a lot about the region.

WHY ATLANTA: AFRO-CARIBBEANS' REASONS FOR MOVING TO ATLANTA

Afro-Caribbean immigrants are moving to Atlanta for a variety of reasons, including better jobs, schools, quality of life, and opportunities for homeownership. Among the reasons that they gave for moving to Atlanta, three overarching themes appeared.

Moving on Up (to Atlanta)

“You move here and you get to buy stuff...become a homeowner.” – Karen, a second-generation Kittitian transplant in her early thirties who moved to Atlanta from Los Angeles in 2002.

Jobs

Afro-Caribbean outward migration from major immigrant destinations like New York to Atlanta is being driven by a desire for greater opportunities (for blacks). I found that a large number of Afro-Caribbeans reported moving to Atlanta because they viewed it as offering them better opportunities for employment, education, and homeownership than the places that they left. Boasting a rapidly growing economy, especially in the late 1980s and the 1990s, Atlanta attracted thousands of migrants from both within and outside the US to the region. The 1996 Summer Olympics sparked large development in the city. In preparation for the Olympics, Atlanta built apartment complexes, parks, and businesses in the downtown area, where the

majority of the sporting events and ceremonies took place. The construction boom also extended to its outer suburbs. Additionally, Atlanta has become home to several major corporations, such as The Coca Cola Company, Delta Airlines, CNN, and Home Depot. Like other transplants, many Afro-Caribbeans were attracted to Atlanta by its thriving job market. Samirah, a second-generation Barbadian migrant in her mid-thirties who moved to Atlanta in 1996, after completing graduate school in Texas, described what motivated her to move to the southern metropolis: “I came to Atlanta for economic opportunity...I didn’t have any friends here. I came strictly for a job...and they had a lot going for, you know, a lot of development, which is also a detriment to them now. But, a lot of development was happening.”

Many of those who arrived in Atlanta in the 1990s spoke of the abundance of jobs in the city at that time. They enthusiastically described to me how companies in Atlanta, during the 1990s, were hiring people on the spot and, for example, how someone could visit the city for a weekend and easily get a job during that period. One Afro-Caribbean transplant from New York told me how soon after arriving in Atlanta in 1997 both she and her boyfriend at the time easily got jobs with the company Public Storage, which also provided them with employee housing. Similarly, another Afro-Caribbean migrant recounted that she moved because in the early 1990s, people in New York were talking about how there were going to be many jobs available in Atlanta; she moved to Atlanta in 1996. For many of the Afro-Caribbeans that migrated to Atlanta in the 1990s, looking to take advantage of the city’s booming job market, their decision to move to the new destination was like taking a leap of faith.

Atlanta has become a major destination for not only Afro-Caribbean immigrants looking to achieve upward socioeconomic mobility, but also for those who were already successful and upwardly mobile. The southern metropolis also boasts a wide availability of jobs for highly

skilled professionals. Among the Afro-Caribbean professionals in this study, none reported having trouble finding employment in Atlanta, including those who migrated to the city in the 1990s and in the 2000s. This might be due to the fact that several migrants arrived in Atlanta already with jobs, after the companies that they worked for transferred them there. Interestingly, a few Afro-Caribbean migrants that I spoke to reported that they were considering moving to Atlanta before their jobs relocated them there. Kerry, a second-generation Trinidadian immigrant in her late thirties, received a promotion at her job that required her to move to Atlanta in 1994, rather than in 1996 as she was planning. Though she was migrating from New York to Atlanta, her transition to Atlanta felt seamless because all she had to do was pack her bags and head there. At the time, the company that she worked for had moved entire departments of its New York offices to Atlanta, so she already knew people, when she arrived. Similarly, Keith, a thirty-five year old migrant of Trinidadian descent, also moved to Atlanta after his job relocated him there. He was in the military and was first stationed at Fort Benning in Columbus, Georgia from 2006 to 2007. He told me that after he completed a 15-month assignment in Iraq, he asked to be assigned back in Georgia in 2008 because he and his wife liked living in metro Atlanta so much.

The recent economic recession that has had great impact upon the United States and many other countries has also had an impact on Atlanta's economy by decreasing the availability of jobs. The experience of Jeff, a Barbadian transplant in his late twenties, is a good example of how post-1990 migrants have been affected by Atlanta's declining economy. He moved to Atlanta from Boston in 2003 and had been unemployed for several months, since he got laid off from his construction job in early 2009. He told me that it had been hard to find permanent work because Atlanta's construction industry was hit very hard by the recession. He explained that many construction projects had been postponed, or abandoned completely, due to lack of

funding. While I lived in Atlanta from 2009 to 2010, I came across several abandoned building projects (with for-sale signs), specifically for apartment complexes, around the metro area. Ironically, at the same time I saw many construction projects under development around Atlanta. When I was searching for an apartment in which to live, I visited several brand new apartment complexes around the city. The apartment complex that I ultimately chose was built 6 months before I moved there in late August 2009, and was still under construction when I moved in. The Atlanta area continues to build and expand as if it anticipates continued rapid population growth for another decade or two. And, despite the recession, Afro-Caribbean immigrants continue to migrate to Atlanta in large numbers. In a report on race and ethnicity for the Brookings Institution, William Frey (2010) found that Latino and Asian migration to new immigrant destinations, including Atlanta, had slowed due to the recession and the housing market collapse, and had redirected towards traditional destinations. However, my research shows that Afro-Caribbean migration to Atlanta has not been slowed by the recession. Though the declining economy has tightened up the city's job market, many of the Afro-Caribbean migrants I interviewed told me that they still saw Atlanta as a place that offered many opportunities—especially for homeownership and a better quality of life—and most importantly, that they would recommend other Afro-Caribbeans move there.

Homeownership

Unlike their previous migrations (e.g., New York, Boston, Miami), the majority of Atlanta's Afro-Caribbean population has settled in suburban communities surrounding the city.

Atlanta is a relatively small city at the center an expansive metropolitan area.¹⁵ I found that many Afro-Caribbean migrants bought homes in the surrounding suburbs, as far as an hour outside of the city limits, rather than in the city of Atlanta. Though they complained about the long commute into the city, the traffic, and the missed the convenience of public transportation (particularly by New York-origin migrants), they claimed that it was all worth it for the opportunity to own a home.

Afro-Caribbeans live throughout the 10-county metro area. Their residential dispersion may be due to the Atlanta area's urban sprawl. After four decades of nonstop expansion, the Atlanta metro area has become the epitome of modern urban sprawl—a vast expanse of housing tracts and condominium and apartment complexes, with shopping centers, mini-malls, convenience stores, and office parks scattered chaotically across the landscape (Keating 2001: 7).¹⁶ The majority of Afro-Caribbean settlement has been in the eastern Atlanta suburbs, with the largest concentrations in the towns of Stone Mountain and Lithonia. Both towns are located within DeKalb County, which is home to the largest concentration of Afro-Caribbeans in metro Atlanta, with almost half of the region's Caribbean population according to the 2000 US Census. Communities with significant Afro-Caribbean populations in the western suburbs include Powder Springs and Douglasville. In this study, most of the Afro-Caribbeans lived in Fulton County while the second largest concentration lived in DeKalb County.

It is important to note that often when I asked Afro-Caribbeans in this study where they lived, they typically referred to the county that they lived in. For example, they would say they lived in Cobb County rather than saying they lived in the town of Powder Springs (located in

¹⁵ The Atlanta metro area had a 2010 total population of 5,268,860, while the city had a total population of 420,003.

¹⁶ Atlanta led the nation in residential construction between 1990 and 1996. Most new jobs and newcomers in Atlanta in the 1990s settled outside the city (Bullard 2000: 9).

Cobb County). The metropolitan area is broken into a 10-county region. Fulton, DeKalb, Gwinnett, Cobb, and Clayton are the five original counties, and continue to be the core of the metro area, and Cherokee, Douglas, Fayette, Henry and Rockdale make up the remaining counties. This is likely due to the fact that the counties that make up metro Atlanta area have significant governmental authority, creating noticeable differences between counties. For example, although DeKalb County and Fulton County border each other and both contain part of the city of Atlanta, Fulton County has higher taxes than DeKalb County. This became clear to me after I bought the same bar stool in two different Target stores---one in Fulton County and another in DeKalb County—and noticed that the store in Fulton County had a higher total cost than the one in DeKalb County. It is also likely that people in Georgia find it easier to relate to the larger geographic region represented by a county than a smallish town no one may have heard of.

Atlanta boasts what I call a “bling-bling culture,” a cultural economy that endorses the ownership of expensive, ostentatious clothing, jewelry, homes, and cars. In Atlanta’s bling-bling culture, possessing these items, or appearing to possess them—by renting, leasing, or purchasing cheaper imitations of luxury items (e.g., buying a fake Louis Vuitton handbag, leasing a Lamborghini, or renting a mansion), allows a person to project to others an image of success, whether it be real or false. In New York City, for example, many view owning a Manhattan apartment or condominium, particularly in the neighborhoods of the Upper East Side, Tribeca, and Battery City Park, as a symbol of wealth and success, whereas in Atlanta, living in a gated community or a McMansion—large (and in some cases palatial) homes that have become a standard of living for Atlanta’s middle-class to upper-class—is a symbol of wealth and success. Another distinct feature of Atlanta’s bling-bling culture is that a large number of its consumers

are black. If you were to look inside the upscale shops of New York's famed Fifth Avenue or its high-priced apartments on Park Avenue, you would likely see predominantly white faces; however, if you were to look inside the upscale shops in Atlanta's Phipps Plaza or in its many McMansions, you would definitely see a relatively large number of black faces. Because of the large number of wealthy blacks in Atlanta, it is not uncommon in Atlanta to see a number of black people driving luxury cars, shopping in high-end boutiques, and living in mansions. In a CBS News report on black return migration to the South, it alludes to Atlanta's bling-bling culture, stating that "black suburban Atlanta may look like Beverly Hills, but it's Mecca for many new migrants who are buying homes worth from \$200,000 to more than \$2 million. And new subdivisions keep sprouting, marketed especially to blacks" (Leung 2009: 1). Atlanta's south DeKalb County rivals Prince George County in Maryland as one of most affluent black communities in US (Bullard 2000). But, you would not likely find the culture of ostentatiousness there that you see in Atlanta. Atlanta's bling-bling culture is greatly influenced by not only its large number of wealthy and middle class but also its large number of black celebrities, leading to it commonly being referred to as "Black Hollywood." No other "chocolate" city (another name for cities with a large black population) has such a large mix of black wealth, power, and celebrity like Atlanta has.

During the year that I lived in Atlanta, I saw more luxury cars (many times with a black driver behind the wheel) than the entire eight years that I lived in New York. Traveling around Atlanta, especially in the neighborhood of Buckhead where I lived, you would likely see many Mercedes, BMVs, Jaguars, and other luxury cars on the road.¹⁷ I saw so many that it seemed as if the cars were being given away. The bling-bling culture was also visible in day-to-day life.

¹⁷ There were a string of luxury car dealerships within a mile of each other on Piedmont Avenue, which was main road closest to my apartment.

Going out in Atlanta was like a daily pageant of what kind of expensive jewelry, high-end clothing labels, and luxury cars that one had or appeared to have. Several New York-origin Afro-Caribbean migrants that I spoke to claimed that they didn't like the ostentatious behavior, or the need to "show out" in Atlanta, pointing to examples of seeing while out in public of people "dressing up" to go to the mall or using a limo to arrive at the local clubs. They said that they didn't see this ostentatious, wealth-advertising behavior as much in New York as they did in Atlanta. It may very well be that they weren't as close to these kinds of wealth in New York as they are in Atlanta.

However, despite how they felt about its ostentatiousness, many Afro-Caribbeans moved to Atlanta to participate in and enjoy parts of its bling-bling culture, for example, living in McMansions and driving luxury cars. It mattered to the migrants that living in Atlanta gave them the chance to have things that others—particularly family and friends still living in the communities that they left—saw as symbols of success. Atlanta was viewed as offering better opportunities for homeownership, due to its lower housing costs, than traditional Caribbean destinations in the North (specifically New York). Many of the Afro-Caribbeans that migrated from New York specifically told me that they were attracted to Atlanta because you could get "more house for your money" there, compared to New York. Many migrants reported that they were able to buy a large house in Atlanta for the same amount of money as a one-bedroom condo in New York, or a small house in its outer suburbs. Dwight, a Kittitian migrant who moved from New York with his wife, told me that he liked how much one could get in terms of property size in Atlanta. He and his wife initially relocated to the southern city to start a family and wanted a house with enough space for them and their future children. When they lived in New York, they owned a small townhome in the Bronx. But, when they moved to Atlanta, they were able to

afford a large three-bed/three-bath home, featuring a spacious master bedroom suite, basement, open kitchen living space, dining room, formal living room, garage, and sizeable backyard. Atlanta offers a variety of housing options, such as gated communities, McMansions, townhomes, condos, and rental apartments, to black residents, of varying socioeconomic classes, from the working class to the upper class. I saw an example of this firsthand in 2007 when I visited my best friend who at the time was a fulltime graduate student in Atlanta. She was able to rent, with a roommate who was working as a teacher, a two-bed/two-bath townhome with a garage in a gated community in East Atlanta for \$1225/month, while at the same time I (also a fulltime graduate student) was renting, with a roommate who was working as a paralegal, a two-bed/one-bath apartment in a brownstone in Brooklyn for over \$1500/month.

Contemporary immigration research has revealed a growing trend of immigrant suburban settlement since the 1990s (Singer, Hardwick, and Brettell 2008). More immigrants are settling in the suburbs than in the cities of the 100 largest metro areas, opposed to the image of immigrant enclaves in cities where there are services for them (Singer 2008). As many new jobs and housing opportunities developed in the suburbs, immigrants have followed and settled in the suburbs, with many immigrant newcomers bypassing major cities and moving directly in suburban communities. In Atlanta, this is especially the case given the high cost of living in the city limits for people wanting a large home, or just a home with enough space to accommodate a family.

“Move to Atlanta, You Will Live Longer!”

The second major theme among the migration stories of Afro-Caribbeans in Atlanta is moving to the southern city for a better quality of life. The majority of the Afro-Caribbean

migrants that I spoke to listed quality of life factors as playing as important a role in their decision to move to Atlanta. The indicators of the better quality of life that Atlanta offered varied from migrant to migrant; but, for the most part, the Afro-Caribbean transplants in Atlanta that I interviewed indicated a better quality of life as having a warmer climate, thriving environment, and slower and more relaxed pace, compared to the cities that they left.

Afro-Caribbean migrants in this study reported being attracted to Atlanta because they viewed the city as “a good place for a new beginning.” Those who lived in other US cities before moving to Atlanta—especially those who lived in cities in the Northeast for a number of years—told me that they heard the city was up-and-coming and thought it would be a good place to start over. Talia, a migrant of Trinidadian descent in her late thirties, didn’t know much about Atlanta before moving there in 1996, but she had heard from others while she was still in New York that it was an up-and-coming city. She told me that at the time she was young and wanted to get out of New York City and so she decided to try living in Atlanta. Another Afro-Caribbean migrant, Jennifer, a Jamaican woman in her late forties, also decided to move to Atlanta, as she and her husband were looking for a place to start over and heard it was an up-and-coming city.

Atlanta’s warm climate was a major draw for Afro-Caribbean immigrants. Many of those who migrated from cities in the Northeast, particularly New York and Boston, described being tired of the cold and snowy winters in the Northeast. Having lived in the Northeast most of my life, I completely understood why Atlanta’s warmer climate would appeal to Afro-Caribbeans living there. However, when I moved to Atlanta in 2009, the climate was much colder than I expected, especially during the winter months, when I saw a few snowfalls. Several Afro-Caribbeans who had lived in Atlanta since the 1990s informed me that the southern city’s climate had gotten colder over the past decade. Despite this, Atlanta still has warmer weather

than New York and the other northern cities that Afro-Caribbeans moved from. Andrew, a Trinidadian-born migrant in his sixties, was one of many Caribbean New Yorkers who left the city in search of a warmer climate. After living in New York for 25 years, Andrew decided to leave and relocate someplace warmer because he no longer wanted to shovel snow every winter. He told me that he chose Atlanta mainly based on its weather.

Along with a warmer climate, Afro-Caribbeans that moved from northern US cities were looking for a slower pace of life in Atlanta. This was especially true for New York-origin Afro-Caribbean transplants in Atlanta, many of whom told me that they felt New York was too fast-paced, with its 24-hour lifestyle, and decided to relocate to Atlanta so they could slow down and live a more relaxed life. Migrants also mentioned moving to Atlanta to get away from the hostility that has become synonymous with New York City. Afro-Caribbean immigrants in Atlanta that I spoke to described that people in Atlanta as generally being friendlier than those in northern cities. Many told me that they had changed significantly from living in Atlanta, becoming calmer and friendlier than when they lived elsewhere. They claimed to notice the change the most when they went back to the North to visit friends.

Dwight's migration story provides a good example of how he viewed moving to Atlanta as a way to improve the quality of life of him and his family. He was born in St. Kitts and grew up in the Bronx after his family immigrated there when he was a child. Dwight and his wife moved from New York to Atlanta in 2007 because they wanted to slow down. Their lives had become too busy in New York. He was a partner in a New York law firm, working 65 to 80 hours a week, while his wife was a social worker at a private agency, working about 60 hours a week. Due to their schedules, they were passing each other coming to and from work. They wanted to start a family, so they decided to leave New York and relocate to Atlanta because they

thought it offered a better quality of life than New York. Dwight got this idea about Atlanta, after noticing how much younger and relaxed his wife's cousin, Anthony (whose story of moving to Atlanta on faith I discussed earlier in this chapter) looked than they did, whenever he would come back to New York to visit. Since they moved to Atlanta, Dwight and his wife get complimented on how young and relaxed they look, when they visit New York. When I interviewed Dwight, he told me that he believed you could add years to your life by moving to Atlanta.

Like Dwight, Afro-Caribbean migrants who were looking for a better quality of life saw moving to Atlanta as having significant health benefits. Whether these perceived health improvements are related to moving to Atlanta, or to moving out of crowded northern metro areas, is not clear. But, what is clear is that the possibility for improving their quality of life plays a significant role in the movement of Afro-Caribbean immigrants to Atlanta. Not only quality of life has drawn Afro-Caribbeans to Atlanta but the idea that for them, Atlanta represents a universe of black people from different cultural, educational, class, and social background and different parts of the world and United States.

The Black Mecca Factor

Race has played a significant role in shaping the motives of Afro-Caribbean migrants to Atlanta. Afro-Caribbeans are drawn to Atlanta because (to them) it is a *black* city. Almost all of the Afro-Caribbean immigrants that I interviewed reported being greatly attracted to Atlanta because of its large black population, particularly its core of black professionals, and not its pool of Caribbean residents. Atlanta has what I call a "black mecca factor," that sets it apart from

most other Caribbean destinations, or possible destinations.¹⁸ It is unique because of the great influence the large size, and relatively high socioeconomic class status, of its African American population has had on shaping the city. Atlanta is home to the second largest black population behind New York, as of 2010, pushing Chicago out of its long-standing position among US metros with the largest black populations. Though Afro-Caribbeans in Atlanta are very likely included in the US Census count of Atlanta's black population, many Afro-Caribbeans in this study reported that the city's rapidly growing Caribbean community didn't influence their decision to migrate there. The confluence of factors that make Atlanta a black mecca is very important because there are plenty of places, especially in the South, such as Baltimore, Charlotte, or Houston, with a large black population that don't necessarily have the number of middle class blacks or the concentration of black power that Atlanta has. As a black mecca, Atlanta is viewed as offering black people many more opportunities for success and upward mobility than other cities.

Jefferson, a fifty-six year old transplant from Dominica, described how Atlanta's status as a black mecca very much played a part in his decision to move to Atlanta from Hartford, Connecticut in 1989. He thought that the city was particularly attractive after he read about how it came into prominence through a succession of black mayors and government officials. Karen, a second-generation Kittitian immigrant in her thirties who relocated to Atlanta from Los Angeles in 2002, described her desire to live in a black mecca. She told me that it was important

¹⁸ Washington, D.C. is another destination that possesses the black mecca factor, in that has a majority black population (and black political leaders) and nearby suburbs that are home to a flourishing African American middle class. Like Atlanta, Washington, D.C. is a top destination for black migrants in the US and has a large and growing Afro-Caribbean (and African) immigrant population. In fact, several Afro-Caribbeans in this study mentioned that they considered moving to the D.C. area before they moved to Atlanta.

for her to be in a community of successful black Americans, who were professionals, government workers, and entrepreneurs, and who were motivated and making changes in the world, who were motivated, and who were entrepreneurs, and not in a place where blacks were struggling and just getting by. She felt that being in an atmosphere where blacks were successful was critical for her to progress.

For many Afro-Caribbeans in Atlanta, the city's large black population greatly influenced their decision to move there. Terri, a Jamaican-born migrant in her early thirties who relocated to Atlanta from New Orleans in 2001, described how the city's large black community was very important in her decision to move to Atlanta. She told me that it was important to her to be around "her people." In fact, several Afro-Caribbeans in this study reported that prior to their move they didn't know that there was a Caribbean community in Atlanta but they knew about its large black population. Alana, a New York-born transplant of Barbadian descent in her mid-thirties who moved to Atlanta from Chapel Hill, North Carolina, told me that the Caribbean community in Atlanta played no role in her decision to move there but that the city's large black population played a major role. She explained that it was important to her to be someplace where she felt comfortable. She wanted to be around black people (though not too many) and liked that in Atlanta she was able to see people that looked like her. Alana's feelings were reiterated by other Afro-Caribbeans in Atlanta that I interviewed. They felt it was important to live in a city with a large number of black people, where they might see other black faces daily, and they saw Atlanta as place, unlike many of the new immigrant destinations in the US, that provided them with this particular experience.

When migrants compared it to other cities that they lived in, Atlanta's black mecca factor became most evident. When I asked Terri, a Jamaican-born, New York-raised migrant in her

thirties, how Atlanta compared to other places that she lived, for example, New Orleans, which was the last city that she lived in prior to moving to Atlanta, she stated: “New Orleans and Atlanta are very different. New Orleans is missing the large black professional community that Atlanta has. I felt that a young 20s professional class didn’t exist in New Orleans... That was one of the reasons I knew I wouldn’t stay in New Orleans due to the lack of [a black] professional class.” For Afro-Caribbeans that moved to Atlanta, many of whom were mostly middle class and professionals, it was important to them that they live in a city where they weren’t one of a few black professionals there, but one of many. They felt Atlanta offered them that an environment where black professionals thrived and where Afro-Caribbean professionals could thrive and grow. Simon, a Trinidadian transplant to Atlanta in his late thirties, summed up best how this notion of Atlanta’s status as a black mecca could impact positively Afro-Caribbeans participating in the migration there. He stated: “you almost felt like you were supposed to succeed when you came here because the atmosphere was just so overwhelming in a positive way for black people. So it was very motivating and very rewarding to be here.”

In Atlanta, Afro-Caribbeans tend to settle mostly in suburban areas where African Americans are the dominant group rather than areas where whites predominate. The majority of the people who live within the Atlanta city limits are racially black, making up 54% of the city inhabitants 2010, as opposed to whites, who make up 38%. The region’s legacy of racially segregated growth has had an impact on the residential patterns of immigrant newcomers in Atlanta. “Immigrants appear to be making inroads in the northern part of the metro area, which has traditionally been the whiter part of the racially divided region, and are less established in historically African American neighborhoods” (Singer 2008: 18). According to the work of historian Mary Odem, “there is very little foreign-born settlement in areas with the highest

concentrations of African American residents, mainly in south Fulton County, including southwestern Atlanta, and southern DeKalb County, where African American communities compose more than three-fourths of the population” (2008: 119). The findings of Odem’s research, and of most research on immigration to Atlanta, are based mostly on the experiences and residential patterns of Mexican immigrants. In contrast, these settlement patterns do not hold true for black immigrants. Previous research has shown that Afro-Caribbeans tend to live in predominantly black neighborhoods (Tedrow and Crowder 2001).

Afro-Caribbean immigrants report migrating to Atlanta for a variety of reasons, including school, warmer climate, better quality of life, and better opportunities for homeownership and employment; however, these factors alone do not account for what is drawing Afro-Caribbeans specifically to Atlanta, and not to other cities with similar characteristics, such as Charlotte, Phoenix, or Portland (Singer 2008). Though there are warm climates, low housing costs, jobs, and top universities in other cities in the US, all in all, the most salient theme running throughout the migration stories of Afro-Caribbeans for moving specifically to Atlanta is race. Afro-Caribbeans are attracted to the possibilities that the city offers, namely the possibilities that it offers for black people to live well and to do well, something they feel that they wouldn’t be as likely to do in the places that they left behind.

CONCLUSION

The personal decisions that the Afro-Caribbean immigrants make are of great importance in understanding their move to Atlanta. Afro-Caribbeans in this study reported migrating to Atlanta for a variety of reasons, including better jobs, schools, quality of life, and opportunities

for homeownership. Yet, taken all together these factors do not fully explain why they chose to move to Atlanta, rather than other cities with similar characteristics. They give various reasons for leaving their cities and moving to Atlanta, but there's warmer climate in other places, like Miami and Houston, and good schools in other places, like Los Angeles and Chicago. I found that the process by which Afro-Caribbean immigrants decide to move to Atlanta is largely determined by race.

Migration scholars have attributed much importance to the use of immigrant social networks in the migration decisions of Afro-Caribbeans (Ho 1991; Bashi 2007; Hintzen 2001; Olwig 2007). But many Afro-Caribbeans are drawn to Atlanta more because it is a black city than because of the availability of Caribbean networks who may be able to provide them with help in their new environment. The availability of opportunities for black people in Atlanta, along with the city's image as a place where black people are empowered (to a greater extent than the cities that they moved from) trumped Afro-Caribbean migrants' need for the support and comfort that comes with living somewhere with a large and established Caribbean community.

For Afro-Caribbeans participating in the migration to Atlanta, race plays a critical role in shaping their decisions to move to and settle in the southern metropolis. In previous studies of race and Caribbean immigrants in the US, researchers have focused mainly on how they understand race, identify racially, or relate to African Americans, but they have not examined how race influences or shapes Afro-Caribbeans' migration to specific destinations. I have found that in the migration of Afro-Caribbeans to Atlanta, blackness, being black, and being around other black people matters.

Their reasons for migrating are very similar to the range of factors drawing other migrants to the region—particularly Asian and Latino immigrants moving to new immigrants

destinations to the South. Studies of immigration to Atlanta pinpoint mostly economic reasons for the new immigration to the area (Singer 2008; Odem 2008; Gozdziaik 2005; Massey 2008). These studies have shown that immigrants, especially Latino immigrants, are moving to the region looking for jobs, mostly low-skill labor. However, the major difference between these groups and Afro-Caribbeans is the role that race, and blackness especially, that have played in their migration to Atlanta. In her work on Latino immigration to the rural South, Helen Marrow (2011) finds that Latino immigrant newcomers' stereotypes of blacks and whites' preferences for immigrants have led them trying to distance themselves from blacks and blackness (Marrow 2011). Because race is a critical part of the story of all people of African descent in the US, Afro-Caribbean migration to Atlanta has a greater connection to, and more similar to, African American return migration to the region than Latino and Asian immigrants' migration to new destinations (or to Atlanta).

Afro-Caribbeans' migration to Atlanta has been fueled by the idea that there are greater opportunities there for them as blacks than elsewhere in the US. The image of Atlanta, as a good place for black people, that Afro-Caribbeans had before they moved was greatly influenced by the reverse migration of African Americans to the South. Many respondents mentioned that they knew very little about Atlanta and the South before they moved there, except for slavery and the civil rights movement but not much else. But I found that although many said that they had little prior knowledge of Atlanta, they knew it had a large black population. The large number of college-educated and middle class African American return migrants and native residents in Atlanta has significantly impacted Afro-Caribbean immigrants' attraction to the southern metropolis.

The migration stories of the Afro-Caribbeans in this study shed light on how race, class, and environmental factors are interwoven and interlinked in drawing thousands of Afro-

Caribbean immigrants to Atlanta, Georgia. A large black middle class and a booming economy, plus other factors/attractions--including the climate--made Atlanta attractive to Afro-Caribbeans, including those coming from other US cities, the Caribbean, and abroad. Lastly, in Atlanta, Afro-Caribbeans are moving to select locations within the metropolitan area but largely where African Americans predominate. Much written on black migration to the South emphasizes a “call to home” model that assumes all southern-bound black migrants have roots in the region. I argue that Afro-Caribbeans do feel “at home” in Atlanta, but not because they have deep roots there. Atlanta features an ethnically diverse black migrant pool that attracts Afro-Caribbeans and gives them a sense of comfort and pride to live among other black people in a black city. The complex ways that migration and race are interwoven in case of Afro-Caribbeans in Atlanta, and in black migration to Atlanta in general, is the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3: BLACKNESS AS A PLUS—RACE & AFRO-CARIBBEAN MIGRATION TO ATLANTA

Growing up as an American-born child in an Afro-Caribbean family in Boston, race was, and still is, a contentious subject. From conversations with my parents, I learned at an early age that we, as Caribbean people, viewed race differently than North Americans. According to my Caribbean-born parents, Americans concentrated too much on race, and African Americans, in particular, spent the most time thinking about race and often viewed being black as a reason for why they should get something (i.e., through affirmative action programs), or why they did not get something (i.e., due to racial discrimination). On the other hand, they believed that Afro-Caribbeans, and other black immigrants (specifically African immigrants) focused more on education and hard work than on race. As I matured from a child to a young adult, I developed a different perspective on race than my immigrant parents. I realized race touched many aspects of not only my life, but also the lives of other black people in the United States, whether they were African, African American, or Afro-Caribbean, foreign-born or native-born. I also realized that there were apparent contradictions in my parents' perspectives on race. Despite their efforts to downplay or ignore race, we lived in a predominantly black and Hispanic neighborhood and socialized (outside of work and school) mostly with black (Caribbean) people.

Until I read Mary Waters' *Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities* (1999) in college, I thought my parents' views on race were not, as they claimed, representative of the views of other Afro-Caribbeans. In her book, Waters states that Afro-Caribbeans, especially in the first-generation, express the beliefs that Americans, both black and white, are overly concerned with racialism, and that racial barriers can be overcome

with hard work and determination. Waters (1999:149) describes racialism as “a heightened sensitivity to race, a tendency to regard relations between people in terms of race.” Other studies to date have shown that Afro-Caribbean immigrants consciously develop perceptions about race that shape their identity choices, relations with African Americans, and decisions on where to live, work, and what schools to attend (Bashi 2007; Foner 2001; Kasinitz 1992; Lorick-Wilmot 2010; Reid 1939; Vickerman 1999).

Because I grew up with the belief that most Afro-Caribbeans didn’t consider race an important factor in their lives, I was wary about discussing race in this study. Did Afro-Caribbeans’ perceptions about race influence their migration to Atlanta? Although I considered Atlanta a black city, and knew it was a major destination for African American migrants “returning” to the South, I toyed with the idea that Afro-Caribbeans were migrating to Atlanta, because they were attracted to the city’s growing Caribbean and immigrant populations (not unlike similar migrations to the traditional immigrant destinations of New York, Boston, Washington D.C., and Miami), and not to the city’s racial characteristics. However, conversations with Afro-Caribbeans in Atlanta, and my own observations from moving and living there myself, revealed otherwise.

This chapter examines the role of race in the new (post-1990) migration of Afro-Caribbean immigrants to Atlanta. I look specifically at how migrants’ perceptions of race and of Atlanta as a black mecca have influenced their decision to move to the southern metropolis and their experiences living there as black immigrant newcomers. As discussed in the preceding chapters, Afro-Caribbeans are moving to Atlanta for a variety of reasons—school, family

reunification, better jobs, warmer climate, better quality of life, and opportunities for homeownership and socioeconomic mobility. Yet, altogether these factors do not fully explain why they are choosing to move to Atlanta, rather than to other cities with similar characteristics, such as Charlotte, which is also a southern city with a large African American population that since the turn of the 21st century has become a major destination for immigrant newcomers (especially Latin America) and southern-bound black migrants. What makes Atlanta unique is the great influence the large size, and relatively high class status, of its African American population has had on shaping it. Atlanta is to Black America what Harlem was to Black America in the 20th century: it is the mecca of black wealth, higher education, culture, and political power (Shepherd 1998). These racial characteristics, especially the city's large black middle class and professional communities, are prime factors in attracting Afro-Caribbeans to Atlanta from traditional immigrant destinations in the US (e.g., New York City, Boston, and Miami), the Caribbean, and elsewhere. My data show that Afro-Caribbean migrants' racial identity as black is a consistent and significant component in their migration decisions and experiences. Contrary to many of the claims by migration and race scholars, I argue that being viewed as "black first" in the US is not a negative or disadvantage for Afro-Caribbean immigrants. Blackness, especially in Atlanta, is a plus and can provide Afro-Caribbeans with many benefits.

RACE MATTERS

Despite Afro-Caribbeans' efforts to avoid, ignore, or downplay its effects, race has been a salient feature in their migration history in the US (Vickerman 1999; Bashi 1998; Kasinitz 1992; Foner 2001). Upon their arrival in the US, Afro-Caribbean immigrants quickly learned that their

race, or how they were racially classified, had many implications for their new lives, including their identity choices, interactions (with whites and African-Americans), neighborhood choices, jobs, education, among other things (Vickerman 1999; Waters 1999; Bashi 1998; Kasinitz 1992; Foner 2001; Green and Wilson 1992). It is not to say that race was not factor in their lives prior to migrating. However, when they migrate to the US, Afro-Caribbean immigrants encounter a racial system that is different from what they knew “back home” in their countries of origin (Bashi 2007; Bashi 1998; Vickerman 1999). Though Afro-Caribbeans knew that they were “black” while they were in the Caribbean, they had to learn the social meanings attached to being black in the US (Vickerman 1999; Bashi 1998). In the Caribbean, color and class influence the social meaning of race, whether someone is light-skinned or dark-skinned and rich or poor. In the US, the social meaning of race is more rigid and based on whether someone appears to be black (Vickerman 1999). However, color and class are also significant in American society, especially in the South, where light skin and the right family name can provide some advantages (“honorary whiteness”). Learning they are “black” according to American racial categories is part of the immigrant adjustment experience (Waters 1999). Because they are racially classified as black in the US, Afro-Caribbeans face challenges and obstacles in their efforts to achieve upward mobility due to America's history of discrimination and violence toward people of African descent (Lorick-Wilmot 2010).

In response to these race-related obstacles, Afro-Caribbeans have developed a Caribbean identity, as they see social and economic advantages to maintaining a distinct ethnic identity in American society (Bashi 1998; Vickerman 1999; Waters 1999). The earliest portrayals of Afro-Caribbeans noted that they were mostly confined to predominantly black neighborhoods in the US (Bryce-Laporte 1972; Reid 1939). Even as the population grew larger, and as many became

upwardly mobile, Afro-Caribbeans tended to reside in large black residential areas (Foner 2001; Kasinitz 1992; Watkins-Owens 1996). In their study of Afro-Caribbean residential patterns in New York City, Crowder and Tedrow (2001) found that Afro-Caribbeans established distinct communities on the fringes of the city's largest African American neighborhoods, namely in Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx, and that these Caribbean enclaves tended to have higher median incomes, higher percentages of college-educated residents, and higher levels of homeownership than the surrounding African American neighborhoods. By developing distinct ethnic identities, organizations, and neighborhoods, Afro-Caribbeans attempt to distance themselves from African-Americans to help avoid the racial stereotypes and discrimination endured by African-Americans in American society (Kasinitz 1992; Vickerman 1999; Waters 1999). But in time Afro-Caribbeans begin to identify with African-Americans, usually the longer they live in the US (Kasinitz 1992; Vickerman 1999). Several scholars argue that experiencing racial discrimination in the US is a major factor in influencing Afro-Caribbeans' identification with African Americans (Kasinitz 1992; Vickerman 1999; Waters 1999; Rogers 2006).

Sociologist Mary Waters (1999) argues that class background and level of Americanization are important influences on Afro-Caribbeans' identity choices. In her ethnographic study of first- and second-generation Afro-Caribbean immigrants in New York City, Waters (1999) found that Afro-Caribbeans who first identify as African-Americans, (i.e., racially) tended to be poor or working class, while those who first identify as Caribbean (i.e., ethnically) tended to be middle class. However, Waters is mistaken to think that Afro-Caribbeans identify as only one way. Conversely, Vilna Bashi (1998: 962) states, "one does not choose between ethnic labels and racial labels. Individuals have both ethnic and racial identities, at one and the same time." In this study, I specifically use the term "Afro-Caribbean" to highlight that

my respondents are both black and Caribbean, and not just one or the other, and these identities cannot be separated when discussing the group and their experiences. I believe that the efforts by Afro-Caribbean immigrants to distinguish themselves ethnically/culturally from African Americans does not necessarily imply that they view blackness as negative or desire to dissociate themselves from blackness or all African Americans.

As I highlighted in my own story growing up in an Afro-Caribbean family at the beginning of this chapter, generation plays an important role in the shaping a racial consciousness among Afro-Caribbean immigrants in the US. There are major differences in the way first-generation and second-generation Afro-Caribbean immigrants view race (Waters 1999; Deaux 2006; Bashi and Clarke 2001). Previous research has shown that Afro-Caribbeans' understanding of race prior to their arrival in the US plays an integral part in how they deal with their encounters with racism and discrimination in the US (Vickerman 1999; Bashi 2007). "The first generation is likely to believe that while racism exists in the United States, it can be overcome or circumvented through hard work, perseverance, and the right values and attitudes. The second generation experiences racism and discrimination constantly and develops perceptions of the overwhelming influence of race on their lives and life chances that differ from their parents' views" (Waters 1999: 309).

Bashi (2007) argues that the difference between the generations stems from three factors. First, the fact that first generation Afro-Caribbean immigrants, unlike the American-born second-generation, are able to use their experiences of growing up in a black-majority society "back home" in their Caribbean country of origin to insulate them, to a degree, from the harmful effects of racism. The first-generation also have the possibility of returning home to escape racism in the US. Second, first-generation are more likely than second-generation to remain within ethnic

residential enclaves and to have access to Caribbean social networks that allow them to minimize interactions with possibly racist white Americans (Bashi 2007; Deaux 2006). Lastly, first-generation Afro-Caribbean immigrants can presumably use markers of their difference such as their accents, as a way to highlight their foreignness, leading others, namely white Americans, to distinguish them from and view more favorably than African Americans (Deaux 2006; Bashi and Clarke 2001; Bashi 2007). Waters (1999) found that in New York white employers claimed to view Afro-Caribbean more favorably than African American, describing Afro-Caribbean employees as more hardworking and easier to work with than their African American counterparts. It is not clear if this happens in other cities with smaller Caribbean communities or larger African American communities. In Atlanta, the Afro-Caribbeans that I interviewed for this study did not report experiencing any favoritism among employers due to their Caribbean immigrant background.

Blackness as a Plus

Afro-Caribbean immigrants are largely drawn to Atlanta because to them it is a *black* city. Most of the migrants interviewed for this study told me that they were greatly attracted to Atlanta because of its large black population and because they viewed it as offering black people many opportunities for upward socioeconomic mobility and quality of life. Previous research on ethnicity and migration suggest that Afro-Caribbean immigrant newcomers were drawn to Atlanta by the pool of Afro-Caribbean immigrants that already lived there (Bashi 2007; Mose Brown 2011; Olwig 2007; Ho 1991; Hintzen 2001). Yet, when migrants were asked how important the presence of a Caribbean population, or of a large black or African American population, was on their decision to move to Atlanta, they would state that it was the large black

community, not the presence of Caribbean co-ethnics, that made Atlanta an attractive destination.

This came across as interesting to me because of the way that the Afro-Caribbeans have reacted towards issues of race and being linked to African Americans in American society, as I discussed earlier in this chapter. Milton Vickerman (1999) argues that Afro-Caribbeans eventually begin identifying with African Americans after living in the US and experiencing racial discrimination. I found that it was more important for Afro-Caribbeans who lived in other US cities (especially traditional immigrant destinations like New York, Boston, and Miami) before moving to Atlanta thought it was more important to live in a black city than did those who migrated directly to Atlanta from the Caribbean. I did not take this to mean that living in black city was less important to the direct Afro-Caribbean migrants because, for example, almost all of the direct migrants that I interviewed came to Atlanta to attend one of the city's historically black colleges and universities, namely Morehouse College. Their desire to attend a HBCU showed that they also highly valued being among a large number of upwardly mobile black people, since they chose a predominantly black college rather than one of the many colleges in Atlanta with smaller black student populations, such as Georgia State University or Emory University.

From my interviews with all of the migrants in this study, I got the sense that it was important to them, to be in a place where people looked like them, and to have a connection to a larger black community, regardless of the years that they lived in the US before moving to Atlanta. Beulah, a Jamaican woman in her sixties who moved to Atlanta after briefly living in Australia, reinforced this idea. She told me that that Atlanta's black population was important to her because she felt a connection to them, and to the city itself, since there were more people around that looked like her. Besides being homesick, there weren't many black people around

where she was living in Australia. There were a few aborigines but language was a barrier to her connection with them. The large black community played a role in her satisfaction with living in Atlanta because she felt more of a connection to her own people.

Blackness is a vital part of the Atlanta experience. It would be hard to imagine Atlanta's history or development without the presence of its African American population. The city has been a major part of black American history, as the center of the civil rights movement in the 1960s and as the home of the nation's most celebrated civil rights leader, Martin Luther King, Jr. Atlanta is also home to four of the nation's historically black colleges and universities that attract thousands of black students to the city yearly. Many of them who graduated from these schools have remained in the city and added to its black middle class and professional community. According to William Frey (2010), Atlanta's large black middle class population provides a continuous draw for black migrants from across the country. Atlanta houses a significant black middle class and upper class, that is described by Lawrence Otis Graham (1999) as the most organized in the US due to the power that they have in education, business, and politics. In his book, *Our Kind of People: Inside America's Black Upper Class*, Graham (1999: 321) argues that Atlanta's "black community has played a role in making it one of the most popular destinations for elite blacks in search of a city where they are in control." The city also houses several black-owned companies, such as Atlanta Life, which is the nation's largest black-owned company, and some the nation's black-controlled law firms, businesses, car dealerships, and food service companies. There are many African Americans in Atlanta in positions making decisions that impact the city and its local neighborhoods. The election of the first black mayor Maynard Jackson in the 1970s ushered in a new black political era in the city that includes the election of

its first female mayor Shirley Franklin in 2002.¹⁹ Several other US cities have had black mayors, including Washington D.C., Chicago, New York City, and New Orleans, but Atlanta stands apart from them because of its long history of consecutive black mayors. “With all of Atlanta’s high-profile black schools, political leaders, and businesses, as well as its overall economic and population growth, it is not a surprise that many young black professionals from the North and elsewhere are relocating to Atlanta” (Graham 1999: 322). All of these things have contributed to the image of Atlanta as a black mecca.

Atlanta represents a universe of black people from different cultural, educational, class, and social background and different parts of the world and United States. Interestingly, the southern city has a notable connection to another black mecca—Harlem, which is considered the first black mecca. Harlem was a major destination during the Great Migration, which saw millions of African Americans leave the South for destinations in the North, West, and Midwest. At the same time, Harlem was also a major destination for the first wave of Afro-Caribbean immigrants that arrived in the US in the early 1900s. Historian Irma Watkins-Owens (1996) argues that the interaction of the different black groups was instrumental in the black cultural renaissance, which became the Harlem Renaissance, and in the development of Harlem into a black mecca for all peoples of African-descent around the world. Now Atlanta is a major destination for black migrants, especially from New York, participating in the return migration to the South. The connection between the two cities is not unimportant. Just as Harlem attracted different black migrants from across the country and the world, Atlanta is attracting thousands of black peoples from all over the world, including descendants of those who migrated to New York from the South decades ago, and it has developed a worldwide image as a space where

¹⁹ Shirley Franklin is the first female elected mayor of a major city in the United States.

black people, culture, wealth, education, and politics are flourishing.

Magazines, movies, and television have helped to build and perpetuate Atlanta's image as a black mecca to the world. African American director, actor, and producer Tyler Perry's movies have for most part all been based in Atlanta. Tyler Perry Studios, the first black owned major motion picture film studio in the country, is located in Atlanta. Tyler Perry Studios produces the television shows *House of Payne*, *Meet the Browns*, and *Why Did I Get Married?* all in Atlanta. The popular reality television show *The Real Housewives of Atlanta*, broadcast on the Bravo channel, showcases the lives of wealthy and upper middle class black women and their families living in Atlanta. It is the only series in the *Housewives* reality show franchise to have a predominantly black cast. (It is one of the most well known and popular shows of the franchise, which includes Orange County, New York City, New Jersey, Miami, Beverly Hills, and Washington D.C.) On the first episode, the show opened with a strong statement about Atlanta and its unique status as a place of black wealth and power. The voice of one of the female cast members states: "Atlanta is a mecca for wealthy African Americans. Nowhere else is there an elite society of African Americans going to galas, fashions, and living in luxury gated communities. Atlanta is the black Hollywood. We have a lot of A-listers around town²⁰." As the voiceover plays, the screen fills with shots of luxury cars, mansions, golf courses, red carpet events, and of black celebrities and of the cast dressed in designer clothes and expensive jewelry. Every night the show airs, and as the cast become more popular and well-known in the public eye, Atlanta's image as a black mecca builds and spreads to its viewers across the country and the world, which includes not only blacks, but other racial and ethnic groups. It paints a picture that reaches not just blacks but other races that are fans of the franchise. For example, I

²⁰ Excerpt taken from the Season One intro of Bravo's *The Real Housewives of Atlanta* (2008).

remember talking to a customer service representative for Comcast Cable and when I told her I was in Atlanta, she immediately asked me if I had seen any of the “Real Housewives” in person and told me about how much she loved the show. I do not know what race the representative was but our conversation showed me how powerful and far-reaching the images presented by the show were.

The music and music videos of Atlanta recording artists, such as Ludacris, T.I., Ciara, Monica, and Jermaine Dupri, also help to spread the image of Atlanta as black mecca around the world especially to the younger hip hop generation, by referencing the southern city and showcasing Atlanta’s “high life” (fun, high energy social/club scene). Along with their music, recording artists like Monica, Keyshia Cole, and Chili (from the Grammy Award-winning group TLC) have featured Atlanta on their reality shows, which have aired on cable channels BET and Vh1 in the past five years. The record labels So So Def and LaFace Records are based in Atlanta and have introduced the world to artists and music groomed and representative of the southern city. These labels have put forth acts such as Usher, Outkast, Toni Braxton, TLC, and Kris Kross. Their songs, videos, and now reality shows help spread this image of Atlanta to a wide audience. Many black celebrities such as Bobby Brown and Whitney Houston, Faith Evans, Toni Braxton, and others have aided in the image of Atlanta as a black mecca. The city has been dubbed Black Hollywood since so many black musicians, actors, and athletes have called it home.

After the release of the 2010 US Census data, there have been a number of newspaper and magazine articles relating to black migration to the South since 2000. In its March 24, 2011 edition, for example, the New York Times published an article entitled "Many U.S. Blacks Moving to South, Reversing Trend." The article began "The percentage of the nation’s black

population living in the South has hit its highest point in half a century, according to census data released Thursday, as younger and more educated black residents move out of declining cities in the Northeast and Midwest in search of better opportunities" (Tavernise and Gebeloff 2011: 1). This article sparked a barrage of newspaper and magazine editorials across the US discussing the mass movement of black people to the South and the black communities forming there. In many papers across the country, including the LA Times, USA Today, and Black Enterprise, there were articles with titles such as "Blacks Return to Southern Roots," "Why We're Moving Back South," and "More Blacks Calling South Home Again" (Copeland 2011; Kellogg 2011; Curtis 2011) highlighting the pull of living in the South for many black migrants. The words of one Afro-Caribbean respondent made me realize how powerful these media images are in creating an image of Atlanta as not just a black mecca, but also as a good place for black people. Nisha, a Trinidadian migrant in her late thirties who moved to Atlanta from Orlando, told me that when she lived in Trinidad, she originally wanted to move to Atlanta because she saw pictures in *Essence* magazine of gorgeous mansions and black people. She stated: "So I was like not only are there black people there but there are affluent black people. So that was kind of my visual of Atlanta." For Nisha and other Afro-Caribbean immigrants, seeing images of blacks doing well in Atlanta were important to them and to their decision to move to the southern city.

Anthony, a migrant of Guyanese descent in his thirties who moved to Atlanta from New York in the early 1990s, explained what Atlanta being a black mecca meant for black people:

I think that there are solid and good opportunities for blacks to make it here. I guess the fact that for a black individual you don't have to struggle if you don't want to, if you are a go-getter. The opportunities are here. Where as you have other cities, for example, where there is a large population that no matter what they do they still struggle because the opportunities are not there. I would consider something like that as a mecca for black people.

For many of the Afro-Caribbean immigrants that I interviewed for this study, Atlanta represented a new experience, an experience similar to home where they saw black people in power. Atlanta continues to appear more and more in the public eye and attention as a place rich with black culture, history, wealth, abundance, opulence, and celebrity. All of these images make Atlanta appear as golden land of opportunity for black people, similar to the image New York had for many immigrants and migrants looking for a new start and better opportunities than the places they left behind. Thomas, a transplant in his late thirties who emigrated from Trinidad directly to Atlanta, described how he seeing blacks in power in Atlanta was a new, but welcome experience:

...how much they were doing. Cause, you know, I've been to other states before like...ah...been to New York of course, been to Canada, been to Florida. And not to put anyone down but you know, it's like you just saw like normal, regular working-class black people. Like Atlanta was the first place I really saw black people in positions of power, I guess you would say.

Keith, a New York-born transplant of Trinidadian descent in his mid-thirties who moved to Atlanta after being stationed at a military base in Korea, described how Atlanta's large black middle class distinguished it from other US cities. He stated:

[In other cities] you see 90% white and 10% black in the suburbs. Those black people would be the doctors and the lawyers. In Atlanta, you see very common people owning property, even apartment buildings. The political scene has a lot of black candidates and representatives and chief of police. Everyone and everything is kind of African American. It is different and refreshing. The large black community in Atlanta makes you feel like an insider. For instance, when I was in Virginia, I was in my mid-20s and I purchased a home where the majority of the people were white. Everyday they would look at me like "who are you?" and "why are you here?". I am not going to stereotype Virginia because they also have a large African-American community but in Stanford, VA that was the experience I had. When I was house shopping in Atlanta, I went from community to community and saw nothing but black people. I said this is true. It is not a rumor. Black folks live differently in Atlanta.

How much of these images of black wealth and prosperity in Atlanta are perceived or reality is, however, debatable. As I discussed in the preceding, Atlanta has a bling-bling

economy that revolves around the outward appearance of wealth and affluence, whether it is real or a façade. Indeed there are a higher proportion of affluent blacks in Atlanta than in other cities, southern and elsewhere, but the numbers don't always add up to the visual opulence one sees in Atlanta. There is also a high black poverty in Atlanta that challenges its black mecca image, which I discuss in further detail later in the chapter.

Regardless of whether or not these images of Atlanta's black prosperity are real or perceived, they are important factor in Afro-Caribbean migrants' experiences living in their new home. One migrant who moved to Atlanta from New York told me that she loved having a large variety of black professionals in Atlanta so much that she intentionally had a black doctor, black dentist, and when she got married she had a black party planner, black caterer, and black deejay. For many Afro-Caribbean migrants, Atlanta's large black population and its image as a place of black affluence have played a very important part in their satisfaction with living in the city, especially when they compared it to the cities that they left.

Previous research has shown that Afro-Caribbeans have sought ways to succeed, by distancing themselves from African Americans, by emphasizing their Caribbean immigrant backgrounds and developing their own distinct neighborhoods, organizations, and networks. Yet, I found that it was important to Afro-Caribbean immigrants to see African Americans, and not just black immigrants doing well in a place, which is something that has often been the case in other major cities, such as New York, Boston, and Miami, with both significant African American and black immigrant populations. Karen, a New York-born migrant of Kittitian descent in her early thirties who moved to Atlanta after living briefly in Los Angeles, told me that it was important for her to be someplace where African Americans were successful and just getting by because African Americans and Afro-Caribbeans are "in the same boat together" in

American society. She explained that seeing African Americans who were professionals, who were in government, who were making changes in the world, who were motivated, and who were entrepreneurs, was the type of atmosphere that she needed to progress personally and professionally.

Being in a black space, with a large pool of successful black people, has provided Afro-Caribbeans with a comfort factor. There is a feeling of being an insider. I imagine that this insider feeling may not be the same across class, that is Afro-Caribbeans who are not college-educated, a professional, or middle class may not have the same experience in Atlanta. However, the Afro-Caribbean migrants that I interviewed for this study were all college-educated, and mostly middle class, and expressed feeling a sense of belonging in their new environment due to its large, thriving black community. Atlanta is not a 'sundown town'²¹ where blacks have to be afraid to be caught there at night or where they know they are not wanted (Loewen 2005). As a black mecca, it is the opposite. It is a place where blacks are welcomed and encouraged to do well and be involved. Being able to own homes among other black middle class homeowners allows them to feel more at home in the Atlanta suburbs. There is also confidence provided by the presence of the nearby historically black colleges and universities, and the knowledge that a new generation of black intellectuals and professionals are being educated there. Respondents also noted that actually seeing black people in everyday settings played a large part in the comfort factor. To them, it was nice to be able to walk around and see a large number of black faces. It brought a sense of familiarity for the Caribbean-born transplants that have experienced the same comfort level when they lived in the black majority societies back home in the

²¹ "A sundown town is any organized jurisdiction that for decades kept African Americans or other groups from living in it and was thus "all-white" on purpose" (Loewen 2005: 4). All-white towns may include nonblack minorities and even a tiny number of black residents.

Caribbean.

From my own experience, I understood the importance of the comfort factor that Atlanta's black population offered and why it would be a powerful draw for Afro-Caribbean migrants. I visited Atlanta for the first time during a college spring break in 2003. From the time I stepped off the plane at Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, I could not help feeling like I had arrived in a different country. The large number of black people that I saw from the moment I arrived made me feel like I was in my family's homeland of Dominica in the Caribbean, rather than in a city in the United States. During my visit, I stayed with Amil, one of my high school friends, who at the time was a sophomore at Morehouse College, and who lived a block away from the campus in a gated apartment complex. For a week, I got a glimpse of the black college experience, which was very unlike my own college experience at an ivy-league institution. I attended classes and campus events with Amil and felt so proud and empowered to be in among thousands of black male and female college students and faculty. Exploring the school's surrounding area, which is also home to Spelman College, Clark Atlanta University, and Morris Brown College. I felt like I had stepped into a scene from the Spike Lee movie *School Daze* or the popular television show (and *The Cosby Show* spin-off) *A Different World*, which both showcased the life of students at fictional historically black colleges in the South. It was environment unlike what I experienced in Boston, where I was accustomed to seeing black people mainly in certain neighborhoods but throughout the majority of the city mostly white people. The large number of black people in Atlanta, especially the large core of black middle class and professionals, makes the city feel like a welcoming space for black people looking to better their lives.

Simon, a transplant in his forties who emigrated from Trinidad to Atlanta directly in the early 1990s, described how going to Morehouse College and living in a black city made him feel at ease:

The experience at Morehouse was very comfortable. Coming from Trinidad, which is predominantly black to Georgia Military College which is predominantly white in a white town but still having friends and then being accepted and getting a scholarship to a black school in a black city made it so easy. The anxiety and stress was low. And in being the hometown of Martin Luther King which I never knew about made things fit like I was supposed to be here.

Dwight, a Kittitian migrant in his mid-thirties who moved to Atlanta from New York with his wife, explained how the black population in Atlanta was important to him:

That was definitely important. And I think that kind of---it played a role in the places we looked at. Because there's also a very developing black professional community in Charlotte. And we looked at Charlotte and we looked at Atlanta. Like I said we picked Atlanta because Charlotte was a little too slow. But that was definitely important because you want to go somewhere where you are comfortable, where you fit in, and where there are opportunities for you, competitive opportunities. I think that is present here in Atlanta. That was definitely a factor.

Jefferson, a transplant from Dominica in his mid-fifties who moved to Atlanta from Connecticut in the late 1980s, also explained how the black population in Atlanta is a comfort to him:

It is very comforting compared to Boston where every other person you see is white. It is more comfortable. I felt that in a place like Boston, being downtown in the financial district I didn't feel like I needed to be there at all. I felt that this doesn't have anything to do with me at all. Whereas here you can go anywhere in Atlanta and nobody cares.

For the migrants, it was not just important that Atlanta offered opportunities for black people but that it also provided a safe and comfortable place for them to live, grow, and progress as black immigrants. Mary, a Haitian migrant in her mid-forties who moved to Atlanta from Connecticut, reinforced these ideas. She told me that seeing blacks in Atlanta as teachers, lawyers, and doctors inspired her because there weren't many black people in Connecticut.

When she came to Atlanta, she told her son to look to them as role models to show him that nothing and nobody can stop him from becoming what he wants to be. Simon, a migrant in his late thirties who migrated directly to Atlanta from Trinidad, explained how Atlanta's black population motivated him: "You almost felt like you were supposed to succeed when you came here because the atmosphere was just so overwhelming in a positive way for black people. So, it was very motivating and very rewarding to be here."

They saw Atlanta as a good place to raise their future kids. Nisha, a 37-year-old Trinidadian woman, told me that she moved to Atlanta because she wanted her future kids to grow up somewhere African Americans, and not just foreign-born blacks, were doing well. She liked that Atlanta had a large African American professional population. She explained that she had lived in Miami, Orlando, Tampa, and New York City and felt that in those places foreign-born blacks (i.e., Afro-Caribbean and African immigrants) were doing better than African Americans there. Because her children would be seen by others as African American, she didn't want them to grow up in a place where they and others, especially white people, didn't see African Americans doing well. When I asked her why she was concerned about how African Americans were perceived, she said that she worried that her children would be treated unfairly in a place where African Americans were not viewed as high-achieving. Though, being high-achieving doesn't mitigate or completely eliminate experiences of racism. She explained that she had often been in situations where white people's demeanor towards her became more welcoming once they heard her accent. Researchers have argued that white employers tend to show a preference for hiring foreign-born over native-born black applicants because they viewed immigrants as more reliable and hardworking (Waters 1999; Bashi Bobb and Clarke 2001; Model 2001). Since her children wouldn't have an accent to signify their Caribbean heritage,

Nisha was worried that whites would discriminate against them.

Whatever their achievements, Afro-Caribbeans are seen as black first in the US and realize that their blackness has critical implications for their life outcomes. Many Afro-Caribbean migrants that I interviewed, like Nisha, believe that being submerged in Atlanta's large black middle class and professional population will lessen their experiences of racial prejudice and discrimination from whites and provide them with a safe space where they can thrive.

It is interesting that they reported feeling a sense of "racial comfort" from living among Atlanta's large black population, since research has shown Afro-Caribbean immigrants often claim not to view race as an important factor in their lives (Waters 1999; Vickerman 1999; Bashi 2007). It seems that their experiences in other US cities has caused them to view being around other black people as important to them and as good for their quality of life. In Atlanta, being black is not automatically a disadvantage or a negative factor that hinders the experiences or the life outcomes of those identified, or categorized, as "black." The city offers black migrants social, economic, political, cultural, and psychological benefits. Incorporation into Atlanta's black middle class provide Afro-Caribbeans opportunities for socio-economic mobility, including black professional organizations, fraternal associations, institutions, and services, which were initially developed by African Americans in their struggle for equality and civil rights (Neckerman, Carter, and Lee 1999; Kasinitz, Mollenkopf, Waters, and Holdaway 2008). Blackness, I argue, is a plus in Atlanta. To be clear, I am not saying that every black person is receiving "keys to the city" and living the American dream in beautiful homes with white picket fences. But, living in a black mecca is a powerful draw for black migrants, like Afro-Caribbeans, looking to improve their standard of living.

Blackness Matters But...

Though many consider Atlanta as a center of black wealth, education, political power, and culture, there is also another side of the city—and another Atlanta black experience. The contradicting sides of Atlanta chip away at its image as a black mecca. David Sjoquist (2000: 2) argues that "the 'Atlanta paradox' is a tale of extreme racial and economic inequality—of abject poverty in a region of tremendous wealth, of a poor and economically declining city population in the face of dramatic economic growth, and of a black population in the face of dramatic growth, and of a black mecca in a "city too busy to hate" (a slogan adopted in 1955 by Mayor William Hartsfield) confronting a highly racially segregated population and the substantial problems associated with racism and poverty that pervade the city."

Atlanta's image as a black mecca involves some myth-making that excludes negative or contradicting black images, such as the city's high black poverty rate (of 33% in 2010) that exists alongside great black prosperity (2006-2010 American Community Survey). The city is a contentious space, fraught with several major divisions within the black community, including, for example, growing economic inequality between the black poor and the black middle class. As much as it can be called a black mecca, some could and do also consider Atlanta a ghetto. The city's black poverty has contributed to a high rate of crime, unemployment, and drug use (Keating 2001). The large poor black population in Atlanta has been disenfranchised, even as the black middle class has made gains in government and business. Black political ascendancy, rather than solving the problems of Atlanta's black community, has resulted in some segments of the community benefitting some more than others. Black leaders have focused on policies and programs that address mostly the needs and concerns of the middle class, particularly regarding housing, employment, and schools, while largely ignoring the needs and concerns of the black poor (Bayor 2000; Keating 2001). A good example is the treatment of poor black neighborhoods

during the development for the 1996 Summer Olympics. Black poor and working class neighborhoods were destroyed or diminished during the preparation for the Olympics, which was at the same time under the leadership of a black mayor (Bayor 2000; Keating 2001).

When Maynard Jackson, the city's first black mayor, was elected in 1973, he was committed to solving some of the city's racial and economic inequalities. He tried to foster economic development on Atlanta's mostly black south side by, for example, encouraging the placement of the city's international airport in the area to stimulate its stagnant economy (Keating 2001). However, his initial efforts to create equity among the city's residents were hindered by opposition from the white elite, who still dominated the local economy (Keating 2001). Jackson and his successors realized that in order to run the city they also needed the support of the white business community, which has rarely considered the needs of the black poor (Bayor 2000; Keating 2001). Continued economic control of the city by white business leaders and black class divisions, among other factors, have limited black political power and the development of policies that benefit both the black poor and black middle class in Atlanta (Bayor 2000).

The influx of thousands of black migrants into Atlanta, since the 1990s, has also created divisions between migrant newcomers and old members (i.e., native black Atlantans) of the community. Several of my Afro-Caribbean respondents reported that they experienced some tensions with African American residents in Atlanta. They told me that they felt some African Americans in Atlanta were not receptive to Afro-Caribbeans, and immigrants in general, because they viewed them as threats. Judith, a Jamaican transplant who immigrated directly to Atlanta in 1989, described how perceptions of competition and stereotyping fueled tensions between Afro-Caribbeans and African Americans in Atlanta:

I have experienced some mild hostility from African Americans towards Caribbeans. I had a conversation with a colleague about it and he told me that African American people feel that Caribbean people came to reap what they sown through the Civil Rights Movement. I had some subtle experiences and I asked him about it. He said we, including himself, feel that you all came reaping what we fought for. I am a teacher and students and parents would try to refer to an issue towards my nationality. They feel we feel we are above African Americans, especially among the more educated Americans. Strange enough the person who told me that Caribbeans were robbing them of their birthright has a PhD. I move among educated people and I hear all these little comments. They stereotype Caribbean people. They will not come out right but it is very subtle things people say.

When they experienced hostility or stereotyping from African Americans in Atlanta, my respondents generally responded by brushing it off or ignoring it. Some Afro-Caribbean migrants attributed these tensions to African Americans in Atlanta having a lack of knowledge about the Caribbean and Caribbean immigrants. One migrant stated: “There has been some conflict between the African American and Afro-Caribbean communities in Atlanta, or in Georgia. I don’t think they fully understand the Caribbean in the true sense and I don’t think we have made a good effort to educate them about the Caribbean in the true sense.” Atlanta, like most of the South, has had very little history with immigration prior to 1990. The recent influx of Afro-Caribbeans, and other immigrants from Asia, Latin America, and Africa, has been a major demographic change for the city. Residential dispersion of Afro-Caribbean immigrants in Atlanta might be hindering the development of familiarity between the city’s large African American residential community and Caribbean immigrant newcomers. However, it is important to note that Atlanta has also received many African American migrants from New York and other northeast cities with significant Caribbean immigrant populations who may have brought with them hostility toward Afro-Caribbeans. Migration scholars have well documented the relations between the African American and Afro-Caribbean populations in New York, which has been characterized by a mix of conflict and cooperation (Waters 1999; Vickerman 1999). It is possible

that pre-migration tensions may be shaping Afro-Caribbeans' relationship with African Americans in Atlanta.

Social institutions and organizations in Atlanta are helping to ease some of the tensions between Afro-Caribbeans and African Americans in the city, by educating the community about the Caribbean and by providing spaces for the two communities to meet and create connections. Churches and schools are two major institutions in Atlanta that serve as important sites for coalition-building between the new and old members of the growing black community. The local colleges and universities, particularly Emory University, Morehouse College, Georgia State University, Kennesaw State University, and Agnes Scott College, have been instrumental in educating the African American student community about the Caribbean. They offer courses in Caribbean Studies. They also have Caribbean student groups that allow Caribbean and African American students the chance to connect and learn about Caribbean culture and each other. Agnes Scott College, for example, gave one of my respondents the chance to showcase his photos documenting Caribbean life in Atlanta, including shots of the Caribbean Carnival and Caribbean American Heritage Month events, in the school as art exhibit in 2010. Efforts are also being made by the churches to ease tensions between black immigrants and the larger African American community. Local churches are providing opportunities for socializing and networking among members and surrounding community. They promote understanding of each other. One migrant talked about an event that her church hosted where members were encouraged to bring food dishes representing their culture to share with the congregation. The Auburn Avenue Research Library on African American Culture and History has played a major role in educating and facilitating connections between the Afro-Caribbean community and the larger black community in Atlanta. Located in the historic Sweet Auburn district, which in the early 20th

century was the heart of the black community in Atlanta, as a major commercial area, the library has hosted a large number of Caribbean events, including events for Caribbean American Heritage Month. The library hosted a four-part Caribbean symposium series called “Where the Island Sleeps Like a Wing” which occurred between October and December in 2002. The series focused on the Caribbean community in Atlanta and touched on several topics, such as culture, the second and third generations, and politics. The event involved several members of the community, academics from local and other universities and member of the Jamaican Parliament taking part in panel discussions. The symposium also included a bibliography of books related to the Caribbean experience. These events are open to the public.

These tensions and divisions challenge Atlanta’s image as a black mecca. The fact that all members of Atlanta’s black community were not flourishing in this black mecca did not affect migrants’ view of the city as a good place for black people. During my conversations with Afro-Caribbean migrants for this study, they mentioned divisions and tensions and the city’s black poverty. But they still liked living in Atlanta and planned to stay there for the next ten years. When they spoke about Atlanta and their experiences living there, the migrants focused mainly on the large number of black middle class and professionals in the city and expressed how important the city’s black mecca image was to their satisfaction with their lives in Atlanta. This reaction seems to be influenced by Afro-Caribbeans’ pre-migration experiences. Many of them have lived in the Northeast in cities that have significant Caribbean immigrant populations but not thriving black communities. They see Atlanta as a place where people of African-descent can thrive and achieve their goals to be well and live well. It is debatable how much of these images of black prosperity is perceived and how much is reality. But regardless these black images are powerful and important factors in shaping the migration of Afro-Caribbeans to Atlanta and their

experiences living there.

CONCLUSION

Race is a salient feature in Afro-Caribbeans' migration experience. Being black shapes many aspects of their lives. Afro-Caribbeans' perceptions of race inform their decisions regarding the relationships that they form with other groups, the neighborhoods they reside in, the jobs that they seek, and the kinds of organizations that they join (Kasinitz 1992; Vickerman 1999; Waters 1999; Bashi 2007). Afro-Caribbean immigrants differentiate themselves culturally from African Americans but this does not diminish their understanding of race or the significance of race on their experiences. Afro-Caribbeans have a strong sense of ethnic as well as racial identity. But, their racial identity seems to be more salient in certain contexts or circumstances. In this study, I found that their blackness is very important factor in their decision to migrate to Atlanta and their experiences living in the city. The city's image as a black mecca has greatly influenced their migration. Many of the Afro-Caribbeans in Atlanta that I interviewed were attracted by the large presence of black people, especially black professionals in Atlanta.

They identify with being black in Atlanta—chiefly the image of prosperity and affluence of the city's black middle class. They see the city's large black population as welcoming to black migrants looking to better their standard living and achieve upward mobility. However, the city also has its downsides, such as the city's high black poverty rate (of 33% in 2010) that exists alongside great black prosperity (2006-2010 American Community Survey). The city is fraught with several major divisions within the black community, including a growing economic divide between the poor and the middle and upper classes. The arrival of thousands of black migrant newcomers into Atlanta has also created divisions within the city's black community. Though

some of my Afro-Caribbean respondents have experienced some tensions with African Americans in Atlanta, fueled by anti-immigrant prejudice and stereotypes, community building is occurring between the two communities, as Afro-Caribbean transplants navigate the networks and institutions, such as black churches and the local colleges, especially the historically black colleges and universities in the city, that have been long-established by Atlanta's African American community. Social institutions and organizations in Atlanta are helping to ease some of the tensions between Afro-Caribbeans and African Americans in the city, by educating the community about the Caribbean and by providing spaces for the two communities to meet and create connections.

In the long run, the influx of Afro-Caribbean immigrants into Atlanta in recent years is likely to broaden understandings of race and to help transform long-held racial conceptions. Their presence brings greater awareness of ethnic diversity within the city's black population. The growing number of black immigrants who emphasize their ethnic distinctiveness is one sign that views of blackness may be changing. This change is especially significant in the South, a region that has been mostly bi-racial for its history and is now experiencing an influx of immigrants from Asia, Latin America, and Africa. Atlanta is a prime area to for the study of new understandings of blackness and race in America. Despite the arrival of immigrant newcomers, Atlanta proper remains a black space, with more than 50 percent of its residents being reported as black in the 2010 US Census. Afro-Caribbeans are becoming an increasingly visible part of black Atlanta. Afro-Caribbean migrants' in-migration may play a pivotal role in developing a new black Atlanta and changing ideas of blackness and southern culture.

CHAPTER 4: CARIBBEAN ATLANTA

Around 4 p.m. on the Saturday of Memorial Day Weekend in 2009—three days after I moved to Atlanta to begin this study—my friend Nevis picked me up from my apartment and we made our way downtown to attend the Atlanta Caribbean Carnival. I had planned my move to the city to coincide with the Carnival so that I would be able to experience this important Caribbean cultural event and get a glimpse of Caribbean life in Atlanta. When Nevis and I arrived downtown, it looked deserted. In New York, as soon as you get within a few blocks of Eastern Parkway, where its Caribbean Carnival takes place annually on Labor Day, you are inundated with images, sounds, and smells that let you know that you are at or approaching the Carnival. But, as we drove along the streets of downtown Atlanta, I didn't see any signs that the Atlanta Caribbean Carnival was occurring there—no music, masqueraders, banners, large crowds of people walking around, traffic, or lines of police officers and barricades on the street marking the location of the Carnival. According to its website, the Atlanta Caribbean Carnival included a parade of bands (from 12pm to 2pm) that moved along West Peachtree Street and a Festival Village (from 10am to 10pm), located on historic Auburn Avenue in the Carnival Village, which would have food, vendors, and musical performances by a number of popular Caribbean soca and calypso artists.

I imagined the streets would be filled with people dancing and waving the national flags of their respective Caribbean home countries and the sounds of soca, calypso, reggae, and various other Caribbean music, pouring from the large speakers tied tightly to carnival trucks as they slowly rolled down the streets or from the speakers of cars parked along the streets as

Carnival attendees tried to create their own carnival experience. But, after driving along West Peachtree Street and Jesse Hill Jr. Drive for ten minutes looking for cheap parking, I saw no signs of the Carnival. Despite this, we parked and made our way towards the Carnival Village. Slowly, we spotted small groups of people walking in the direction of the street. Looking closely at the people, I saw that some were holding Caribbean flags or wearing clothing with a Caribbean country's name or flag on it. About a block away from Auburn Avenue, I saw the first major sign that an event was happening: police officers and barricades. A few steps later, vendor stands and crowds of people became visible. Caribbean music began to fill the air. On each side of the street, there were crowds of people standing around vendor stands selling Caribbean CDs, DVDs, clothing, and crafts. After several feet, the vendor stands turned into food stands, which were located under a highway overpass. As we walked past the stands towards the other side of the Carnival Village, the smell of different island foods filled the air. Many of the stands offered similar Caribbean dishes. On the other side of the overpass, there was a stage in the middle of a circular area. Scattered around the stage, there was a few more food stands and a large crowd of people. A band was performing a calypso song on the stage, while thousands of people were dancing to music and waving flags from various Caribbean islands. The smell of the Caribbean dishes, such as curry goat, jerk chicken, and oxtail stew, wafted through the air from the many food stands, enticing those walking by to stop and eat. The Carnival Village was filled with vibrant expressions of Caribbean culture, identity, and pride. As Nevis and I weaved through the crowd towards the stage, I felt a strong connection to my Caribbean culture and to the thousands of other Caribbean people at the Carnival.

The Atlanta Caribbean Carnival is one of many ways that Afro-Caribbeans have marked their growing presence in the region. Since their arrival in the city, Afro-Caribbeans have put a

distinctive stamp on Atlanta and its surrounding suburbs. In this chapter, I explore how Afro-Caribbeans are using cultural practices and institution building to create community among each other and to claim spaces in Atlanta that foster and reinforce a distinct Caribbean identity and culture—“Caribbean Atlanta.” The community supports Caribbean newspapers, radio programs, festivals and parades, and numerous cultural and social organizations and clubs, including country-specific associations, a theater group, cricket teams, and a networking organization. Through their businesses, neighborhoods, organizations, and events, Afro-Caribbean immigrants are transforming the physical and cultural landscapes of the Atlanta metro area, as well as helping members of the Caribbean Atlanta community, especially recent migrants, adapt to their new life. They are also creating transnational and “translocal” (extending or operating across regional boundaries) linkages between Atlanta and other major cities. Many Afro-Caribbeans maintain strong ties to their former communities (i.e., the cities, towns, and countries that they migrated from) through frequent travel and social networks. These ties are especially important for Afro-Caribbeans’ community-building efforts in Atlanta. They allow Afro-Caribbean migrants to get services, support, and goods that they need to feel more at home and to create and sustain a Caribbean identity in their new home.

AFRO-CARIBBEAN FOOTPRINTS: PLACE-MAKING AND COMMUNITY-BUILDING

Caribbean Atlanta Neighborhoods

Afro-Caribbean migrants have marked their presence in Atlanta by creating Caribbean spaces across the metropolitan area. Unlike their counterparts in New York and Miami, Afro-Caribbeans in Atlanta are forming ethnic cultural spaces in the suburbs rather than in the heart of the city. This fits with the residential patterns of Afro-Caribbeans in this study (as discussed in

Chapter Two). The majority of Afro-Caribbean migrants in Atlanta have settled outside the city limits, with the largest concentration in suburban areas east of the city. The settlement of Afro-Caribbeans in the suburbs follows a recent shift in immigrant settlement patterns in the US from major cities to suburbs (Singer, Hardwick, and Brettell 2008b). David, a sixty-year-old Jamaican man who migrated from New York in 1989, explained to me how the Caribbean community has spread out across the Atlanta metro area since the migration began.

“The Caribbean community, 20 or 25 years ago, in the 1990s was centered in DeKalb County, which includes the towns of Stone Mountain and Lithonia. It has now spread out to points north. I work in Kennesaw and there is a vibrant Caribbean community there. There are Caribbean people in Roswell and even further up than that, well into the suburbs. It has gone south Stockbridge. You find a lot of folks living down there. Of course, it goes all the way down to Conyers and Douglasville. The Caribbean community is very spread out now.”

One of the first and most significant Caribbean spaces to form in the Atlanta area is in the small city of Stone Mountain located east of Atlanta city limits in DeKalb County. Stone Mountain is, according to the Afro-Caribbean migrants in this study, the place where you can find Caribbean people, food, clubs, and businesses in Atlanta. In 2010, the city’s population was 5,802, with blacks making up 69 percent of the residents. West Indian was the second largest ethnic group. West Indians made up 4 percent of the city’s population and are the second largest ethnicity behind English, making up 5 percent of the population, according to the 2010 American Community Survey estimates. For many Afro-Caribbean transplants, Stone Mountain is the heart of Caribbean Atlanta; its plethora of businesses and high concentration of Caribbean residents evoke images of Crown Heights and Flatbush in Brooklyn, two well-known, large Caribbean commercial and residential areas of the New York City borough. Memorial Drive, one of the main streets, is a commercial street filled with Caribbean businesses, including a mall of clubs that are bustling during the weekends, especially during holiday weekends, and carnival

weekend.

The small city was named for the nearby mountain. Located inside Stone Mountain State Park, the mountain has a giant memorial of three Confederate military leaders carved into its side. Stone Mountain was the local home of the Ku Klux Klan, which was revived there after dying out in the 1870s (Wade 1998). This history marks a stark contradiction to what the area has become of late—a black suburb with a growing Caribbean enclave. Very few of the Afro-Caribbean migrants that I interviewed knew about the anti-black history of Stone Mountain. Whenever I asked about Stone Mountain, my respondents only mentioned its Caribbean community. They never mentioned its dark history of racial violence. Their settlement in Stone Mountain is similar to their settlement in New York City, where they have carved out distinct Caribbean enclaves within larger black neighborhoods, except in this case, Afro-Caribbeans in Atlanta are forming residential niches in the black suburbs rather than the black inner city neighborhoods (Tedrow and Crowder 2001). This “pioneer” type of settlement into an area that was previously hostile, and potentially dangerous for blacks, is not surprising, given that research on Caribbean immigrants in New York has shown that they were among the first black people to move into once white areas in the city and helped to racially mix neighborhoods such as Canarsie and Crown Heights (Lobo and Salvo 2000; Crowder and Tedrow 2001; Bashi 2007). By moving to Stone Mountain and forming neighborhoods there, Caribbean immigrants establish themselves as a distinct ethnic community, and still maintain a connection to the larger black community in Atlanta.

As a distinctly Caribbean neighborhood, Stone Mountain provides Afro-Caribbean migrants in Atlanta a comfortable space where they can connect to their compatriots, purchase Caribbean foods and products, participate in Caribbean cultural organizations, and attend

Caribbean clubs. Most Afro-Caribbeans interviewed for this study reported that the presence of Caribbean compatriots, events, and products played a major part in their satisfaction with their new lives in Atlanta. As discussed in the preceding chapters, Afro-Caribbeans were greatly attracted to Atlanta by its image as a black mecca. The presence of a vibrant Caribbean community was seen by many of the migrants as an added bonus to living in Atlanta. Dwight, a Kittitian migrant in his mid-thirties who migrated from New York to Atlanta in 2007, explained to me how the existence of Caribbean neighborhoods in Atlanta greatly helped him and his family adapt to their new lives in the southern city. He stated:

The fact that there is a Caribbean community and I can go get some Caribbean food and I can experience some Caribbean music and some Caribbean festivity, that's definitely good. You know, we like to eat Caribbean food. And, we can cook it but you don't always feel like cooking. And, it's good to be able to experience your people and your culture and your music. I'm glad that exists because it definitely makes living here a little easier. I don't feel like I left that behind. I feel like I can get that here. There are some things I feel that we left behind in New York that we haven't gotten here, but that's not one of them.

Although almost all of the Afro-Caribbeans in this study identified Stone Mountain as a Caribbean neighborhood, and the center of the community in Atlanta, I found that only two of my respondents lived there at the time that I interviewed them. Several migrants did live there during their time living in Atlanta, usually staying with a relative soon after they migrated to the area, but they moved to other suburbs that, according to them, had better housing and schools. The small number of migrants to have lived in Stone Mountain is not surprising, since, as I discussed in the preceding chapters, many of the Afro-Caribbean migrants in this study had no networks and/or decided to move to Atlanta even though they had no ties there. The most common reason that respondents gave for not living in Stone Mountain was that they wanted to live in an ethnically diverse neighborhood. Despite spending a lot of time there socially, Kerry, a

thirty-nine year old woman of Trinidadian descent who moved to Atlanta from New York in 1994, explained to me that she chose to live in Cobb County instead of Stone Mountain because of the ethnic diversity that living in the county offered her. She said: “When I think of a true melting pot in a county, I find that more in Cobb. In Stone Mountain, not so much. Lithonia, not so much. I think that those areas are heavily populated by one group—us. I don’t see Indians, Caucasians, or Chinese. In Cobb, I see everything.” Like Kerry, other Afro-Caribbean migrants told me that they preferred to live in a diverse area, rather than one dominated by only one group. Research has shown that DeKalb County—the county where Stone Mountain is located—is the most diverse county in the Atlanta metropolitan area and that Cobb County is becoming increasingly diverse as immigrants and African Americans, attracted by their housing and job opportunities, settle there (Hansen 2005; Singer, Hardwick, and Brettell 2008b). I found that the Afro-Caribbeans that I interviewed for this study were especially not interested in living predominantly black or Caribbean neighborhoods. Though they reported being attracted to Atlanta because it was a black city, this did not necessarily mean that they moved so they could live in black only areas. This was especially important to Afro-Caribbeans who migrated to the area from New York. Even if they lived in the Caribbean neighborhoods in New York, they were used to living and working in a diverse environment and wanted to have a similar experience in Atlanta.

The Caribbean spaces that have formed in the suburban areas of Atlanta such as Stone Mountain are important for immigrant newcomers to cushion the resettlement process. These spaces help Afro-Caribbean immigrants to feel more at home. It is a place where all Afro-Caribbeans, not only recent migrants, can live among Caribbean compatriots, find Caribbean food and products, develop social networks, and showcase their culture and their presence as a

distinct black ethnic community in Atlanta.

Caribbean Businesses

Though Afro-Caribbeans make up a small percentage of the Atlanta areas residents, their presence is evident: Caribbean restaurants, bakeries, newspapers, festivals, and cricket teams can now be found throughout the metro area. Caribbean businesses play an important role, as not only forms of self-employment and entrepreneurship for Afro-Caribbean immigrants in Atlanta, but also as markers of Caribbean ethnicity. These businesses are key sites of the Caribbean immigrant experience in Atlanta. They provide services and products that help Afro-Caribbeans adapt to living in Atlanta. They also help develop and promote a Caribbean Atlanta community by providing information about Caribbean events and businesses in the area. Many of the Caribbean restaurants and shops carry magazines and flyers that promote other Caribbean events and businesses in the Atlanta area.

It is an adjustment at first for migrants especially for those who lived in cities with large established Caribbean communities, such as New York, where Afro-Caribbeans are able to get any and everything from the region. As the population grows, Caribbean goods and services are becoming more available. Local businesses are recognizing the presence of the growing Caribbean community and are reaching out to them. Kroger, one of the largest grocery chains in Atlanta (and the region), now caters to Caribbean costumers by providing Caribbean products. Over the last 10 years, Caribbean products, such as oxtail, snapper fish, or plantains, became available in the local chain supermarkets in the Atlanta area. Florence, who migrated to Atlanta in 1993, described how Caribbean food items (and other ethnic foods) have become more and more available with the influx of immigrants into the city. She stated, “When I first arrived, you

had to go to a specialized market, like the DeKalb Farmer's Market. I think as the Asian, African, and Caribbean communities demanded more food; the supermarkets expanded their selections to include more ethnic foods." The availability of Caribbean products is important to the Caribbean immigrant experience and maintenance of a Caribbean identity in Atlanta. Sociologist Tamara Mose Brown (2011) found in her study of West Indian nannies in Brooklyn that the cooking and eating of Caribbean dishes helped them maintain ties to their Caribbean heritage and form communities among each other. Afro-Caribbeans in the study have pointed to food as one of the main ways that they stayed connected to their culture on an everyday basis since they migrated to Atlanta. Having access to Caribbean foods was especially important for the migrants. Many told me that being able to cook and eat traditional Caribbean dishes helped make Atlanta feel more like home. Anthony, who migrated to Atlanta in 1994, explained to me why access to Caribbean products and foods were important to his life in Atlanta. He stated: "The availability of Caribbean products plays a very important role in my satisfaction with Atlanta because it was something I was used to in New York growing in a Caribbean family. In New York, I was used to Caribbean scenery and cuisine. With it being available here, it gives me great satisfaction."

Most of the Caribbean businesses in the region are restaurants. Stone Mountain is home to many of the Caribbean restaurants in the Atlanta area. Memorial Drive's strip has 5 or 6 Caribbean restaurants within a few miles of each other, including Kool Runnings and Royal Caribbean bakery, a popular bakery in the Atlanta area that was transplanted from New York. Several of my respondents recommended to me Tassi's Roti Shop, which was an Indo-Trinidadian-owned restaurant on the eastside of Atlanta in Marietta, a city in Cobb County. It is one of the only Trinidadian restaurants in the Atlanta area. This reflects the growing diversity of

the area, since Cobb County, like other northern counties in metro Atlanta, was formerly an all-white suburb that has recently become more diverse with the influx of immigrants and African Americans to the area (Singer, Hardwick, and Brettell 2008b). Caribbean restaurants, like Tassi's Roti Shop, are playing a significant part in the transformation of the area's cultural landscape. Though the majority of the Caribbean restaurants are found in Stone Mountain and other suburban areas, there are few other restaurants in the city proper that are marking the group's presence.²²

Caribbean restaurants are key sites of the Caribbean experience in Atlanta. They play a major part in helping migrants adjust to their new lives in Atlanta by providing not only Caribbean products and foods, but also a space for Afro-Caribbeans to meet compatriots and learn about Caribbean events and services in the area. Typically, inside these restaurants, near the register or the entrance, there are large numbers of business cards for Caribbean-owned companies, flyers and other materials announcing local Caribbean events, and Caribbean-focused newspapers providing information about the region and the Caribbean community in Atlanta. The major Caribbean newspaper in the area is *Caribbean Star*. Founded in 1992, the Caribbean-focused news magazine publishes biweekly and is free for all residents of the Atlanta metro area. The *Caribbean Star* can be found in other cities with large Caribbean populations, including New York.

Events in Caribbean Atlanta

²² The Caribbean restaurants in the city include Calypso Café and Grill, Afrodish Restaurant, and The Original Jamaican Restaurant in the downtown area, Stir It Up in Little Five Points, and Taste of Tropical in the West End.

There is an active Caribbean nightlife in Atlanta, both within the city limits and in its outer suburbs. Almost every night of the week, somewhere, there is a Caribbean party hosted by one of the Caribbean clubs in Stone Mountain, held in one of several of the city's night clubs, or in the reggae rooms that are designated to play reggae and other Caribbean music during their regular weekly parties. The proliferation of Caribbean parties is a clear marker of the growing presence of Afro-Caribbeans in Atlanta. One migrant explained to me the impact on the city's music and club scene: "If you go out on regular black night, you may hear 20 minutes of reggae all night. But now at First Fridays party Trendz does a Caribbean room and most clubs and parties now have a room where you can hear reggae and soca because they know we come out and spend money. This has happened in last 5 years." During the time I was in Atlanta, from May 2009 to August 2010, about 4 Caribbean parties or reggae rooms cropped up in various clubs and lounges across the city. I attended the opening nights of the Caribbean parties at several lounges throughout the Atlanta area. These new Caribbean-themed parties were growing in popularity in the Caribbean community. Several of my Afro-Caribbean respondents, when I asked them about the Caribbean events they attended, they told me that they had also attended the new Caribbean nights at the non-Caribbean clubs in the city.

There are also many social and cultural events that cater to the Caribbean community in Atlanta, including bi-monthly mixers and networking events aimed at Caribbean professionals hosted by a networking group called A We Kinda Ting. I was told about it by one of my respondents. I tried to attend one of their events but the registration filled up quickly and I couldn't attend. From those who attended, I heard it the event was filled with middle-aged Caribbean professionals. Caribbean food festivals have also been gaining popularity in the area. While I was in Atlanta there were two main food festivals, the Caribbean Cookout and the Jerk

Festival. The festivals are growing in popularity and infusing Caribbean food into the southern metropolis that is known for its soul food.

Carnival

Atlanta Caribbean Carnival is the largest Caribbean events that occur in Atlanta yearly. Carnival is a vibrant expression of Caribbean culture, identity, and pride. Carnival participants or masqueraders wear costumes that range from t-shirts showcasing a group logo to elaborate costumes decorated with sequins and feathers to very large masterfully built costumes that often require wheels or harnesses to help the masquerader carry and navigate through the streets. Masqueraders dance on the streets along the carnival route to the sounds of steel pan or/and soca and calypso played by a band or a DJ—this is commonly called “playing mas.” By bringing together different Caribbean groups to celebrate a shared identity and culture, carnival plays an important role in the development of a pan-Caribbean consciousness among Afro-Caribbean immigrants (Kasinitz 1992; Hintzen 2001). As the diaspora has grown and spread out across the world, carnival has become a shared cultural identity, as well as a space for Afro-Caribbeans to publically showcase their ethnicity (Kasinitz 1992).

The Atlanta Caribbean Carnival was the earliest sign of Afro-Caribbean immigrants’ presence in Atlanta. By the time I found out about it in 2008, the carnival was celebrating its 20th year. To my surprise my father, who regularly attended the annual Caribbean carnivals in Boston, New York, and Toronto (and who I frequently used as my personal Caribbean Wikipedia), had known about Atlanta’s carnival for years, and several of his friends regularly traveled to the Atlanta carnival as part of their yearly carnival circuit.

The first carnival took place in 1988, when the Caribbean population was relatively small (1990 Census estimated the West Indian population in Atlanta was around 8,000). At the time,

Atlanta was predominantly African American and white and had not yet attracted large numbers ethnic groups and before then had not held any ethnic festivals. Atlanta Peach Caribbean Carnival, Incorporated was formed in 1987 to put on the “Atlanta Peach Caribbean Carnival—A Folklife Festival” in effort to promote Caribbean heritage, culture, and history in Atlanta. Wanting to become part of the carnival circuit that many Caribbean people (like my father) traveled to annually, the planning committee chose Memorial Weekend for the carnival as to not conflict with Caribbean carnivals in other US cities. The effort to develop the first Atlanta Caribbean Carnival was a collaborative effort among local residents (including non-Caribbean residents) and representatives from the various Caribbean groups in the area. The organizers also contacted carnival organizers in other US cities, such as New York and Miami, and asked them to send their carnival bands down to play for the Atlanta Caribbean Carnival.

In its first year, the organizers made great efforts to showcase Caribbean culture larger Atlanta community. As a precursor to Carnival, the carnival organizers put a steel pan band and a group of people in carnival costumes in the city’s annual Fourth of July Parade. They also organized cricket and soccer sports tournaments to familiarize Atlanta residents with the major sports played in the Caribbean and a Taste of Caribbean Cuisine where people could sample Caribbean fare.

When I attended the carnival for the first time in 2009, I got my first indication of the diversity of Caribbean culture and community in Atlanta. I saw flags from different countries, including St. Kitts & Nevis, Jamaica, Barbados, St. Vincent, Dominica, Antigua & Barbuda, Trinidad & Tobago, US Virgin Islands, Grenada, Belize, St. Lucia, and Haiti. The Caribbean community is not monolithic. Although I refer to Afro-Caribbeans in Atlanta as “the (Atlanta) Caribbean community,” “the community” is made up of different Caribbean communities, based

on generation, home nations, language, class, and the places that they moved from (e.g. those who moved from New York versus those who moved from Miami). I found that some people travel to Atlanta to experience its carnival. Based on my lack of prior knowledge of it, I assumed that most of those attending the Atlanta Carnival were residents of metro Atlanta. I didn't expect anybody, except for the invited artists, to travel to Atlanta for its carnival, like they do to Boston, Washington, D.C., Toronto, and, of course, New York for their carnivals. But, my friend Nevis and I both ran into people that we knew that traveled from cities in the Northeast to Atlanta to attend the carnival for the first time. The carnival is increasingly establishing Atlanta as center of Caribbean life in the US, similar to the way the New York Caribbean Carnival established New York City as a major cultural center for the Caribbean diaspora.

Though the Atlanta Caribbean Carnival would be viewed as a major Caribbean cultural event in Atlanta, I was surprised to discover that the majority of the Afro-Caribbeans that I spoke to had either not attended or never heard of it. Ashley, a migrant of Jamaican descent in her forties who moved to the area from Boston with her husband and kids in 2007, expressed to me a desire for Caribbean events to take her kids to so they could stay connected to their Caribbean culture. I asked her if she had taken them to the Atlanta Carnival. She replied that she didn't know when the carnival took place but she would love to go. She promptly asked me for information about the carnival. She told me that she went to Boston Carnival a few times in years past and would love to take her kids to Atlanta's carnival one year.

During my interviews with Afro-Caribbeans in Atlanta, I found that the Afro-Caribbean migrants in this study had varying degrees of knowledge about the Caribbean community, events, and spaces in the Atlanta area. It is possible for a Caribbean person to live in Atlanta and not know about the Caribbean events occurring in the area, especially if they are not around

Stone Mountain, or live in DeKalb County, which are typically where Caribbean events take place in the Atlanta area. Most of the Afro-Caribbeans that I interviewed for this study, unless they were actively involved in a Caribbean organization in the area, or a close to someone who was involved in these organizations, did not know about the local Caribbean events, including the largest Caribbean event in the Atlanta area—the Atlanta Caribbean Carnival. This was surprising, given that there were a large variety of Caribbean media in Atlanta in 2009 and 2010 that migrants could use to find out about Caribbean events in the area.

There are a few websites where Afro-Caribbeans in Atlanta are able to learn about events, such as www.atlantareggae.com and www.gacaribbeanamericanheritage.org. Most of these sites, however, appeal to younger Afro-Caribbeans or the “party” crowd advertising mostly parties, especially parties during Atlanta Caribbean Carnival weekend, and do not advertise cultural events that are likely to attract families and the older generation of Afro-Caribbeans in the area. Though the website of the Georgia Caribbean American Heritage Coalition does advertise cultural events, such as cook-offs, workshops, plays, receptions, and award ceremonies, it focuses mainly on listing the calendar of events for June’s Caribbean American Heritage Month. Events are also advertised on flyers distributed at Caribbean restaurants and shops, as discussed earlier in the chapter. But, obviously migrants have to frequent these Caribbean businesses to get the flyers and learn about the events. For the most part, since Caribbean events in Atlanta are not commonly covered in the local news or in the local newspapers, an event can come and go with little awareness that it ever had happened, unless you are actively looking for an event. I learned late into my study from two of my respondents that there were two long-running Caribbean radio programs that played Caribbean music and discussed Caribbean current events in the region and in the Atlanta area--WFRG 89.3 and Clark Atlanta University’s WLCK

91.9. But, very few of the Afro-Caribbean migrants in my study knew about the radio programs or listened to them. Again, those who knew about the Caribbean radio programs were actively involved in Atlanta Caribbean community and frequently attended and/or organized Caribbean events in the area. I found that the way most Afro-Caribbeans in Atlanta found out about Caribbean events was through word of mouth.

Several factors influence how much people knew about Caribbean events and the size and success of events in the southern metropolis. The geography and sprawl of the area has created a situation where the Caribbean spaces in Atlanta are dispersed across the metro area. Those who lived in Caribbean spaces like Stone Mountain tended to be more involved and knew more about Caribbean events in the area than those Afro-Caribbeans who lived farther away. The variation in awareness of Caribbean community's activities also appears to be linked to the time and area of in-migration to the Atlanta region. The Afro-Caribbean transplants who moved to Atlanta prior to the early 2000s tended to be those who were more socially involved and knew the most about the events, cultural groups, and businesses in the area. They got involved in cultural organizations in the community in the early 1990s, when the Caribbean population in Atlanta was small, in order to meet other Caribbean transplants and learn about local Caribbean events. For those who migrated to Atlanta in the early 2000s, their involvement in and/or connection to the Caribbean community in Atlanta is complicated by their continued ties to the Caribbean communities in the places that they moved from. This was especially for New York-origin migrants. They admitted to traveling back to New York several times a year to retrieve Caribbean products or foods and to attend events for family and friends and Caribbean cultural events, such as New York's Carnival. I will discuss later in this chapter how this behavior has affected community development among Afro-Caribbean migrants in Atlanta.

There were a number of respondents that knew little about the Caribbean life in Atlanta and had attended very few Caribbean events in the Atlanta area. Those migrants who were not actively involved in the Caribbean community tended to do other activities to stay connected to their culture. They listened to Caribbean music, cooked Caribbean food, and traveled to their Caribbean home countries. People informed me, too, that the date of the carnival was a problem – since it was planned on Memorial Day Weekend, it was a time when many people took the three-day weekend as an opportunity to leave town.

Two Carnivals, One City

I was surprised to learn that there was more than one Caribbean carnival in Atlanta. I only found out about one carnival during a Google search and saw nothing in that search about a second carnival. I learned of the second carnival when several respondents informed me that tensions within the community led to two separate carnivals.

From what I learned from my respondents, the two carnivals occur on the same day (or during the same weekend, generally) in different parts of the metro area, with the original/older one taking place in the downtown area and the second/newer one taking place in a different location year after year (generally an area with a large Caribbean population, such as Lithonia or Stone Mountain). One of the respondents in this study, Andrew, a Trinidadian-born migrant who moved to Atlanta from New York in the 1994 and was one of the original carnival's organizers during the 1990s, told me that the older and younger generations of migrants in the Atlanta Caribbean community divided their affiliations and the carnival too. The older generation organizes theirs in downtown Atlanta and the younger generation organizes a separate one that takes place outside of the city, in the surrounding suburbs (e.g., Stone Mountain). However, I

suspect that the tensions that led to the split of the carnival are more complicated than a generational divide between the younger and older members of the Afro-Caribbean community in Atlanta.

At the core of the split of the carnivals, there seems to be an issue over who should be organizing, or which Caribbean island group should be organizing, Atlanta's Caribbean Carnival—that is, the Trinidadians rather than the Jamaicans or the Caribbean-born rather than the American-born of Caribbean parentage have should be in control of the carnival's organization. I learned from one of the co-founders of the original carnival, Alicia, a American-born migrant of St. Thomas-descent, that though at its inception the carnival steering committee was cross-cultural, with some whites, some African Americans, and representatives from each Caribbean group in Atlanta, eventually tensions arose concerning who should be involved in the carnival's organization. She explained to me some of the tensions with other carnival organizers that she experienced due to her national background: "I was very involved for many years and I enjoyed it tremendously, although a lot of people felt that I should not have been involved because I am not a "Trini." And the Trinis have a mark on carnival. I had a lot of tension and stress in that regard. A lot of them were involved but they wanted me nowhere around." According to Alicia, she was eventually pushed her out of the carnival organization because of this issue with her background. So, I suspect over continued tensions over who should be organizing the city's carnival likely led to the younger generation, and others who felt excluded from the carnival organization, to split from the group and create their own carnival.

Kevin, a New York-born migrant who moved to Atlanta in 1995 and whose father was a longtime leader of several Caribbean organizations in the Atlanta area, told me what he thought the two carnivals. He said:

The other carnival is in Decatur and younger people run it. They were college students when they broke off to start their own carnival. The first year their carnival was good because it was new and fresh. The next year they started getting greedy with the money and then it wasn't good. They flip flopped but Peachtree Carnival is the official carnival and their carnival is not.

Those who knew about the two carnivals told me that it was better when it was just one because they felt the community was too small for two. Very few mentioned the other carnival and of those who knew about it, most admitted to mainly attending the one downtown. The presence of more than one carnival has decreased the attendance for both carnivals by creating confusion on where or when they are taking place. Margaret, the leader of the Georgia Caribbean American Heritage Coalition, described how the division has had an effect on carnival attendance. She stated, "We have this major division during carnival. Last year there were three carnivals. But what happened was for two of them most people went downtown where it is supposed to be. There was one in midtown, which had a beautiful program but no people because everyone stayed downtown. The Stone Mountain group is mostly from Trinidad and had no one see their road march."

The division has also created misinformation about the carnival and has shaped migrants' views of the event. After my first experience at the carnival in downtown, one of my respondents, Alana, a New York-born migrant of Barbadian-descent in her mid thirties who moved to Atlanta in 1995 after college, informed me that the carnival used to be downtown but currently took place in Conyers, a city located 24 miles east of Atlanta. After I told her that there was one downtown that year, she replied, "I didn't know there was one downtown. I have two Guyanese coworkers who went to the one in Conyers at the Horse Park and they said it was not well put together." I was also told that the second carnival was in different places with significant Caribbean populations, including Decatur, Conyers, Lithonia, and Stone Mountain.

Regardless of the knowledge about the carnivals or their locations, the consensus among the Afro-Caribbean migrants that I interviewed was that the Caribbean community in Atlanta was not big enough to have more than one carnival.

The fact that there are dueling carnivals at all shows the growing influence and presence of the Afro-Caribbean in Atlanta. Whether or not Afro-Caribbeans in Atlanta attend the carnival(s), the important thing is that Atlanta has a thriving Caribbean community that can support an annual carnival. The Afro-Caribbeans in this study reported moving to Atlanta for its black population and that the existence of Caribbean community there did not play a part in their decision to move. Many of them described a Caribbean community in Atlanta as an added bonus of moving there. The existence of a sizeable Caribbean community, Caribbean events, neighborhoods, and businesses adds to the migration experience for Afro-Caribbean migrants in Atlanta and allows them to build and foster a new Caribbean community and identity that incorporates their culture and new home in the South.

Caribbean Organizations

Outside of those that plan and carry out the carnival celebrations, there are a variety of other Caribbean organizations in Atlanta, including cricket and soccer clubs, a Caribbean theater group, and many cultural associations, such as Atlanta Jamaican Association and Dominica Atlanta Cultural Association. These organizations play a major part in developing a pan-ethnic Caribbean social network in Atlanta. They connected the earliest migrants, who arrived around the early 1990s when the population was beginning to grow, and helped them navigate the social landscapes of their new environment. Several respondents that migrated to Atlanta prior to the mid-1990s explained how finding out about the group from others and newspaper ads helped

them connect with other Caribbean people in the area. The Atlanta Caribbean Association (ACA) has the longest history. ACA serves as an umbrella organization for the Caribbean groups and events in the Atlanta area. In the early 1990s, when the migration to the city began to surge, ACA was flourishing and at its peak, but has faded since then. In 2009, when I started my research in Atlanta, ACA membership had dwindled down to a handful of people.²³ The growth of the Caribbean community in Atlanta has been both a good and bad thing for ACA. The late 1990s saw a proliferation of island-specific groups, with Afro-Caribbean immigrants gravitating towards their island-specific organizations. With the influx of new Caribbean immigrants in the Atlanta area, each organization has accumulated a sizeable enough population to sustain an active membership.

The Georgia Caribbean American Heritage Coalition, Incorporated (GCAHC) is a recently created nonprofit organization that is making efforts to bring together Atlanta's Caribbean community and to incorporate the community and its culture into the region. GCAHC was founded in 2006 in response to efforts to establish June as Caribbean American Heritage Month (CAHM). Under the leadership of Dr. Claire Nelson, the Institute for Caribbean Studies (ICS) in Washington, D.C. initiated the campaign to designate June as National Caribbean American Heritage Month recognizing the significance of Caribbean people and their descendants in the history and culture of the United States. ICS began their efforts to establish a National Caribbean American Heritage Month in 1999 with a letter to President Bill Clinton asking to recognize August as National Caribbean American Month. June officially became National Caribbean American Heritage Month when President Bush signed the proclamation on

²³ In 2012, when I tried to access the website for ACA, it was shut down.

June 5, 2006.²⁴ One year later, GCAHC worked with State Representative Billy Mitchell of Stone Mountain to get the resolution adopted by the Georgia General Assembly. The Georgia General Assembly adopted the CAHM Resolution designating June as Caribbean American Heritage Month.²⁵

The main objective of the GCAHC is to organize events in the Atlanta area in observation of CAHM. The founding president of the organization, Valrie Sanders, told me about the events that they organize in Atlanta for Caribbean American Heritage Month. Every year, since its inception, GCAHC has partnered with different Caribbean organizations and the libraries in the metropolitan area to put together events for CAHM.²⁶ The Atlanta Central Library and Auburn Avenue Library on African American Culture and History together host a Caribbean film festival. Throughout the month of June, GCAHC puts on a number of other activities including educational events, dinners, cultural shows, plays, advocacy events—such as getting a representative from the Carter Center to discuss their involvement in the Caribbean—and a small business seminar sponsored by the Small Business Association.

The month is kicked off in Atlanta City Hall with an opening reception that each year highlights a country or region of the Caribbean. When I attended the reception in 2010, they spotlighted the sister islands of Antigua and Barbuda. When I entered City Hall, it had a feel of a Caribbean market. Around the large room, Caribbean organizations had set up table exhibit, displaying their national culture, food, national costumes, and art. After taking a moment of silence for the victims of the 2010 Haiti earthquake, the proclamation of President Obama

²⁴ Since 2006, the White House has issued an annual proclamation, signed by the president, recognizing June as Caribbean American Heritage Month.

²⁵ Georgia was the third state to adopt the CAHM Resolution.

²⁶ Margaret informed me that they are required to work with the local libraries, based on guidelines set up by ICS.

recognizing June as Caribbean American Heritage Month was read. As the program progressed, which included musical performances, an awards ceremony, and fashion show, I noticed that the Mayor of Atlanta Kasim Reed, who took office in 2010, was absent, though the reception was held in City Hall. I was surprised because I had seen the mayors of Boston and New York on floats at each city's Caribbean carnival, showing their support for the event to hopefully garner new supporters and voters among the community. Nancy Foner (2005: 148) states: "Attendance at the West Indian American Day Parade on Eastern Parkway has become a requirement for politicians seeking city and state office and those representing districts with large concentrations of West Indians." Mayor Reed instead sent one of his aides of Jamaican descent to read a letter. In it, he acknowledges the Caribbean community in metro Atlanta and states that Caribbean Americans are aiding to the culture and makeup of Atlanta. However, I saw his absence as a clear sign that the Caribbean community is not fully acknowledged or valued in Atlanta. It is possible that major African American political figures in Atlanta do not view Afro-Caribbean community as potential political assets because of its relatively small size (in comparison to the city's large African American population) and of its residential dispersion across the metro area. For city politicians, Afro-Caribbeans are not big part of their potential voting pool since they have settled mostly in the suburbs rather than in the city. The event had many other leaders in attendance, including the consul of Barbados Edward Lane and State Representative Billy Mitchell, who was recognized for his work with the Caribbean community in Atlanta.

In addition to the reception, there are a number of staple CAHM events. There is a film festival at the Central Library, which each Wednesday for the month of June shows films from different Caribbean countries. The month also includes a Caribbean day at an Atlanta Braves baseball game and a Caribbean Variety Show. Very few of my Afro-Caribbeans respondents

knew of GCAHC or the Caribbean American Heritage Month events. Those who did were involved in cultural organizations, such as the Atlanta Jamaican Association or the Dominica Atlanta Cultural Association. Even the Afro-Caribbeans that I interviewed did not know about the organization or its events, GCAHC is making great strides to celebrate Atlanta's diverse Caribbean community and to educate the greater Atlanta community on the Caribbean culture, history, and identity.

In early 2010, the Georgia Caribbean American Heritage Coalition undertook a major advocacy project: the Georgia Caribbean American Complete Count initiative for the 2010 US Census. Following a directive from Dr. Nelson of the Institute of Caribbean Studies, GCAHC created a committee under the umbrella of Caribbean American Heritage Month and worked with local Caribbean organizations and churches with large Caribbean congregations to spread the word about the initiative to get Afro-Caribbeans to write in Caribbean or West Indian as their ethnicity on the US Census. The committee also worked closely with the Census Bureau and its local representatives to put on events in the Atlanta area. Using Census funds, the Georgia Caribbean American Complete Count Committee organized a large Caribbean Count event at the DeKalb Technical College Center in March 2010 in the heart of the Decatur/Stone Mountain area, where large number of Afro-Caribbeans in Atlanta lived. The committee made great efforts to cater to the community's needs by providing different services, along with information about the Census. They invited the Caribbean consulate and local elected officials. They also got a representative of the US Census Southeast region to take part in a Q&A session. The event also featured a Caribbean real estate broker, two Caribbean lawyers who gave legal advice about getting US citizenship, some preventive medicine representatives, including Dr. Edward Layne who is the honorary consul of Barbados in Georgia, and a CPA, the treasury of the group, giving

tax advice. I had not heard about the event, when it occurred. But, according to Valrie, the event was successful and attracted about 900 people.

The Caribbean Count event was featured in the city's major newspaper Atlanta Journal-Constitution (AJC) on the cover of the Metro section of the Sunday issue on March 14, 2010. There was a large picture of the Caribbean Count event on the front cover of the section and several other pictures from the event with short taglines about the Georgia Caribbean American Complete Count Committee. However, the accompanying article focused on the work of the Asian and Latino Census Complete Count groups and didn't discuss the work of the Georgia Caribbean American Complete Count Committee. The Caribbean Count group was only featured in the article's pictures. This unequal treatment raises questions on how Afro-Caribbean immigrants are viewed and treated by the larger Atlanta community in relation to more racially visible immigrant newcomers, such as Latinos and Asians. Even with their efforts to build a distinct community identity and counted as a distinct ethnic group in Atlanta, many Afro-Caribbeans feel their presence is not being recognized by the larger community. Few of my respondents knew about the Caribbean Census efforts in the Atlanta. None told me that they attended any of the events, with the exception of Margaret. But one of my respondents explained to me why the Caribbean Complete Count initiative was important for the Caribbean community in Atlanta. Andrew stated, "We are trying our best [to make the Caribbean presence known in Atlanta] through the Census to motivate people to make that identity as Caribbean so we can be one to be reckoned with, politically and economically."

Their development of Caribbean organizations could create tension with the broader black community in Atlanta. These organizations are important sites for the formation of a Caribbean community because they are generally based on the existence of a Caribbean

population and reinforce Caribbean identities—both their specific national/island-based identities and their pan-ethnic identities as Afro-Caribbeans/West Indians/Caribbean people. Their cultural activities—dinners, dances, outings, pageants, and sporting events--emphasize a distinct Caribbean culture and identity and differentiate Afro-Caribbeans from African Americans (Basch 1987). The existence of these cultural organizations can be misread by African Americans in Atlanta as a sign that Afro-Caribbean migrants do not want to be incorporated into the larger black community. However, I never got the sense from the Afro-Caribbeans that I interviewed for this study that they sought to be apart from African Americans or the African American community. Indeed, many of the migrants sought out Atlanta precisely to be a part of the larger black community, i.e., because Atlanta was a black mecca. Though they identified ethnically as Caribbean or West Indian, which Afro-Caribbeans have been shown to use as a form of distancing, they also identified as black people and saw themselves as part of the larger black community in Atlanta.

CARIBBEAN CONNECTIONS

Afro-Caribbean's migration experience is not a simple story of leaving one country for good and settling in another, abandoning their former lives. Most Afro-Caribbean immigrants engage in various kinds of transnational activities that connect them to their countries of origin (Olwig 2007; Basch 2001; Vickerman 2002; Sutton 1992). Developments in communication and cheap flights have greatly facilitated their ability to sustain strong relationships with families and friends who live thousands of miles away. Even as they become incorporated into the local society, they stay closely connected to families and friends in the Caribbean through telephone communication, regular remittances to family members, and involvement in events in their

former communities. Such connections help them to deal with emotional and material challenges of living in a new place and remain embedded in their former communities at the same time that they develop new networks in their new home. As a result, migrants are able to form a sense of belonging to multiple communities. Through their ties to the cities that they migrated from, they do not have to rely completely on the services, events, and goods available in Atlanta to maintain their Caribbean identity and cultural practices and traditions.

Fairly cheap airfares and Atlanta's major international airport--the busiest airport in the country—makes it easier for Afro-Caribbean migrants to visit “home” (i.e., the Caribbean and/or the cities that they left) with great frequency and to go back for family emergency, special celebrations, leisure, or to get things they need, such as food, music, or clothes that they can't find easily in Atlanta. As a hub for Air Tran and Delta, airlines that offer daily flights to New York at rates around \$200, Atlanta's airport makes it easy for migrants to travel between the two cities. Many migrants told me that they would visit the Caribbean a few times a year and get the Caribbean-style products they desired for themselves and bring them back to Atlanta; and if they could not go, they would have family members ship the products to them. (Although the population and the availability of Caribbean products in Atlanta have grown, there are some products that are easier and cheaper to get from their former communities, especially traditional Caribbean immigrant destinations like New York and Miami.) Being able to easily go back to their former communities shapes their experience of living in Atlanta. Many Afro-Caribbeans I interviewed told me that connections to their “old” lives greatly influenced their feelings of satisfaction with their new lives in Atlanta. As they travel between Atlanta and their former communities, Afro-Caribbean migrants are forming connections between Atlanta and other major cities, including New York, Miami, Boston, and other places they migrated from.

A Little NYC in Atlanta

For transplanted Afro-Caribbeans in Atlanta, their experiences in living in another city complicate and influence their community development. In the case of those who moved from New York, it is possible to migrate to Atlanta and to live around and socialize mainly with other Afro-Caribbean New Yorkers. When I moved to Atlanta, nearly all of the people I knew or met in the city were New York transplants. I met very few native residents of Atlanta during the year I lived in the southern city. New York-origin Afro-Caribbean migrants have seemingly transplanted their Caribbean New York social circles and lifestyles to Atlanta. They continue to attend parties and events with mostly other Caribbean New Yorkers and live in areas with others from their old New York neighborhoods. For Afro-Caribbean newcomers from New York, Atlanta can seem like a suburb of the New York tri-state area because of the large number of people who have migrated to the city from New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. In fact, several migrants described Atlanta as “Little New York.” Because of the active nightlife and the many opportunities to socialize with New Yorkers in the city, Atlanta has become like, as one migrant described it, “a New York away from New York.” It is quite possible to attend parties, clubs, and events in Atlanta hosted by an Afro-Caribbean migrant and find the majority of the partygoers are Caribbean New Yorkers.

The idea of Atlanta being “New York away from New York” or a Little New York influenced several of my New York-origin respondents’ decisions to move to the southern city. Karen, a New York-born transplant of Kittitian descent in her early thirties who moved to the southern city from Los Angeles in 2002, told me: “I knew Atlanta would be a smarter choice for

me because of all of the African Americans or Caribbean people who have migrated down here, it makes it sort of like a mini-New York.” For some of the New York-origin Afro-Caribbean migrants in this study, Atlanta being a Little New York helped with their resettlement process. When I interviewed Kerry, a migrant of Trinidadian descent in her late thirties, in the fall of 2009 in a Borders Bookstore near her home in Cobb County, she explained how Atlanta being a Little New York eased the transition to her new life in the southern city:

I actually moved to Atlanta in 1994 and I used to visit a lot before I moved here. So when I came, I liked it and a lot of my friends went to school at the AUC. So I would visit them and I thought that I could do this because it's like New York away from New York. They were from New York too. I came down here to visit a lot and I ended up getting a promotion at my job in 1994, which is why I moved then. I was planning to move in 1996 but ended up moving two years early because it was easy. I just had to pack my bags and head here. I already had the job waiting since I was already with the company. So it was a seamless transition for me to make the move.

Whether or not other Afro-Caribbean migrants (not from New York) view Atlanta as a Little New York or recognize that there is a growing Caribbean New York community in Atlanta is unclear. The only migrants in this study to refer to Atlanta as a Little New York were migrants from New York. What is clear, however, is the importance of New York as a place and social and cultural center of the Caribbean diaspora (Olwig 2001). A large number of the Afro-Caribbean migrants that I interviewed for this study (13 out of 33) were connected to New York in some way—they either were born there or lived there for a significant amount of time (at least a decade) before they moved to Atlanta. Even after they move out and away from the city, New York continues to be central point for these Afro-Caribbean migrants in Atlanta. It makes it seem like New Yorker is an ethnicity that Afro-Caribbeans migrants are bringing with them to Atlanta and interchanging with their racial and ethnic identities. This point is significant, because it highlights a major difference between New York-origin Afro-Caribbean migrants and those from

other places. As I discussed in the previous section, most of Afro-Caribbean migrants from New York who live in Atlanta still maintain their social and cultural ties to New York by not only socializing mostly with other Afro-Caribbean New Yorkers in Atlanta, but also traveling back to the city several times a year to maintain their family and friends still living there, to shop, and attend social events (e.g., birthdays, baptisms, funerals, and holidays) and cultural events (e.g., carnival). Interestingly, despite the length of time they have lived in Atlanta, and their claims of being happy with their life in Atlanta and having no plans to move back to New York (or anywhere in the future), Afro-Caribbean migrants from New York who live in Atlanta still maintain an identity as Caribbean New Yorkers.

Though sticking to their old communities may create a barrier in between the black immigrant community and those in the larger African American community, it has been helpful for developing a community among the Afro-Caribbeans in Atlanta, since so many have moved to the area from New York. Being among other Caribbean New Yorkers in Atlanta creates a feeling of home and familiarity for migrants, making the transition to life in Atlanta easier.

CONCLUSION

Afro-Caribbean migrants are having a significant impact on Atlanta in a number of ways. Since they began migrating to Atlanta in the 1990s, Afro-Caribbean migrants have been able to create an economic, social, political, and cultural presence throughout the Atlanta metro area. They have transplanted their cultural practices to create a Caribbean community in Atlanta. In Atlanta and its surrounding suburbs, one can now find Caribbean restaurants, bakeries, markets, newspapers, radio programs, nightclubs featuring soca, reggae, dancehall, and calypso, and

annual carnivals/parades celebrating the various Caribbean cultures and communities present there. The Atlanta Caribbean Carnival is a prime example of their impact. Developed when the Afro-Caribbean population in Atlanta was relatively new and growing, the carnival was Atlanta's first ethnic festival and the first sign of Afro-Caribbean immigrants' presence in the city. There are different things, activities, events, organizations, networks, and practices that Afro-Caribbean migrants were using to develop and maintain a connection to their Caribbean cultures in their new home in the South. These Caribbean organizations and events have facilitated Afro-Caribbeans' creation of community in Atlanta.

Afro-Caribbean migrants have to adapt and develop new Caribbean identity and practices as they move from their former communities to Atlanta. The Caribbean community that is forming in Atlanta is heavily influenced by its members' connections and lives in other Caribbean communities outside of the region. Many Afro-Caribbean migrants, especially those who moved from New York, are also maintaining strong ties to the Caribbean communities that they left—through frequent travel to visit family and friends, to participate Caribbean events, and to purchase Caribbean products and goods (not easily available in Atlanta). As one Afro-Caribbean migrant described to me, the Caribbean community is an added bonus of living in Atlanta. The existence of a Caribbean Atlanta—Caribbean neighborhoods, businesses, events, and organizations—help Afro-Caribbean migrants in Atlanta to maintain Caribbean cultural identities, feel more at home, and shape a new Caribbean identity and cultural life that incorporates the communities that they left behind and their new home in the South.

CHAPTER 5: AFRO-CARIBBEANS' INCORPORATION INTO ATLANTA

“Lord, please bless our political leaders as they deal with the pressing issue of immigration. We pray to the Lord.” I heard this statement during a May 2010 Sunday mass in a Catholic church (with a predominantly white middle-class congregation) in the Buckhead neighborhood of Atlanta, and my attention was roused. At first, I wasn’t sure what I had heard. I thought the speaker was going to ask God for help regarding the recession or the war, but instead – I heard correctly! - the prayer was for help with immigration. Although I don’t attend church as much as my mother (or my grandmother) would want or like me to, I don’t recall ever hearing any prayers that identified immigration as a problem in need of God’s guidance and help. Normally, prayers are made for those who are sick, homeless, unemployed, troubled, or recently deceased, or for issues that the church deems as “sins,” or against what is said in the Bible, such as abortion and homosexuality. The prayer was a telling statement about the public opinion of the influx of immigrants into the southern metropolis.

Immediately I felt uncomfortable. Right there in this place of worship, my family (which includes people at various stages of the immigration process, from resident alien to naturalized citizen) and the Afro-Caribbeans in my study were being labeled as a *problem* that required divine intervention. The large increase in the foreign-born population in Atlanta over the past three decades has stimulated a mixture of reactions and feelings from the city’s native/long-term residents, and the local government. The city has made strides to incorporate their immigrant newcomers, for example, by legally recognizing June as Caribbean American Heritage Month and allowing the CAHM planning committee to use city hall (for free) for the opening reception.

However, the message I received in this one church in the Buckhead section of Atlanta was that immigrants were not welcome.

In this chapter, I discuss Afro-Caribbean immigrants' experiences of incorporation into Atlanta. Immigrant incorporation can occur along multiple paths with different segments of the population, and at varying rates, depending both on the characteristics of the immigrant group and how the group is received (Vickerman 1999; Lorick-Wilmot 2010). I argue that Afro-Caribbeans' reception and incorporation into Atlanta are shaped by the presence of other "visible" immigrant newcomers, particularly Latino immigrants, and even more so, by their relationship with the African American community in Atlanta. Though local attitudes and policies towards immigrants have become more and more hostile in recent years, such as new laws in Georgia, similar to Arizona's S.B. 1070, aimed at restricting undocumented immigrants' access to jobs, social services, and housing, Afro-Caribbean immigrants may be insulated from the hostile anti-immigrant attitudes and policies brewing in the region due to their relationship with the African American community in Atlanta, especially their ability to "blend" into the large black community.

SOUTHERN DISTINCTIVENESS

Atlanta is unmistakably in the South. The South has long been a distinct region of the United States, with its own culture, history, politics, and religious traditions. Its distinctiveness, many believe, has been shaped by its history of slavery, secession, and defeat in the Civil War. "After the war the South continued to follow a separate historical path marked by uneven economic development, rural poverty, and an entrenched system of white supremacy and racial segregation" (Odem and Lacy 2009, ix-x). Though the region has experienced dramatic changes

since the 1960s, with growing job markets and an improved racial climate, brought on by the passing of the civil rights bills and significant economic development and investment, the South remains distinct.

The South holds a definitive place in the history and collective memory of many African Americans, as a place where their roots run deep. Anthropologist Carol Stack (1996) argues that African Americans are drawn to the South by a “call to home.” African Americans have long dominated the South’s black population, and have affected the definition and perception of blackness in the region. In the southern United States, (with the exception of southern Florida), “black” means African American. African Americans have shaped the South’s development and made it distinct from other regions of the country. The South has a distinct black culture characterized by soul food, bass-driven music, and mega churches. The large part of American slavery occurred in the South, resulting in a large proportion of African Americans being located in the South during and after slavery. The region was the center of the Civil Rights Movement, with many of its leaders and activities being based in the region.

The region’s long history of violence and racial discrimination against all people of African descent, however, caused more than 6 million African Americans to move from the South to the North, Midwest, and the West, looking for better quality of living, job opportunities, and freedom. The passage of the Civil Rights bills in the 1960s triggered a new era in the region—a New South that is more tolerant towards African Americans and “outsiders.” The New South has been drawing African Americans, and other migrant newcomers, from all over the world to the region. The influx of non-white newcomers from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean into the South has triggered a number of changes to the social landscape of the

region and has ushered in a new “New South” era in the 21st century—that is culturally and racially diverse (Odem and Lacy 2009).

Responses to Immigration

Southern attitudes and policies toward immigration have become increasingly hostile in recent years, heightened by national pre-occupation with “illegal” immigration (Odem and Lacy 2009). Heated debates over undocumented immigrants and immigration reform have polarized southerners’ attitudes toward immigrants, especially Latino immigrants, in the South. For example, all southeastern states have made English their “official language.” “The surge of Latino immigrants to the region also has become fodder for a growing number of hate groups in the South, including a revitalized Ku Klux Klan” (Odem and Lacy 2009: 144). A number of states, most notably Georgia, Mississippi, Alabama, and South Carolina, have passed sweeping legislation targeting undocumented immigrants. In 2006, Georgia passed the Georgia Security and Immigration Compliance Act that requires two things: first, contractors that do business with the state use the federal E-Verify program must verify the legal status of all workers and second, police must check the documentation of all those arrested for a DUI or a felony and report them to federal authorities (Odem and Lacy 2009). In 2011, lawmakers passed the Georgia bill that authorized local and state police to ask for proof of residency and detain those who they suspected were in the country illegally. The law also makes it illegal to intentionally house or transport undocumented persons. The law has been the subject of several protests in the state and federal courts blocked most of the controversial parts of the law. Similarly, educational officials in Georgia enacted a policy to ban undocumented immigrants from attending five of the state’s public colleges, including the highly selective University of Georgia and Georgia Institute of

Technology. The new immigration policies represent the hardening attitudes and southerners have regarding the recent influx of immigrants to the region.

How do these anti-immigrant laws and sentiments in Atlanta affect Afro-Caribbean immigrants? When I asked the Afro-Caribbeans in this study about how they as immigrants were treated in Atlanta, all told me that they had not experienced anti-immigrant prejudice or discrimination in the southern metropolis. They felt this was so because the focus in the city was mainly on the Latino immigrants, since they are more visible as immigrants and/or newcomers than black immigrants. The overwhelming dominance of Mexican immigrants in metro Atlanta—who make up about 27 percent of the foreign-born population in metro Atlanta in 2009—has created a profile of “immigrants” in the region, characterized as a low skill and undocumented population who are likely to put extra pressure on social services and local resources. The result has been the development of anti-immigrant behaviors and policies, such as the Georgia Bill, the ban against undocumented immigrants at five of Georgia’s public colleges, and the prayer for help with the “immigration problem” that I witnessed in the Buckhead Catholic church.

The Georgia anti-immigrant laws have not affected Afro-Caribbeans, since the majority of those who migrate to Atlanta have proper documentation—that is, US citizenship, work or student visas, and resident alien status (according to the 2006-2010 American Community Survey, 60.6 percent of Afro-Caribbeans in metro Atlanta were naturalized US citizens). It is important to note that undocumented Afro-Caribbeans, unlike Latino immigrants, tend to have entered the country legally on travel or student visas and became undocumented from overstaying their visas, opposed to entering the country unauthorized (Foner 2005). According to Nancy Foner (2005: 197), "opposition to immigrants and high levels of immigration is generally

greater when newcomers are seen as being largely undocumented." This may explain why Afro-Caribbeans have not experienced anti-immigrant prejudice or discrimination in Atlanta.

But, just because they have not been experienced anti-immigrant discrimination now does not mean that Afro-Caribbean immigrants may not be affected later. If the state continues to pass restrictive laws aimed at immigrants, the impact of the laws on the Caribbean immigrant community would likely be the migration of a higher number of middle class Afro-Caribbeans, who are more likely to be naturalized citizens or resident aliens, and a lower number of working class or poor Afro-Caribbeans, who are more likely to be undocumented.

Because they are black, Afro-Caribbeans are, in many ways, an invisible immigrant minority (Bryce-Laporte 1972). Several of the Afro-Caribbean immigrants that I interviewed for this study echoed this sentiment of feeling invisible. They felt that they were often seen as part of the larger African American population and that Afro-Caribbeans were not recognized as a distinct ethnic group in Atlanta, despite their efforts to create a distinct Caribbean identity and cultural presence in the city (e.g., the annual Atlanta Caribbean Carnival in the downtown area and other Caribbean events across the Atlanta area). For many Afro-Caribbean migrants coming from New York and other cities with large Caribbean immigrant communities, they experienced a bit of culture shock when they encountered people in Atlanta who were not familiar with Afro-Caribbean peoples and culture. Karen, a New York-born migrant of Kittitian descent who moved to Atlanta from Los Angeles in 2002, explained how the "invisibility" of the Caribbean community in Atlanta impacted Afro-Caribbeans' experiences of incorporation. She stated:

I don't think the Caribbean presence is noticed here. In New York, Caribbean people and culture is just part of what makes New York so fun. It is such an experience to live in. It is just normal. Here it is like Caribbean people don't exist and when they find out someone is from the Caribbean they don't get what that means. And I guess that is why

carnival or anything people try to do here doesn't come off so well because people just don't understand the difference. Get back to race, people who are not—even black people—some people just don't see what the difference is. Aren't all black people just black? What do you mean some are Caribbean and some are not? I think that some people just don't get the difference. I think it is all-- black, white, and Asian. If you don't have an accent, they just look at you like you are regular black person. They don't understand anything about being a Caribbean person versus being a black American. To a lot of people it is just the same. I think that people of all races just look at people at face value and can care less on what makes you who you are. They don't get the Caribbean culture or why they should you acknowledge it. They don't get that there is a huge difference.

Afro-Caribbean immigrants' shared racial phenotype with the city's large native African American population, along with their ability to speak English, obscure their ethnic distinctiveness, allowing them to blend into Atlanta society with little issue or media attention. By contrast, the arrival of Latino and Asian immigrants received significant media and public attention. Art Hansen (2005) asserts that the visibility of the immigrant population varies in Atlanta, depending on language, population size, culture, socioeconomic status, and race. An example of this is the documentary film "Displaced in the New South," directed by David Zeiger and Eric Mofford (1995), which explores the cultural collision between Asian and Latino immigrants and the suburban communities near Atlanta where they settled. The film makes no mention of black immigrants, neither Afro-Caribbean nor African immigrants, arriving to the area at the same time.

For Afro-Caribbeans, invisibility has benefits. Unlike visible immigrants in the area, especially Latinos immigrants in Atlanta, Afro-Caribbeans have not experienced anti-immigrant restrictions or discrimination. Because they easily blend in with the African American community, Afro-Caribbean immigrants are not identified by southern nativists as "threatening" immigrants or outsiders.

AFRO-CARIBBEAN RELATIONS IN ATLANTA

Afro-Caribbeans are a distinct social group in the United States because they are black and they are immigrants—"which influences their adaptation [and incorporation] into the social and economic fabric of their new country" (Mederios Kent 2007: 3). For Afro-Caribbeans in Atlanta, their blackness played a major role in their decision to migrate to the city. As discussed in the preceding chapters, many of the Afro-Caribbean migrants that I interviewed for this study were attracted to Atlanta because it was a black city. What does that mean for Afro-Caribbeans' relationship with African Americans in Atlanta?

Before I arrived in Atlanta, I wondered what kind of relationship Afro-Caribbeans had with African Americans there. Having lived in Boston and New York, two places with large black Caribbean populations, I had experienced first-hand tensions between the Caribbean and African American community. I heard African Americans accuse Afro-Caribbeans of coming to the US and stealing their jobs. I also heard Afro-Caribbeans (including members of my own Caribbean immigrant family) describe African Americans as lazy and believe them to squander the many opportunities available to them in the US.

I found that in Atlanta socioeconomic class has shaped Afro-Caribbeans' relations with African Americans. The special attraction that Atlanta holds for Afro-Caribbean migrants is the existence of a large black middle and professional class population that provides opportunities for networking and upward mobility. Percy Hintzen (2001) found that Afro-Caribbeans in northern California formed relationships with African Americans based along class lines and preferred to associate mostly with professional and middle class African Americans. Associations with middle class African Americans were seen as way to gain access to political, professional, and social networks of professional and middle class African Americans,

particularly in an area where African Americans have political power. In Atlanta, there are many African Americans in positions to make decisions that impact the city and its local neighborhoods. The city's "black community has played a role in making it one of the most popular destinations for elite blacks in search of a city where they are in control" (Graham 1999: 321). As discussed in Chapter Two, Afro-Caribbean migrants in Atlanta are largely middle class, college-educated, and step or "twice" migrants, who had previously lived in other US cities for several years before moving to Atlanta. Because they lived in other US cities before coming to Atlanta, these Afro-Caribbean migrants see the importance of living in a city where African Americans are doing well. They are aware of the advantages of working and forming strong connections with African Americans in Atlanta in order to achieve their own socioeconomic mobility. For example, several of the Afro-Caribbean migrants interviewed for this study reported being members of black Greek-lettered sororities and fraternities and using these networks of fraternity brothers and sorority sisters, in their former communities and in their new home, to help them get jobs, find places to live, and find friends after they moved to Atlanta.

Afro-Caribbean migrants are building relationships with African American professionals in Atlanta and are working with them to create a space within the city that highlights their culture and history and most importantly their presence in the southern city. Though they have been creating their own cultural organizations and events, they need the support of African American community, particularly the African American politicians that represent Stone Mountain and other areas with a high concentration of Afro-Caribbean residents, to get their community's objectives accomplished in Atlanta.

A few of the Afro-Caribbean leaders in Atlanta that I spoke to mentioned working extensively with the African American politician State Representative Billy Mitchell, who represents Stone Mountain, the center of the Caribbean community in Atlanta, helping them in

organize certain large Caribbean community events. Valrie Sanders, the founding president of the Georgia Caribbean American Heritage Coalition, which organizes the CAHM events, explained to me how Caribbean organizations in Atlanta have to work with the local African American politicians due the size of the community and its lack of political clout in the southern metropolis: “We really have to depend on other people like State Representative Billy Mitchell and Hank Johnson (Congressman representing the 4th Congressional District of Georgia-DeKalb County with parts of Rockdale and Gwinnett) and people with large Caribbean constituencies. If we want to get anything done, we have to work with them or through them because they are the African American elected officials that represent our areas.” One of the major collaborations between the community and Representative Mitchell is the initiative for the recognition of June as Caribbean American Heritage Month in Georgia. They helped write the legislation and worked with him to get the resolution adopted by the Georgia General Assembly. With Rep. Billy Mitchell’s help, Georgia was the third state to write the legislation to get June recognized as Caribbean American Heritage Month. Thus, Afro-Caribbean migrants’ relationship with African American political leaders, like Rep. Billy Mitchell, has been a major factor in the Afro-Caribbean community development in Atlanta, since they have had to work with them to get organize major Caribbean events such as Caribbean American Heritage Month, and to address their community interests.

However, being “black” in a black mecca, does not mean that all African Americans in Atlanta have accepted Afro-Caribbeans. In Chapter Three, I talked about tensions between the two groups caused by some African Americans in Atlanta feeling threatened by the new immigrants. When Ashley, a transplant of Jamaican descent, first arrived in Atlanta in 2007 from Boston, she thought that with the large number of African Americans in positions of power in the city, local companies would be more open than companies in other cities to giving black

applicants a chance. But, she found that opportunities did not come as easily as she expected, and thought African Americans in power saw black migrant newcomers as competition for positions. Though a few Caribbean migrants reported experiencing tensions with African Americans in Atlanta, in truth, the tensions between the two communities have been subtle and minor, not involving violence or major hostility.

Scholars have shown Afro-Caribbeans' relationship with African Americans to be complex and contradictory—an amalgam of conflict and cooperation, distancing and identification, tension and accommodation (Foner 2005; Hintzen 2001; Green and Wilson 1992; Kasinitz 1992; Waters 1999; Vickerman 1999). In the early 1900s, when they first began to settle in the New York, Afro-Caribbean immigrants tended to distance themselves from African Americans by forming their own clubs, living together in Caribbean ethnic enclaves within larger black neighborhoods, such as Harlem, and focused on cultural markers such as listening to Caribbean music, dressing in tropical clothing, playing cricket, and celebrating British holidays to distinguish themselves from African Americans (Watkins-Owens 1996). Afro-Caribbeans attempt to distance themselves from African Americans to avoid stereotypes and discrimination and experienced benefits from identifying ethnically and distinguishing themselves from African Americans in forms of job opportunities and positive receptions from white employers (Waters 1999). However, the longer immigrants stay in America, the more likely they are to experience discrimination and to identify with African Americans (Vickerman 1999).

The lack of major hostility between the two groups is likely due to that the fact that the Caribbean community is significantly smaller than the African American community in Atlanta and do not pose a significant threat politically or numerically to the African American community—which fought long and hard to gain political power and control of the local government. Though Atlanta has become more ethnically diverse with the influx of Asian and

Latino immigrants to the area, the political landscape is still divided along the black-white binary, particularly in the city government. When I moved to Atlanta in 2009, the big talk around town was over the mayoral election between black candidate Kasim Reed and white candidate Mary Norwood and the possibility of a white candidate winning the election and breaking the succession of black mayors since the election of the first black mayor of Atlanta, Maynard Jackson, in 1974. So, being black facilitates Afro-Caribbeans' relationship with African Americans, since they add to the numbers of black voters in Atlanta, giving African American politicians more potential voters and political power.

Green and Wilson (1992) argue that inter-group relations between African Americans and Afro-Caribbean immigrants are inextricably linked to larger issues of black politics and empowerment. In the next two decades, tensions in Atlanta's increasingly ethnically diverse black community are likely to surface as the Afro-Caribbean population grows larger and larger, reaches a critical mass, and becomes a significant part of the electorate in the Atlanta area. Afro-Caribbeans are likely to mobilize as an ethnic group to gain their own share of political influence to speak for own (Caribbean immigrant) interests, as their counterparts in New York have done (Kasinitz 1992; Rogers 2006). Thus far, a few Afro-Caribbeans have been elected to political offices in the Atlanta area, but it has been in the outer suburbs and not in the city of Atlanta. In Clayton County, Jewel C. Scott, a Jamaican immigrant, served as the first female and Caribbean American district attorney of Clayton County from 2005 to 2008. Also in Clayton County, Wole Ralph, who is of Guyanese heritage, was, at the time I was in Atlanta in 2010, the Vice Chairman of Clayton County Board of Commissioners. Cyril Mungal, who is Trinidadian, sits on the City Council of Stone Mountain (his term as councilmember expires in 2015). According to one of my respondents, these candidates downplayed their ethnicity and did not use the "ethnic card" to gain votes from the growing Caribbean community. In the case of the black-controlled city

government, where they will face the most political competition with African Americans (in comparison to the whiter outer suburbs, with the exception of Stone Mountain), this may eventually lead to conflict between Afro-Caribbeans and African Americans in Atlanta over representation and political ground, especially if an Afro-Caribbean migrants defeats an African American incumbent. In his study of the political incorporation of Afro-Caribbeans in New York, Reuel Rogers (2006: 248) observes that “when Afro-Caribbeans pursue their own ethnic political representation in New York, for example, African Americans sometimes complain the immigrants are pursuing divisive strategies and undermining the larger struggle for black empowerment”.

Another potential source of tension in the new Atlanta black community is the growing African population. Black African migrants pose a threat politically and economically to the African American in Atlanta. Like the Afro-Caribbean population, Atlanta’s African migrant population quadrupled (from 8,919 to 34,302) between 1990 and 2000, and then more than doubled to 90,013 in 2010 (See Table 4). They also constituted 2.9 percent of the black population in metro Atlanta in 2000 (Logan 2007). They are mostly middle class and with high education rates. While I was in Atlanta, I did not speak to any African migrants and so I do not know their stance on black solidarity and empowerment among the black ethnic groups in Atlanta. But from what I heard from some of my Afro-Caribbean respondents, there was little interaction or collaboration between the African migrants and the rest of the black Atlanta community. Afro-Caribbean migrants tended to keep within their ethnic social circles, that is their Caribbean network of friends and family. The presence of Africans in the area, however, offers Afro-Caribbeans an opportunity to mobilize under a black immigrant identity and to compete with the African American community for political power over the city. The area in Atlanta that this black immigrant political collaboration is likely to happen is in the Stone

Mountain area, since they is a significant concentration of both groups there. A black immigrant coalition among Afro-Caribbeans and Africans could have a major impact not only on the political landscape but also on the cultural landscape of the Atlanta area. The increasing diversification of the city's black community may lead to the dominant black culture morphing from African American culture to a foreign (or Caribbean/African fusion) one. This potential change is very likely to cause tension and hostility to rise between African Americans and the black immigrant groups in Atlanta.

THE NEW GREAT MIGRATION TO THE NEW ATLANTA

The influx of Afro-Caribbean immigrants, and a large, diverse group of other non-white newcomers from across the United States and abroad, to Atlanta has triggered an unprecedented series of changes in the social, cultural, economic, political, and racial landscapes of the southern metro, ushering in a new era in its history---the era of the New Atlanta. The composition and diversity of this great migration to Atlanta, along with its existing large African American population, have transformed Atlanta from a biracial (mainly black and white) society into an international, multi-ethnic metropolis, unlike other major metropolises in the US, such as New York City, Miami, Boston, and Los Angeles. It is a unique metropolis because of the great influence, large size, and relatively high socioeconomic status of its African American population and their role in shaping the city.

Its distinct southern culture has become increasingly popular in the media. A great example is the rise of reality television shows focused on different aspects of life in Atlanta in the past decade, including *Real Housewives of Atlanta*, *Big Rich Atlanta*, *Love and Hip Hop: Atlanta*, *R&B Divas*, and *Married to Medicine*. The success of these shows has pushed Atlanta

and its culture, realities, and distinct sound into the public eye and helped to spread the South's distinct culture and image worldwide. This has helped Atlanta develop in recent years an image as an attractive place to live in the US, especially for black people.

For Afro-Caribbean immigrants, there are several benefits to moving to and settling in Atlanta. Unlike Asian and Latino immigrant newcomers, Afro-Caribbeans' incorporation into Atlanta has been shaped by their relationship with the African Americans. Though southern attitudes and policies towards immigrants have become more and more hostile in recent years, especially towards Mexican immigrants (and those who "look" Mexican), Afro-Caribbean immigrants have been for the most part insulated from the hostile anti-immigrant attitudes and policies brewing in the region because they are black and can "blend" into the large African American community in Atlanta. This is important to note since research on the recent wave of immigration to the South do not touch on the benefits of having or forming a relationship, whether real or superficial, with the large African American in the region. The literature tends to focus on the tensions brewing between immigrant newcomers, particularly Latinos, and the existing African American community or the immigrant newcomers' efforts to distance themselves from African Americans. But I found for Afro-Caribbean immigrants, being racially black, can reap several benefits, regarding their reception and incorporation into the Atlanta area, which other non-white immigrants cannot or may not be able to access. The pushes for making English the official state language, development of policies to restrict undocumented students' access to public universities, and the passing of laws to deny undocumented people public services were all created with a Latino (specifically Mexican) immigrant's face in mind and not a black Caribbean immigrant's face. In the southern debates about immigration, Afro-Caribbeans (and other black immigrants) are invisible, just another black face in an ocean of black faces in Atlanta. Thus, there are benefits to being a black immigrant in a black city.

The recent trend of immigrant settlement in the region are challenging and changing long-held southern attitudes and conceptions of race and immigration. The increasing diversification of the city's black community is transforming black culture and spaces in Atlanta from predominantly African American to a more diverse one. The new great migration of Afro-Caribbeans and other black migrants offer future research opportunities to analyze black culture in a uniquely innovative and fertile context. What is developing there reflects and enhances the diversity of both Atlanta and the South at large.

CONCLUSION

Afro-Caribbeans moving to and settling in Atlanta are participants in two important sociological (internal) migrations. The first is the recent wave of immigrants from Latin America, Africa, and Asia settling in new destinations, particularly in the South and other places that have little prior experience with immigration. The second is the ongoing wave (post-1970) of African Americans moving (in some cases back) to the South in a reversal of the Great Migrations (early 1900s to 1940s), which saw millions of African Americans move from the South to the North, Midwest, and West.

I began this project wanting to answer two main questions. First, what factors led to the emergence of Atlanta as a new destination for Afro-Caribbean immigrants? And second, how the city's large African American population, and its growing non-white immigrant population, affected Afro-Caribbeans' incorporation into the Atlanta area? To answer my research questions, I employed qualitative data collected using in-depth interviews, participant observations, and analysis of the US Census. I interviewed 33 first- and second-generation Afro-Caribbean men and women, who represented a wide range of Caribbean nations, and who migrated to Atlanta from other US cities, the Caribbean, and abroad between 1979 and 2010.²⁷ To understand how Afro-Caribbeans were being incorporated into the southern metropolis, I attended and observed Caribbean events and organized gatherings that took place in the Atlanta metro area between May 2009 and August 2010. I paid special attention to the Atlanta Caribbean Carnival(s), which has taken place in the Atlanta downtown area annually on the Saturday of Memorial Day

²⁷ Jamaica, Trinidad, Guyana, Dominica, Barbados, Haiti, Montserrat, St. Kitts, and the US Virgin Islands

weekend since 1988. I also conducted a descriptive analysis of US census data to trace demographic changes in the Atlanta area, particularly in relation to the Afro-Caribbean population in the area.

What I found was that Afro-Caribbeans were moving to Atlanta for a number of reasons. Many came for economic and educational opportunities that the southern city offered. Migrants were either relocated to the area by their jobs or they moved on their own to take advantage of the booming economy that the city boasted in the 1990s—before and after the 1996 Summer Olympics. A major factor in their migration to Atlanta was the search for a better quality of life. The Afro-Caribbean migrants in my study were greatly attracted to Atlanta’s warm climate, low cost of living, relaxed, laidback environment, and large living spaces. Almost all of the Afro-Caribbeans that I interviewed identified the city’s opportunity for homeownership—specifically the opportunity to own a large home with expansive surrounding property—as one of the main reasons that they moved to Atlanta. They liked that Atlanta offered them the chance to “get more bang for their buck,” in terms of housing, since in many cases, they were moving from New York City, and other northeast US cities, where a large house with surrounding property could cost close to a million dollars.

I found that the majority of the Afro-Caribbeans migrants in Atlanta were middle class and moving from other US cities, mostly the New York City metro area, Boston, and southern Florida. A small number were emigrating directly from the Caribbean to Atlanta, with the majority coming from Trinidad to attend college in the area. The smallest number of Afro-Caribbean migrants was moving to Atlanta from abroad, particularly from the United Kingdom, to join family that already lived there.

Regardless of where they moved from or why they moved to Atlanta, the largest and most significant factor in Afro-Caribbeans' migration to Atlanta was race. Specifically, Afro-Caribbeans were attracted to Atlanta because to them it was a black city. Before I began this study, I hypothesized that Afro-Caribbeans were drawn to Atlanta by growing number of Afro-Caribbeans that were already there. Instead I found that they were drawn to Atlanta by its core of black professionals, not Caribbean co-ethnics. Being black and immigrant in Atlanta shaped many aspects of Afro-Caribbeans' lives, including the relationships that they formed with other groups, the neighborhoods they resided in, the jobs that they sought, and the kinds of organizations that they joined. The Afro-Caribbeans that I interviewed for this study had a strong sense of their ethnic as well as their racial identity. But, their blackness was the most salient factor in their migration to Atlanta. They were attracted by city's image as a mecca of black prosperity and affluence. They saw the city's large black middle class as an indicator that there were many opportunities for black people to achieve upward socioeconomic mobility.

However, upon arrival, Afro-Caribbean migrants found that the city also had its downsides, including a high black poverty rate (of 33% in 2010) that has existed alongside its great black prosperity (2006-2010 American Community Survey). Atlanta's black community is fraught with minor divisions. The arrival of thousands of black migrant newcomers into Atlanta has also created slight tension between the city's African American residents and Afro-Caribbean migrants (and other black migrant newcomers) fueled by perceived economic competition with and stereotypes of migrant newcomers. In the case of black immigrants, some of the tensions are fueled by heated national debates over undocumented immigrants and immigration reform that have polarized southern attitudes toward immigrants and immigration. In 2011, Georgia lawmakers passed a bill that authorized local and state police to ask for proof of

residency and detain those who they suspected were in the country illegally. Similarly, higher education institutions in Georgia have enacted a policy to ban undocumented immigrants from attending five of the state's public colleges, including the highly selective University of Georgia and Georgia Institute of Technology. The new immigration policies represent the hardening attitudes and southerners have regarding the recent influx of immigrants to the region.

Fortunately Afro-Caribbeans have not experienced anti-immigrant prejudice or discrimination in the southern metropolis. This is likely due to the fact that the focus of anti-immigration debate has been predominantly on Latino immigrants. The overwhelming dominance of Mexican immigrants in the metro Atlanta area—who make up about 27 percent of the foreign-born population in metro Atlanta in 2009—has created an image of “immigrants” in the region, characterized as a low skilled, undocumented, and Latino. Since the majority of Afro-Caribbean migrants in Atlanta have proper documentation—that is, US citizenship, work or student visas, and resident alien status—they have been targeted or directly affected by the Georgia anti-immigrant laws and policies.²⁸ Also, Afro-Caribbean immigrants' shared racial phenotype with the city's large native African American population, along with their ability to speak English, have obscured their ethnic distinctiveness and allowed them to blend into Atlanta with little issue or media attention. By contrast, the arrival of Latino and Asian immigrants received significant media attention and public reaction. In Atlanta, the visibility of the immigrants varies, depending on language, population size, culture, socioeconomic status, and race (Hansen 2005). For Afro-Caribbeans, being black in Atlanta has served as a cloak of invisibility. Unlike visible immigrants in the area, like Latinos and Asians, Afro-Caribbeans did not experience anti-

²⁸ According to the 2006-2010 American Community Survey, 60.6 percent of Afro-Caribbeans in metro Atlanta were naturalized US citizens.

immigrant restrictions or discrimination because they “looked” African American, and therefore were not identified by southern nativists as “threatening” immigrants or outsiders.

As I discussed in the preceding chapters, Afro-Caribbean migrants in Atlanta are largely middle class, college-educated, and lived in other US cities for several years before moving to Atlanta. From their experiences in other US cities, Afro-Caribbean migrants in Atlanta understand the importance of living in a city where African Americans are doing well. In order to achieve their community and personal goals, Afro-Caribbean migrants have been building relationships with African American professionals and politicians in Atlanta and working with them to create Caribbean spaces within the region that mark their culture, history and presence in Atlanta. Their biggest accomplishments have been the creation of the annual Atlanta Caribbean Carnival and the recognition of June as Caribbean American Heritage Month in the Georgia legislature. Also social institutions and organizations, such as churches and schools, have been working to build bridges between Afro-Caribbeans and African Americans in the city and helping to ease any tensions between the two black ethnic groups, through education and community activities.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

While this dissertation opens up dialogue about new black migration to Atlanta and presents a picture that counteracts one of a monolithic black community in the South, it does not include the voices of all the black migrants. I purposely didn't include African Americans, Africans, or Afro-Caribbeans from non-English speaking countries. Including those groups would have provided a complete understanding of black migration to Atlanta, showing the

similarities and differences among the groups and within the groups. It also would have provided a complete understanding of the impact of new black migration on the city's existing black community.

Another limitation of the research project is the lack of diversity in socioeconomic class among the Afro-Caribbean participants. Most of the migrants were middle class. I aimed to include a diverse pool of Afro-Caribbean migrants in this study in terms of nationality, gender, generation, age, education, and class. However, the method that I used to gather participants for the study greatly influenced the type of people that I spoke to. Using a snowballing method ensure that I received people open to talking to me because I was referred to them by a friend or family member, but also put the selection process in the hands of the people giving me the contacts. So, they could choose not to give me the contact information of people who were undocumented or working class, or whom they considered as reflecting badly on them and the Afro-Caribbean community in Atlanta. It would have added to my analysis and the broadness of my study, if working class, poor, and undocumented Afro-Caribbeans were included.

The findings of this study have several implications for future research. New immigrants challenge traditional image of region as just white and black. Helen Marrow (2008) finds that southern response to new immigration has seen tensions arise between African Americans and Latinos, casting African Americans as antagonists of horizontal racism with Latinos. Future research needs to be done to examine the responses of African Americans in the South to Afro-Caribbeans, and other black immigrants moving to the region and into their communities.

In this study, I argue that race has played a large and significant role in shaping the migration of Afro-Caribbeans to Atlanta and the outcomes faced by those participating in this migration. Future research should be done to understand if the same is true for Africans and

Afro-Latino immigrants. There is also much to be explored on the role of African American institutions and leaders in helping to incorporate Afro-Caribbeans and other black immigrants into Atlanta. Lorick-Wilmot (2010) argues that community organizations shape Afro-Caribbean immigrants' understandings of race and ethnic identity and show them how to best use these ethnic and race identity options to achieve their goals of success. Further research needs to be done to explore how black institutions in Atlanta, such as churches, sororities and fraternities, and social clubs, that have been pillars in the city's African American community, play any role in the lives of Caribbean immigrants and in navigating their new lives in the South.

This study offers benefits for policy makers and leaders in Atlanta, and the South, experiencing new migration. It allows leaders to see a side of one of the new migrants to the region that is often overlooked in the literature and media coverage on new migration to Atlanta—both of black migration to the South and of immigrants moving to, and settling in, “new destinations.” Public perceptions of Afro-Caribbeans and other black immigrants may be broadened through an understanding of how important race and the image of the city as a good place for black people were in their decision to migrate to Atlanta and their incorporation into the city. Policy makers and community leaders may see how they may best serve the needs of its new black immigrant population through a better understanding of the population's experiences living in the Atlanta. Afro-Caribbeans can also benefit from this research by seeing their stories being told and recognizing they have played an important part in the shaping of a multi-ethnic Atlanta, and a New South.

Appendix

Table 1: 10 US Metros with Largest Afro-Caribbean Population, 1990-2000

<i>Metro Area</i>	<i>Afro-Caribbean</i>		<i>Percentage of Black Total</i>		<i>Percentage of Metro Total</i>		<i>Growth</i>
	<i>1990</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>1990</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>1990-2000</i>
New York, NY	403,198	566,770	20.3%	25.7%	4.7%	6.1%	40.6%
Miami, FL	105,477	153,255	28.5%	34.4%	5.4%	6.8%	45.3%
Fort Lauderdale, FL	55,197	150,476	29.6%	43.4%	4.4%	9.3%	172.6%
Boston, MA-NH	40,825	62,950	20.6%	25.6%	1.3%	1.8%	54.2%
Nassau-Suffolk, NY	32,210	60,412	17.7%	25.5%	1.2%	2.2%	87.6%
Newark, NJ	29,818	55,345	7.3%	12.1%	1.6%	2.7%	85.6%
West Palm Beach-Boca Raton, FL	20,441	49,042	19.8%	30.3%	2.4%	4.4%	141.7%
Washington, D.C.-MD-VA-WV	32,440	48,900	3.1%	3.7%	0.8%	1.0%	50.7%
Orlando, FL	14,872	42,531	10.4%	18.4%	1.2%	2.6%	186.0%
Atlanta, GA	8,342	35,308	1.1%	2.9%	0.3%	0.9%	323.3%

Source: Logan 2007:53.

Table 2: *Social and Economic Characteristics of Afro-Caribbean Population in Metro Area, 1990-2010*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Median Household Income</i>	<i>Percentage Homeowners</i>	<i>Percentage College Educated</i>
1990	\$46,267	57.9%	27.1%
2000	\$50,911	61.9%	29.9%
2010	\$58,427	63.0%	33.3%

Note: Figures for median household income are in constant dollars for 1990, 2000, and 2010.

Source: Logan 2007: 63; 2008-2012 American Community Survey.

Table 3: *Size of Populations in Metro Atlanta, 1990-2010*

	<i>1990</i>		<i>2000</i>		<i>2010</i>	
	<i>Total Pop</i>	<i>% of Total Pop</i>	<i>Total Pop</i>	<i>% of Total Pop</i>	<i>Total Pop</i>	<i>% of Total Pop</i>
<i>Total Population</i>	2,959,950		4,112,198		5,268,860	
Non-Hispanic white	2,101,441	71.0%	2,460,740	59.8%	2,920,480	55.4%
Non-Hispanic black	742,770	25.1%	1,199,456	29.2%	1,707,913	32.4%
Hispanic	58,215	2.0%	268,451	6.5%	547,400	10.4%
Non-Hispanic Asian	51,289	1.8%	155,117	3.8%	254,307	4.8%
Foreign-born	117,253	4.0%	425,519	10.3%	716,434	13.6%
Afro-Caribbean	8,342	0.3%	35,308	0.9%	90,254	1.7%

Source: Data derived from the 1990 and 2000 US Decennial Censuses, made available through Diversity in Black and White, Lewis Mumford for Comparative Urban and Regional Research; 2010 US Census.

Table 4: *Composition of Black Populations in Metro Atlanta, 1990-2010.*

<i>Black Ethnicity</i>	<i>1990</i>		<i>2000</i>		<i>2010</i>	
	<i>Total</i>	<i>% of Black Total</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>% of Black Total</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>% of Black Total</i>
African American	725,509	97.7%	1,129,846	94.2%	1,527,646	89.4%
Afro-Caribbean	8,342	1.1%	35,308	2.9%	90,254	5.3%
African	8,919	1.2%	34,302	2.9%	90,013	5.3%
Black Ethnic Total	742,770		1,199,456		1,707,913	

Source: Data derived from the 1990 and 2000 decennial censuses, made available through Diversity in Black and White, Lewis Mumford for Comparative Urban and Regional Research. Data for 2010 derived from 2008-2012 American Community Survey.

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