

**BLACK, FOREIGN BORN AND ELECTED:
WEST INDIANS IN NEW JERSEY'S
POLITICAL OFFICES**

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Black, Foreign-Born and Elected: West Indians in New Jersey's Political Offices

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This is the first research project in New Jersey to focus on West Indian elected officials. The primary goals were to gain an understanding of how they campaigned for office, whether and how they have maintained ties to their ethnic communities and how they self-identify. After exploring various facets of their lives including their immigration to the U.S., education, employment, desire to run for office and the political structure of New Jersey, I find that the typical West Indian elected official is a well-educated, oftentimes entrepreneurial, middle-aged community activist who shares strong ethnic ties in the States and back home. More often than not, they gain the confidence and support of key local political actors who help them to successfully secure office in both majority white and majority co-ethnic communities.

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Black, Foreign-Born and Elected: West Indians in New Jersey's Political Offices

Introduction

When I began my research, I was directed to the quaint town of South Toms River, in Ocean County, along the coast of the Jersey Shore, to locate a potential respondent. It is here that I would make outreach to the newly elected Mayor Joseph M. Champagne. I called the City Hall offices to locate him, but first asked if in fact, a Caribbean or West Indian man was elected in this town? The woman on the receiving end of my call enthusiastically replied, "Yes. We have a Haitian-American as our Mayor" and gave me his contact information.

Not only does Mayor Champagne serve his community with the same enthusiasm and drive that brought him on a journey from Haiti through New York, Italy and Vermont to South Toms River, but he has not forgotten his roots. When visitors and residents enter City Hall to access or inquire about services, or participate in the legislative process, they are greeted with the flags of the United States, Ocean County and Haiti. In a town with about 3,600 residents, 70% white, a non-existent West Indian population and a majority of unaffiliated voters, how did a West Indian come to be elected Mayor?

This is the first research project in New Jersey to examine West Indian elected officials and how they have accessed elected office. I trace the path of eight elected officials in local office at the time of my research. These case studies reveal important

and surprising findings, some of which stand in contrast to extant studies on candidate profiles, minority candidate recruitment and self-identification. But before I delve further into the project, I first present a brief synopsis of West Indian migration to the United States and specifically to the New York/New Jersey area.

West Indian migration to the United States began in the early part of the 20th century because of the development of the banana industry by the United Fruit Company (UFC) (Palmer, 1995). Palmer argues that Caribbean men migrated to other parts of the Caribbean, especially Panama, to seek employment in the construction and agricultural trades. However, once boats began delivering UFC bananas to ports along the Atlantic, most notably New York, the inter-Caribbean migration shifted to the United States. Upon arriving, most West-Indian immigrants settled in African-American neighborhoods most notably Harlem, New York (Reid 1939). They soon assimilated into African-American and the larger American cultures (Bryce-Laporte, 1972, 1984). The migrants, mostly men, came with education and skills that enabled them to adjust quickly to the mixed classes of the Harlem community by securing jobs, housing and becoming involved in social activities (Reid, 1939).

During this adaptation process, West Indians joined established local political organizations such as the United Democratic Club and the newly created African Blood Brotherhood, a radical black liberation organization, optimistic about gaining political, economic and social power. However, as Bryce-Laporte notes, the many achievements of West Indians have gone relatively unnoticed thus causing them to suffer a *dual*

invisibility (Bryce-Laporte, 1972). Because of the complexion of the majority of West Indians at this time, they were phenotypically indistinguishable from Black Americans. Outside observers subsumed their “West Indianness” under the native Black umbrella. Forty years later, and for the purposes of this thesis, are Bryce-Laporte’s conclusions still accurate in New Jersey? Are West Indian accomplishments still unnoticed? What has inspired West Indians to run for elected office in New Jersey? How do they self-identify? Do they conform to the normative standards for a political candidate? In what way has their “West Indianness” helped or harmed their political aspirations? Do they believe they have the support of the West Indian community? These are some of the questions I take up in this study.

The largest concentrations of Caribbean immigrants in the United States live in New York City and although dispersed throughout the boroughs, most reside in Brooklyn (U.S. Census 2000). Much of the research and scholarship about West Indians has focused on New York City (Kasinitz, 1992; Mollenkopf, 2001; Foner, 1998; Waters, 1999; Rogers, 2006). Outside of New York, New Jersey and Florida have the largest populations of Caribbean immigrants, yet these populations remain under-studied. This research project is among the first to shed light on the political involvement of Caribbean-born West Indian immigrants in New Jersey and how they secure elective office.

Motivation for Research

My experience working with New York City's first two Caribbean-born City Council members, Una S.T. Clarke from Jamaica, elected in 1991, and the Reverend Lloyd Henry from Belize, elected in 1993, sparked my interest in the topic. As a senior at Brooklyn College and a child of Jamaican parentage, I paid close attention to the election of New York City's first Jamaican woman to the New York City Council. She spoke at one of Brooklyn College's Caribbean Student Union events and I was drawn to her charisma, intellect, commitment and passion for social justice for Caribbean people in New York. I asked her if I could volunteer in her office and she accepted. Shortly thereafter, she hired me.

Upon Clarke's historic election, she became the country's de facto Caribbean Ambassador. Her office fielded calls from people across the country and from the Caribbean. The callers' requests ranged from seeking help with landlord/tenant issues and with the immigration process, to invitations to speak to their communities and organizations. She attempted to fill a vacuum of leadership while trying to establish an information clearinghouse that had been both empty and vacant. Caribbean people all over the country sought her expertise and advice. When the opportunity arose to support another Caribbean-born candidate for election to the City Council, in an adjoining district, Clarke played a central role in helping to get the Rev. Lloyd Henry elected. I became a member of his staff working with him on the newly created New York City Council Immigration sub-committee to determine the ways in which the New York City

government and social service providers could better respond to the needs of the City's immigrants.

I came to recognize these candidates' proud display of ethnicity and engagement with the Caribbean community as critical campaign strategies. And since Clarke's election in 1991, other Caribbean-born immigrants in both Brooklyn and Queens continue to win election to local office. As a result, I wondered whether Caribbean-born elected officials in New Jersey also use their ethnicity as a political strategy to win office, if they exhibit demonstrable ethnic pride while campaigning, and/or if they see their West Indian identity as one of many aspects of their identity.

Organization of Research

Immigrant political incorporation has multiple dimensions including naturalization, voting, advocacy and social organization participation. I focus on elected leadership asking how West Indians come to run for local office and what underpins their success. I seek to add to the literature of immigrant political incorporation, expand the scope of research on Caribbean-born elected officials to include those outside of New York City and other large urban areas, ultimately, to consider the feasibility of undertaking a more extensive comparative study to include Caribbean-born elected officials in other states across the country.

This paper analyzes the background of these elected officials, their districts and campaigns to determine what salient factors led them to run for office and how they self-identify. My findings suggest that a combination of length of residence, strong home-country ties and community activism motivate West Indians to run for office. I examine whether and how officials use their ethnic identities to gain support, and find variation – with some using their ethnicity as a campaign strategy and others not making it a focal point of their campaign.

This paper has six chapters. The introduction provides a description of the research project, a literature review and the methodology employed to conduct this research. The second chapter provides a synopsis of New Jersey's political structure and demography. The third chapter introduces the elected officials including circumstances surrounding immigration to the US, education and employment. The fourth chapter explores their introduction to political engagement, their ultimate success in securing elective office and potential future political ambitions. The fifth chapter examines their understanding of the importance of ethnic ties and self-identification and the sixth chapter summarizes the findings and presents an outline of future political possibilities for Caribbean Americans in New Jersey and beyond.

Literature Review

“For too long, West Indians and their vote have been taken for granted by the established Black American leadership in New York City.” (Green and Wilson, 1987)

There are numerous bodies of literature in which to situate this research. For this project, I will focus on three key categories: West Indian migration to and political incorporation in the U.S.; candidate emergence and profiles; and immigrant electoral representation in the suburbs.

West Indian Migration and Political Incorporation

Political Scientists have not published much data on West Indian elected officials in the U.S. Furthermore, within the existing scholarship, the focus tends to be on New York City, Brooklyn in particular, and/or “the limited focus on the West Indian success story has dominated the discourse on West Indians” (Jones, 2010). The most prolific scholars, Foner, Kasinitz, Model, Mollenkopf and Waters, have focused on all aspects of this group’s socio-economic assimilation and tangentially on their political incorporation. Rogers argues “political scientists have not given Afro-Caribbean immigrants serious analytical attention despite their status as voluntary immigrants who lay claim to a distinctive ethnic background” (2006, 46). To date, seven Caribbean-born elected officials have assumed office in New York City – one State Senator, two Assemblypersons and four City Council Members. These officials represent(ed) Caribbean-majority districts and some share(d) constituents because of overlapping jurisdictions. Others have identified additional Caribbean-born elected officials in other

states and countries, most notably Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Canada and the United Kingdom.¹

No ethnic minority community is a monolith, nor should these groups be expected to share a singular approach to achieving electoral power. Rocha and Espino (2010, 630) found, when studying some Latino groups, that Latinos residing in an area with a large Latino population coupled with residential segregation increases the probability that Latinos will be engaged with the political system. In Marwell's 2004 study of second generation Dominicans, she found that Dominicans living in the 'Dominican neighborhood' of Washington Heights claimed a distinct ethnic political space more vigorously than Dominicans living in the Brooklyn multi-ethnic community of Bushwick-Williamsburg. Both studies suggest residential segregation plays a role in political engagement and claims of ethnic pride. Which pattern do the Caribbean-born elected officials follow in New Jersey and why? Will communities with high concentrations of West Indians support a West Indian candidate who demonstrates ethnic pride? Will a distinct ethnic political space translate into electoral representation?

To begin to answer these questions, we must first understand how West Indians came to settle in the U.S. There were two major waves of West Indian immigration to the United States, pre-1950 and post-1965, which also coincides with the time that scholars have published much of the research on West Indians. The Immigration Acts of 1918 and 1924 evidenced the anti-immigrant hostility toward immigrants and people of color in the

¹ Trinidadian-born Mervyn M. Dymally served as State Senator in the California state legislature, Lieutenant Governor and in the U.S. House of Representatives.

U.S. after World War I in that they significantly reduced immigration quotas for all but Northern Europeans, ending the first wave of West Indian immigration (Parascandola, 2005, 18). In 1965, the Hart-Cellar Act eliminated the national origins quota system that had been in place since the 1920's thereby allowing for significantly increased immigration from the Caribbean, Asia, Latin America and Africa.

Representative of the pre-1950's research, in 1939, sociologist Ira De Augustine Reid published the first major work on West Indians. *The Negro Immigrant, His Background, Characteristics and Social Adjustment 1899-1937*, detailed the status of West Indians living in Harlem at the turn of the 20th century. His most famous and controversial conclusion, Reid argued that West Indians were overrepresented as entrepreneurs and demonstrated above-average success in Harlem as compared to native Black Americans, led future researchers to use his findings to either 'prove or 'disprove' the notion that Black Caribbean immigrants are more successful than native born Black Americans (Sowell, 1978, 1981, 1994; Watkins-Owens, 1996; Model 1995,2008; James, 2002, Ifantunji, 2014). Representative of the post-1965 research, in 1972, another sociologist, Roy Simon Bryce-Laporte, published "Black Immigrants: The Experience of Invisibility and Inequality" in the *Journal of Black Studies* which argued that black immigrants suffered a double invisibility because of their blackness and foreignness. These works represent the first set of scholarly research on West Indians in the U.S. during the first and second immigration waves and seemed to argue that pre-1965, West Indians appeared to have positive outcomes after immigrating to Harlem while the other laments the lack of a recognized ethnic distinction.

Some twenty years after Bryce-Laporte, researchers began a subtle shift in the research on Black immigrants to include a focus on the group's collective identity and political incorporation. *Caribbean New York: Black Immigrants and the Politics of Race*, authored by sociologist Philip Kasinitz, researched New York City's West Indian community and explored the dynamics between the Caribbean community, political institutions and their potential to gain political access. With a focus on the politics of their ethnic identity, Kasinitz identified a subgroup of this community who "make their living by bridging the gap between the polity and the Caribbean community," naming them "ethnicity entrepreneurs" (163). These ethnicity entrepreneurs, business and community leaders, would be the spokespersons for the West Indian community and serve as power brokers between the community and the established political institutions. Kasinitz concluded that "For the first major wave of West Indian immigrants to the city, an "ethnic rather than a "racial" politics would have been impossible because "as far as society was concerned, race was the paramount issue" (252). He argues that now, the Caribbean community in New York City uses "Ethnicity was a way to create access" (253).

In 2006, Reuel R. Rogers, a political scientist, authored, *Afro-Caribbean Immigrants and the Politics of Incorporation: Ethnicity, Exception, or Exit*. Rogers explored how New York City's Afro-Caribbean immigrants adapted to the political system and whether they follow a pluralist or minority group model. Based on conclusions drawn from the interviews he conducted, Afro Caribbean immigrants do not fit neatly within either paradigm because of their focus on economic interests, education

and symbolic representation (252) and because of their “exit option”, their ability to return to their home country if unable to cope with American racism (196). He defines this process as the “differential political incorporation” model (Rogers, 2000). He also argues that for Afro-Caribbeans, “seeing coethnics in positions of political influence may have greater symbolic significance for them at the moment than for their native-born counterparts (248).” Rogers also notes that “Afro-Caribbeans and African-Americans are concentrated in many of the same election districts” which can tend to lead to interethnic tensions for access to resources. Rogers raises the important distinction between neighborhood-based versus at large elections and argues that at-large elections in Hartford produced less interethnic tensions than the New York City neighborhood-based elections (138).

In an article on immigrant-minority relations in New York and Hartford, Rogers argues that Afro-Caribbean leaders have been capitalizing on the population’s increasing numbers and political resources to make serious bids for elective office (Rogers, 2009, 100). He further notes that in New York, the electoral system is designed to reward political candidates who make ethnic or racial group appeals to galvanize voters (101) while arguing that the at-large system of elections in Hartford appears to encourage politicians to downplay identity-based politics or at least balance group-centered efforts with broader appeals (108). Mollenkopf and Hochschild contend in their book *Bringing Outsiders In*, that “successful immigrant political incorporation is a two-way process where immigrants receive some political and policy outcomes that they want and thereby

change some elements of the host country at the same time that they themselves are changed through their participation in the political arena” (31).

These works highlight the ways in which West Indians have become incorporated into urban communities, learned the socio-economic and political processes, established and demonstrated distinct political identities which has allowed for some access to electoral representation and the ways in which these actions may affect policy outcomes. My research findings will discuss the role of these issues in my subjects’ campaign for office.

Candidate Emergence and Candidate Profiles

Research on who chooses to run for local office in the U.S. offers several insights that inform my work. In *Who Runs for the Legislature*, Moncrief and colleagues argue that though there are anywhere between 5,000 and 6,000 state legislative elections in a two-year period, the majority of literature written about campaigns focus on national campaigns for president and the Congress (xi). While my research focuses on municipal elected officials, I believe that this research on non-incumbents who run for office will provide some useful parallels and as Lawless argues, “career ladder politics tends to characterize candidate emergence in the United States (2012, 7). Descriptive representation is important and Lawless posits that research on candidate emergence is useful in that “particular socio-demographic groups are best able to represent the policy preferences of that group (2012, 8).

Moncrief, et al, interview 600 candidates in eight states and focus on key questions, such as why are they willing to run and how did they come to the decision (2). These researchers conclude that the majority of incumbents run unopposed and that campaigning requires a significant investment of time and personal resources. They also determined that most of the candidates who ran were middle-class, middle-aged empty nesters, business owners or employees, or retirees. They found that only 10% were attorneys (35). The candidates also tended to be active in local politics, which is confined to volunteer work on other campaigns, or to the local party and the most common recruitment agents were political party or elected officials (45-46). Prior to running for a state seat, many were elected to school board, city council or county commission seats and ran as open-seat challengers rather than challenging an incumbent (36-37).

Moncrief, et al determine that “state legislatures have always been bastions of middle-aged, white males” (95) and devoted a chapter to researching the recruitment patterns that bring women and minorities to run for the legislature. They conclude that three-quarters of the women candidates are in their 40’s or 50’s because women postpone running for political office while their children are young, more than half have a college or post-graduate degree and more women than men are comfortable running for office without the support of a spouse (96).

With respect to minority candidates, Moncrief, et al conclude that where there are few minorities, virtually none are found in the state legislature and where minorities constitute a substantial portion of the electorate, far more are elected to office (105).

African-American candidates tend to be somewhat younger than their white counterparts, with very little difference between the groups on education and income levels, and there are a higher percentage of African American women candidates than white women candidates (105, 108). Interestingly, they find that party agents are not important recruiters in bringing African Americans to run for state legislature and that they are more likely to be urged to run by people from their churches, neighborhoods and families (108) and resolve that “traditional recruitment mechanisms may be slow to find people from underrepresented groups to run for office” (114).

Lawless finds four factors outside the traditional political opportunity structures (such as open seats, term-limited incumbents, or politically congruent constituencies), that influence a candidate to run for office: minority status, family dynamics, professional experiences and political attitudes and recruitment (190). Of interest to this research in her summary of findings regarding evidence of the effects of minority status in the candidate emergence process, Lawless posits, that the gender gap in nascent ambition exists among white, black and Latino eligible candidates; women are less likely to consider running for office and are less likely to be recruited to run for office; and that African Americans are more likely than their white counterparts, to be recruited to run for office and to consider themselves qualified to run for office. In both these discussions about minority candidates, it is unclear if any of the subjects are foreign-born and would have responded differently if their ethnic status had been acknowledged.

These studies help to frame expectations about the decision-making process West Indian candidates employ when deciding to run for office and to some extent, their qualifications as candidates, though they did not focus on immigrants or ethnic identity. My research contributes to filling this gap.

Immigrant Electoral Representation in the Suburbs

As indicated earlier, much of the research on West Indian immigrants focuses on large urban cities such as New York City, London, Toronto and Miami. Because New Jersey is a state with many suburbs, these studies will provide a useful framework; however, the suburban dynamics may influence how Caribbean-born immigrants interact with political institutions and may present different strategies.

Jones-Correa, in his piece, “Electoral Representation of New Actors in Suburbia” seeks to shift the discussion from the notion of “suburbia as overwhelmingly dominated by the concerns of the white middle class” to include the demographic reality that a substantial portion of recent immigrant population has moved directly into suburban neighborhoods (2006, 2-3). He argues that there is little analysis of what might make ethnic politics in suburbia different from the experience described in traditional urban case studies (4). Jones-Correa develops four hypotheses for assessing the ways suburban immigrants become engaged in formal electoral politics based on theories put forth by Dahl, Dahl and Wolfinger, Parenti and Erie and asks if these representatives successfully transition into elected office and how they may represent their ethnic constituencies (6).

Through 113 in-depth interviews conducted in Washington, D.C. coupled with five focus groups, Jones-Correa divides his research into four categories: candidate recruitment, campaign strategies, representation and issues (11). Jones-Correa concludes that the “election of representatives drawn from these new residents has introduced changes to the menu of issues up for consideration and funding by local decision makers” (26). He argues that the electoral representation of first-generation migrants is taking place in the first generation, in contradiction to Dahl’s multi-generational model of incorporation (23). Jones-Correa posits that immigrant elected representatives do appear more responsive than their colleagues to the needs of other immigrants and that these representatives provide a voice for issues and groups that might not otherwise be heard (24, 20). The most interesting observation noted was in response to the question of how immigrant representatives get elected in majority-white districts. Jones-Correa found that these candidates may bring diverse parties together by framing issues broadly and that they may place a lesser emphasis on issues pertaining to particular ethnic or immigrant groups (24, see also Marwell).

These three bodies of literature will help to situate this research by explaining why these elected officials decided to run for office, whether they represent the “typical” candidate, in what ways they employ their ethnic background, if at all, to access political office in the suburbs and whether they have formally or informally addressed this group’s issues of concern.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

This study examines why and how West Indians run and get elected to office. It uses a comparative case study design rooted in qualitative research methods. I conducted qualitative in-depth interviews with current elected officials to better understand their road to victory. In this study, West Indians will refer to those persons born in the Anglophone, Francophone and Dutch speaking areas of the Caribbean. I also include those from Guyana as well as those from the countries of Belize, Costa Rica, Guyana, Honduras and Panama. These countries share similar social and cultural practices as their Anglophone Caribbean neighbors and the majority of the Afro-Costa Ricans and Hondurans are creole-English speaking descendants of black Jamaican immigrant workers. For the purposes of this research, I will use Caribbean-born and West Indian interchangeably.

Data Collection

My cases consisted of eight West Indian elected officials. I employed snowball sampling to learn the names of West Indian candidates and elected officials within New Jersey. I identified eleven West Indian elected officials who have served or are currently serving in local office in New Jersey. A focus on municipalities also expanded my pool of potential subjects. I tried, unsuccessfully, to schedule interviews with the three who have left office. I began the research by sending emails explaining the nature of the research and requesting preferred meeting dates and times. I conducted follow-up telephone outreach to confirm appointments. I explained that the interviews would be audio-recorded and transcribed and they waived anonymity. The officeholders I

interviewed currently serve at the mayoral and council levels in Burlington, Essex, Middlesex, Ocean, Passaic and Union counties. From November 2012 through January 2013, I interviewed eight municipal office holders in their home, business, or office varying in length from one to three hours per session. I conducted semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions that sought to discuss the subjects' immigrant background, the use, if at all, of ethnic identity, motivations for seeking elective office, perception of how they are viewed by voters in their district, self-identification, opinions of perceived support from the West Indian community within and outside of New Jersey and future political ambitions (see Appendix 1 for interview schedule). It should be noted that all the elected officials are Democrats.

I reviewed available candidate interviews, publicly available information on personal, town and organization Web sites, election campaign materials and media articles to gain perspective on how they marketed themselves to constituents. I also read scholarly and newspaper articles and books on the subjects of candidate profiles, immigrant political incorporation and West Indians in the U.S. Also, because of the lack of a sizeable survey on first-generation immigrant elected officials from the Caribbean, I could not access and analyze survey data.

Interviews

Since this is the first study of its kind in New Jersey, I chose to conduct qualitative, in-depth interviews to form case studies from which I could get a sense of the individuals as representatives of particular communities and compare and contrast data across the cases. When attempting to learn information about a subject's actions, beliefs and perceptions, I thought it best to engage them in a conversation using my research questions as a framework. This would allow me to facilitate a back and forth exchange to better understand responses to my questions and offer follow-up questions to dissipate potential miscommunication or misunderstanding by both parties. Heyink and Tymstra argue, "qualitative interviews allow for the respondent to raise essential issues, allow for clarification of misunderstandings about questions asked and answers given and allow for the building of a rapport between interviewer and interviewee" (1993, 295).

However, Heyink and Tymstra also hold that some disadvantages to qualitative interviews include interviewer bias and the lack of controlled conditions in which facts can be established unambiguously. Politicians, in particular, may have an incentive to be parsimonious with full disclosures; however, these respondents may have had a certain comfort level with me because of a shared cultural heritage. Miles and Huberman argue, the researcher's goal is to "attempt to capture data on the perceptions of local actors 'from the inside' through a process of deep attentiveness (1994, 6)." As articulated by Heyink and Tymstra, my primary interest is in respondents' own interpretation and wording with respect to their behavior, their motives, emotions and experiences (1993,

300). Given the types of research questions posed, a basic survey could not get at the answers or address follow-up if the respondent raised additional issues or ideas.

Analysis

The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. I applied a coding frame to organize chunks of data. I coded the eight transcripts for immigration (IMM), ethnicity (ETH), self-identification (SID), employment (EMP), education (EDU), campaigns (CAMP), support for office (SFO), family (FAM), accomplishments while in office (ACC), any reference to thoughts on the political process (POL) and also analyzed the transcription to allow themes to emerge from the data. Miles and Huberman (1994,7) argue, “words can be assembled, sub-clustered and broken into semiotic segments. They can be organized to permit the researcher to contrast, compare, analyze and bestow patterns.” I examined the codes across all cases to identify similarities and differences. My goal was to find common themes that spoke to what motivated these foreign-born black people to become engaged in New Jersey politics, if they had candidate profiles that comported with the profiles of other minority candidates, whether they campaigned on their Caribbeanness and if their Caribbean ethnic heritage has a role in how they may self-identify. By completing this comparative case study, I hope to contribute to the understanding of immigrant electoral representation, especially in the suburbs, and to consider how and whether my cases reflect the findings cited in the literature or suggest different factors or theories.

CHAPTER 2

New Jersey – People, Places and Politics

In this chapter, I describe aspects of New Jersey's demography and political structure to provide a background on the environment in which the respondents immigrated and ultimately developed their political careers.

New Jersey is nicknamed the Garden State because of its production of blueberry, cranberry, spinach, bell pepper, peach and lettuce on its more than 10,000 farms (State of NJ Web site). New Jersey, located on the northeast coast of the United States, is nestled between New York to the north and both Pennsylvania and Delaware to its South and West. New Jersey, a densely populated compact state (only about 130 miles in length), is the home of the Garden State Parkway, New Jersey Turnpike and Atlantic City casino resorts. Its top three largest cities are Newark, Jersey City and Paterson with its capital Trenton, as the tenth largest (census). In 1950, one in four New Jerseyans lived in one of the "big six" cities, Camden, Elizabeth, Jersey City, Newark, Paterson and Trenton.

Counties and Municipalities

New Jersey has 21 counties, and unlike any other state, it is divided into 565 towns, cities, boroughs, townships and villages. Almost one third of the municipalities, 177, are less than two square miles, more than 100 have populations with less than 2,000 residents and approximately 200 are almost exclusively supported by state funding

(Karcher, 1998, 3-5). To provide perspective, Rhode Island is another small, dense state; however it has only 39 municipalities that average 30 square miles (194). New Jersey is also the nation's most suburban state because many workers now commute from homes in one fringe suburb to jobs in another and never need to enter a city (Salmore and Salmore, 235).

Population

Based on the U.S. Census estimates as of July 2011, New Jersey has approximately 8.8 million residents of which 1.8 million, or 20%, are foreign born. New Jersey has always been a multicultural state and is on track to becoming a majority/minority state (Salmore and Salmore, 51). On average, immigrants to New Jersey tend to be more highly educated than those living elsewhere and data from the National Science Foundation show that almost half (48%) of state residents with master's degrees and 41% of those with doctorates in scientific fields are immigrants (Gang and Piehl, 2008).

New Jersey currently ranks third in the country, behind New York and California, as an immigrant receiving state (Census). For 100 years, the 1870's through to the 1970's, the majority of New Jersey's immigrants came from eight European countries: Italy, Germany, Russia, England, Scotland, France, Ireland and Poland (Fine, et al 2014). As of the 1980 Census count, approximately 68,000 Cuban immigrants resided in New Jersey (ibid). As of the 1990 Census, Italy still remained the top sending country; however, with the 2000 and 2010 Census, immigrants from Asia and Latin America

comprise the new wave of immigrants to the state (ibid). The top sending countries to New Jersey are now, India, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Philippines, Columbia, China and Korea (ibid).

New Jersey's immigrants reside in all of New Jersey's 21 Counties; however, six counties have more than 100,000 foreign-born residents and of those six, three have upwards of 200,000 foreign-born residents (see Table 1). Bergen County has the highest number with approximately 260, 000, followed by Hudson, Middlesex, Essex, Union and Passaic. The largest numbers of West Indian immigrants live in Essex County followed by Union, Hudson, Bergen and Middlesex showing some overlap.

TABLE 1. Top 10 New Jersey Counties with the Largest Foreign-Born Populations

<u>County Name</u>	<u>Foreign-Born Population</u>	<u>West Indian Population</u>
New Jersey (State)	1,804,834	127,933
Bergen	260,657	8,903
Hudson	254,080	9,785
Middlesex	239,862	8,365
Essex	188,390	42,798
Union	153,485	15,832
Passaic	137,541	8,329
Morris	91,747	2,267
Monmouth	82,405	5,482
Somerset	73,454	3,085
Mercer	73,022	6,386

Source: US Census 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate

New Jersey is home to almost 20%, or one-fifth, of the country's Caribbean population. Immigrants from the Caribbean-Basin region make up about 3% of New Jersey's population with 270,187 residents. West Indians, as described in this study, account for 49% , almost half, of the Caribbean-Basin population in New Jersey with

approximately 128,000 residents. The largest numbers of West Indian immigrants hail from Jamaica and Haiti with approximately 40,000 each, Guyana with 20,000, Trinidad and Tobago with 13,000, Dominica 5,900, Panama 3,200 and Barbados with 3,000 (see Table 2).

TABLE 2. The Caribbean Population in the US and New Jersey

<u>Country Name</u>	<u>US – Population Size</u>	<u>NJ - Population Size</u>	<u>% of U.S. Population Residing in NJ</u>
Total Caribbean Born	1,461,033	270,187	18%
Jamaica	684,268	40,217	5.8%
Haiti	591,572	40,125	6.8%
Guyana	262,403	20,478	7.8%
Trinidad & Tobago	231,582	13,222	5.7%
Dominica	27,079	5,894	2.1%
Barbados	52,368	3,080	5.9%
Grenada	30,519	1,356	4.4%
St Vincent and the Grenadines	23,096	936	4%
Bahamas	32,149	468	1.5%
Belize	47,579	1,052	2.2%
Panama	103,098	3,283	3.1%
**West Indies	21,876	2,157	9.9%

Source: US Census 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate

** - Those with ancestry in the region who did not select a specific country

New Jersey's Political Structure

I briefly described New Jersey's county and municipal structure and provided a detailed description of its Caribbean and West Indian population. In this section, I discuss New Jersey's political structure, idiosyncrasies and all, to help provide a contextual backdrop for discussing the elected officials in the next section.

New Jersey is considered a "blue state", a state that predominantly votes for or supports the Democratic Party. Democrats also comprise the majority of its voting electorate. Despite Democrats controlling both houses of the state legislature, a Republican currently serves as governor.

The state has been politically characterized by strong "home rule", which is the power of a local city or county to set up its own system of self-government, strong local political machines and weak statewide institutions (Salmore and Salmore, 2013, 232-233). For much of New Jersey's history, county governing politics was the equivalent of state governing politics meaning county political structures were the nucleus from which municipalities self-governed (Salmore and Salmore, 246). Along with the ability for relatively small entities to practice self-governance and make determinations on lucrative contracts, New Jersey has also had its fair share of political corruption as documented in books about New Jersey politics, including Ingle and McClure's *The Soprano State: New Jersey's Culture of Corruption* (2008). Salmore and Salmore also detail the rich history of New Jersey political corruption with elected officials from U.S. Senators to county bosses and city mayors including Enoch "Nucky" Johnson the Atlantic City political boss

and the HBO series *Boardwalk Empire* fame through the recent 2013 conviction of Trenton Mayor, Tony Mack, for extortion and bribery (249-251).

New Jersey's county structure is also unique in that a Board of Chosen Freeholders governs each of the 21 counties. The Board can have three, five, seven or nine Freeholders elected at large, representing the entire county, or elected to serve a particular district. These Boards oversee a range of executive and legislative functions and can have an elected county executive with the Board serving a legislative or oversight capacity. New Jersey's 565 municipalities fall under the jurisdiction of county government and practice 12 forms of government (Salmore and Salmore, 237). The majority forms of government are Mayor-Council, where the Mayor is the chief executive with veto power and the legislative serves purely as a legislative body and Council – Manager, where a Mayor, whose duties are limited to presiding over council meetings, is chosen from the group of popularly elected Council Members. (Salmore and Salmore, 238-239).

Salmore and Salmore argue that suburban politics is distinct in style and substance in that suburban politics is candidate-centered, with promises of a good quality of life, protects private space, is less intrusive and has a strong moralist strain (369). Karcher cites reasons for the strength of local government including: a level of accountability to its constituency, candidate intimacy with voters and a high-level of responsiveness to individual problems. Karcher also notes that local governments provide a testing ground for aspiring leaders of both parties and weans out those unsuitable for

elevation to higher office and local governments also allow ethnic, racial and religious minorities to acquire some semblance of political power (202).

With respect to the utility of local government, Karcher, a former New Jersey Majority Leader of the Assembly argues that local government provides experiences to minorities who would otherwise have no opportunity to prepare themselves for participation in county or state politics (202). Salmore and Salmore argue that the “American political debate has always been a dialogue about how best to assimilate newly arriving ethnic, religious and racial groups who demand a place in the political universe” (369). In their discussion about suburban voters, Salmore and Salmore argue “they prefer candidates who seem to be like them and share their particular values.” The ensuing research will discuss how these eight Caribbean-born elected officials have created a space for themselves within the local government and have convinced voters of their shared values.

Elected Officials’ Town Social, Economic and Political Demographics

In what follows, I present short profiles on the towns of the eight respondents. The elected officials interviewed for this research represent seven towns of varying size, geography, ethnicity, median income and educational attainment. Tables 4a and 4b present basic data about the towns. The towns are geographically dispersed - Passaic is located in the north central part of the state, both Essex and Union counties are northeast,

with Middlesex, as the name suggests, in central New Jersey. Burlington and Ocean counties are located in southwest and southeast New Jersey, respectively.

As 4a shows, of the seven towns studied, Paterson has the largest number of residents and largest foreign-born population and South Toms River, the smallest in both categories. Essex County has the second largest population and its town, Irvington, has the largest number of West Indians, the majority are Haitian-born. Highland Park has the largest White population with 68% and Irvington the largest Black population with 85%.

As 4b shows, two towns, South Toms River and Westampton have unaffiliated voters registered as the majority, the other towns have Democrats in the majority. The majority of the towns have a Mayor-Council form of government, but Westampton has a Mayor-Township Committee governing body, where the Mayor is selected from among the Committee members. Some of the towns have ward systems and others elect at large council members.

New Jersey is politically unique in many ways with its abundance of municipalities, county governing structure and multiple forms of local government. The towns that the elected officials represent also serve as a microcosm of the state, with a range of income, education and diversity of ethnicities. It is with this setting that I move into an introduction of the elected officials.

TABLE 4a Elected Official's Towns' Demographics

<u>Elected Official</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>County Pop.</u>	<u>County Foreign Born Population</u>	<u>County W.I. Population</u>	<u>Town Population</u>	<u>Foreign Born Population</u>	<u>Town W.I. Population</u>
Fredric	Irvington	Essex	789,565	24.5%	43,000	54,000	16,775 30.9%	9,700
Champagne	South Toms River	Ocean	583,414	7.9%	1,500	3,700	209 5.7%	39/6
Aubourg	Roselle	Union	548,256	29.1%	16,000	21,000	6,800 32.2%	1,900
Mapp & Greaves	Plainfield	Union	548,256	29.1%	16,000	50,000	17,800 35.8%	2,100
Foster-Dublin	Highland Park	Middlesex	828,919	30.3%	8,500	14,300	3,900 27.5%	100
McKoy	Paterson	Passaic	505,672	27.5%	8,300	145,219	43,322 29.7%	5,000
Chang	Westampton	Burlington	450,838	9.5%	4,800	8,700	1,032 11.8%	18

 US Census 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-year Estimate

TABLE 4b Elected Official's Town Social Demographics

<u>Elected Official</u>	<u>Town Name</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Median Household Income</u>	<u>Bachelors Degree or Higher</u>	<u>Majority Registered Voters</u>	<u>Government Type</u>	<u>Election Districts</u>
Fredric	Irvington	Essex	\$36,000	13%	Democrats	Mayor/ Council	Four Wards Three At Large
Champagne	South Toms River	Ocean	\$61,000	11%	Unaffiliated	Mayor/ Council	Six Members At Large
Aubourg	Roselle	Union	\$42,000	15%	Democrat	Weak Mayor Council	Five Wards One At Large
Mapp Greaves	Plainfield	Union	\$52,000	20%	Democrat	Mayor Council	Four Wards Three At Large
Foster-Dublin	Highland Park	Middlesex	\$76,000	60%	Democrat	Mayor Council	Six At Large
McKoy	Paterson	Passaic	\$33,000	8%	Unaffiliated	Mayor Council	Six Wards Three At Large
Chang	Westampton	Burlington	\$95,000	25%	Democrat	Mayor- Township Committee	

 US Census 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-year Estimate

CHAPTER 3

An Introduction to the Elected Officials

In this section, I provide an in-depth introduction to each of the eight elected officials in my study. I detail their immigration path to New Jersey, their educational background and present a synopsis of their employment history prior to their elections. Of the eight subjects included in this study, half attended high school in the US, all but one has a college degree, and half have advanced degrees. Mayor Chang and Mayor Champagne are practicing attorneys. All the subjects are married with children. Three, Councilman McKoy, Mayor Mapp and Council President Aubourg work in the financial sector. Six have or had their own businesses and one, Councilwoman Fredric, is a scientist (see Table 5).

TABLE 5. Biographic Data of West Indian Elected Officials in NJ

<u>Elected Official</u>	<u>Year of Arrival</u>	<u>Age of Arrival</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Degree(s)</u>
Charnette Fredric	1996	17	Senior Scientist	MHA
Joseph Champagne	1991	19	Attorney	JD
Yves Aubourg	1986	21	Economic Development Director	BS
Adrian Mapp	1977	21	Director of Finance and Qualified Person Agent	MBA
Elsie Foster-Dublin	1974	14	Owner, Elsie's Home Stay	BA
William McKoy	1972	16	Chief Auditor	BA
Carolyn Chang	1972	14	Attorney	JD
Vera Greaves	1969	26	Real Estate Agent	---

This is the first study of West Indian or Caribbean American elected officials in New Jersey. These immigrants' stories are traditional in that they immigrated to rejoin parents or spouses, navigated terrain in an unfamiliar educational or work environments to achieve a modicum of success and forged lasting relationships with those on whose helped they relied at some point in their journey. Some cite particular circumstances that helped them to become who they are today, while others attribute a level of familial expectations and cultural upbringing to explain their achievements. It is important to learn their stories, to note similarities and differences, and to determine if their stories of electoral success are unique to this ethnic group. I describe the candidates in order of least to the longest number of years in U.S. to allow for a comparative analysis.

Councilwoman Charnette Fredric – Irvington
The Scientist at City Hall

The study's most recent immigrant, Charnette Fredric is a Senior Scientist at Roche Molecular Systems, a division of Hoffman-LaRoche and has worked with the organization for about 11 years. While working at LaRoche, she received her Masters degree in Healthcare Administration (M.H.A.) from Seton Hall University and is working towards a Ph.D. in Chemistry. Fredric is also a Councilwoman, in her first term, representing Irvington Township's West Ward, becoming the first Haitian-American Councilperson in Irvington and in Essex County.

Fredric's journey began in 1996 when she immigrated from Cazale, Haiti to Irvington. She travelled with her mother and two brothers to rejoin her father. Fredric attended a private Episcopal Church school in Port-au-Prince, Saint-Trinite, and then College Saint Pierre. When she arrived in Irvington at the age of 17, her father insisted that she attend Essex County College, take the GED and register for college classes.

Fredric took computer science courses, but determined she was too loquacious to pursue a career in this field. After taking her first biology course and performing well, she was encouraged by her professor to consider a major in this field. She was inspired by the work of her professor and with constant encouragement graduated with an Associate degree in Biology/Pre-Medicine. Fredric continued with her education at Rutgers University – Newark and graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Biology and minor in Chemistry.

During her second year of college, she interned with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (now Rutgers New Jersey Medical School) to learn about anatomy and physiology. Her goal was to take the MCAT, go to UMDNJ, and become a doctor. After taking the MCAT's several times, she decided to give up on medical school and instead, seek employment, which she found with Waterworks Laboratory. After two years, Fredric moved on to Hoffman-LaRoche.

Fredric chose to stay in Irvington to be close to her aging parents. When her son was ready for school, Fredric became engaged in community affairs and events, especially the PTA, which ultimately whetted her appetite for local politics.

Mayor Joseph M. Champagne – South Toms River
From Activist to Mayor

Joseph Champagne, the first Haitian-American elected Mayor in New Jersey and the first of African descent elected in Ocean County, has a self-described thriving career as a self-employed immigration, estate planning and family law attorney who speaks four languages, English, French, Haitian Creole and Spanish.

In 1991, 19-year old Champagne immigrated to Brooklyn, New York from Port-au-Prince, Haiti with his younger brother to rejoin his mother. While a senior at Sarah J. Hale High School, he was invited to participate in Columbia University's American Opportunity to Learn Program because of his academic excellence. This experience provided him an opportunity to learn English. He then attended and graduated from Columbia University's pre-med program with the goals of studying for the MCAT and

ultimately becoming a doctor. Champagne says he wanted to become a doctor partly because it was looked upon as a glamorous career and while he was less interested in performing surgeries, he was very much interested in conducting research on the causes of diseases and working towards finding cures.

But, while studying for the MCAT and teaching Math and Environmental/Earth Science at his high school alma mater, a friend convinced him to take the LSAT and apply to Vermont Law School since it was the number one law school in the country for Environmental Law. The friend argued that this career path would coincide well with his current teaching and interests in Environmental Science. Champagne redirected his educational pursuits towards law school, attended the Charles Hamilton Houston Pre-Law Institute at Georgetown University and was later accepted to Vermont Law School (VLS).

While a student at Columbia University, he had founded The Black Student Leadership Collective for Human Rights. While a student at VLS, his activism continued and he founded the Student Leadership Collective for Human Rights, a campus wide student group that identified and promoted student leadership talents. During his second year at VLS, Champagne experienced a traumatic event that he says helped cement a career in advocating for others. In 2001, a U.S. News and World Report photographer visited the campus to take photographs of students for a magazine profile and told Champagne that his camera could not take a picture of him because, “he was too dark.” Champagne reported the incident and developed a newfound appreciation for those who

struggled in the Civil Rights movement both in the U.S. and Haiti. Champagne, together with the officers of his student organization, organized a “Day of Outrage” on campus to help educate students and faculty about human rights.

While attempting to process this event, he applied to study law for a semester in Italy at the Universidad Di Trento School of Law. He returned to finish his law school training at Howard University Law School, a historically black college. In 2002, he moved from Vermont to Ocean County, New Jersey for employment and in 2007, he moved to South Toms River. He began his private practice shortly thereafter and shares building space with a fellow attorney, a Republican, who has not only served as a mentor, but has helped Champagne to establish his political career.

Council President Yves F. Aubourg
Like Father, Like Son

Yves Aubourg works as Hillside’s Coordinator and Economic Development Director where he recruits businesses to join the urban enterprise program and provides coaching and mentoring to local entrepreneurs. In addition to serving as Roselle’s First Ward Council Member, Aubourg served as the Police Commissioner, Chair of the Finance Committee and is the Council President and Chair of the Roselle Democratic Party.

Aubourg’s journey to Roselle Council President began in July 1986, when the 21 year-old immigrated to Brooklyn, New York from Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Aubourg and his brother left Haiti because Jean-Claude Duvalier (Baby Doc), then President lost

power and Haiti was plunged into turmoil. Aubourg had grown up as a member of Haiti's upper middle class with his own driver and security detail. Aubourg's father was Under Secretary of State for François Duvalier (Papa Doc) and a few of his uncles served in the army. Aubourg's father was an attorney and teacher who spoke seven languages. He died when Aubourg was six years old, although his accomplishments and reputation were a constructive force to Aubourg as a child growing up in Haiti.

Aubourg was educated in private schools and completed two years at the Inaghei University of Haiti, with a concentration in Business Administration and Diplomacy. When admitted to the Law School, Aubourg spoke French, Spanish, Haitian Creole and some English. He did not complete his education because of the move to the States.

Upon arriving in Brooklyn, his uncle secured Aubourg employment at Hoffman-LaRoche as a lab worker. Because of the language barrier, (English was the least developed of his languages), and a lack of a background in health, Aubourg began his career as a lab assistant. Aubourg married in 1982 then moved to Elizabeth, New Jersey. In 1992, he and his wife bought their home in Roselle.

Aubourg was entrepreneurial in his educational and employment pursuits. When he moved to Roselle, he attended Union County College's medical technology program, but switched to Kean College, now Kean University, to complete studies for a Bachelor of Science in Medical Technology, which furthered his career in this field. He was downsized from Lab Corp, but secured a research position with Johnson and Johnson

Ortho Clinical Diagnostic. While working for Johnson and Johnson, he migrated to an auditing position that allowed him to represent the company all over the world.

Unfortunately, he was downsized again and after 18 years in pharmaceutical research, he reverted to his core business skillsets and became a car salesman.

Shortly thereafter, a friend contacted him about his interest in Roselle's new Urban Enterprise Zone program. Aubourg then became the first Urban Enterprise Zone Coordinator for the Borough of Roselle, a position that ultimately drew on his extensive business knowledge. For two years, he established the program and maintains that it was the fastest growing program in New Jersey.

Building upon his entrepreneurial spirit, in 1996, Aubourg and a group of 15-20 friends created a Haitian investment organization to collect money amongst them to invest in creating businesses. Together, the group erected a laundromat in a formerly vacant building. For years, he had heard politicians stating they wanted to redevelop the area and wanted people to invest in the town. Aubourg and his partners figured they could assemble a number of Haitian investors, since Roselle has a very large Haitian community. Not only was this a successful venture, but the experience provided Aubourg with insight into the inner workings of local politics.

Mayor Adrian O. Mapp – Plainfield
Business and Politics – A Perfect Mix

Adrian Mapp currently serves as the Director of Finance and the Qualified Person Agent for the City of Orange. In his other life, he serves as Mayor of the town of Plainfield.²

Mapp was born in Greens, Barbados. He was one of eight children and attended a private Seven-Day Adventist school as a youngster on a partial scholarship, with the goals of one day becoming a nurse. Unfortunately, the letter advising him of the date of the nursing examination arrived to his home the day after the testing date, so he went to work for what was then the Barbados Marketing Corporation.

In December 1977, at 21 years old, Mapp immigrated to Elmhurst, Queens. He held positions as a gas station attendant and security guard to eke out a living. His wife joined him one year later. After two years in Queens, Mapp moved to Plainfield, New Jersey for two reasons: the first was that a distant cousin invited him to experience a different lifestyle in Plainfield; and the second, because he secured employment in the mailroom, shipping and accounting departments for a steamship company, the United States Lines, in Cranford, New Jersey. Upon moving to Plainfield, he and his wife lived with his mother, until they were able to afford a space of their own.

² At the time of interview, Mapp was a Council Member who had already declared his candidacy for Mayor.

Mapp decided to pursue advanced education and graduated Union County College with an Associate's degree in Public Administration and from Rutgers University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting. He landed a position with Bristol Meyers Squibb (BMS), took advantage of the company's tuition reimbursement policy, attended Farleigh Dickinson and graduated with an MBA in International Business. Mapp received an undergraduate degree in accounting and thought it useful to take the Certified Public Accounting exam to become a CPA. By this time, Mapp was an Associate Director with BMS and had worked in the areas of accounting, financial reporting and global logistics.

Mapp's career in public service began when he was laid off from BMS after 16-year tenure. During this time, he formed a small finance company, Mapp Financial Services that he continues to maintain. Mapp argues that the business did not meet financial expectations due to the country's economic recession. A friend, who happened to be the Mayor of Roselle, New Jersey, contacted him to reconnect and during the lengthy conversation, offered Mapp the position of Chief Financial Officer for Roselle. This position required certification and Mapp, once again, enrolled in courses to become a Certified Municipal Finance Officer. He then went on to become, briefly, a Comptroller for the East Orange Housing Authority. These work experiences provided Mapp with insight into the workings of local government in other jurisdictions and would serve to inform his decision-making process in his various elected positions representing Plainfield.

Councilwoman Elsie Foster-Dublin – Highland Park
Committed to Service

Elsie Foster-Dublin is the owner of Elsie's Home Stay, which provides host families for students and professionals visiting America for an extended period. Foster-Dublin also serves as a Councilwoman in the town of Highland Park.

Foster-Dublin emigrated from Kingston, Jamaica at 14 years old, in December 1974, with her five siblings to rejoin her parents in Newark, New Jersey. Her dad emigrated as a farm worker, but became an x-ray technician and her mother, who worked as a domestic, later became a dietician. Shortly after arriving, the family moved into their 10-bedroom home in Newark. Foster-Dublin attended Westside High School, Essex College of Business and then graduated from Rutgers University with a degree in Business Administration.

As a teenager, Foster-Dublin and her siblings worked alongside their father in his cleaning business working in office buildings at night and at the airport on weekends. She argues that these experiences contributed to her strong work ethic. Prior to creating Elsie's Home Stay, she worked at various jobs including serving as an administrator at the Rutgers University School of Social Work and as a legislative liaison at the New Jersey Department of Personnel.

One summer, a friend asked her to host a South African professor in her home for three months because the friend and Rutgers had run out of housing options. She agreed

thinking it a wonderful learning opportunity for her and her family. Two weeks after he left, the friend called again, this time with a Professor from the Republic of Georgia. Foster-Dublin was accustomed to having many people around, not only because of her large family, but because whenever family or friends visited or migrated from Jamaica, they stayed with the family until they were able to establish themselves. Foster-Dublin then agreed to host 35 students from France and reached out to several of her contacts to help house the students. This hosting event occurred simultaneously with the loss of her full-time employment and a business, Elsie's Home Stay, was born.

When Foster-Dublin and her husband married and wanted to buy a home, they had two main criteria: a bedroom community where everyone knew their neighbors and a town with an excellent school system. They settled on Highland Park and as her son became engaged with the school system, she made it a priority to become engaged. This full-fledged engagement in the PTA would lead to wider community engagement and a series of events that would allow for her introductory participation with local government.

Councilman William McKoy - Paterson
The Paterson Humanitarian

William McKoy is the Chief Auditor for the Early Childhood Department of the Jersey City Public School District, the first Jamaican-born elected official in Paterson, and the longest-serving Council Member, currently in his fourth term, representing the Third Ward.

In August 1972, McKoy, 16 years old, emigrated from Kingston, Jamaica to Paterson, New Jersey with his mother, four brothers and sister. His mother had often travelled to New York as a domestic worker and thought that she could better provide for her family in the US, especially since her husband had recently died. He contends that his father was a very constructive influence in his life. His dad was affectionately known as Deacon, and whenever anyone in his district needed employment (his dad managed a coopers shop), social service assistance, or a place to stay, they sought out the Deacon. McKoy describes his father as an upstanding member of the community who held his children to high moral standards that molded their characters. These experiences would later influence McKoy's decision to seek elective office and inform his interactions with constituents and those in the political establishment.

McKoy attended Trenchtown High School in Jamaica, so when he arrived in Paterson, he continued with his studies at John F Kennedy High School. McKoy experienced transitional growing pain on his first day of class at his new school. He was in English class and the teacher asked, "What is a sentence?" Not the one to shy away from a challenge, McKoy figured that he would raise his hand and respond to the question. As he began his response and before he could finish his answer, the class was "rolling in laughter." "The boys were lying on the ground with their feet in the air wailing," at what McKoy presumed was his thick Jamaican accent. McKoy contends, here he was, a 16 year old from Trenchtown High, "who would NOT be laughed at." There was some back and forth between the students and an agreement was made to meet after school to "settle the score." His English teacher, Sharon Smith "probably saved his

life” by preventing him from getting into fisticuffs with the other students. Ms. Smith expressed an interest in him, made him stay with her every day after school and helped him to navigate the new educational system. That friendship blossomed and has maintained its strength over the years so much so that Ms. Smith, a soloist, sang at McKoy’s 25th wedding anniversary.

He then went on to, what was then known as William Paterson College (now University), and graduated with a degree in accounting and a minor in business administration. Since arriving in Paterson in 1972, McKoy has never left the city.

With his accounting degree in hand, McKoy’s worked with what was then known as NJ Bell Telephone Company, at his first official job. He took a rotational assignment in the National Exchange Carrier Association (NECA) and handled the settlement process for small companies. As a result of the Telecommunication Act of 1996, NECA won the contract to develop a program, E-rate, to accomplish the goal using communication and the Internet to connect schools and libraries across the country to resources that otherwise would not be available.

McKoy developed the system for the entire country and successfully designed key aspects of the program for use by school districts and administrators. McKoy maintains that Paterson was one of the highest recipients of funding and as a result, Paterson is the most interconnected school district in New Jersey. In 2001, after more than 20 years, McKoy left Verizon Communications (formerly NJ Bell) to work for Jersey City.

As McKoy's children began to approach school age, he argues that he and his wife pledged to become active participants in their children's education. As a result, he attended several meetings of the PTA, joined the organization and was eventually elected its President. McKoy quips that at the time of interview, he was the first and only male PTA President for the school. McKoy was deeply engaged in the affairs of the PTA and Paterson's educational system. This was his gateway position to a life in elected office.

Mayor Carolyn V Chang – Westampton
The attorney for change

Carolyn Chang owns and operates her private law practice in Mount Holley, established in 1992, specializing in family and matrimonial laws, guardianships and estate matters. Chang is also serving her second term as Mayor of Westampton Township.

In August 1972, 14-year old Carolyn Chang emigrated from Kingston, Jamaica to East Orange, New Jersey with an older brother and two younger sisters to join her mother. She attended Vernon L. Davie Junior High School for a year and then moved on to East Orange High School.

As a high school student Chang remarks about her less than smooth transition. This was the first time she had ever left Jamaica and while in Jamaica, lived a very sheltered life. Chang remembers not fitting in very well, especially as it related to student-teacher interactions. Chang states that teachers in Jamaica were also

disciplinarians that helped to maintain a certain amount of order and respect in their classrooms, and that did not appear to be the case while she attended high school. Despite these new, but difficult experiences, she performed well in middle and high school. She attributes her performance to the fact that her relatives, neighbors and family friends taught her to value education.

Chang attended Rutgers New Brunswick and graduated with a major in Political Science and a minor in English. While at Rutgers, Chang was part of the Educational Opportunity Program, which provides students with an array of academic and professional services, as well as financial support, to help ensure graduation. She was assigned a counselor with whom she still has a relationship and who now mentors her daughter. Chang states that ever since she could remember, think and breathe, she had always wanted to be an attorney. In Jamaica, they are called Barristers and she remembers that they commanded a level of respect, appeared to be making a difference, and the practice was viewed as an honorable profession.

Chang was accepted to the University of Denver Law School, Seton Hall and Rutgers Newark Law. Seton Hall had a Council on Legal Education Opportunity program designed to help minority law students navigate law school and complete their law degree; however the program required a summer orientation. Chang needed to work and declined Seton Hall's offer. She also declined Denver to be closer to her future husband and ultimately secured employment with the Katzenbach School for the Deaf in Trenton as a Residential Services Supervisor.

A few years later, Chang, determined to fulfill her childhood desire to practice law, applied for and was accepted to Rutgers Camden Law School. Chang attended classes part-time during the day, despite being advised by a Dean that the part-time program was for evening students and that maybe “she did not belong there.” For her last year of law school, Chang finished her course work on a full-time basis and graduated. She also got married that year and she and her husband purchased their first house in Trenton.

Chang served as a Law Clerk to a number of Superior Court Judges in the Family Court in Mercer County and was the first Law Clerk in New Jersey to clerk two years, rather than one, in the Superior Court. Chang then worked as an Associate at a law firm for a number of years prior to opening her practice.

A dramatic increase in her property taxes, coupled with other changes in the town spurred Chang’s interest in local politics. She remembers thinking at the time that she had better start paying attention to the goings on because there is a governing board that determines budgetary issues. She determined that she needed to start voting on these issues and in 1998, became a U.S. citizen.

Councilwoman Vera Greaves
Entrepreneur, Volunteer, Councilwoman

Of my group of study subjects, Greaves has lived in the US the longest and was the oldest at time of immigration to the U.S. Vera Greaves is a Council Member on the

Plainfield City Council and a licensed realtor. Prior to her becoming a realtor, she owned and operated Vera's Hosiery for twenty years and worked in the pharmaceutical industry.

Greaves came to the U.S. in March 1969 at 26 years old on a visitor's visa to join her husband. They thought that the U.S. would provide them with an easier life and greater opportunities. Greaves was born in Boscobel, Barbados, but lived in St. Andrew with her grandparents with whom she was raised. She attended Boscobel Girls School and Alexandria Girls High School in Spice Town with a full scholarship. She later went on to a private school to learn secretarial skills. She got married in 1963, became a stay at home mom and lived with her grandparents before moving in with her mother-in-law.

While in Barbados, Greaves got her first job as a secretary at the Rocklyn Bus Station and recalled that it was about this time that John F. Kennedy was assassinated. She said that she was never politically inclined, but felt shocked and saddened. When she came to the U.S., she took some courses at Union County College. At the time, her husband worked two jobs as a technician and she was able to get intermittent part-time work.

Greaves successfully secured a position in the clerical department of C.R. Bard, a pharmaceutical company. She then moved on to work for Ethicon as a suture technician inspecting sutures. Unfortunately, she was laid off because when the boss hired a new person as her supervisor, she refused to train him. She thought that she may have deserved the promotion or that the person she had to train should have reported to her.

Greaves remembers being very upset and depressed with the layoff. She then resolved that she was not going to allow anyone to dictate what she could and could not do, so she decided to start her own business.

Greaves bought a couple of pleated skirts from New York and decided to sell them at the flea markets in English Town (nicknamed New Jersey's favorite flea market) in Freehold, New Jersey. Her merchandise was not selling, so she began to look at what merchandise was moving and bought socks and pantyhose instead. This merchandise sold well and Vera's Hosiery was born. She had three booths in English Town, but also worked the New York flea market in Roosevelt Field (Long Island, New York), in Pennsylvania at Rice's Market and in Burlington (New Jersey) at Columbus. She ran the business for 20 years and boasts that it enabled her to pay for her daughters' weddings and send her children to college.

Greaves argues that the nature of the flea market landscape changed as a result of the burgeoning of dollar store chains and similar types of discount stores. Because of the plethora of business competition, she determined that it was time to move on and obtained her real estate license.

Greaves was not actively involved in her community or politics, but when Hillary Clinton announced that she would run for President in 2007, Greaves said that this was an opportunity for her to be a participant in electing the first woman president of the U.S.

She then sought volunteer opportunities with local Democrat groups, a move that would introduce her to party leadership and ultimately propel her into elected office.

The stories of these eight Caribbean elected officials indicate several common features in their paths to elected office. These respondents did not seek to become formally involved in local government, but through personal connections and entrepreneurial or volunteer work, were initiated toward the inner workings of local politics and governing agencies. These experiences led to a desire to serve as a representative of their peers, in some capacity, and these eight formally declared their intention to seek elected office.

Chapter 4 - Political Ambitions and Political Engagement

In this chapter, I provide an analysis of the respondents' candidate emergence and profiles as well as their pathway to elected office. The results reveal that all of the candidates comport with the majority of findings in the literature of typical candidates, except that none are retirees, the majority were not empty nesters, and all but two are middle-aged.

Based on the second series of findings, the majority of elected officials did not use ethnicity as a campaign strategy to solicit support; instead/rather, the officials used outreach to and communication with their ethnic communities as a means to attract support, not to the exclusion of other communities in their towns or districts.

Candidate Emergence and Candidate Profiles

The road to elected office for each of the respondents started with a sense of wanting to become involved in the direction of the community. For example, both McKoy and Aubourg were inspired by the work of their parents in their native countries Jamaica and Haiti. Champagne's activism began during his college years. Chang, Foster-Dublin and Fredric were drawn to activism mostly because of their children's engagement with the public education system. The excitement of the 2008 presidential campaign of former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton inspired Greaves to political activism. Table 6 provides an outline of the respondents' political engagement including offices held, recruitment, whether they ran an explicitly ethnic campaign and whether

opponents, media outlets, community residents, and/or party actors acknowledged their ethnicity.

TABLE 6. Political Engagement of West Indian Elected Officials in NJ

<u>Elected Official</u>	<u>Office(s) Held</u>	<u>Initially Recruited By</u>	<u>Ethnic Campaign</u>	<u>Ethnicity Acknowledged</u>
Charnette Fredric	Councilwoman		No	Yes
Joseph Champagne	Mayor City Council	Party Members	No	No
Yves Aubourg	Council President Board of Education		Yes	Yes
Adrian Mapp	Mayor Freeholder City Council	Party Leadership Self	No	Yes
Elsie Foster-Dublin	Council President Deputy Mayor Board of Education	Party Leadership	No	No
William McKoy	Council Member Board of Education		No	Yes
Carolyn Chang	Mayor Council Member	Party Leadership	No	No
Vera Greaves	Council Member	Party Leadership	No	Yes

In analyzing the paths to office for these officials, I established whether they mirrored the literature's findings of who generally runs for office. Moncrief, et. al. argue that most of the candidates who run for *state* office are well-educated, middle-aged, middle-class, empty nesters that were business owners, employees or retirees with few

attorneys represented. My study presents different findings when it comes to occupation, age and whether children still reside at the homes of the officials. While attorneys remain in the minority (Champagne and Chang), the majority are, or were, business owners, many self-employed. Greaves and Mapp were the only empty nesters and all of the respondents were employed full-time. The youngest elected officials in the sample, Fredric and Champagne, are not yet middle-aged.

My findings are consistent with the research when it comes to the path to office, in that almost all of these elected officials served as PTA or school board members or were active with local party politics and ran for or were initially appointed to fill vacancies (see Table 6). Foster-Dublin decided to become actively engaged in a community issue and developed a relationship with then Mayor Frank to work toward a solution. Through this process, Mayor Frank appointed her the Mayor's designee to the Planning Board. Shortly thereafter, the Mayor appointed Foster-Dublin to fill an unexpired City Council vacancy and then she ran for her first full term. Greaves volunteered on a political committee to work for the Clinton presidential campaign. The town party chair, impressed with her work, got her more involved in local politics. When the Councilperson that represented her ward vacated the position to become Freeholder, the chair appointed Greaves to fill the vacancy. She served one year and then ran for a full term. McKoy began his political career with his election as "the first and only man to serve as PTA President to date." While he served in this capacity, some members of the community encouraged him to run for the school board. He not only won the election, but served as Board President for two consecutive years.

With respect to recruitment and minority representation, researchers conclude that that African Americans were more likely urged to run by people from their churches, neighborhoods and families and not by “traditional recruitment mechanisms” (Moncrief, et al, 108). My findings concluded otherwise. Party members or party leadership recruited the majority of these officials to run, or appointed them to fulfill vacant terms. For example, with Council President Aubourg, a church friend and Board of Education member asked Aubourg to run for a seat on the Board of Education. This example comports with both my literature and findings. Aubourg is a very active member of his church; however the church friend who made the overture also sat on the Board of Education. Aubourg consented, won the seat and became the first Haitian-American elected to the school board. On the other hand, party officials, exclusively, recruited Chang. She began to receive inquiries from the Burlington County Democratic Party about her interests in becoming a candidate for a State Senate seat. She ultimately declined the offer because of child-care responsibilities, but ten years later, the party approached Chang again to run for a local town seat. She successfully ran for office and won all five districts in the town, including her overwhelmingly Republican district.

There has been a long and documented body of work which consistently argues that women are less likely to run for office for a number of reasons (Carroll, 1983; Sanmonbatsu, 2006; Lawless and Fox, 2008; Hawkesworth, 2012; Dittmar, 2014 et al); however my research shows an equal number of women and men who successfully ran for office. Are West Indian and other foreign-born women more likely to run for office? Do support structures differ enabling West Indian and other foreign-born women to

access local-level political office more easily than native-born women? Are Afro-Caribbean women displacing African American women in elective office? I do not address these questions here, but look to scholars who study candidate emergence and immigrant political representation to consider future research around these issues.

Pathways to Elective Office

These elected officials fit the mold of a typical candidate for office in that they are well-educated slightly older professionals. So, how then does running for office translate into winning said office? In this section, I delve more deeply into their electoral campaigns. Specifically, I examine whether their ethnicity played a role in their campaigns and if so, in what ways. I also note from where they received their support and how their campaigns were funded.

Before I proceed with a discussion on whether these elected officials used an overtly ethnic campaign to help them win office, I will outline some patterns or behaviors used by past candidates (in New York City and elsewhere), which the literature has suggested, qualifies as an ethnic campaign. In addition to visual displays, such as flags or native language access, an ethnic-focused campaign seeks to unlock the “ethnic infrastructure” by tapping into home country and voluntary associations to access mailing lists, volunteers and other networks (Kasinitz, 1992, 244). The West Indian leadership should converge to visibly support the campaign (242) and the candidate should make overt appeals to the group explaining the need for political influence while highlighting the non-responsiveness of other potential representatives to their unique

needs (234). Maintaining an equal balance of support for American issues as well as bringing forth homeland issues that concern the electorate are also important strategies to employ (Laguerre, 2006, 40-41).

Some of the research suggests that when large concentrations of West Indians reside in a neighborhood, neighborhood-based descriptive representation emerges thereby creating *ethnicity entrepreneurs* who serve as powerbrokers to help the community access resources (Kasinitz, 1992). Others argue that non-neighborhood-based electoral systems encourage West Indians to downplay their ethnicity (Rogers, 2000). Some of the towns in this study, Irvington, Plainfield, Paterson and Roselle have high concentrations of West Indians, but only one respondent from these towns reported using an explicit ethnic strategy. Aubourg (Roselle) touted his Haitian identity as part of his campaign. During campaign outreach meetings, Aubourg urged the Haitian residents “that they needed a place at the table, because without that seat, no one would prioritize their concerns.” He also impressed upon them of the importance of representation and their need to keep abreast of the goings on in town. Aubourg also made himself available as both a translator and go-between for residents interfacing with the town on various issues.

Interestingly, in Plainfield, Mapp notes that during his first campaign for Mayor, he took the West Indian community for granted, in that he assumed they would vote for him because of a shared ethnicity, regardless of his outreach level. He had always been engaged with the community, especially as a member of the Barbadian Organization of New Jersey and as a self-appointed Ambassador for Barbados. After his loss, he learned

that he needed to maintain his engagement with the community to attract continued support.

Chang, Champagne and Foster-Dublin represent areas that have few West Indian residents, so an ethnic campaign targeted toward members in these communities may not have yielded overwhelming electoral support because they who did not represent a large voting bloc. However, they proudly acknowledge that the at-large West Indian community contributed to their success. New Jersey based West Indian and Caribbean organizations such as the Caribbean Association of Southern New Jersey, the Caribbean Bar Association, the Jamaican Organization of New Jersey and other Jamaican-born elected officials within and outside of the state supported the campaigns of both Foster-Dublin and Chang. Members of these groups volunteered during the campaign and/or on Election Day, provided financial contributions, distributed campaign literature and worked in other campaign-related capacities.

Champagne, likewise, received support from the Caribbean Bar Association. The National Haitian American Elected Officials Network, the Haitian American Leadership Council and members of the Haitian community as far away as Connecticut and Florida also worked to support his election. While West Indians constituents in the district may have lacked the ability to provide substantial support, these officials received support from regional associations, which proved beneficial to their campaigns.

McKoy argued that in a community as diverse as Paterson, an ethnocentric campaign strategy would not have worked because as he contends, “you cannot get all of the people to vote for you if you only focus on one ethnicity.” McKoy states that his campaign has, and should he run again, will, continue to focus on his years of service to the community and residents of Paterson. In his most recent election, he faced a Dominican Republic-born challenger who appeared to spend, as McKoy recalls, large sums of money and time on outreach to only Dominican residents. McKoy won the election and argued that his opponents’ faulty strategy appeared to court Dominican residents at the exclusion of others in the community, which potentially left voters apprehensive about his candidacy and may have moved them closer to his.

McKoy concedes that a “good number of residents in the community are either Jamaican or West Indian” and that he may have received their support because they know he is a co-ethnic. He has had Jamaican-themed and Caribbean-related events recently in his tenure, but argues that for quite some time, very few people in the town knew of his ancestry. He also acknowledges receiving support from West Indian organizations throughout New Jersey and notably, from a Jamaican-born elected official from New York City. Similarly, Fredric acknowledges receiving support from the Haitian community in Irvington, Haitian organizations within and outside of New Jersey as well as Haitian elected officials, including Aubourg and Champagne, which have helped in her campaign for office.

Other support for their campaigns came, more often than not, from the local party machine that helped to recruit them. In the cases when the candidate chose to run unsupported or against the party candidate, they often used their personal monies to support their campaigns.

The findings suggest that whether the candidate used an ethnic outreach strategy or showcased demonstrable ethnic self-identity, the West Indian community and the home-country community inside and outside of the state rallied to support the candidate either through financial means or as volunteers. These resources combined with local support and name recognition accumulated through their prior activism helped them to achieve victory.

Each official, on some level, acknowledges their ethnic background and expressed gratitude for the support from their communities. How then does this acknowledgment translate into their expressions of self-identity and their relationship to and with the West Indian community? I take up these questions in the next chapter.

Chapter 5 – Ethnic Ties and Self-Identification

This chapter analyzes the ways that respondents maintain intra and inter-Caribbean relationships as well as how the candidates self-identify. All respondents expressed multiple levels of ethnic ties including the creation of, or participation in a home country, or regional association. A few have received some level of recognition or accolades by their native country's government for electoral accomplishments in the U.S.

I also examine how the respondents self-identify and in what ways they may have demonstrated that identity. Given the nature of the research topic and the research on West Indians' use of their ethnicity to access resources in New York City, I expected all respondents to self-identify as either West Indian, or as a native of their home country, but how they view themselves elicited varied responses.

Ethnic Ties

In discussing the respondents' ethnic ties, the data reveal a deep sense of commitment to their homeland and co-ethnics. For the purposes of this discussion, I will group the respondents by country, because the findings show that the elected officials maintained strong in-state ethnocentric networks, but could not identify a successful and robust statewide West Indian or inter-Caribbean focused organization, other than the Caribbean Bar Association and Caribbean Medical Mission of New Jersey, that would have created a New Jersey centered space for these officials to intermingle.

The Haitians

Fredric, Champagne and Aubourg have maintained very strong ties with Haitian-related organizations within and outside of New Jersey and have received recognition for their efforts.

Aubourg started a business collective with other like-minded Haitian entrepreneurs. He is also a part of *Cercle de l'amitie, Circle of Friends*, an organization that helps student English Language Learners, in three towns, access college scholarships. This organization also helps to build schools and began work on an orphanage, in Haiti. Aubourg proudly proclaims that he serves as a *de facto* representative for Haitian families in Roselle and Hillside who may need to engage with city agencies. He also translates and helps authenticate Haitian documents. Aubourg has also made it a priority to recruit Haitian Americans to run for school board and other offices, most notably, his protégé, Archange Antoine, Vice President of the Roselle School Board and a member of the Young Elected Officials Network. He was also nominated as Haitian American of the year for his work on behalf of Haiti.

Fredric, a long-standing member of FOCOM, an organization that focuses on helping her hometown of Cazale and other parts of Haiti, is a member of the National Haitian-American Elected Officials Network. Champagne, also a member of the same elected officials' network, participates in the Haitian American Leadership Council, an

organization that serves to increase Haitian American civic participation and to help shape policy toward Haiti and its descendants.

In the aftermath of the 2010 Haitian earthquake, Aubourg and Champagne helped to harness and organize activities of town agencies, legislative colleagues and community residents to support relief efforts. Furthermore, each has stated that they proudly display the Haitian flag during Haitian Flag Day ceremonies and Champagne displays the flag alongside the American and county flags at South Toms Rivers' City Hall. When Champagne and Aubourg learned of Fredric's campaign, they reached out to support and offer help.

The Jamaicans

The Jamaican born elected officials, Foster-Dublin, Chang and McKoy, maintain strong ethnic ties to the Jamaican and greater Caribbean communities in New Jersey and the tri-state region.

Foster-Dublin argues that the Caribbean community has always been ready to support a fellow or sister countryperson and takes a great measure of pride in that person's success, which is consistent with what Rogers concluded (2000, 248). Because of this pride and support, she has had the opportunity to host foreign dignitaries from various Caribbean islands in Highland Park and around the state. Foster-Dublin established the United Caribbean American Network of New Jersey for leaders and

business-minded persons to help cultivate future Caribbean leaders. She also created the Jamaican Trade Council of New Jersey to work closely with the Jamaican government to create trade linkages and business opportunities. She has presented at various Jamaican Diaspora conferences and sat on former New Jersey Governor Jon Corzine's Blue Ribbon Advisory Panel on Immigration.

When Chang moved to Burlington County, she became a founding member of what is now known as the Caribbean Association of Southern New Jersey (CASNJ). CASNJ sponsors a yearly scholarship ball and recently established a scholarship in Chang's name as homage to her support and commitment to the group. Chang, like Champagne, has an affiliation with the Caribbean Bar Association and states that she maintains close relationships with many of the West Indian attorneys throughout the state. Chang also served as the Jamaica Organization of New Jersey's (Jon-J) keynote speaker for Jamaica's 50th Independence Anniversary celebration.

McKoy ran for the first time in 2000 and recalls receiving his initial campaign support from a Jamaican-born New York City Councilwoman. He was a member of the now dormant Association of Caribbean American Elected Officials and is affiliated with the Jamaican Organization of NJ – Jon-J. A few years ago and with the support of Jon-J, he organized a flag raising ceremony for Jamaica's independence in Paterson, where the Jamaican Counsel General served as a keynote speaker. McKoy has also served as a Grand Marshall in the Jersey City West Indian parade.

The Bajans

Mapp and his wife used to be active members of the Plainfield-based Barbadian American Organization of New Jersey (BACON-J), an organization that works locally, award scholarships and raises money for projects in Barbados.

Mapp is often invited to participate in local home country events hosted by Bajan dignitaries in the tri-state and the Consul General has visited Plainfield on occasion.

Mapp's political success has also been featured in *The Nation*, a popular newspaper in Barbados.

Mapp also acknowledges identifying and introducing his countrywoman, Vera Graves, to then Mayor McWilliams because of her interest in further engagement in politics. He also maintains a cordial relationship with Foster Dublin and self-describes as a self-appointed Ambassador for Barbados.

Greaves contends that while there are a number of West Indians that live in and around Plainfield, the Bajan community recognizes her as a co-ethnic and expresses their concerns about various issues to her before seeking help from the established channels of support. She has been back to Barbados several times and does her best to stay connected to the community here and abroad. She is not officially a part of any ethnic or social network that connect her to other Caribbean-born elected officials, nor does she know of other West Indian electeds in the New York Tri-State region, other than Mapp.

Discussion

For the most part, the elected officials from the same country knew each other and in most instances, helped with the others' campaign. Mapp, however, does have a relationship with Foster-Dublin and this could be because of the proximity of Plainfield to Highland Park. The elected officials also demonstrated a level of commitment in unifying co-ethnics within their community through country-based ceremonies or celebrations. Because of their status as leaders in the community and as co-ethnics, constituents identified them as persons to whom they could turn to help resolve individual concerns. These officials also served as "native informants" to legislative colleagues to help organize disaster-relief efforts to the Caribbean region and/or to identify problems or share concerns from these groups. Many have also used their status as a platform to introduce dignitaries from the homeland to the diaspora and to other city and state officials, to engage in talks that would create mutual business opportunities for New Jersey and the home country and to support infrastructural projects in the home country.

These findings comport with that of Jones-Correa who argues that immigrant elected representatives appear more responsive to the needs of other immigrants and that these representatives provide a voice for issues and groups that might not otherwise be heard and is more than symbolic (2006, 20). Consistent with Jones-Correa's research findings, the election of these immigrant-born representatives took place with the first generation, and with the cases of Fredric and Champagne, less than two decades after

their arrival to the U.S., which suggest that it no longer takes immigrants multiple generations to become a part of political institutions.

Jones-Correa argues that immigrants elected from largely white towns, such as Chang, Champagne and Foster-Dublin, may be “constrained in their advocacy for immigrants and other under-represented residents in their districts,” but this does not hold true for Champagne and Foster-Dublin (21). Foster-Dublin served on a statewide panel to suggest recommendations to the governor on how best to incorporate and serve the needs of immigrants and Champagne’s colleagues and constituents saw him as the resident expert on how best to help with relief after the devastating 2010 Haitian earthquake.

Jones-Correa also highlights Michael Parenti’s argument that “the spatial dispersal of ethnic groups in suburbia might not necessarily weaken ethnic ties and identification (5).” As this research shows, the ethnic ties remained strong despite, in some cases, representing communities with very few West Indians. I will examine whether self-identification of these respondents weaken or maintain its strength in “the spatial dispersal” of suburban New Jersey.

Self-Identification

The respondents immigrated to the U.S., have maintained strong ethnic ties and a few have used their ethnicity as a means to attract campaign and electoral support. The

next question I posed was one of self-identification. When asked how the respondents self-identify, only two, Aubourg and Foster-Dublin, stated a hyphenated American identification – Haitian-American and Jamaican-American respectively. Champagne, Mapp, Greaves and McKoy self-identified as Black people. Fredric and Chang did not select any ethnicity. Fredric stated that she is an elected official and Chang, a mother.

Aubourg self identifies as a Haitian American because he states that when he first arrived in the U.S., he remembers many of the stigmas Haitians faced such as being labeled AIDS carriers and recalls that many Haitians were ashamed of their ethnicity. He argues that times have changed, his colleagues support him and recognize that he is a voice of the Haitian community and that he is a proud American citizen. Foster-Dublin says that she will always identify as a Jamaican-American because she was born and raised in Jamaica. She takes great pride in being a Jamaican American, but contends that as elected officials, she and others have a responsibility to understand the African American experience, “to learn, embrace and educate others because as Caribbean people in the United States, we stand on those giant shoulders today.” As a result of her activism with the African-American community, the Metuchen branch of the NAACP bestowed her with the Adam Clayton Powell award.

Despite his strong ethnic identity, Champagne self-identifies as a Black man. He argues that because of a negative racial incident while a law school student, he recognizes that people may not see a Haitian or a West Indian, but they will see a black man. Mapp self-identifies as a Black American who is extremely proud of his Caribbean heritage, but

admit that at times, he has had to deal with the notion that “he’s not from here” and that some people have tried to use it against him throughout his public life. McKoy acknowledges that he is the first elected official of Jamaican descent in Paterson and states that he began wearing a Jamaica flag when Paterson began to organize Jamaican independence celebratory events. McKoy, however, self-identifies as a black man living in America. Specifically, he uses the “New Jersey Turnpike definition of Black.” “When a trooper looks over his glasses, he sees a black man driving and that’s good enough for me.” McKoy says that he does not dismiss his Jamaican roots and proudly admits that those roots helped prepare him for life. Greaves self-identifies as a Black person, a West Indian, a female and a mother of five. She argues that people who meet her often think that she is from Jamaica and if not, that she is definitely from the islands.

Both Chang and Fredric approached self-identification from unique perspectives. When asked how she self-identifies, Chang states that she is a mother, wife, lawyer and business owner who happens to be Black. She argues that she was not raised to view her Blackness as something that was supposed to hold her back. Because she saw people on the political stage [in Jamaica] that looked like her and sounded like her, her experiences with Blackness may be different from those of Black Americans, so she does not let her Blackness define her. As for Fredric, while running for the school board elections, the town’s newspaper, the *Irvington Herald*, described her as a Haitian American, a description from which she does not shy away. Although she is a “proud Haitian American,” Fredric self-identifies as an elected official because she posits, by self-

identifying in this way, she opens herself to everyone. Also, she argues, as a scientist, she sees herself first, as a person.

Based on these findings, I would argue that while the majority of the officials maintained strong relationships with those from their native countries, these ties do not necessarily govern how they see themselves in the broader American fabric of their suburban communities. Jones-Correa argues that “ethnicity is an easy shortcut to voters’ interests and sentiments, and it allows politicians to make targeted appeals to manageable groups of voters in organized settings” (26). Given their perspective on how they self-identify and may be identified, these officials did not solely rely on their ethnicity as a short cut to get elected, especially in the largely white suburbs.

Marwell argues, “even for immigrants of the same national origin, there is no uniform process by which the new second generation achieves political incorporation. Instead ...other important factors shape modes of immigrant political participation as well (227).” I generalize these findings to the West Indians in this study. Though they claim immense pride in their ethnic heritage and remain passionate about home country causes, they too did not have uniformity in how they self-identified or accessed political office.

Irvington and Roselle have large numbers of Haitian residents, potentially creating a space that would allow for a candidate of Haitian descent to be more comfortable in self-identifying as such. Yet, Aubourg self-identifies as a Haitian

American and Fredric, as a politician who is a proud Haitian American. Aubourg overtly sought to unify and mobilize Haitian residents, potentially alienating African American constituents, while Fredric sought and accepted support from Haitians in Irvington and throughout New Jersey and the East Coast, with the goal of also appealing to the larger, predominantly African American community.

Foster-Dublin represents a majority white town, did not campaign on being a Caribbean-born immigrant, but self-identifies as a Jamaican-American. McKoy self-identifies as a “New Jersey Turnpike State Trooper Black Man” though his community has a large Jamaican and West Indian population. Foster-Dublin’s self-identity may have created opportunities for her to go beyond the boundaries of Highland Park to access resources and serve as an *ethnicity entrepreneur* with both home country and state actors and agencies. McKoy’s potentially differently focused ambitions remain in Paterson, where he is known by co-ethnics as a Jamaican or West Indian, and as a Black man by other residents and may not feel the need to identify as a West Indian.

What is also noteworthy is that those who self-identified as Black, did not use the term African American. I have identified several potential reasons why the respondents may have chosen this nomenclature. My findings seem to suggest that some elected officials may have sensed a level of political expediency self-identifying as Black or West Indian, especially in communities with a large or a very small African-American population. I argue that in the majority-white towns, self-identifying as Black or an “other” may help to make these candidates more attractive to party leadership, especially

to those looking to create slates that reflect the diversity or burgeoning diversity of the community, and/or encourage voter participation from non-prime voters from those communities. A second possibility could be that the white political leadership knowingly chose to support a non-native black candidate because of potentially long held beliefs that immigrant blacks are more industrious, higher-achieving model minorities (Waters, 1999, 2008; Sowell, 1978, 1981, 1994). A third possibility could be that in predominantly Black communities, self-identifying as a Black political candidate, though foreign-born, may symbolize an understanding of, affinity with and a commitment to the larger African-American or Black political agenda – a subtle “we are one” statement. A fourth possibility may be that by self-identifying as Black, the respondents acknowledge a link to that race in the U.S., but by not using the term African-American, they may also be acknowledging and/or embracing their ethnic upbringing and cultural experiences.

The ethnic composition of the towns also played a role in the election of these officials. Marwell concludes that “given a district-based system of representation, the exclusive focus on ethnicity will be useful in promoting initial steps toward incorporation only where immigrant ethnic concentrations are unusually high – the zones of first immigrant settlement (249-250).” Though this research takes place in New Jersey’s suburbs, the findings suggest that focusing exclusively on ethnicity is not the only viable method for attracting votes and winning political office. Jones-Correa argues, “the phenomenon of immigrant representation in suburbia suggests some departures from traditional political science narratives of immigrant incorporation, but these departures are not as radical as they might seem at first glance. (27)” Though the departures are not

radical, enough of a departure exists, especially with regard to campaign strategy, self-identification and possibly gender that warrant further exploration by researchers.

Chapter 6 – Findings Revisited, Future Plans and Future Research

This is the first research project in New Jersey to focus on West Indian elected officials. The primary goals were to gain an understanding of how they campaigned for office, whether and how they have maintained ties to their ethnic communities and how they self-identify. After exploring various facets of their lives including their immigration to the U.S., education, employment, desire to run for office and the political structure of New Jersey, I find that the typical West Indian elected official is a well educated, oftentimes entrepreneurial, middle-aged community activist who shares strong ethnic ties in the States and back home. However, it was how they self-identified, their campaign strategies and the gender distribution that yielded the most important findings.

Self-Identification and Gendered Politics

Given the research on West Indian politicians in Brooklyn and on immigrants in the suburbs, I expected respondents representing largely white communities to self-identify as either Black or African-American and those representing largely co-ethnic communities to self-identify as a co-ethnic, West Indian and/or Caribbean. The research suggests that in communities with a large population of a dominant ethnic group, a co-ethnic will self-identify as such in order to mobilize voters. Whereas West Indian elected officials in communities with majority white residents may view ethnic self-identification as unnecessary since they phenotypically present as Black. However, my findings showed one respondent representing a largely white community self-identifying as a

hyphenated American and several who represented communities with large West Indian populations self-identifying as Black. The respondent who self-identified as a Jamaican-American may do so to maintain ties to co-ethnics in New Jersey, the U.S. and abroad, not necessarily to mobilize ethnic support. Those respondents who self-identified as Black may not have seen a reason to self-identify as a co-ethnic because within that community, their ethnicity was public information.

What is interesting to note is the respondents' use of the term Black. Those who self-identified as Black, did not specifically say African-American. There has been a long-standing discourse on what it means to be Black and African American within and outside of the U.S. and how Blacks in the U.S. should self-identify (Waters, 1994, 1999; Foner, 2001; Bryce-Laporte, 1972; Butcher, 1994; Dawson, 1994, 2012; Hochschild and Rogers, 2000; Pinderhughes, 1995). Greer argues, "Black ethnic groups in America have been negotiating multiple identities, that of being immigrants, phenotypically black, and American (2013, 138)." She contends that the "black" modifier is what distinguishes black immigrants from other non-black immigrant populations. Ann Walters, Board member of Carib ID, a group pushing to have separate West Indian and Caribbean categories on the Census, argues that, "We are not African Americans. Our origin is the Caribbean and we must be able to count as such and measure the economic mark we have made and continue to make at every strata of the society (News Americas Now, August 2014)."

With respect to gender, many political scientists note a dearth of female political representation in the country and have acknowledged that political institutions remain bastions for middle-aged and older white men. However, my results yield an even distribution of women and men office holders similar to their representation in the U.S. population. Does this population possess particular characteristics that allow for a greater encouragement and or acceptance of women elected officials? Could it be that growing up in countries that had women as ministers of parliament, agency heads, or entrepreneurs made the notion of women assuming political power more palatable? For researchers interested in women's political representation, this may be an interesting avenue for future research.

Future Political Ambitions

The last question I posed to the respondents focused on their future political plans. Only one respondent openly stated his intention to pursue higher office and had already announced. The others seemed a little less forthcoming in their future political plans, but indicated a desire to continue to be active in the community. They may not have been as open about their future plans because they may not have wanted to "show their cards" to potential opponents, may not have had all the key players on board with their reelection plans, may have truly been undecided or some combination of all three.

Since the interview, all respondents continue to serve in political office. Mapp is serving his first term as Mayor of Plainfield and McKoy, Foster-Dublin and Aubourg

continue to serve as Council Members in Paterson, Highland Park and Roselle respectively. Champagne has recently launched his Mayoral reelection campaign and Chang's colleagues nominated her as Mayor for another term. Greaves, during the interview, stated her distaste for the negative aspects of politics, such as personal attacks; however, it appears as though she may have learned to handle this aspect of politics and both she and Fredric now serve in a slightly higher position as At-Large Councilwomen.

Research Limitations

Despite the findings, this study is not without its limitations. The research focused solely on those officials currently in office which begs the question, would the research results differ if the research included those candidates who lost their bids for office? Also there were a few known candidates that no longer serve; would their experiences have altered the findings? How would they have self-identified? For example, perhaps given the unique structure of New Jersey politics and the numbers of municipalities that exist and its east coast tri-state area, would the results differ in a red or purple state, or in a state with fewer West Indian or other immigrants? Would West Indian Republicans self-identify differently or share the same commitment to ethnic ties? I would argue that there may be West Indian Republicans who currently serve in office; however, their need to self-identify as a West Indian or Caribbean American may be submerged under the larger Black or Republican self-identity. As for representation in red or purple states, I would argue that West Indian elected officials would self-identify as Black until a "tipping point" is reached in a particular community or jurisdiction, thereby enabling them to

comfortably self-identify as a West Indian or Caribbean, or at the very least, be a part of the political discourse without political ramifications.

This research also did not address voters' motivations for choosing either to support or not support a co-ethnic candidate. In what ways does a West Indian candidate's expression of their ethnicity impact the decision-making of a West Indian, African-American or White voter?

Lastly, during the research phase, I was unsuccessful in locating any Indo-Caribbeans who had served in political office in New Jersey. Indo-Caribbean immigrants share an Indian and African heritage and may not self-identify as West Indian or Black. They may also see a more viable political affinity with immigrants from South Asia because of religion, food and cultural production. Would they garner the same type of support from Afro-Caribbean voters? This too would be an interesting avenue for future research.

Conclusion

A successful democracy has the full participation of its citizenry – those eligible to run for office are allowed to run and institutions make provisions to enable those eligible to vote ample opportunity. If history serves as a guide, immigrants will continue to come to the U.S. for a plethora of reasons and be simultaneously absorbed into and change the political culture of the host country. In South Toms River, because Mayor

Champagne flies the Haitian flag at City Hall, he cites an increased awareness of Haitian and Caribbean peoples. Although none of the officials cited specific ways that their policy-making has helped co-ethnic or other immigrant groups in their community, they did cite and increased awareness and sensitivity about the broader issues of housing, education and quality of life issues.

It is also interesting to document the ways in which these elected officials have informally helped one another campaign for office. Aubourg and Mapp have recruited co-ethnics to run for office and various forms of co-ethnic support have come from outside of New Jersey. I see this trend continuing, especially as immigrants continue to see the suburbs as the new gateway destinations.

Party politics and local party support play a critical role in successfully seeking elected office in New Jersey and local party actors facilitated the initial foray into the political arena for the majority of the respondents. Once they commit to running for office, several key questions emerge that warrant further examination. In what ways do these new immigrants approach representation? If they maintain ties to ethnic communities/enclaves, does this have an impression on how they seek to govern? In what ways do they seek to represent the concerns of their immigrant and ethnic constituents, if at all? Does their representation in local, state and federal offices have the potential to influence future immigration policies in New Jersey and/or U.S. foreign policies toward their home countries? Does this group mirror other minority ethnic groups in how they

have accessed political office and advocated for favorable home country treatment by the U.S. government and less stringent immigration laws?

I predict scholars of ethnic politics, black politics and West Indian incorporation will exploit the interdisciplinary and multi-faceted subject areas of immigrant political incorporation in the U.S. because of increased interest immigrant political behavior, to discover and create a robust body of literature that seeks to answer many of the questions posed.

APPENDIX 1 – INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**BACKGROUND:**

I WOULD LIKE TO BEGIN BY ASKING A SERIES OF QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND.

1. Can you tell me about when and how you came to the U.S.?
 - What year did you come to the US
 - From what country did you emigrate
 - At what age do you come to the US
 - With whom did you come
 - Where did you live?
 - Have you lived anywhere else?
 - How many languages do you speak?
 - Do you have multiple citizenship status?
 - If yes, with what countries?

EDUCATION:

NOW I WOULD LIKE TO FIND OUT ABOUT YOUR EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

2. Can you tell me about your education?
 - Where were you educated?
 - Did you attend private/public school?
 - Do you have an advanced degree?
 - From where is this advanced degree?

EMPLOYMENT:

WE HAVE COVERED YOUR BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION. IN ORDER TO GET A WHOLISTIC PERSPECTIVE OF WHO YOU ARE, CAN YOU PROVIDE ME WITH A DESCRIPTION OF YOUR EMPLOYMENT BACKGROUND.

3. Where have you worked prior to holding elected office?
 - Where have you worked before?
 - Have these jobs fed your desire to run for office?

POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT:

NOW I REALLY WANT TO BEGIN TO EXPLORE HOW YOU INITIALLY BECAME INVOLVED IN POLITICS

4. Can you tell me how you initially became involved in politics?
 - Did anyone in your family hold public office while you were growing up?
 - Is anyone in your family politically active; either inside or outside of the US?
 - Have you run for student government?
 - Have you been in a leadership position in a community, religious, or social organization?
 - Are you connected to a political club?
 - Who encouraged you to run?

POLITICAL CAMPAIGN:

YOU HAVE TALKED ABOUT HOW YOU BECAME INVOLVED IN POLITICS, THIS IS A GREAT SEGUEWAY INTO TELLING ME ABOUT YOUR FIRST

POLITICAL CAMPAIGN AND WHAT YOU HOPED TO ACCOMPLISH ONCE ELECTED

5. Can you tell me about what happened when you first ran for office? Let's start with why you initially ran and for what office.

{WHAT MADE THE DIFFERENCE FOR YOU IN THE ELECTION...WHAT FACTORS DO YOU THINK HELPED YOU TO WIN/LOSE?}

- Were you challenging and incumbent or was it an open seat?
- Why did you think you could win?
- Was it for a specific, single member district, or was it at-large?
- Some people run for office as part of a slate, was that your case?
- Were you considered an outsider?
- What was your initial platform? Were you running to change the way things were done, or running to become a part of the process?
- Did this affect your decision to run for office initially, or subsequently?
- Have your experiences met your expectations before you ran for office?
- How much money did you spend on your first campaign?
- Was money a factor in your decision to run?
- Were you concerned about fundraising?
- Where did you get the majority of your electoral support?
- Where did you get the majority of your financial support?
- Do incumbents get challenged in your town?
- Do you remember your initial campaign strategy?
- In what way were you covered by the media?

- Do you have any campaign materials that you can share with me?
- Did you face any barriers when you initially ran for office?
- Have you run for office more than once?
- If you have run for office more than once, was it for the same office?
- How has your campaign strategy changed since you first ran for office?

IF NO LONGER IN OFFICE, ASK THE FOLLOWING

- What were the circumstances surrounding you no longer being an elected official?
- Do you want to run for election again?
- For what office would you run?
- If you do not want to become reengaged in elected office, what would you like to do?

ETHNIC TIES:

WE HAVE TALKED ABOUT YOUR RUNNING FOR OFFICE, CHALLENGES YOU FACED AND SUPPORT THAT YOU RECEIVED. YOU ALSO TOLD ME ABOUT WHERE YOUR COMMUNITY SUPPORT TO RUN FROM OFFICE CAME FROM. I WANT TO DELVE A LITTLE DEEPER INTO THE ROLE THE WEST INDIAN COMMUNITY PLAYED IN YOUR ELECTION, IF ANY AND DISCUSS YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT THE WEST INDIAN COMMUNITY IN NEW JERSEY.

6. How has the West Indian community responded to your being an elected official?

- How have your fellow countrymen in the community responded to your being an elected official?
- Have Caribbean-born officials (either in New Jersey, or the Tri-State) helped you to navigate the political process?
- In what ways have they helped you?
- Have Caribbean officials from the region helped you to navigate the political process?
- Have Caribbean officials from the region helped you in any way once you became an elected official?
- Have you used your notoriety as an elected official to advocate on behalf of any groups, whether in New Jersey, the Tri-State, in the US or internationally?
- How do you maintain ties to other Caribbean-born elected officials?
- In what way is this networking useful, if at all?
- Have you hosted dignitaries from your home country or home country associations?
- Have you visited your home country since immigrating to the US?
- How were you received upon arrival?
- Do you intend to return to your home country permanently?
- If so, do you intend to run for political office there?
- Are you connected to a political party or political movement in your home country?

SELF-IDENTIFICATION:

THANK YOU FOR BEING SO GRACIOUS WITH YOUR TIME SO FAR, AS I WIND DOWN THE INTERVIEW, I ONLY HAVE TWO MORE TYPES OF QUESTIONS TO ASK. THE FIRST HAS TO DO WITH HOW YOU SELF-IDENTIFY AND THE LAST, YOUR FUTRE POLITICAL AMBITIONS. I HAVE ASKED A LOT OF QUESTIONS ABOUT THE WEST INDIAN COMMUNITY AND ITS LEVEL OF IMPORTANCE IN YOUR POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIALIZATION. I HAVE COME TO THIS INTERVIEW WITH THE ASSUMPTION THAT YOUR WEST INDIAN-NESS IS SOMETHING THAT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO YOU. LET'S UNPACK THIS SOME MORE.

7. How do you self-identify?

- Would you consider yourself an ethnic leader?
- Which term do you prefer and why? West Indian or Caribbean?
- If another West Indian in politics does something really great, or really awful, does that reflect on you?
- Do you think what happens to other West Indians in general has something to do with your own life?
- Do you think West Indians help or divide the Black community?
- Some people say that there are conflicts between African American and West Indians. How do you feel about the statement?
- Is it a necessity that this group expands its access to political power?

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE:

SPEAKING OF FURTHER ACCESS TO POLITICAL POWER, LET'S TALK ABOUT YOUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE.

8. Are you thinking of running in the next election?
 - For what position would you run?
 - Do you think that holding local office is more or less desirable than other levels of office?
 - What is the highest office to which you aspire and why?
 - Have your attitudes changed over time about holding public office?
 - What have you accomplished during your tenure in office?
 - Do you encourage other West Indians to run for local office? Can you provide examples?

WRAP UP:

I WOULD LIKE TO OFFICIALLY END THE INTERVIEW NOW, BUT WANTED TO ASK TWO LAST QUESTIONS.

9. Can you provide me with the names of New Jersey based Caribbean-born elected officials?
10. Is there anything else you want to add to all that you have shared with me today?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND FOR HELPING ME TO COLLECT AND DOCUMENT THIS INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR POLITICAL JOURNEY. AS SOON AS I HAVE A FINISHED PRODUCT, I WILL BE SURE TO FORWARD YOU A COPY. IN THE EVENT THAT I NEED CLARIFICATION ABOUT ANYTHING WE HAVE DISCUSSED, IS IT OKAY IF I REACH OUT TO YOU?

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