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Examining Bullying, Ostracism, and Pervasive Stereotypes of Black Immigrants from the Caribbean Living in the United States

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ABSTRACT—Caribbean migrant populations are important contributors to American society, yet this population is understudied. Two case vignettes provide data of Black immigration experiences in the Southwest and Northeast regions of the United States. Expressions of intersectional identities (e.g. racial and sexual identities) are linked to bullying and ostracism outcomes. Additionally, gaps in functionality of social systems are discussed. Popular literature suggests an overrepresentation of some immigrant groups incarcerated and experiencing psychopathology which is not reflected in the data. Implications for training of educators and practitioners are offered. Future research should focus on differentiating these migrant groups along with recognizing the diversity of unfulfilled needs.

KEYWORDS—Bullying, Ostracism, Stereotypes, Identity, Immigration and the Caribbean

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Changes in national identity are often discussed in terms of diversity issues. How are changing racial distributions, gender identities, and academic achievements altering American culture, and how do these issues intersect? One way of bolstering population growth is through immigration. However, according to the Harvard Law Review (2015), “the forces driving the immigration regime have always been driven in part by an image of immigrant criminality” and the image itself has been driven by racism. Despite the often negative viewpoint, immigration is an important avenue for social development. Immigrants are said to make the economy more efficient because they address gaps in the labor market.

The US Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (United States Department of Justice, 1965) set the criteria for today’s immigration policy. Historically, the enforcement of immigration quotas for non-Western European nations limited diversity and perpetuated White privilege in American citizenship. Consequently, access to permanent, documented residency in the U.S. was a smooth transition for some groups and a rocky road for others. Despite the long-standing barriers for some nationalities, the demographic composition of the American population is changing into a more diverse society. According to the 2010 United States Census Bureau, the US population has grown almost 10% (from 281.4 million people to 308.7 million people). The Black population in America has increased by 12% (from 34.7 million people to 38.9 million people). According to the 2010 United States Census Bureau data, the people of color population has increased by 15%. Projections from these census data suggest that by the year 2060, 8.1% of the total Black population will be foreign born.

According to the 2010 United States Census Bureau, the Black population is growing at a slower rate than other major racial and ethnic groups, nationwide. This sluggish pace, from 2010 through 2012, is partly due to Black Americans being victims of homicide (Silver, 2015). More than 260,000 Black men have been killed in America since 1980 (Goldberg, 2015). The call to action from the Black Lives Matter movement (Garza, Tomet, and Cullors, 2012) has drawn greater public attention to the dehumanization and state violence against Black people. Nonetheless, the enduring legacies of slavery foster incidents of injustice and brutality directed at African Americans and expose Black immigrants as vulnerable targets of bullying, prejudice, and negative stereotyping.

Where is population growth occurring most often? The United States
census reports that Texas had the highest number of increased population at 4.3 million more people since the previous Census. Also, according to the 2010 United States Census Bureau, Texas is the second most populous state in the country after California. Between 2000 and 2010, data about the fastest growing states in the US show that Nevada grew 35.1%, Arizona increased by 24%, and Utah reported 23.8% growth. Moreover, approximately 40.3 million (12.9%) of the United States population is foreign born, and some states attract a disproportionately greater numbers of foreign born new comers. The 2010 United States Census also reports the states with the largest foreign born population, with the top states being: California (27%), New York (22.1%), New Jersey (21.2%), Nevada (19.1%), Florida (19.4%), Hawaii (17.8%) and Texas (16.3%).

Are government agencies, private institutions and the media promoting messages that appropriately reflect the new America? Garnett et al. (2013) suggest that intersectionality is a “useful theoretical model to apply to discrimination and bullying research [because it] focuses on the intersections of multiple social identities.” (p. 1226) Intersectionality is a term that social scientists use to describe the way group affiliations align to form an individual’s composite identity (Cole, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Andersen & Hill-Collins, 2010). In this paper, we look at the changing population in the United States and the status of Black migration. Next, we address when, where, and how Black immigrants are likely to encounter bullying, based on research findings. Then we present two case vignettes to consider how presumptions about race/ethnicity, class, gender, and sexual orientation may directly result in perceptions of bullying and ostracism during points of conflict. Finally, we identify behavioral approaches and suggest treatments that may benefit the well-being of Black immigrant populations in today’s American society.

A Changing America

Individual Black migrant backgrounds can be varied, and they are likely different from their American counterparts in terms of education and socioeconomic status. Some individuals may be coming to America as well educated and highly skilled professionals. MacArthur Fellow and author, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie commented on being African but not African-American in the United States during two interviews on the Fresh Air radio program (Gruse, 2013, 2014):
I think the immigration story that we are very familiar with, when it concerns Africa, is the story of, you know, the person who's fleeing war or poverty, and I wanted to write about a different kind of immigration, which is the kind that I'm familiar with, which is of middle-class people who are not fleeing burned villages, and who you know had ostensibly privileged lives, but who are seeking what I like to think of as choice—who want more, who think that somehow over there is more exciting, is better. Race is such a strange construct, because you have to learn what it means to be Black in America... So for example, people will say, 'Oh, you're so easy to get along with.' And they'll tell me some story of some African-American woman they knew who just wasn't like me. Which I find quite absurd. (Gross, 2013, 2014)

Insensitivity towards and misunderstanding of emerging groups can occur with individuals from different social backgrounds as well as with individuals having similar identities.

Immigrant children exist in the United States under various conditions. Suarez-Orozco (2001) predicts that by 2020, one in every five students will be an immigrant or a child of immigrants. Within these immigrant children groups, Adams and Kirova (2006) list three categories of possible immigration status: (1) children who left their place of birth willingly (2) children who enter the US seeking asylum and hold refugee status, (3) children who enter or reside in the US illegally, unaccompanied, and undocumented. According to Fuchtgott-Roth (2013):

The educational backgrounds of immigrants and native-born Americans are different. Statistically, the average skills of native-born American workers are distributed in a bell-shaped curve. Many Americans have high school diplomas and some college education, but relatively few adults lack high school diplomas and even fewer have Ph.D.'s in math and science. In contrast, immigrants' skills are distributed in a U-shaped curve, with disproportionate shares of adults without high school diplomas who seek manual work and others with Ph.D.'s in math and science.

Hence, there are two tracks of immigrants coming to America. One group of immigrants is highly educated. Another group emerges from poverty and may come to the US as children, who have completed fewer years of standardized education, compared to native-born American children.
of comparable ages (Johnson, 2015). Both of these groups are important when considering immigration and especially important for the Black population in America.

Researchers classify stigmatized identities as visible or overt traits, such as race/ethnicity (Helms, 1989) and voluntarily hidden identities, such as sexual orientation, (e.g. Beatty & Kirby, 2006) and/or religion, (Padela et al 2015). When multiple identities intersect, it is often difficult to determine which is most salient for the individual, and when more than one identity is stigmatized. It is also difficult to know to which identity that the individual experiences discrimination. The manner in which various identities and personas interact to create experiences is a public health concern, as the negative outcomes associated with discrimination based on a centralized identity have known associations with increased self-harm behavior (Garnett et al, 2013) and social isolation (Meyer, 2003).

Nevertheless, there are opportunities for growth and development of Black communities tied up in immigration issues, namely successfully attracting migrants who fill gaps and who will contribute to American society. Additionally, negative immigration experiences for both types of Black immigrants are an area for growth when making strategic moves to recruit migrants to the United States.

Black Immigration and Intersectional Identities

According to 2010 US Census data, most Black migration is from the Caribbean. These Black immigrants, coming to the United States, face several challenges. For example, in terms of Black identity, what it means to be Black in Jamaica, Haiti, or Trinidad and Tobago is very different from what it means to be an African in America. Authors such as Anderson (2015) have written about the differences between Black Caribbean people and African people in America.

Thornton, Taylor, and Chatters (2012) found that African people in America felt significantly “closer” to native born Black citizens living in the United States when compared to Black Caribbean people. Assumptions often made about Black immigrants are that they will identify with and gravitate towards African American culture and that they will be embraced in this culture. As demonstrated by Carter (2010), as well as Tillery and Chressefield (2012), this is not always the case. A person of African heritage moving to the United States from the Caribbean especially may face challenges...
related to (1) a new racial construction (2) a change in status (3) culture shock and (4) being a racial minority for the first time. These issues are not widely discussed, yet they present a major area of concern for Black immigrants in America.

Tillery and Chresfield (2012) found that Black Caribbean immigrants were often portrayed as the model minority in articles, editorials, and letters published in four newspapers widely circulated in Black communities in the first half of the 20th Century. The Tillery and Chresfield (2012) study also found that despite the “model minority” label, the print media found in Black communities also referred to Black Caribbean immigrants as prone to criminality and other socially deviant behavior. This is an early suggestion of some separation between African American and Black Caribbean populations in the United States. What’s interesting is that the literature has been relatively reserved about the developing relationships between native born Black Americans and Black Immigrants.

Pottie et. al (2014) found that first generation immigrant adolescents experience higher rates of bullying and peer aggression compared to third generation and native counterparts. Additionally, the unmet trauma and mental health needs of immigrant children have been described as a critical concern (Johnson, 2015) in some states. There seems to be a clear gap in the documented difficulties and the successful interventions that could address these issues.

For those Black immigrants that are “falling through the cracks” in educational, social and healthcare settings, there can be lasting adverse effects. These effects are pervasive, and can be seen across developmental stages (e.g. see Watson-Jones; Legare, 2016 and Molet, Macquet Lefebvre & Williams, 2013). Research suggests that the protective effects of higher socioeconomic status enjoyed by White young adults against mental health conditions such as depression are masked in Black young adults due to high discrimination among Black youth from families with college educated parents (Cheng, Cohen & Goodman, 2015). This highlights evidence of a social system that does not always address issues of bullying and ostracism experiences in terms of intervention and social responsibility.

Garnet and her colleagues (2013) discuss how the intersection of various stigmatized identities can further confound an individual’s development, as they often struggle to attribute the discrimination faced, a phenomena known as attributional ambiguity. The question of attributional ambiguity is of interest in the current conceptualization. Researchers have
demonstrated that when people perceive ostracism from a mainstream group, they are more likely to display signs of anxiety (Watson-Jones et al., 2016). However, if their membership within an ostracized group is thought to be temporary, then their mood is less affected (i.e. participants in a temporary group membership condition had greater positive affect, Writh & Williams, 2009).

One theory about Black Immigrants is that they may have the freedom to attribute ostracism and/or bullying experiences in the USA to a misplaced stereotype from a person outside of the group, which may be protective. Countering this, the experience of ostracism from a racial inner circle may add a layer of distress that has not been well documented in the literature. Intervention strategies are needed to address the perpetrators of ostracism as well as the recipients, especially when these behaviors are observed within an inner circle.

Padela et al (2015) found that for migrant Muslim physicians whose Islamic identity was more central to their sense of self, discrimination experiences were rated higher, and sometimes lead to increased job turnover when compared to Muslims whose Islamic identity was not as central to their sense of self. This look into identity salience is important in the current conversation because its premise should inform the case-by-case assessment. People who hold a particular attribute as more central to their sense of self, and who also feel discriminated against because of this attribute are more likely to leave environments where they experience these behaviors.

As a function of socially conscious planning and strategy, researchers and practitioners would benefit from considerations of truly diverse experiences of identity. Negative, sometimes erroneous stereotypes about immigrants still persist, despite the benefits gained from entering migrants. Society may assume that a Black migrant has the same experiences as an African American, when that migrant would benefit from information about social behavior, cultural norms and to have questions asked of them about similarities and differences between their American experiences and their former life in their home country. One suggestion by Salomone, (2008) is that for Black Caribbean immigrants, there is a necessary balancing act between assimilating to American culture and maintaining Caribbean connections that will also acknowledge and maintain the nuances of Caribbean culture.

This added consideration of intersectionality in identity may be particularly informative in understanding the individual’s experience. African
Americans have been shown to hold race as more central to their identity than Black people from other countries. Brook et al. (2008) found that people with more salient, multiple identities that work well together experience higher psychological well-being than those whose multiple identities are in conflict with each other. This finding makes a case for Black individuals—especially adolescents and young adults—to crystallize their sense of self.

Carter (2010) found that when comparing African Americans in Texas to Black individuals in London, UK and Trinidad and Tobago, the groups differed significantly on a measure of Black identity. The groups also differed on qualitative indicators of label preferences. Caribbean people were more likely to see themselves on a continuum of racial membership where they can slide further away from negative racial stereotypes by identifying more by their status: having more money, or having lighter skin for example (Middleton, 2008), than by race.

Depending on what identity the individual holds as most central, one person compared to another may have very different experiences and perceptions of discrimination and bullying. Though classism and colorism are not problems limited to the Black Caribbean population, there is evidence to suggest that African Americans are a particularly racialized group, and that Caribbean people in particular react negatively to being categorized in a similar way (Griffith, Johnson, Zhang, Neighbors & Jackson, 2011).

Sources of and Responses to Targeted Bullying and Other Mistreatment

The topic of bullying is a popular one in the media, but in terms of academic scholarship, the pursuit of cross-cultural findings and the development of validated assessments have been limited. School age children are frequent targets of bullying from peers (Lim & Hoot, 2015) while adults may face workplace bullying situations too (Tehrani, 2012). This prolonged mistreatment is considered chronic bullying as one or more individuals do hurtful things to harm or distress others repeatedly. Saylor, Nida, Williams, Smyth, Twyman, Macias, & Spratt (2012) produced a brief-self-report measure for detecting bullying in the form of direct physical aggression, direct verbal aggression, and/or relational aggression.

Cyber-bullying refers to bullying using technical tools, such as cell phones and computers (Kowalski, Limber, & Agatson, 2008; Willard,
Williams (2001) defines ostracism as ignoring and excluding others. The Bullying and Ostracism Screening Scales (ROSS) detect these behaviors in pediatric populations (Saylor, Nida, Williams, Smyth, Twyman, Macias, & Spratt, 2012).

McKenney, Pepler, Craig, and Connolly (2006) coined the term ‘ethnic bullying’ to describe when bullying occurs on the basis of differences in ethnic background or cultural identity. Scherr and Larson (2010) expanded this definition of ‘immigrant bullying’ to describe bullying that targets another’s immigrant status or family history of immigration. Saylor, Nida, Williams, Smyth, Twyman, Macias, and Spratt (2012) find that experiences of isolation are common outcomes for targets of bullying (direct aggression) along with targets of ostracism (social exclusion). This is another troublesome pattern when we consider the growth rate of Black people in America when compared to other races. To promote social consciousness, we must address these issues systemically—in schools, institutions and in public media.

Ostracism is another form of targeted mistreatment that is considered to be a social tool used to communicate that an individual or group’s behavior is aversive to some powerful other (Williams, 2007). It can also be used to dissuade an individual or group from encroaching on some other’s territory. A function of ostracism is that it can persuade another to modify their behavior, if this is possible. The risk is that responses to ostracism are diverse, and the effects of chronic experiences of ostracism can cause lasting damage to individuals who are ostracized on the basis of a centralized identity, which they cannot change (Brook et al, 2008).

What happens when the individual is less resilient, or becomes so shocked by the experience(s) of ostracism that they are unsure of how to act? Baumeister et al (2002) describe a temporary state of cognitive deconstruction where individuals show no signs of mood impact, but have an impaired ability to self-regulate. When an individual experiences this impairment, they are less likely to use the cognitive and motivational resources that are necessary to positively alter their behavior. Social risk theory suggests that when an individual has experienced enough social exclusion they perceive their value to others as low and their presence to others as burdensome (Allen & Badcock, 2003). Rather than seeking belonging, self-enhancement and control, long term targets of ostracism are more likely to accept the alienation and isolation conditions that short-term targets fight (Zadro, 2004).
Over time, it is said that individuals who experience chronic social ostracism report feelings of prolonged alienation, low self-evaluation, helplessness, and depression (Williams & Zadro, 2005). Williams describes a three stage response sequence to ostracism (1997 & 2001). In the first stage, the individual responds reflexively to a painful experience of any form of ostracism. Secondly, the individual experiences threats to a need for belonging, self-esteem, control and meaningful existence and increases in sadness and anger. In the third stage, an individual is reflective of the situation as a whole, considering reasons for ostracism, predispositions that reflect individual differences in the target and they will then attempt to fortify the most threatened needs.

These insights and measures can cultivate a broader understanding of an important phenomenon in group dynamics from multiple domains and across multicultural contexts. When there is attributional ambiguity and the individual is uncertain about which identity is being discriminated against, it can further frustrate their attempts to assimilate to the culture. While the burden of responsibility for addressing discriminatory behavior should not be on the victim of such behavior, being informed about certain social patterns can represent vast differences in outcomes for individuals.

Black Immigrants and the Criminal Justice System

A prominent stereotype is that immigration is a problem to be managed. Additionally, a common view is that immigrant criminal activity is a financial responsibility that should be redirected from state budgets to federal budgets, with states essentially charging the federal government for expenses associated with incarceration and deportation of immigrants involved in criminal activity (Hagan & Palloni, 1998). The magnitude of these occurrences however, may be grossly overstated. Analysis of American Community Survey (ACS) data by Ewing, Martínez, & Rumbaut (2015) reveals that only 1.6% of immigrant males aged between 18 and 39 are incarcerated as opposed to 3.3% of American born males in the same age bracket.

There is substantial evidence to suggest that immigrants are less likely to face incarceration than the native born. Despite this, there are prejudices, fears and stereotypes that drive policymakers. The result of this is that consequences for those who do commit crimes and who are immigrants are much more severe than they are for citizens. Ewing, Martínez, & Rumbaut (2015) note:
The blunt weapon that is the US immigration-enforcement apparatus is being wielded against a widening swath of the immigrant community, regardless of their ties to this country, regardless of whether or not they are actually criminals. It is long past time for US immigration policies to accurately reflect the diversity and complexity of immigration to this country, based not on a reflexive politics of fear and myth, but on sound analysis and empirical evidence.

Misplaced stereotypes lead to excessive policing of Black immigrant communities, pervasive oppression and stunted development. In a conversation about social development for people of color, particularly within the African diaspora, these practices are deeply concerning. In order to address these concerns, the Black community as well as advocates for Black communities must take a conscious approach.

Consciousness should come on two levels: awareness of current issues facing the community and preparedness to strategize accordingly. Being targeted on the basis of race and immigration status can lead individuals to feel ostracized and hopeless about the future. When individuals become hopeless, they are less likely to be social contributors and more likely to fall into negatively stereotypical social roles, as these are the most publicized as available (e.g., Liu, 2011). Additionally, organizations like the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition report that while 90% of the state’s corrections budget goes to incarceration, the remaining 10% spent on “diversions” or community-based supervision and treatment are much more effective and cost effective.

Mental Health Needs of Black Immigrants

Some researchers have found that immigrants, in general, have lower rates of mental disorders than second or later generation individuals in the United States, (National Institute of Mental Health, NIMH, 2007). The NIMH data also provides evidence that the way foreign born populations seek services is different from American born individuals, but that over time it becomes more similar to their American born counterparts. Takeuchi et al (2007) suggest that early assumptions about foreign born people in the United States were that adversity surrounding social and financial situations would lead a migrant population to experience more negative mental
health outcomes. It is noted that much of the data that was used to support these assumptions was collected in a biased way, only looking at populations in hospital settings, but not migrant individuals who did not seek services. What this suggests is that mental health problems are not necessarily a feature of immigration, but rather, can be an indicator that something is awry in the way an individual is functioning within their current environment.

A healthy migrant individual is no more likely to seek services than an American born citizen in many instances (Takeuchi et al., 2007). Having said that, there are instances where consciously furnished services would be the most appropriate response to a person who is experiencing adverse effects as a result of misappropriated stereotype, racism, classism or discrimination based on sexuality, national origin or religious identity.

Continued social development, protection and support are crucial for the resilience of a severely targeted population in America. Charles H. Cooley describes social consciousness as reflecting people's willingness to track the larger movements of society, “the decadence of nations, institutions and races” (p. 676, 1907). Filtering racism, stereotyping and discrimination from the lens of immigration requires concerned citizens, practitioners and policy makers to consider individual experiences of immigration.

In the following section, two case vignettes are provided of Black men who immigrated to the United States from the Caribbean. Readers are encouraged to consider how each individual’s recognition of multiple identities, perception of bullying and ostracism, and acculturation issues influence the outcomes for both Black men and their families. For each vignette, we suggest methods to address gaps in how systems currently treat people falling into similar dilemmas. In order to maintain confidentiality and privacy, according to Ethics Code 4, Standards on Privacy and Confidentiality, (American Psychological Association, APA, 2002) the following steps have been taken. The reported material is altered (including names and non-essential details) so as not to disclose personally identifiable information about the individuals (Tuckett, 2000).
Case Vignette #1

The Case of Johnathan Jameson

Case Type: Public Records Vignette
Consultant Type: Expert Witness

An Assistant Professor of Psychology and Ostracism Specialist was asked to testify in a murder trial by the attorneys of the accused.

Demographic Information of the Accused:

Age: 40
Ethnicity: Black Caribbean
Birth Order and Siblings: Johnathan is the sixth son of his mother's seven boys.
Education: Some High School

Prior contact with consultant: no
Consultant Account:

Johnathan is the second youngest son of his Caribbean mother’s seven children. While living in the Caribbean, Johnathan stayed out of trouble. People in the community knew the Jameson family, and Johnathan particularly was seen as a good kid and well-liked by everyone. He had many friends. He spent time with his brothers, who were protective and looked out for him. He spent the first thirteen years of his life in the Caribbean, then he moved to Houston, Texas with his brothers and mother. Johnathan’s parents have been separated for many years and he has not seen his father since he was 12.

Upon relocating, Johnathan and his brothers found it difficult to settle into their new environment. The young men had Dred-locked hairstyles, and spoke with Crucian accents. The rules of school attendance were stricter than they were accustomed to, and Johnathan had difficulty with his school. He was teased at school for his accent, hair, and impoverished clothing.

Johnathan and his family identified themselves as Caribbean, not African American, and reported feeling unfamiliar with the more conservative African American culture that surrounded them. The Jameson children experienced targeted stigmatization and ostracism from school peers and members of the community in Houston, Texas. Coming from the Caribbean where he was a member of the racial majority, Johnathan became an
outsider. In addition to the actual taunts and hostility, he experienced from the community, the poor condition of Johnathan's family life in Texas—lack of transportation, lack of involvement in school and school programs, frequent changing of apartments—served to further isolate Johnathan from the community.

After dropping out of school at 17, Johnathan struggled to find work, much like his brothers did. Eventually, after seeing his brothers earn money through selling drugs, Johnathan also became a drug dealer. Consequently, the young men were being targeted in their community by the police, and the brothers often felt pressured to make guilty pleas for crimes they did not commit, in attempts to avoid harsher punishment. Johnathan made repeated attempts to retain legal employment, and secured a job on a construction site, but struggled in his relationships with others there. He was often in physical fights with others and so, he could not hold his employment.

Eventually, Johnathan resorted to regular petty crime to provide for himself. During a burglary, Johnathan was spooked by the presence of another boy who lived in the house. Johnathan hit the boy with a baseball bat. The boy died, and Johnathan was convicted of capital murder.

System Functionality: Ostracism as a dysfunctional tool—Johnathan

Johnathan and his family reported feeling unwelcomed into their community, but the attributional ambiguity (Garnet et al., 2013) surrounding why they were being discriminated against meant that there were less clear opportunities to change their behavior, particularly because some of the ostracized characteristics (e.g. hair style, race and accent) were more central to their identities. One theory is that the Jameson family suffered the effects of long-term ostracism, which lead various family members to drop out of socially adaptive and structured organizations that might have helped them assimilate to their environment more functionally.

All occupants of a city, state, or country contribute to that environment, either positively or negatively. Williams' Temporal Need-Threat Model (1997 & 2002) outlines three stages of reactions to ostracism starting with a reflexive response to a painful experience of any form of ostracism. When ostracism is a passive-aggressive, visceral reaction to an unknown group, it can have negative consequences for both sides. Ostracism has been discussed as serving a purpose, when the target understands the reasons for
being ostracized and can change their behavior (Williams, 2007). It is the responsibility of a socially conscious community to create an environment where such responses can be safely voiced by the target and addressed by the majority group.

For Johnathan and his family, the second stage of ostracism (threats to a need for belonging, self-esteem, control and meaningful existence and increases in sadness and anger) may have occurred when the boys were targeted at school for their differences in dress, accent and hair. Intervention at this stage would require at least one or two "local" identified American authority figures to be sensitive to statements and behaviors that could be received as hurtful by the new family, and to have someone advocating for the children and their mother.

Advocacy could have included a teacher referral to a culturally sensitive family therapist/school counselor, having a functioning anti-bullying policy at the school or a teacher talking to students about why a particular statement can be hurtful. Advocacy for Johnathan and his brothers could also have included the police officers who stopped the boys from having conversations with them about the city and how many people struggle similarly to find good work and decent places to live. When the boys were being disciplined at school or on the streets, a longer conversation with a clear rationale for the rules and the reason they were being stopped or punished are some basic interventions that could have been implemented to counteract feelings of isolation and discrimination.

In this profile, immigrant bullying and ostracism from others seemed to ensure that the boys did not return to school, Johnathan's failure to earn his high school degree or GED limited the number of legal opportunities and future work potential. Insufficient social systems and sensitivity meant that young men, such as Johnathan, who could have contributed positively to a functional society were instead isolated and prone to criminal activity. Ultimately, bullying and ostracizing young men like Johnathan costs the society more than engaging them would have. The Texas Criminal Justice Coalition reports that in Texas, community supervision costs $3908.00 per client per year, while a prison term costs $18,538.00 per client, per year.

Next, we profile a Black immigration experience in the Northeast regions of the United States. The individual featured in this vignette identifies as transgendered male. A transgendered person moves across the binary (male or female) gender boundaries as they are traditionally defined in our culture (Golden, 2008).
Case Vignette #2
The Case of Diego Gomes

Case Type: Clinical Case Vignette
Consultant Type: Psychotherapist
Demographic Information

Age: 24
Birth Order and Siblings: Diego is an only child.
Education: Post-Graduate

Prior contact with consultant: yes, as a teenager for systems therapy with parents.

Consultant Account:

Diego is in the fourth semester of his graduate degree as a doctoral student studying in an engineering program at a large school in New York. He has self-identified a racial/ethnic heritage from Trinidad, including African, Spanish, and Chinese descent. He is a transgendered male, from an upper middle-classed Trinidadian family. Diego has just recently come out to some of his family members. Diego is from a conservative, religious family who has been supportive, he reports, but who do not accept his sexuality or his gender identity. His father still calls him his "little girl" and Diego has neglected to formally come out to other members of his family for fear of their reaction. He has always had an androgynous sense of style, so he believes that his extended family may genuinely not know his orientation.

Diego was experiencing suicidal ideation, finding it increasingly difficult to focus on his academic goals, and sought counseling services provided at his university's Counseling Center. Because of his struggles with his multiple identities, Diego requested a male therapist, but did not specify a racial preference. He was assigned to an African American therapist. Diego reported feeling as though he was assigned to this therapist simply because he is "Black."

Diego reported that the therapist suggested that his problems were related to the lack of "other African Americans" around him. Also, Diego reported that the therapist seemed uncomfortable discussing gender and issues of sexuality. Diego decided that if he was being judged based on the color of his skin, then this therapist would also be likely to make judgments about his sexuality. Diego reported being embarrassed and upset.
by this interaction with the therapist, because he does not identify as African American, but as Trinidadian. He reported that the encounter made him feel self-conscious and paranoid that the people in his predominantly White department feel similarly to the people at the Counseling Center. He did not raise these concerns to the therapist, and never returned for more counseling sessions.

Diego reported that he was used to being in a racial category shared by few and that he enjoyed being around the people in his cohort. He expressed concern that others believe that he somehow “belongs” to the African American subculture, and could not just as easily function and be included in the larger society. He does not believe that he has to be around other Black people in order to feel included. He prefers to be asked about his own heritage, which he fully embraces as mixed. Diego asked his European American and African American friends as well as his Caribbean friends how they would have interpreted the situation, and whether he was discriminating against the African American therapist by cancelling his next appointment. Diego is contemplating transferring to a much less diverse area so that people will be less likely to have preconceived notions about who he is. Diego was experiencing increased suicidal ideation, which he said he managed until the time of this process note (five months without treatment).

System Functionality: Ostracism as a dysfunctional tool-Diego

In Diego’s case, the failure of his new therapist to understand the intersection of his identities as a mixed-raced Trinidadian, a transgender man and a racial minority in America seems to have led to his disrupted experience of a support service that could have meant life or death for him. As a member of the Trans/Queer community, and being “Black” with a higher socioeconomic status meant that he was already at a greater risk for experiencing depressive symptoms and discrimination (Cheng, Cohen & Goodman, 2015). In terms of his developing identity, Diego was also in a particularly vulnerable position: not yet at peace with his sexuality and fearful of being bullied by his family or by the therapist. Garnet and her colleagues (2013) have highlighted how holding various stigmatized identities can further confound an individual’s development, as they often struggle to attribute the discrimination faced.
We can theorize that a portion of the ostracism that Diego reports is the perceived threat of exclusion from his in-group (his extended family) and the new threat to a need for belonging to his new in-group of academics at his university. Inadvertently, the school's counseling center or the therapist sent Diego a message that he did not “belong” in a White majority, and that he needed to take refuge from that reality. Diego’s self-esteem, sense of control and meaningful existence seemed to be affected by this different perception of racial experience and emotional attachment.

Identifying Risks & Protective Factors
Diego experienced increased suicidal ideation, but asked for help, and then feedback about his negative (ostracizing) experience. This can be conceptualized as stage three of Williams’ Temporal Need-Threat Model (1997 & 2001) responses to ostracism: an attempt to fortify the most threatened needs. One interpretation of Diego’s response is that he demonstrated much resilience. However, his behavior could also be explained by Baumeister et al.’s (2002) description of a temporary state of cognitive deconstruction where individuals show no signs of mood impact, but have an impaired ability to self-regulate. For someone like Diego, the clinician assessment should include probing for signs of dropped grades and an increase in reckless activities preceding the bullying experience.

How Diego might describe differences he has observed between American culture and his home culture would be vital information. It is also important to note that Diego, who had very legitimate needs, was at risk for self-harm, and sought services in a very vulnerable time.

Discussion
In this paper, we have taken a socially conscious approach to discussing immigration issues. The narrative began with a look at the changing population in the United States and deliberates on why Black migrants are an important population to consider in a conversation about changing populations. Experiences of direct aggression and social exclusion are discussed, and we explain how this type of mistreatment is more likely to be experienced by Blacks in general. Two case vignettes were presented, using the premise that Black migrant populations are an important addition to American society, but that they may be overlooked in current discussions of bullying and os-
tracism encounters. Finally, possible treatment and behavior approaches are
discussed. Beyond the person-to-person interactions, group-level dispari-
ties and confinements can occur with long-term consequences.

Functional relationships, a productive society and equal experiences of
citizenship are not unreasonable social goals. Bullying and ostracism can
be barriers to achieving these goals. On the other hand, being socially con-
scious helps individuals and communities to frame their action plans. The
idea is that by continuing to create environments for Black people to pur-
sue opportunities, services and occupations where there is not much Black
representation, and by asking questions about how to attract and support
all Black populations, inclusive of Black immigrant populations, individu-
als and communities will feel more empowered to enact change.

We purport two intervention strategies for tackling this problem: step
one involves the active participation of policy makers and authority figures
in enacting social change—speaking out against discrimination and im-
plementing training programs that highlight common cross cultural faux
pas. Step two involves personal agency on the individual level. Parents who
are aware of school climates can encourage their children at home to make
reference to each meaningful identity and children can begin to express
why/if that identity is important to them.

In terms of social activists and authorities, the onus to affect change
should sit squarely on their shoulders. The authors hope that the following
questions will be answered quickly by agencies, teacher groups, universi-
ties and private organizations. What can service providers do to promote
Black mental health and high social functioning? How can Black citizens
and residents increase their personal agency? How can social justice pro-
mote individual agency?

Intervention strategies for individuals who are empowered and able to
assume an agentic approach may use simple strategies such as journaling,
self-development therapy, actively promoting healthy images of successful
Black individuals in the media, and developing a clear personal narrative of
how their identities fit together.

Future Directions for Scholarship,
Growth and Development

The events mentioned in the case vignettes are not uncommon. Therefore,
a conversation about being socially conscious to address the many sides of
Black experiences in America is necessary. Being a socially conscious community means looking at why Black populations are not growing as fast as other populations, and developing ways to address those issues. One suggestion is to take cultural differences seriously, and work to provide the kinds of environments that foster mutual learning for both migrants and their receiving communities.

More stories must be told. Within this paper, we did not capture any women's stories which is an unfortunate limitation. Future work must include the experiences of Black women in general, and Black migrant women in particular. It is also difficult to fully separate the experiences of Black populations in America when comparing the overwhelming negative effects of racism, and police brutality. Bullying, discrimination and experiences of ostracism are not a Black Caribbean person's problem, but a social problem in America, if you are Black.

A second suggestion is to include more academic studies that showcase the differences in needs (service seeking, accommodations, culture, et cetera) observed from international Black people as opposed to African American people. A third suggestion is the call for intervention strategies and platforms, made to as many different spheres as possible.

Helping teachers, doctors, therapists and other service providers to be aware of unintentional prejudices that may be influencing Black individual's intentions to stay in particular communities, or beliefs that they could do well in those communities is really crucial. The conversation about community building must continue, with special attention being paid to the likely balancing act between finding like-minded peers who are familiar with the individual's culture of origin and achieving true societal integration.

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