



Addressing Tensions Between African Americans and Immigrants

**Demographic, Historical and
Political/Economic Dimensions**

James Jennings, PhD
Tufts University,
Medford, MA



Relations between groups

- Demographic
- Historic
- Political/Economic



Demographic

- Both groups growing in numbers in across the country
- Coupled with youthful, growing African American population
- Both groups often living in same communities, attending same schools



Demographic

- Strong presence of Black immigrants in many traditional African American communities
 - In Boston: Foreign-born constitute one-quarter or one in four of Black population
 - In New York, Florida: Similarly high proportions ranging from one-fifth to more than one-quarter



Historic

- Often invisible in public discourse and news reporting on African Americans and immigrants
- History of Black America rich with stories of immigrants
 - Collaboration between representatives of Haitian revolutionary Toussaint L'Ouverture working with enslaved Blacks to expand slave rebellion in U.S. South
 - Huge influx of West Indian immigrants to NY, Boston, Philadelphia

Historic

Reid, Ira De Augustine. 1969. *The Negro Immigrant, His Background, Characteristics, and Social Adjustment, 1899-1937*. New York: Arno Press.



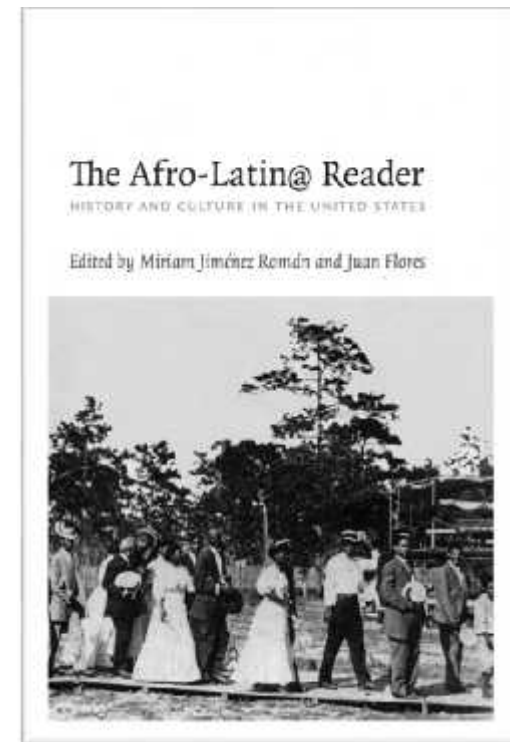


Historic

- Leaders from both groups working together on civic, labor and economic initiatives
 - Working together to improve worker conditions
 - **Yun, Grace.** 1993. *Intergroup Cooperation in Cities: American, Asian, and Hispanic American Communities.* New York: The Asian American Federation.

Historic

- Afro-Latino historical lens shows conflict and collaboration:
 - **Jimenez Roman, Miriam, and Juan Flores. 2010.** *The Afro-Latin@ Reader: History and Culture in the United States.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.





Historic

- Media emphasizes conflict, presents both groups as historically monolithic
 - Lack of knowledge of the role and impact of immigration in the Black community
 - Feeds into potential animosity and mistrust between groups that have much in common

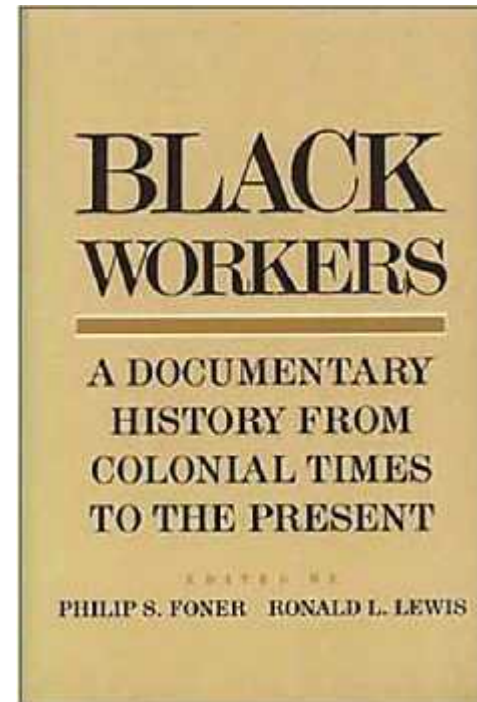


Political/Economic

- Misperceptions over political divisions between immigrants and African Americans can:
 - hurt both groups in the expansion of economic opportunity for all;
 - create a competitive focus on jobs vs. supporting strategies for the expansion of living-wage jobs; and
 - instead of economic partners, groups will see each other as adversaries.

Political/Economic

- Political conflict was easily encouraged by wealthier interests to keep profits up and wages down:
 - **Foner, Philip S. and Ronald L. Lewis.** 1989. *Black Workers: A Documentary History from Colonial Times to the Present.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.





Strategies

- Moving from danger to opportunity:
 - Enhancing knowledge about the history and cultures of African American and immigrant communities
 - Public education about the history of racial and immigrant struggles for equality
 - Increase visibility of the common struggles that bring people and groups together

Strategies

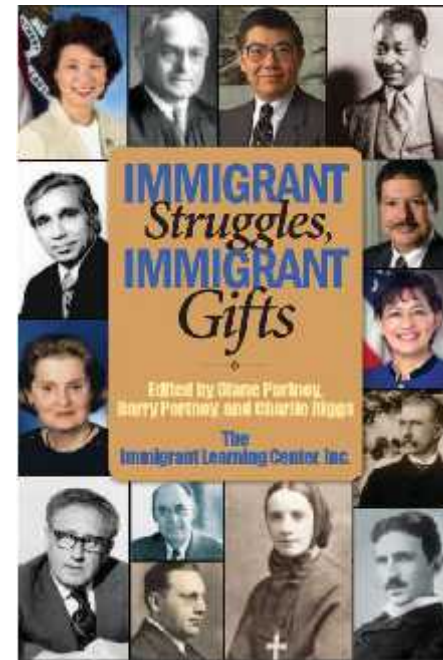
- In MA, coalitions of African American and immigrant groups together seek:
 - Better working conditions
 - Access to health resources
 - Better schools for everyone

- Network of African American and Immigrant Solidarity



Stories

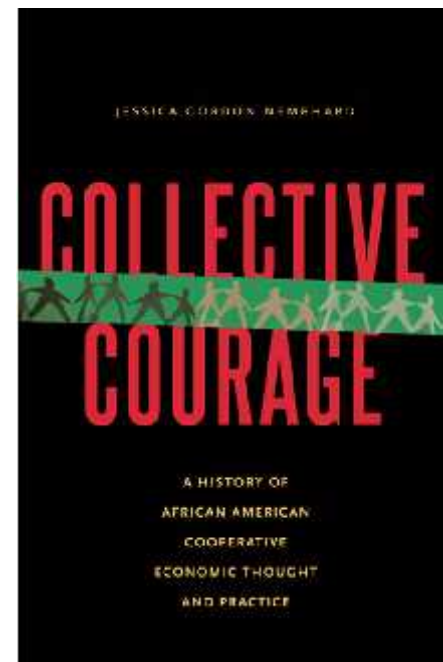
- Stories of struggles for a better life on the part of immigrant communities reflecting the racial and ethnic diversity of USA:
 - **Portnoy, Diane, Barry Portnoy and Charlie Riggs.** 2012. *Immigrant Struggles, Immigrant Gifts*. Fairfax, VA: George Mason University Press.





Stories

Gordon Nembhard, Jessica. 2014. *Collective Courage: A History of African American Cooperative Economic Thought and Practice.* Routledge.





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