Where Ebony Meets Poverty: Black Identity Politics as a Force for Development in Mexico

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Framing the Study

- How is the postcolonial imperative of exploring the contours of Blackness and Black identity in Mexico originated?

  - Idea of roots and routes
  - Coherent experience of Black selfhood
  - Counterdiscourses of the African Diaspora
  - Historical negation of Blackness in Mexico
Framing the Study

- Focal point of study

Mobilisation of Black identity politics

- Afro-Mexico

Identity  Development
Hypothesis and Sub-hypotheses

- General hypothesis

The persistent consolidation of a public Black identity in Mexico may act as a catalyst for significant growth for the country’s population of Afro-descendents by positively impacting the socio-economic development of their communities.
Hypothesis and Sub-hypotheses

- Sub-hypotheses

(a) The **historic problem of mestizaje** (race mixing) in understanding Mexican national identity has perturbed the ability of the population of Afro-descendents to appropriately engage the **quest of Black consciousness**.

(b) The **utilitarian nature** with which Black identity is frequently asserted in Mexico has served to **prejudice the intent of actively stimulating Black consciousness** as a means to invite the active participation of Mexico’s Black population in the interactive, discursive exchanges of the African Diaspora.
Costa Chica of Oaxaca and Guerrero

- Acapulco to Puerto Angel, 50 km inland
- Veracruz, Tamaulipas, Coahuila...
- 200,000 African slaves
- 450,000 Afro-Mexicans
Map of Veracruz
Organisation and Structure

- Chapter One: Identity Politics Matter
  - Theoretical framework
  - Concepts of identity, race, ethnicity, African Diaspora

- Chapter Two: The Black Other in Mexico: An Historical Analysis
  - Foreignness of Blackness
  - Academic and nationalist discourses surrounding Blackness
  - *Mestizaje* and national identity

- Chapter Three: The Black Subject in Mexico
  - Local negotiation of Blackness and Mexicanness
  - Ethnicity and sense of belonging
  - Discrimination and marginalisation
Central Arguments

- Identity as politically salient and resilient
  - “Process of meaning making”
  - “Legitimate” vs. “spurious” identities
  - Epistemic privilege of oppressed peoples

- Black subject status from Diasporic negotiation
  - Race, ethnicity, intellectual traditions
  - Transformative politics
  - Racial purity and victimisation
Central Arguments

- Incongruence of Mexican conceptualisations of Blackness
  - Shortcomings of *mestizaje*
  - Perpetuation of colonial past
  - Negotiating sense of belonging and Indianness
  - Self-defeating notion of identity
Central Arguments

- Birth of Afro-Mexican studies
  - Africanness, *Nuestra Tercera Raíz*, and folklorisation
  - Black consciousness-raising and *México Negro*

- Dynamics of identity and development
  - Discrimination as governmental neglect
  - Discrimination and poverty
Final Considerations

- Community solidarity and common development strategies
- Amelioration of Black/Indian relationships
- Continued elimination of social ills
- Pedagogical issue, not merely political
~ Thank you for your attention ~

Proceeding to…
Part II: Period of Questioning

Finishing with…
Part III: Deliberation and Qualification