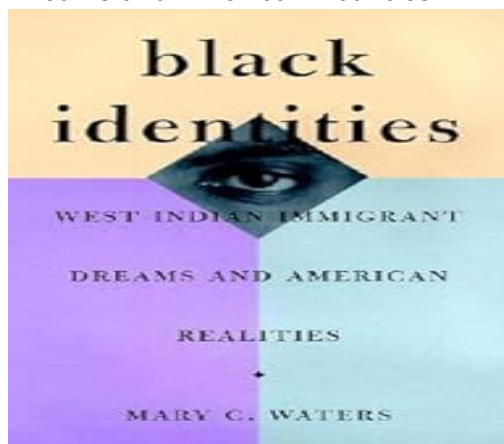


Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities By Mary C. Waters A little long and in some places repetitive but otherwise an interesting look at race relations and immigration in America Paperback well written and interesting interview-based study of racism and identity in New York among West Indian black American and white populations focusing on West Indian identities. Some of Waters' observations have held up better with time than others; anti-black racism has proven both stubborn and adaptive and it is less clear than it used to be that employers prefer immigrant to native-born black workers (while black immigrants have higher employment rates they earn lower wages). She finds that when the immigrants first arrive their knowledge of English their skills and contacts their self-respect and their optimistic assessment of American race relations facilitate their integration into the American economic structure. Ultimately the values that gained these first-generation immigrants initial success--a willingness to work hard a lack of attention to racism a desire for education an incentive to save--are undermined by the realities of life in the United States, Paperback An essential book for thinking about the complexities of black immigrant experience one whose ideas I turn to often: Waters debunks a lot of popular myths--including model minority myths offered by Sowell and sometimes subscribed to by West Indian immigrants themselves: But still a critical read on race immigration and identity in America: Paperback The story of West Indian immigrants to the United States is considered a great success. Many of these adoptive citizens have prospered including General Colin Powell: But Mary Waters tells a very different story about immigrants from the West Indies especially their children, Over time however the realities of American race relations begin to swamp their positive cultural values, Persistent blatant racial discrimination soon undermines the openness to whites the immigrants have when they first arrive, Discrimination in housing channels them into neighborhoods with inadequate city services and high crime rates, Inferior public schools undermine their hopes for their children's future. Low wages and poor working conditions are no longer attractive for their children who use American and not Caribbean standards to measure success, In many families the hard-won relative success of the parents is followed by the downward slide of their children, Contrary to long-held beliefs Waters finds those who resist Americanization are most likely to succeed economically especially in the second generation. Black Identities: West Indian Immigrant Dreams and American Realities



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Good book