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A fine-grained case study of the historical and contemporary construction and reinterpretation of Carib traditions in one community in Trinidad, and an important contribution to the study of indigenous identity politics. The linkages between theory and ethnography and between past and present identity formations are admirably developed.

By situating the issues in this lengthy historical context, Forte gives much more depth than would otherwise be possible to the understandings the project develops concerning how political economic contexts influence identity constructions.

This fine-grained history demonstrates long-term dynamics and shifts in local-global interactions more effectively than any amount of theorizing would do. Forte does an excellent job of using the historical analysis to illustrate larger theoretical points.

Rather than write a community ethnography, the author focuses on individual cultural brokers and their positions in relation to the Arima community and to one another. This individually-focused analysis is an interesting approach that brings the theoretical issues down to earth and adds considerably to the human interest of the story. By focusing on individuals, the analysis shows how intracultural diversity looks at the ground level, where actors have strikingly different interests, ideologies, and approaches and are viewed very differently by outsiders and outside agencies.

By tracing notions and labels—Carib, Arawak, “Indian”—through time, Forte demonstrates how indigeneity is deeply enmeshed in the political economy of historical processes and that the social position of “Indian” is created by various agents.