Published in final edited form as:

J Fam Issues. 2013 September ; 34(9): 1262–1290. doi:10.1177/0192513X12454655.

Correlates of Emotional Support and Negative Interaction Among African Americans and Caribbean Blacks

Karen D. Lincoln¹, Robert Joseph Taylor², and Linda M. Chatters²

¹University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA, USA

²University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, USA

Abstract

This study explores the relationship of family and demographic factors to the frequency of receiving emotional support and the frequency of engaging in negative interactions with family members (i.e., criticism, burden, and being taken advantage of). The study uses the ambivalence framework and data from the National Survey of American Life, a national sample of African Americans and Caribbean Blacks (Caribbean Blacks). Overall, no significant differences were found between African Americans and Caribbean Blacks in the frequency of emotional support or negative interaction; several significant correlates (e.g., age, family closeness) were found for both groups. However, a number of unique associations were also demonstrated (e.g., marital status, frequency of family contact), indicating differences in the ways that these variables operate within the two populations. These and other findings are discussed in relation to the ambivalence framework and subgroup differences in family phenomena within the Black population.

Keywords

African Americans; Caribbean Blacks; social support; negative interaction; ambivalence

Introduction

A large body of research documents that family, friends, church, and community members are important sources of informal support. This research highlights the role of social support networks in promoting and restoring the health of individuals through their ability to meet basic human needs for social contact, to provide assistance, and affirmation (House, Landis, & Umberson, 1988). More than four decades of work in this area has produced important information about the social and demographic factors that precipitate the receipt of social support (Dunkel-Schetter, Folkman, & Lazarus, 1987; Lincoln, Taylor, & Chatters, 2003; Lu, 1995) from various sources within one's social network (Heaney & Israel, 1997) and across different situations (Broman, 1996; Cutrona, 1990). Findings from these studies have

Reprints and permission: sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav

Corresponding Author: Karen D. Lincoln, School of Social Work, University of Southern California, 669 W. 34th Street, MRF 214, Los Angeles, CA, 90089, USA, klincoln@usc.edu.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

proven to be invaluable for enhancing our understanding of the importance of emotional support during crisis situations (Lincoln, Chatters, & Taylor, 2005) and in relation to the well-established link between social support and well-being (Berkman & Glass, 2000).

Although this work has much to offer with respect to understanding the correlates of emotional support and patterns of assistance, the overwhelming majority of this research focuses on the positive aspects of social relationships with only a limited amount of work examining the correlates of negative interaction, especially among African Americans. A growing body of literature indicates that positive and negative aspects of social relationships are distinctive social occurrences, and that negative interactions are, themselves, an important predictor of psychological functioning among African Americans (Lincoln, Chatters, Taylor, & Jackson, 2007; Lincoln, Taylor, et al., 2003). Scholars from a variety of fields have used the concept of *ambivalence* to better understand the quality of family relationships by incorporating both positive and negative elements in a single study (Connidis & McMullin, 2002; Fingerman, Hay, & Birditt, 2004; Lüscher & Pillemer, 1998; Uchino, Holt-Lunstad, Uno, & Flinders, 2001). Findings from this work demonstrate that positive and negative interactions are built into the nature and structure of family relationships.

Negative interactions, unfortunately, are an inevitable consequence of involvement in social networks (Lincoln, 2000). These exchanges, in the form of conflicts, demands, and broken promises, are not only some of the most common and detrimental stressors that individuals encounter (Almeida & Horn, 2004) but are also risk factors for poor psychological functioning (Krause, 2005), psychological distress (Lincoln, Chatters, & Taylor, 2003), and mood and anxiety disorders (Lincoln et al., 2007; Lincoln et al., 2010). Furthermore, several studies indicate that negative interactions with members of one's social network are more detrimental for health and well-being than social support is beneficial (Gray & Keith, 2003; Lincoln, Chatters, et al., 2003; Lincoln et al., 2005). Thus, understanding the correlates of negative interaction and identifying the risk and protective factors associated with this type of interpersonal stress has important implications for health and well-being and for promoting mental and physical health.

The present study investigates the correlates of negative interaction and emotional support from family members among a national sample of African Americans and Caribbean Blacks using the National Survey of American Life, a national probability sample of African Americans and Caribbean Blacks. This investigation explores potential differences between African Americans and Caribbean Blacks in the frequency of reporting negative interactions and receiving emotional support from family and whether there are within-group differences among African Americans and Caribbean Blacks in these types of social exchanges. Several theoretical perspectives and research literatures frame this investigation. First, the concept of *ambivalence* and its application in the family studies literature is discussed. Although ambivalence has been used to characterize the nature of family relationships, it has rarely been employed in studies involving racial and ethnic minority families. We discuss possible applications of the concept of ambivalence to these groups. Following this, we present empirical findings on the topics of social support networks, emotional support, and negative

interaction among African Americans. This section concludes with a review of available research on the social networks of Caribbean Blacks.

Ambivalence

The concept of *ambivalence* has emerged as an important organizing framework for studying emotional support and negative interaction within family systems. Viewed as an extension of the *family solidarity model* (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991), ambivalence has been useful as a heuristic and sensitizing concept, reminding us of the competing and often contradictory features of close relationships. A burgeoning body of literature has brought ambivalence to the fore in family research (e.g., Connidis & McMullin, 2002; Fingerman et al., 2004; Lüscher & Pillemer, 1998), and available theory and research support the position that ambivalence is built into the nature and structure of family relationships.

Two different approaches to ambivalence are articulated in the literature. A sociological perspective conceptualizes ambivalence in family relationships as the result of contradictions that are created by social arrangements. According to this perspective, ambivalence is built into the structure of social status and roles, thus generating incompatible normative expectations (Merton, 1976). Psychological ambivalence, on the other hand, is viewed as the result of intrapersonal conflict and individual processes without reference to social structure. Psychological ambivalence occurs at the subjective individual level and involves conflicting emotions, or attitudes, or contradictory relationships between intimate persons or groups (Lüscher & Pillemer, 1998). The current study incorporates both sociological and psychological perspectives on ambivalence as referring to contradictions in relationships that arise from (a) social structure in the form of norms linked to statuses and roles (e.g., gender, marital, and immigration history) and (b) the subjective level in the form of cognitions and emotions regarding family relationships (e.g., perceptions of social support, negative interactions, and family closeness).

Studies of ambivalence reveal important insights about specific family interactions both within and across generations. However, more studies of ambivalence within the broader social network of family members are needed because we know little about ambivalence within extended families and even less is known about ambivalence in the family relationships of racially and ethnically diverse populations. Lüscher and Pillemer (1998) suggest that studies of population subgroup differences in the experience of ambivalence would be particularly useful for elaborating the framework. Accordingly, investigations of variation in ambivalence by social position (e.g., gender, race, socioeconomic status) are an appropriate next step. Although the role of race or ethnicity in ambivalence has not received much attention in the literature, the issue is a potentially important one. On one hand, the literature does not provide a clear basis for anticipating particular race or ethnic differences in the models explaining ambivalence. However, there are important structural, social, and cultural differences between African Americans and Caribbean Blacks, for example, which lend themselves to an investigation of the factors that precipitate both sociological and psychological family ambivalence among these groups.

Emotional Support and Negative Interaction Among African Americans

The informal networks of African Americans have demonstrated their effectiveness as sources of assistance, collective coping, and their ability to provide a variety of resources for managing risks and adversity. Emotional support and other types of social support provided by informal networks have been critical in helping African Americans cope with the demands of everyday life and with stressful life events, including the loss of a loved one (Sharpe, 2008), homelessness (Taylor, Chatters, & Celious, 2003), chronic illness (Coker, 2006; Tang, Brown, Funnell, & Anderson, 2008), the disability of a family member (Dilworth-Anderson, Williams, & Cooper, 1999), and financial problems (Broman, 1996; Lincoln et al., 2005). Daly, Jennings, Beckett, and Leashore (1995) found that African Americans preferred coping strategies that were group centered—that is, family, community, and kinship networks—to deal with adversity (Daly et al., 1995). Broman (1996) found that, when faced with stressful circumstances, African Americans identified informal help as one of the most common coping resources used for a variety of stressful situations, such as economic problems (88.9%) and interpersonal problems involving a spouse or family member (91.7%). Similarly, Neighbors and LaVeist (1989) found that among African Americans, informal network members were the main source of assistance when coping with financial difficulties. In sum, the use of informal networks is a culturally consistent strategy that enhances the coping efforts and resiliency of African American families (Utsey, Bolden, Lanier, & Williams, 2007).

Informal network members provide support in times of need, but they can also be critical, intrusive, and unsupportive in their own right. Although an emerging body of literature explores the extent and nature of negative interactions among family members (e.g., Krause, 2005), only a few of these studies examine negative interaction among African Americans. For instance, Neighbors (1997) found that roughly half of the personal problems experienced by African Americans were interpersonal in nature and 83% of them directly involved family members (e.g., spouse, parent, child, sibling, and relatives). About one out of three (36%) identified interpersonal problems explicitly involved conflict of some sort (e.g., marital problems, problems with children). In an analysis of social support and negative interaction among a sample of older African Americans, Lincoln, Taylor, et al. (2003) found that respondents indicated that their informal social network was generally supportive and only rarely felt that their interactions with family and friends were negative. Furthermore, the sociodemographic and personality correlates of social support and negative interaction were distinct from one another.

There are several reasons why African Americans might experience ambivalence when interacting with their social networks. First, a strong identification with family members and a desire to exchange support is an important value for African Americans (Billingsley, 1992). As noted previously, African Americans rely heavily on social networks for a variety of assistance within the broad categories of instrumental and tangible aid, emotional support, and advice/information. However, heavy reliance on family members and repeated requests for assistance can overtax these networks and lead to conflict (e.g., George, 1986; White & Rogers, 1997). Second, reciprocity is an important norm for support exchanges and an inability to reciprocate (i.e., materially, financially) can strain relationships. Third, the

extended and multigenerational family structure that characterizes many African American families (Cherlin, 2010) can introduce a host of conflicting norms, as adult children provide assistance to older parents and grandparents help raise grandchildren. Finally, the general literature indicates that negative interaction is fairly common among family members (Rook & Ituarte, 1999), particularly in circumstances where extensive support is provided (Newsom & Schulz, 1998). African Americans, who have a higher proportion of kin in their social networks (Ajrouch, Antonucci, & Janevic, 2001), as well as smaller social networks compared with Whites (Barnes, Mendes de Leon, Bienias, & Evans, 2004), may be particularly vulnerable to conflict within their networks.

Social Networks Among Caribbean Blacks

Among Caribbean Blacks in the United States, family and kinship relationships are instrumental for ethnic identity formation (Waters, 1999), preservation of cultural values and traits, and social support and assistance patterns (Bashi, 2007). Furthermore, family and kinship relationships and networks are involved in all stages of the migration process. Migration decisions for Caribbean Blacks often depend on their connections to existing social networks in the United States (Curran & Saguy, 2001). These social networks are vital for preventing social isolation and exclusion, buffering economic hardships associated with immigration, and defining and reaffirming a transnational Caribbean ethnic identity. The social networks of Caribbean Blacks have also been credited with facilitating immigrant groups' abilities to create niches in housing and labor markets, start their own businesses, financially shore up network members who need assistance, and offer co-residence to help other immigrants establish themselves immediately following migration (Gilbertson & Gurak, 1992; Massey, 1986; Waldinger, 1996; Waters, 1999). Immigrant networks also provide nonmaterial social support, encouragement, and reinforce cultural practices (Glick, 1999; Ho, 1993; Kuo & Tsai, 1986; Levitt, 1999; Tilly & Brown, 1967). Moreover, social networks among Caribbean Blacks are culturally distinct because of earlier migrants' ability to modify and reconfigure themselves to suit the specific social, cultural, and political contexts of their country of origin (Chamberlain, 1998). That is, although the social and economic conditions in the receiving country affect adjustment, there is also a "culture constant" that migrants have brought and continue to bring with them, and which is replenished through existing social networks and visits with family and other social contacts (Chamberlain, 1998).

Caribbean Black immigrants, however, might experience ambivalence in their social and family relationships resulting from changes in social roles and statuses. For example, women are often the first to migrate to the United States and become the sole financial supporters of families (Foner, 2005). In addition, relocation because of migration can have complex effects on support networks and family relations and dynamics (Mahler, 1995) and gender relationships (Bryant, Taylor, Lincoln, & Jackson, 2008). These family disruptions can alter the established system of support exchanges and interactions as well as male–female relationships and gendered family and social roles. Accordingly, these circumstances suggest that family ambivalence may be a common occurrence among immigrant family networks. Unfortunately, research on the family support networks of Caribbean Blacks is underdeveloped, especially research on specific aspects, such as emotional support and

negative interaction. Furthermore, because the vast majority of existing research is based on ethnographic studies of distinct immigrant communities in the United States (Bashi, 2007; Foner, 1998, Waters, 1999), there is little information on these issues within a broad cross-section of Caribbean Blacks.

Focus of the Present Study

This study draws on the ambivalence perspective to investigate the correlates of emotional support and negative interaction with family members among a national sample of African Americans and Caribbean Blacks. The primary research question focuses on the demographic and family correlates of emotional support and negative interaction among African Americans and Caribbean Blacks. The main hypotheses propose that (a) emotional support and negative interaction, as distinct occurrences, have different demographic and family correlates and (b) as a group, the correlates of emotional support and negative interaction will differ for African Americans and Caribbean Blacks. In addition, the analysis for Caribbean Blacks uses a set of immigration variables that are relevant for this population (e.g., country of origin). This analysis is based on the National Survey of American Life, a national probability sample of African Americans and Caribbean Blacks.

Method

Sample

This analysis uses the African American and Caribbean Black subsamples of the National Survey of American Life (NSAL) data set. The National Survey of American Life: Coping with Stress in the 21st Century was collected by the Program for Research on Black Americans at the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research. The field work for the study was completed by the Institute for Social Research's Survey Research Center in cooperation with the Program for Research on Black Americans.

The NSAL sample has a national multistage probability design. The interviews were face-to-face and conducted within respondents' homes. Respondents were compensated for their time. The data collection was conducted from 2001 to 2003. A total of 6,082 interviews were conducted with persons aged 18 years and older, including 3,570 African Americans, 1,621 Blacks of Caribbean descent ("Caribbean Blacks"), and 891 non-Hispanic Whites. The overall response rate was 72.3%; 70.7% for African Americans, 77.7% for Caribbean Blacks, and 69.7% for non-Hispanic Whites. This response rate is excellent when considering that African Americans (especially lower income African Americans) and Caribbean Blacks are more likely to reside in major urban areas that are more difficult and much more expensive to conduct interviews. Final response rates for the NSAL two-phase sample designs were computed using the American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) guidelines (AAPOR, 2006). For the purposes of this study, only the African American (U.S-born only) and Caribbean Black subsamples are included in the analysis (see Jackson et al., 2004, for a more detailed discussion of the NSAL sample). All study procedures were approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Michigan.

Measures

Dependent variables—Negative interaction is measured by an index of three items. Respondents were asked, “Other than your (spouse/partner) how often do your family members: (a) make too many demands on you, (b) criticize you and the things you do, and (c) try to take advantage of you?” The response categories for these questions were *very often*, *fairly often*, *not too often*, and *never*. Higher values on this index indicate more frequent negative interactions with family members. Cronbach’s alpha for this three-item index is .73 for African Americans and .74 for Caribbean Blacks. Emotional support is also measured by an index of three items. Respondents were asked, “Other than your (spouse/partner) how often do your family members: (a) make you feel loved and cared for, (b) listen to you talk about your private problems and concerns, and (c) express interest and concern in your well-being?” Response categories range from *very often* to *never* with higher values on this index indicating higher levels of emotional support received. Cronbach’s alpha for this three-item index is .75 for African Americans and .72 for Caribbean Blacks.

Two family network variables are included as independent variables—frequency of contact with family members and subjective closeness to family. Frequency of contact with family members is measured by the following question: “How often do you see, write or talk on the telephone with family or relatives who do not live with you? Would you say nearly every day, at least once a week, a few times a month, at least once a month, a few times a year, hardly ever or never?” Degree of subjective closeness to family is measured by the question, “How close do you feel toward your family members? Would you say very close, fairly close, not too close or not close at all?” Higher values on these items indicate higher levels of contact and closeness to family members. Several demographic variables are included in this analysis as independent variables, including age, education, family income (each measured continuously), gender (0 = *male*; 1 = *female*) and marital status (married is the referent group). Missing data for family income were handled using hot-deck imputation to impute missing values.

Two variables that are particularly relevant to the Caribbean Black population in the United States are included in this analysis—years in the United States (i.e., immigration history) and country of origin. Immigration history has five categories: U.S. born (is the referent), contrasted with Caribbean Blacks who have resided in the United States from 0 to 5 years, 6 to 10 years, 11 to 20 years, and more than 20 years. Caribbean Black respondents reported more than 25 different countries of origin. This variable, country of origin, was recoded into five categories: Jamaica (the referent group), Spanish-speaking country (e.g., Dominican Republic, Cuba, Puerto Rico), Haiti, Trinidad and Tobago, and other English-speaking country (e.g., Barbados).

Analysis Strategy

Descriptive analyses were conducted to examine the distribution of demographic and family characteristics in the total sample. For purposes of bivariate analysis only, low, medium, and high levels of emotional support and negative interaction were derived from tertiles of the indices. We then conducted multivariate regression analyses predicting emotional support and negative interaction, while examining the main effects of demographic and family

characteristics. To test for ethnic differences in the relationship between gender and emotional support and gender and negative interaction, we included the corresponding interaction terms in the analysis (i.e., gender $\times$ ethnicity). Table 1 presents the characteristics of the sample for the current investigation. All analyses were weighted and took into account complex survey design characteristics using SAS-callable SUDAAN Version 9.0. The PROCREGRESS procedure was used to obtain summary parameter estimates from multivariate regression analyses.

Results

Descriptive analyses revealed that reports of negative interactions with family members were relatively low compared with reports of receiving emotional support. Among African Americans, a relatively small percentage of respondents indicated that they experienced negative interaction with their families *very often* (2.54%) or *fairly often* (9.94%). Similar levels are evident among Caribbean Blacks, with 2.47% indicating that they experienced negative interaction with their family members *very often*, and about 12% indicating that they experienced negative interaction with their family members *fairly often*. Both African Americans and Caribbean Blacks indicated receiving much higher levels of emotional support relative to experiencing negative interaction, with approximately 30% of African Americans indicating that they received emotional support from their family members *very often*, and about 45% indicating that they received emotional support *fairly often*. Similar results were revealed for Caribbean Black respondents, with approximately 32% indicating that they received emotional support from their family members *very often*, and almost 45% indicating that they received emotional support *fairly often*.

Table 2 presents bivariate analysis of emotional support and negative interaction for African Americans and Caribbean Blacks. Approximately, 17% (16.80) of African Americans reported receiving high levels of emotional support and experiencing high levels of negative interaction. Among Caribbean Blacks, almost 19% (18.93) reported both high levels of emotional support and negative interaction.

Regression analysis (Table 3) revealed no significant difference in the frequency of negative interaction or emotional support for African Americans and Caribbean Blacks. The next set of analyses investigates the correlates of negative interaction and emotional support for the two groups separately. The analyses are performed separately so that variables specific to the experience of Caribbean Blacks (i.e., country of origin, immigration history) could be used in their regression analysis.

Table 4 presents the results of the regression analysis of the family network and demographic variables on emotional support for both African Americans and Caribbean Blacks. For African Americans, both the family network variables were significantly associated with emotional support; respondents who have a higher degree of subjective closeness to family members and reported more frequent contact with their family members indicated that they received emotional support from their family members on a more frequent basis. Among the demographic variables, age, gender, and marital status are significantly associated with emotional support. Older African Americans indicated

receiving emotional support from their family members less frequently than their younger counterparts and women indicated receiving emotional support more frequently than men. In addition, African Americans who are widowed or never married indicated receiving emotional support more frequently than their married counterparts.

Among Caribbean Blacks, only one of the family network variables was significantly associated with emotional support. Specifically, Caribbean Blacks who reported higher levels of subjective closeness indicated that they received emotional support more frequently. Age, gender, and income were significantly related to receiving emotional support from family members. Specifically, older Caribbean Black respondents reported receiving emotional support less frequently than their younger counterparts, women reported receiving emotional support more frequently than men, and those with higher incomes reported receiving emotional support more frequently than their counterparts with lower incomes.

Table 5 presents the results of the regression analysis of the family network and demographic variables on negative interaction for both African Americans and Caribbean Blacks. Among African Americans, respondents who reported a higher degree of subjective closeness to family members indicated that they experienced less frequent negative interactions with their family members. However, African Americans who reported more frequent contact with their family members indicated that they experienced more frequent negative interactions with their family members. Among the demographic variables, age, gender, and region are significantly associated with negative interaction. Older African Americans indicated experiencing less frequent negative interactions with their family members compared with their younger counterparts, and women indicated experiencing more negative interaction with family members compared with men. Additionally, African Americans who reside in the Northeast and North Central regions of the United States reported experiencing negative interactions with their family members more frequently than those respondents who reside in the South.

Among Caribbean Blacks, those who were subjectively closer to their family members indicated experiencing less frequent negative interactions. Age, marital status, immigration history, and country of origin were significantly related to negative interaction with family members. Specifically, older Caribbean Black respondents reported experiencing less frequent negative interactions than their younger counterparts. Widowed and never-married respondents reported experiencing more frequent negative interactions with their family members compared with their married counterparts. Caribbean Black respondents who have resided in the United States between 6 and 10 years and for more than 20 years reported experiencing less frequent negative interactions with their family members compared with those who are U.S. born. Finally, Caribbean Black respondents from Haiti reported experiencing more frequent negative interactions with their family members compared with persons from Jamaica.

To further explore the relationship between gender, ethnicity, negative interaction, and emotional support, additional analyses were conducted. Model 3 in Tables 4 and 5 presents the regression coefficients for the correlates of emotional support and negative interaction in

a single regression containing both African Americans and Caribbean Blacks. This model includes an interaction term (i.e., gender $\times$ ethnicity) to examine whether ethnicity moderates the relationship between gender and emotional support and gender and negative interaction. Results did not reveal a statistically significant interaction between gender and ethnicity on emotional support or negative interaction (Tables 4 and 5: Model 3).

Discussion

The findings provide general support for the use of the family ambivalence framework in exploring emotional support and negative interaction as outcomes. The present study's focus on race and ethnicity in relation to family ambivalence makes a unique contribution by identifying the demographic and family correlates of social support and negative interaction among a diverse sample of African Americans and Caribbean Blacks. The results of this study indicated that emotional support and negative interaction occur concurrently within the social networks of African Americans and Caribbean Blacks. Findings also revealed that receiving emotional support from family members occurs much more frequently than negative interactions for both groups and that African Americans and Caribbean Blacks do not differ with respect to the frequency of perceived emotional support or negative interactions reported. This finding is consistent with previous literature on African Americans (Lincoln, Taylor, et al., 2003), Caribbean Blacks (Stansfeld & Sproston, 2002), and Whites (Akiyama, Antonucci, Takahashi, & Lagfahl, 2003), which indicates that among most families, conflict and criticism are present but are not a frequent occurrence. These findings, in conjunction with previous research, indicate that overall Black American families are much more supportive and caring than distressing and problematic.

The conceptualization of ambivalence used in this study involved a broad subjective sense that family relationships can be both supportive and problematic. Findings from this study revealed that emotional support and negative interaction differ as a function of family variables (i.e., intensity of close feelings toward family members, frequency of contact for African Americans), and various social status characteristics (e.g., age, gender, marital status). African Americans and Caribbean Blacks who indicated that they were subjectively closer to their families received more emotional support and experienced fewer negative interactions. This finding is consistent with research on family support networks for both African American (Chatters, Taylor, Lincoln, & Schroeffer, 2002) and White families (Bengtson & Mangen, 1988), in which subjective closeness and familial affection are positively associated with the receipt of support. Conversely, one would expect that families with low levels of affection and closeness would have lower levels of support and more frequent negative interactions.

Frequency of contact with family members was positively associated with both receipt of emotional support and frequency of negative interactions for African Americans. This finding is particularly intriguing and most clearly demonstrates ambivalent relationships among African Americans. Our finding, in conjunction with previous work on African Americans and Whites, indicates that more frequent interactions with family provide the opportunity for both the receipt of assistance (Bengtson & Mangen, 1988; Chatters et al., 2002; Taylor, 1986) and more negative exchanges (Akiyama et al., 2003). Although the

alternative of limiting one's contacts with family would decrease the potential for negative interaction, it also decreases the opportunity to receive assistance and emotional support.

Ambivalence is most prevalent when structural conditions offer fewer escape options (Smelser, 1998), such as when there is a high value placed on social exchange, fewer options to defer responsibilities to others, and difficulties acting against normative obligations to share and exchange resources. As stated earlier, African Americans place a high value on social support exchange and reciprocity and rely heavily on their social networks for assistance. Under these circumstances, ambivalent relationships are likely to exist. Van Gaalen and Dykstra's (2006) characterization of ambivalence provides additional support for our findings. They identified five relationship typologies among adult children and their parents—harmonious, ambivalent, obligatory, affective, and discordant. The ambivalent relationship typology was characterized by children and parents who exchanged high levels of support, particularly financial, practical, and emotional support but who were also most prone to high levels of conflict. They also reported that of the five relationship typologies identified, ambivalent relationships received positive ratings with respect to relationship quality, further supporting the notion that conflicts often arise in emotionally supportive relationships.

It is important to note that frequency of contact with family was not associated with frequency of emotional support among Caribbean Blacks, a finding that is inconsistent with previous work among African Americans and Whites. Recall, however, that the question asks respondents how often they see, write, or talk on the telephone with relatives who do not live with them. Overall, Caribbean Blacks had lower levels of family interaction (i.e., nearly every day) as compared with African Americans (Table 1), which is likely a reflection of the fact that contemporary Caribbean Black families often have a high level of geographic dispersion (i.e., transnational families). For example, it is not unusual for Caribbean Black families who reside in Brooklyn to also have relatives in Florida, Toronto, Montreal, and London, as well as their country of origin (Olwig, 2001; Plaza, 2000). Consequently, geographic dispersion may, to some degree, reduce levels of family interaction. However, given that family interaction and emotional support were unrelated, a lower level of family interaction itself does not reduce the frequency of emotional support received. Similarly, frequency of contact with family members was unrelated to frequency of negative interactions for Caribbean Blacks.

Several demographic variables displayed significant relationships with emotional support and negative interaction among African Americans and Caribbean Blacks. Consistent with the large body of literature in the area of social support (Antonucci, 1994) on the prominent role of women in social networks, African American and Caribbean Black women received more emotional support than men. Previous research on African Americans found that women are more likely than men to receive assistance (Taylor, 1985) and had larger support networks than men (Chatters, Taylor, & Neighbors, 1989) while in one of the few studies of support among Caribbean Blacks, women were more likely than men to receive emotional support (Stansfeld & Sproston, 2002). Consistent with other work indicating that women are more likely than men to experience negative interaction with members of their social network (Okun & Keith, 1998; Schuster, Kessler, & Aseltine, 1990), African American

women indicated more frequent negative interactions than African American men. Women's roles as kin keepers and care takers, as well as their more frequent involvement in social networks overall increases their risk of exposure to negative interaction. Interestingly, there was no difference in the frequency of negative interactions for Caribbean Black men and women.

Among both African Americans and Caribbean Blacks, age was negatively associated with receiving emotional support. This finding is consistent with research indicating that older adults have a lower likelihood of receiving assistance from extended family members (Taylor, 1986). The present analysis also found that among African Americans and Caribbean Blacks, older adults had less frequent negative interactions with extended family members. This finding is consistent with research on African Americans (Lincoln, Taylor, et al., 2003), Caribbean Blacks (Stansfeld & Sproston, 2002), and Whites (Akiyama et al., 2003), which indicates that older adults are less likely to report experiencing negative interaction. Although not the principal focus of this analysis, collectively, these findings are consistent with socioemotional selectivity theory, which suggests that as people grow older, they discontinue those relationships that are bothersome while maintaining those ties that are emotionally rewarding and supportive (Carstensen, Isaacowitz, & Charles, 1999). The finding that older African Americans and Caribbean Blacks had less frequent negative interactions with family is also consistent with Bengtson's notion of "generational stake" (Bengtson, Burton, & Mangen, 1985), which suggests that as people age, they tend to view their familial relationships more positively and are more invested in their family relationships. Accordingly, it may be that rather than an objective decrease in negative interactions, older persons have a *perception* that their relationships are more positive. Whether real or perceived, these and other findings indicate that older age was associated with fewer negative interactions for African Americans and Caribbean Blacks.

African Americans who are widowed or never married reported receiving emotional support more frequently than their married counterparts. This finding is at odds with previous research indicating that marital status and social support are unrelated (Chatters et al., 1989; Taylor, 1986), or that married respondents receive more support than unmarried respondents (Lincoln, Taylor, et al., 2003). However, previous work among older adults (Chatters, Taylor, & Jackson, 1985, 1986) indicates that in the absence of a spouse, unmarried African Americans are more likely than their counterparts to rely on broader social networks (i.e., siblings, friends, and neighbors) for assistance. The existence of a broader, multiplex network may result in the availability and the receipt of more emotional support in this case.

In contrast, widowed and never-married Caribbean Blacks reported more frequent negative interactions with family members than their married counterparts. One possible explanation involves one of the functions of the social networks of Caribbean Blacks. Specifically, the personal obligations of these social networks include "matchmaking and matchbreaking"—described as "meddling in the romantic lives of singles" (Bashi, 2007, p. 139). Scrutiny about with whom one can socialize or become romantically involved may be specifically problematic for single Caribbean Blacks (i.e., never married and widowed persons) and become a source of negative interactions and tension with family members.

Somewhat surprisingly, for Caribbean Blacks, higher income was associated with receiving more frequent emotional support from family. Higher socioeconomic status is important for providing support to others, particularly to family remaining in the country of origin (i.e., remittances) and for recent migrants who are attempting to establish themselves. Additionally, the social networks of Caribbean Blacks are characterized by a “culture of reciprocity” (Bashi, 2007), which specifies norms for both giving and receiving aid. Conceivably, an advantageous economic position may result in high levels of both providing and receiving support of various kinds, including emotional support. In contrast, income was unrelated to emotional support for African Americans.

Among African Americans, region was significantly associated with frequency of negative interactions. African Americans who reside in the South indicated that they had less frequent negative interactions with their family members than those who reside in the Northeast or North Central regions of the United States. One possible explanation could be that the higher levels of religious involvement noted among African American Southerners (Taylor, Chatters, & Levin, 2004) is associated with greater tolerance for family members’ behaviors, which results in fewer negative interactions. This speculation is consistent with other work indicating that religious involvement was positively associated with several measures of family cohesiveness and family satisfaction among African Americans (Ellison, 1997).

For Caribbean Blacks, country of origin was associated with the frequency of negative interactions. Caribbean Blacks from Haiti reported experiencing more negative interactions with their family members compared with their Jamaican counterparts. Although the lack of research in this area makes it difficult to speculate about this finding, the different circumstances under which Haitians and Jamaicans migrate provides a potential explanation for this finding. Haitians are more likely to have come to the United States as refugees from the Duvalier dictatorships (Papa Doc and Baby Doc who were in power from 1957 until the early 1970s) as well as more recent immigration to escape continuing poverty and political violence. Consequently, Haitians’ migration to and residence in the United States occurred under conditions of extreme duress caused by political and economic crises. Furthermore, empirical studies document the differential outcomes for immigrants—who are “pulled” toward living in the United States to improve their standard of living and refugees—who are “pushed” to seek asylum from traumatic conditions in their home countries (Longres, 1991; Vega & Rumbaut, 1991; Uehara, Takeuchi, & Smukler, 1994). Consequently, Haitians’ immigration to the United States is often perilous and motivated by political unrest and extreme economic hardship, circumstances that are particularly disadvantageous. Jamaicans, however, are more likely to migrate for employment reasons (Simmons, Plaza, & Piché, 2005). The differences in negative interaction between these two groups, then, may be a reflection of their different statuses—refugee status (e.g., Haitian) versus immigrant status (e.g., Jamaicans) and the impact that these statuses may have on their family networks and interpersonal relationships.

This study has several limitations. First, because several segments of the population such as homeless and institutionalized individuals were not represented, our findings are not generalizable to these subgroups. Second, the Caribbean Black sample excludes individuals who do not speak English (i.e., persons who only speak Spanish, Haitian-French, or Creole

dialects) and, as a consequence, the study findings are not generalizable to these groups of Caribbean Blacks. Finally, causal inferences are problematic with cross-sectional data and longitudinal data are preferred. It is difficult to ascertain whether negative interactions cause discord or create distance between individuals and their family members or whether a person's interpersonal style or personality influences actual or perceived interactions. Personal disposition does influence one's perception of their relationships and interactions with others. However, there is evidence that social support and negative interaction have unique effects on outcomes above and beyond measures of personality (Lincoln, 2008).

In conclusion, this study used an ambivalence framework to examine the sociodemographic and family factor correlates of emotional support and negative interaction with family among African Americans and Caribbean Blacks. This approach allowed us to explore negative interaction and emotional support as distinct dimensions of family relationships and to identify both common and unique predictors of these two constructs within and across a diverse sample of African Americans and Caribbean Blacks. Study findings demonstrated the importance of emotional social support across various social statuses and aspects of family relationships. Furthermore, this work highlighted the heterogeneity of the U.S. Black population and the importance of considering ethnicity and culture in studies of social relationships. Several of the observed correlates of emotional support and negative interaction (i.e., age, gender, and family closeness) were evident for both African Americans and Caribbean Blacks. However, a number of unique associations were also demonstrated (e.g., income, marital status, family contact), indicating differences in the ways in which these factors operate within the two groups. Together with the present findings, these observations suggest that future approaches to the study of ambivalence and family relationships should strive to more closely mirror the complex reality of families within diverse contexts. The present research effort attempted to capture complexity and diversity in family life by examining demographic and family factors associated with emotional support and negative interaction, focusing on important ethnic group and cultural differences within the U.S. Black population and highlighting the unique experiences of Caribbean Blacks in relation to these issues. Future studies that address the issues of both family complexity and family diversity can inform extant theory and research on family relationships and provide a clearer understanding of the lived experience of family relations in a diverse society.

Acknowledgments

Funding

The author(s) disclosed receipt of the following financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article:

Data collection on which this study is based was supported by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH; U01-MH57716), the Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the University of Michigan. Preparation of this article was supported by grants from the NIMH to KDL (R01 MH084963), National Institute on Aging to LMC and RJT (R01 AG18782), and RJT (P30AG1528).

References

- Ajrouch KJ, Antonucci TC, Janevic MR. Social networks among Blacks and Whites: The interaction between race and age. *Journal of Gerontology: Series B, Social Sciences*. 2001; 56:S112–S118.
- Akiyama H, Antonucci TC, Takahashi K, Lagfahl ES. Negative interactions in close relationships across the life span. *Journal of Gerontology: Series B, Social Sciences*. 2003; 58:S70–S79.
- Almeida, DM.; Horn, MC. Is daily life more stressful during middle adulthood?. In: Brim, OG.; Ryff, CD.; Kessler, RC., editors. *How healthy are we? A national study of well-being at midlife*. University of Chicago Press; Chicago, IL: 2004. p. 425-451.
- American Association for Public Opinion Research. *Standard: Final dispositions of case codes and outcome rates for surveys*. 4th ed. Author; Lenexa, KS: 2006.
- Antonucci, TC. A life-span view of women's social relations. In: Turner, BF., editor. *Women growing older: Psychological perspectives*. Sage; Thousand Oaks, CA: 1994. p. 239-269.
- Barnes LL, Mendes de Leon CF, Bienias JL, Evans DA. A longitudinal study of Black-White differences in social resources. *Journals of Gerontology: Series B, Social Sciences*. 2004; 59:S146–S153.
- Bashi, VF. *Survival of the knitted: Immigrant social networks in a stratified world*. Stanford University Press; Palo Alto, CA: 2007.
- Bengtson, VL.; Burton, L.; Mangen, DJ. Generations, cohorts and relations between age groups. In: Binstock, RH.; Shanas, E., editors. *Handbook of aging and the social sciences*. 2nd ed. Van Nostrand Reinhold; New York, NY: 1985. p. 304-338.
- Bengtson, VL.; Mangen, DJ. Family intergenerational solidarity revisited: Suggestions for future management. In: Mangen, DJ.; Bengtson, VL.; Landry, PH., Jr., editors. *Measurement of intergenerational relations*. Sage; Newbury Park, CA: 1988. p. 222-238.
- Bengtson VL, Roberts REL. Intergenerational solidarity in aging families: An example of formal theory construction. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*. 1991; 53:856–870.
- Berkman, LF.; Glass, T. Social integration, social networks, social support, and health. In: Berkman, LF.; Kawachi, I., editors. *Social epidemiology*. Oxford University Press; New York, NY: 2000. p. 137-173.
- Billingsley, A. *Climbing Jacob's ladder: Enduring legacy of African American families*. Simon & Schuster; New York, NY: 1992.
- Broman, CL. Coping with personal problems. In: Neighbors, HW.; Jackson, JS., editors. *Mental health in Black America*. Sage; Thousand Oaks, CA: 1996. p. 117-129.
- Bryant CM, Taylor RJ, Lincoln KD, Jackson JS. Marital satisfaction among African Americans and Caribbean Blacks: Findings from the National Survey of American Life. *Family Relations*. 2008; 57:239–253. [PubMed: 21151891]
- Carstensen LL, Isaacowitz D, Charles ST. Taking time seriously: A theory of socioemotional selectivity. *American Psychologist*. 1999; 54:165–181. [PubMed: 10199217]
- Chamberlain, M. Brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts: A lateral perspective on Caribbean families in Britain. In: Silva, E.; Smart, C., editors. *The new family*. Institute of Community Studies; London, England: 1998. p. 129-142.
- Chatters LM, Taylor RJ, Jackson JS. Size and composition of the informal helper networks of elderly Blacks. *Journal of Gerontology*. 1985; 40:605–614. [PubMed: 3875644]
- Chatters LM, Taylor RJ, Jackson JS. Aged Blacks choices for an informal helper network. *Journal of Gerontology*. 1986; 41:94–100. [PubMed: 3510245]
- Chatters LM, Taylor RJ, Lincoln KD, Schroepfer TA. Patterns of informal support from family and church members among African Americans. *Journal of Black Studies*. 2002; 33:66–85.
- Chatters LM, Taylor RJ, Neighbors HW. Size of informal helper network mobilized during a serious personal problem among Black Americans. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*. 1989; 51:667–676.
- Cherlin AJ. Demographic trends in the United States: A review of research in the 2000s. *Journal of Marriage and Family*. 2010; 72:403–419. [PubMed: 22399825]

- Coker AL. Stress, coping, social support, and prostate cancer risk among older African American and Caucasian men. *Ethnicity & Disease*. 2006; 16:978–987. [PubMed: 17061756]
- Connidis IA, McMullin JA. Ambivalence, family ties, and doing sociology. *Journal of Marriage and Family*. 2002; 64:595–601.
- Curran SR, Saguy AC. Migration and cultural change: A role for gender and social networks? *Journal for International Women's Studies*. 2001; 2:54–77.
- Cutrona CE. Stress and social support: In search of optimal matching. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*. 1990; 9:3–14.
- Daly A, Jennings J, Beckett JO, Leashore BR. Effective coping strategies of African Americans. *Social Work*. 1995; 40:240–248.
- Dilworth-Anderson P, Williams SW, Cooper T. Family caregiving to elderly African Americans: Caregiver types and structures. *Journals of Gerontology: Series B, Social Sciences*. 1999; 54:S237–S242.
- Dunkel-Schetter C, Folkman S, Lazarus RS. Correlates of social support receipt. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 1987; 53:71–80. [PubMed: 3612494]
- Ellison, CG. Religious involvement and the subjective quality of family life among African Americans. In: Taylor, RJ.; Jackson, JS.; Chatters, LM., editors. *Family life in Black America*. Sage; Thousand Oaks, CA: 1997. p. 117-131.
- Fingerman KL, Hay EL, Birditt KS. The best of ties, the worst of ties: Close, problematic, and ambivalent social relationships. *Journal of Marriage and Family*. 2004; 66:792–808.
- Foner N. *West Indians in New York City and London: A comparative analysis*. *International Migration Review*. 1998; 13:284–287.
- Foner, N. *In a new land: A comparative view of immigration*. New York University Press; New York: 2005.
- George, LK. Caregiver burden: Conflict between norms of reciprocity and solidarity. In: Pillemer, KA.; Wolf, RS., editors. *Elder abuse: Conflict in the family*. Auburn House; Dover, MA: 1986. p. 67-92.
- Gilbertson G, Gurak DT. Household transitions in the migrations of Dominicans and Colombians to New York. *International Migration Review*. 1992; 26:22–45. [PubMed: 12285044]
- Glick JE. Economic support from and to extended kin: A comparison of Mexican Americans and Mexican immigrants. *International Migration Review*. 1999; 33:745–765.
- Gray, BA.; Keith, V. The benefits and costs of social support for African American women. In: Brown, DR.; Keith, VM., editors. *In and out of our right minds: African American women and mental health*. Columbia University Press; New York, NY: 2003. p. 242-257.
- Heaney, CA.; Israel, BA. Social networks and social support. In: Glanz, K.; Lewis, FM.; Rimer, BK., editors. *Health behavior and health education: Theory, research, and practice*. 2nd ed. Jossey-Bass; San Francisco, CA: 1997. p. 179-205.
- Ho C. The internationalization of kinship and the feminization of Caribbean migration: The case of Afro-Trinidadian immigrants in Los Angeles. *Human Organization*. 1993; 52:32–40.
- House JS, Landis KR, Umberson D. Social relationships and health. *Science*. 1988; 241:540–545. [PubMed: 3399889]
- Jackson JS, Torres M, Caldwell CH, Neighbors HW, Nesse RM, Taylor RJ, Williams DR. The National Survey of American Life: A study of racial, ethnic and cultural influences on mental disorders and mental health. *International Journal of Methods in Psychiatric Research*. 2004; 13:196–207. [PubMed: 15719528]
- Kuo WH, Tsai Y-M. Social networking, hardiness and immigrants' mental health. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. 1986; 27:133–149. [PubMed: 3525660]
- Krause N. Negative interaction and heart disease in late life: Exploring variations by socioeconomic status. *Journal of Aging and Health*. 2005; 17:28–55. [PubMed: 15601782]
- Levitt P. Social remittances: A local-level, migration-driven form of cultural diffusion. *International Migration Review*. 1999; 32:926–949. [PubMed: 12294302]
- Lincoln KD. Social support, negative social interactions, and psychological well-being. *Social Service Review*. 2000; 74:231–252.

- Lincoln KD. Personality, negative interactions and mental health. *Social Service Review*. 2008; 82:223–252. [PubMed: 21151733]
- Lincoln KD, Chatters LM, Taylor RJ. Psychological distress among Black and White Americans: Differential effects of social support, negative interaction and personal control. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*. 2003; 44:390–407. [PubMed: 14582315]
- Lincoln KD, Chatters LM, Taylor RJ. Social support, traumatic events and depressive symptoms among African Americans. *Journal of Marriage and Family*. 2005; 67:754–766. [PubMed: 16429592]
- Lincoln KD, Chatters LM, Taylor RJ, Jackson JS. Profiles of depressive symptoms among African Americans and Caribbean Blacks. *Social Science & Medicine*. 2007; 65:200–213. [PubMed: 17449157]
- Lincoln KD, Taylor RJ, Bullard KM, Chatters LM, Himle JA, Woodward AT, Jackson JS. Emotional support, negative interaction and *DSM-IV* lifetime disorders among older African Americans: Findings from the National Survey of American Life (NSAL). *International Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry*. 2010; 25:612–621. [PubMed: 20157904]
- Lincoln KD, Taylor RJ, Chatters LM. Correlates of emotional support and negative interaction among Black Americans. *Journals of Gerontology: Series B, Social Sciences*. 2003; 53:S225–S233.
- Longres J. Toward a status model of ethnic sensitive practice. *Journal of Multicultural Social Work*. 1991; 1:41–55.
- Lu L. Correlates of social support: Personal characteristics and social resources. *Counseling Psychology Quarterly*. 1995; 8:173–182.
- Lüscher K, Pillemer K. Intergenerational ambivalence: A new approach to the study of parent-child relations in later life. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*. 1998; 60:413–425.
- Mahler, S. *American dreaming: Immigrant life on the margins*. Princeton University Press; Princeton, NJ: 1995.
- Massey DS. The settlement process among Mexican migrants to the United States. *American Sociological Review*. 1986; 51:670–684.
- Merton, RK. *Sociological ambivalence and other essays*. Free Press; New York, NY: 1976.
- Neighbors, HW. Husbands, wives, family, and friends: Sources of stress, sources of support. In: Taylor, RJ.; Jackson, JS.; Chatters, LM., editors. *Family life in Black America*. Sage; Thousand Oaks, CA: 1997. p. 227–292.
- Neighbors HW, LaVeist TA. Socioeconomic status and psychological distress: The impact of financial aid on economic problem severity. *Journal of Primary Prevention*. 1989; 10:149–165. [PubMed: 24264627]
- Newsom JT, Schulz R. Caregiving from the recipient's perspective: Negative reactions to being helped. *Health Psychology*. 1998; 17:172–181. [PubMed: 9548708]
- Okun MA, Keith VM. Effects of positive and negative social exchanges with various sources on depressive symptoms in younger and older adults. *Journal of Gerontology: Series B, Psychological Sciences*. 1998; 53:P4–P20.
- Olwig, KF. New York as a locality in a global family network. In: Foner, N., editor. *Islands in the city: West Indian migration to New York*. University of California Press; Berkeley: 2001. p. 124–160.
- Plaza D. Transnational grannies: The changing family responsibilities of elderly African Caribbean-born women resident in Britain. *Social Indicators Research*. 2000; 51:75–105.
- Rook KS, Ituarte HG. Social control, social support and companionship in older adults' family relationships and friendships. *Personal Relationships*. 1999; 6:199–211.
- Schuster TL, Kessler RC, Aseltine RH. Supportive interactions, negative interactions, and depressed mood. *American Journal of Community Psychology*. 1990; 18:423–438. [PubMed: 2264558]
- Sharpe TL. Sources of support for African American family members of homicide victims. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work*. 2008; 17:197–216.
- Simmons, A.; Plaza, D.; Piché, V. The remittance sending practices of Haitians and Jamaicans in Canada; Paper presented on the Expert group meeting on International Migration and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean; Mexico City. Nov-Dec. 2005

- Smelser NJ. The rational and the ambivalent in the social sciences: 1997 Presidential address. *American Sociological Review*. 1998; 63:1–16.
- Stansfeld, S.; Sproston, K. Social support and networks. In: Sproston, K.; Nazroo, J., editors. *Ethnic minority psychiatric illness rates in the community*. National Centre for Social Research; London, England: 2002. p. 117-136.(EMPIRIC) (Quantitative Rep.
- Tang TS, Brown MB, Funnell MM, Anderson RM. Social support, quality of life, and self-care behaviors among African Americans with type 2 diabetes. *Diabetes Educator*. 2008; 34:266–276. [PubMed: 18375776]
- Taylor RJ. The extended family as a source of support to elderly Blacks. *The Gerontologist*. 1985; 25:488–495. [PubMed: 3877662]
- Taylor RJ. Receipt of support from family among Black Americans: Demographic and familial differences. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*. 1986; 48:67–77.
- Taylor RJ, Chatters LM, Celious A. Extended family households among Black Americans. *African American Research Perspectives*. 2003; 1:133–151.
- Taylor, RJ.; Chatters, LM.; Levin, J. *Religion in the lives of African Americans: Social, psychological and health perspectives*. Sage; Thousand Oaks, CA: 2004.
- Tilly C, Brown CH. On uprooting, kinship, and the auspices of migration. *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*. 1967; 8:139–164.
- Uchino BN, Holt-Lunstad J, Uno D, Flinders JB. Heterogeneity in the social networks of young and older adults: Prediction of mental health and cardiovascular reactivity during acute stress. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*. 2001; 24:361–382. [PubMed: 11523333]
- Uehara ES, Takeuchi DT, Smukler M. Effects of combining disparate groups in the analysis of ethnic differences: Variations among Asian American mental health service consumers in level of community functioning. *American Journal of Community Psychology*. 1994; 22:83–99. [PubMed: 7942645]
- Utsey SO, Bolden MA, Lanier Y, Williams OW. Examining the role of culture-specific coping as a predictor of resilient outcomes in African Americans from high-risk urban communities. *Journal of Black Psychology*. 2007; 33:75–93.
- Van Gaalen RI, Dykstra PA. Solidarity and conflict between adult children and parents: A latent class analysis. *Journal of Marriage and Family*. 2006; 68:947–960.
- Vega W, Rumbaut R. Ethnic minorities and mental health. *Annual Review of Sociology*. 1991; 17:351–383.
- Waldinger, R. *Still the promised city? African Americans and new immigrants in postindustrial New York*. Harvard University Press; Cambridge, MA: 1996.
- Waters, M. *Black identities: West Indian immigrant dreams and American realities*. Russell Sage Foundation; New York, NY: 1999.
- White LK, Rogers SJ. Strong support but uneasy relationships: Coresidence and adult children's relationships with their parents. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*. 1997; 59:62–76.

Table 1

Characteristics of the Sample (Unweighted Frequencies, Weighted Percentages)

Variable	African American (N = 3,553)		Caribbean Black (N = 1,616)	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Gender				
Male	1,271	44.03	643	50.87
Female	2,299	55.97	978	49.13
Age ** in years				
18-24	482	16.14	251	19.18
25-34	750	19.59	373	22.69
35-44	850	24.08	417	23.68
45-54	651	18.57	276	15.07
55-64	384	10.00	153	9.15
65-74	301	7.98	98	7.00
75+	152	3.64	53	3.23
Household income ** in US\$				
<200	47	1.61	12	0.72
200-9,999	597	18.13	144	10.68
10,000-14,999	335	9.87	92	7.12
15,000-19,999	377	11.58	128	9.11
20,000-24,999	195	6.56	103	7.61
25,000-29,999	250	9.18	113	10.53
\$30,000-\$39,999	331	12.61	190	12.56
40,000-59,999	434	17.49	228	18.06
60,000-79,999	109	4.79	84	8.59
80,000-99,999	79	4.05	72	4.07
100,000-149,999	42	2.27	55	8.00
150,000+	38	1.87	29	2.96
Education ** in years				
0-8	235	5.60	98	5.80
9-11	647	18.69	201	15.11
12	1,344	37.75	477	29.71
13-15	799	23.86	438	26.10
16	277	8.38	213	11.92
17+	194	5.72	175	11.36
Marital status **				
Married	960	32.91	559	37.56
Partner	260	8.74	131	12.58
Separated	286	7.16	128	5.37
Divorced	524	11.75	178	9.29
Widowed	353	7.89	78	4.29

Variable	African American (N = 3,553)		Caribbean Black (N = 1,616)	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Never married	1,170	31.55	542	30.92
Region ***				
Northeast	411	15.69	1135	55.69
Midwest	595	18.81	12	4.05
South	2,330	56.24	456	29.11
West	234	9.25	18	11.14
Immigration history				
U.S. born	3,464	100	440	36.58
0-5 years	—	—	119	8.07
6-10 years	—	—	164	8.44
11-20 years	—	—	357	20.20
21+ years	—	—	490	26.70
Country of origin				
Spanish Caribbean	—	—	180	14.08
Haiti	—	—	298	12.64
Jamaica	—	—	510	31.72
Trinidad and Tobago	—	—	170	9.99
Other	—	—	440	31.58
Family closeness				
Not close at all	56	1.50	15	.52
Not too close	176	4.99	97	4.75
Fairly close	746	21.44	390	21.40
Very close	2,559	72.07	1,106	73.34
Family interaction *				
Never	43	1.31	9	.75
Hardly ever	81	2.23	24	2.97
Few times a year	82	2.93	52	3.00
At least once a month	132	3.85	73	4.87
Few times a month	351	11.06	221	16.99
At least once a week	985	28.34	552	32.97
Nearly every day	1,864	50.29	678	38.44
Emotional support				
Very often	1,102	29.94	450	31.76
Fairly often	1,551	44.61	708	44.68
Not too often	695	20.43	382	19.98
Never	189	5.02	67	3.57
Negative interaction				
Very often	95	2.54	39	2.47
Fairly often	364	9.94	177	11.99
Not too often	1,138	33.14	549	35.68

Variable	African American (N = 3,553)		Caribbean Black (N = 1,616)	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Never	1,941	54.39	842	49.86

Note: Significant differences between African Americans and Caribbean Blacks:

*
 $p < .05$.

**
 $p < .01$.

 $p < .001$

Table 2Emotional Support and Negative Interaction ($N = 5,194$)

	Negative Interaction		
	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
African American			
Emotional support	Low	Medium	High
Low	606 (20.89)	463 (27.77)	262 (37.72)
Medium	1231 (44.06)	742 (45.21)	286 (45.48)
High	942 (35.05)	482 (27.02)	127 (16.80)
Caribbean Black			
Emotional support	Low	Medium	High
Low	200 (15.57)	164 (28.71)	84 (38.20)
Medium	391 (49.66)	231 (38.60)	86 (42.86)
High	249 (34.77)	154 (32.69)	46 (18.93)

Note: Unweighted frequencies, weighted percentages.

Table 3

Ethnicity, Emotional Support, and Negative Interaction

	Emotional Support (<i>N</i> = 3,528)		Negative Interaction (<i>N</i> = 1,545)	
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>
Ethnicity (<i>African American is referent</i>): Caribbean Black	0.015	0.033	0.060	0.070
<i>R</i> ²	0.33		0.086	

Note: Regressions control for age, gender (0 = *male*), education, household income, marital status (0 = *married*), region (0 = *South*), family closeness, family interaction

Table 4

Emotional Support: African Americans and Caribbean Blacks

Variable	African Americans ^a (N = 3,528)		Caribbean Blacks ^b (N = 1,545)		Total Sample ^c (N = 5,130)	
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>
Ethnicity						
Caribbean Black	—	—	—	—	0.001	0.040
Age	−0.005***	0.001	−0.005*	0.002	−0.005***	0.001
Gender						
Female	0.079**	0.025	0.151***	0.038	0.082**	0.025
Education	0.008	0.006	−0.010	0.011	0.007	0.005
Income	0.002	0.001	0.006**	0.002	0.002	0.001
Marital status						
Partner	−0.016	0.048	−0.094	0.092	−0.013	0.044
Separated	0.015	0.039	0.066	0.079	0.019	0.038
Divorced	0.025	0.033	0.162	0.104	0.037	0.032
Widowed	0.098*	0.046	0.070	0.091	0.096*	0.044
Never married	0.088***	0.025	−0.036	0.068	0.083**	0.024
Region						
Northeast	0.009	0.030	—	—	0.006	0.027
Midwest	−0.040	0.050	—	—	−0.035	0.048
West	−0.031	0.069	—	—	−0.029	0.064
Other	—	—	0.028	0.056	—	—
Immigration history						
0-5 years	—	—	−0.138	0.094	—	—
6-10 years	—	—	0.087	0.104	—	—
11-20 years	—	—	−0.016	0.056	—	—
20+ years	—	—	−0.049	0.080	—	—
Country of origin						
Spanish Caribbean	—	—	−0.064	0.080	—	—
Haiti	—	—	0.022	0.081	—	—
Trinidad and Tobago	—	—	0.117	0.081	—	—
Other English	—	—	−0.014	0.082	—	—
Family closeness	0.547***	0.026	0.651***	0.044	0.560***	0.025
Family interaction	0.088***	0.013	0.048	0.029	0.084***	0.012
Ethnicity × gender					0.029	0.043
<i>R</i> ²	0.337	—	0.373	—	0.338	—

^aExcluded categories for ethnicity (0 = *African American*), gender (0 = *male*), marital status (0 = *married*), region (0 = *South*).^bExcluded categories for ethnicity (0 = *African American*), gender (0 = *male*), marital status (0 = *married*), region (0 = *Northeast*), immigration history (0 = *U.S. born*), country of origin (0 = *Jamaica*).^cExcluded categories for ethnicity (0 = *African American*), gender (0 = *male*), marital status (0 = *married*), region (0 = *South*).

*
 $p < .05$.

**
 $p < .01$.

 $p < .001$.

Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript

Table 5

Negative Interaction: African Americans and Caribbean Blacks

Variable	African Americans ^a (N = 3,528)		Caribbean Blacks ^b (N = 1,545)		Total Sample ^c (N = 5,131)	
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>
Ethnicity						
Caribbean Black	—	—	—	—	0.138	0.098
Age	−0.008***	0.001	−0.006*	0.003	−0.008***	0.001
Gender						
Female	0.121**	0.039	−0.117	0.085	0.121**	0.039
Education	−0.001	0.006	0.007	0.009	−0.001	0.098
Income	−0.001	0.003	0.004	0.006	0.001	0.003
Marital status						
Partner	0.101	0.064	0.183	0.116	0.097	0.059
Separated	0.085	0.081	−0.024	0.091	0.077	0.076
Divorced	−0.022	0.043	0.130	0.071	−0.011	0.041
Widowed	−0.012	0.054	0.284*	0.134	0.000	0.051
Never married	−0.004	0.058	0.218**	0.070	0.008	0.054
Region						
Northeast	0.132***	0.038	—	—	0.117**	0.035
Midwest	0.127**	0.044	—	—	0.128**	0.044
West	−0.010	0.066	—	—	0.026	0.062
Other	—	—	−0.019	0.088	—	—
Immigration history						
0-5 years	—	—	−0.094	0.226	—	—
6-10 years	—	—	−0.321**	0.109	—	—
11-20 years	—	—	−0.097	0.076	—	—
20+ years	—	—	−0.171*	0.065	—	—
Country of origin						
Spanish Caribbean	—	—	0.160	0.110	—	—
Haiti	—	—	0.125*	0.057	—	—
Trinidad and Tobago	—	—	−0.074	0.113	—	—
Other	—	—	−0.047	0.074	—	—
Family closeness	−0.240***	0.024	−0.217***	0.051	−0.239***	0.023
Family interaction	0.033*	0.014	0.034	0.022	0.034	0.013
Ethnicity × gender	—	—	—	—	−0.164	0.091
<i>R</i> ²	0.088	—	0.144	—	0.087	—

^a Excluded categories for ethnicity (0 = African American), gender (0 = male), marital status (0 = married), region (0 = South).

^b Excluded categories for ethnicity (0 = African American), gender (0 = male), marital status (0 = married), region (0 = Northeast), immigration history (0 = U.S. born), country of origin (0 = Jamaica).

^cExcluded categories for ethnicity (0 = *African American*), gender (0 = *male*), marital status (0 = *married*), region (0 = *South*).

*
 $p < .05$.

**
 $p < .01$.

 $p < .001$.

Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript