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## Racial and Ethnic Differences in Major and Everyday Discrimination among Older Adults: African Americans, Black Caribbeans and Non-Latino Whites

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### Abstract

**Objectives:** This study examined differences in major and everyday discrimination between African Americans, Black Caribbeans and non-Latino White older adults.

**Methods:** Data are taken from the National Survey of American Life. Measures of major (e.g., unfairly fired, harassed by police) and everyday (e.g., treated with less courtesy, insulted, followed in stores) discrimination were examined.

**Results:** Both African Americans and Black Caribbeans reported more major and everyday discrimination than non-Latino Whites. However, there were no significant differences between African Americans and Whites with regards to being fired, neighbors making life difficult and receiving poor service. There were no significant differences between African Americans and Black Caribbeans in major or everyday discrimination.

**Discussion:** The discussion notes the importance of examining racial as well as within group ethnic differences within the Black American population in the types of discrimination. It also notes the importance of examining indicators of both major and everyday discrimination.

### Keywords

Black immigrants; Aging; Discrimination; Racial Disparities; Health Disparities

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Experiences of discrimination tend to be chronic, repetitive, and lifelong (Lewis et al., 2015; Luo et al., 2012). Emerging research indicates that first exposure to discrimination can begin as young as kindergarten (age 5) (Brown & Bigler, 2005). Discrimination is generally grouped into two distinct categories. Everyday discrimination, originally theorized by

Philomena Essed (1991) and operationalized by Williams et al. (1997), refers to the chronic experiences of daily hassles that occur on a routine daily or weekly basis, such as being treated less courteously, name calling, and being followed in stores (Kessler et al., 1999; Mouzon et al., 2020). Major discrimination, however, refers to reports of major mistreatment such as denial of bank loans, being bypassed for jobs or promotion, and stopped/searched/threatened by police (Kessler et al., 1999). Discrimination takes an emotionally taxing toll on the mind of its victims, with evidence showing links between discrimination and higher frequency of psychiatric disorders and distress (Mouzon et al., 2016), poorer health (Barnes et al., 2008) and declining cognition (Barnes et al., 2012). For instance, discrimination is associated with poorer mental health including mood disorders, depression (Ayalon & Gum, 2011; Barnes et al., 2008; Brown et al., 2000; Molina et al., 2016; Mouzon et al., 2016) psychological distress (Brown et al., 2000), anxiety (Mouzon et al., 2016; Soto et al., 2011), and general stress (Luo et al., 2012). With regards to physical health, discrimination has an adverse impact on chronic illnesses and even increased mortality risk (Barnes et al., 2008). For example, discrimination has been associated with poorer self-rated physical and oral health, increased number of health problems, and reports of pain (Mouzon et al., 2017).

Although research on discrimination has documented its negative impact on physical and mental health, there are several important gaps in the literature. First, despite a large body of research on discrimination among adults and adolescents (Seaton et al., 2008, 2021), there is very little research on discrimination among older adults. Second, there is considerably more research on everyday discrimination than on major discrimination, and finally, there is little research on the correlates of discrimination, including racial and ethnic differences. The goal of this study is to address these gaps in the research literature by investigating racial and ethnic differences in everyday and major discrimination among older adults. One of the notable features of this study is that we examine specific, as well as summary indicators of everyday and major discrimination. We do this because there may be racial and ethnic differences in specific indicators that are obscured in analyses that focus solely on summary measures (Harnois & Ifatunji 2011, Ifatunji & Harnois 2016). Since this is the first assessment of racial and ethnic differences in discrimination among older adults, our analyses are unapologetically descriptive. We examine whether 9 indicators of major discrimination and 13 measures of everyday discriminations differ significantly across older African Americans, Black Caribbeans and Non-Latino Whites.

## Discrimination and Older African Americans

As noted previously, there is very little research on discrimination among older African Americans. This is especially true for research that investigates discrimination as an outcome variable. We do know that in analyses of adults 18 and older, African Americans 55 and older report fewer instances of everyday discrimination than younger adults (Taylor et al., 2018). In addition, analysis that is restricted to African Americans aged 55 and over, also indicates that older age is associated with reduced likelihood of experiencing discrimination. These findings are to some degree expected because discrimination is an exposure occurrence. That is, discrimination occurs in the workplace, while shopping, in restaurants and in school settings. Older adults who are no longer in the labor market and not in school are less likely to frequent settings where discrimination occurs.

In one of the few analyses of the correlates of discrimination among older African Americans, Mouzon et al., (2020) utilized latent class analysis and identified three everyday discrimination typologies. The high discrimination subtype consisted of older adults who indicated high levels of discrimination on all of the indicators of everyday discrimination. Conversely, respondents in the low subtype had minimal levels of discrimination, whereas those in the disrespect and condescension subtype reported high levels of these types of discrimination (treated with less courtesy, treated with less respect, being perceived as not smart) and infrequent experiences of more toxic and behavioral forms of discrimination (being feared, insulted, harassed, and followed in stores). White et al., (2020) found similar subtypes in their analysis of discrimination among older African Americans. Our analysis will augment this previous research by examining both major and everyday discrimination, as well investigating differences for individual indicators of discrimination.

### **Black-White Differences in Discrimination**

Research on racial differences in discrimination generally shows that African Americans are more likely to experience everyday discrimination than Whites. This has been found in research on adults (Kessler et al., 1999; Williams et al., 1997), as well as research on older adults (Barnes et. al., 2004; Luo et. al., 2012). In analysis of the Health and Retirement Survey (HRS), Luo et. al., (2012) found that older Black adults have higher levels of both everyday and major discrimination. Their work makes an important contribution to the literature, however the HRS only includes a partial number of the indicators of discrimination that is found in the original discrimination indices (Williams et al., 1997) and in the data used in this analysis.

The most extensive research on Black-White differences in everyday discrimination was conducted by Barnes et. al. (2004). Using data from the Chicago Health and Aging Project, they conducted factor analysis and found 2 sub-scales of discrimination (unfair treatment and personal rejection), sub-scales that are consistent with more recent research using latent class analysis (Mouzon et al., 2020). Barnes et al. (2004) found that older African Americans reported experiencing more discrimination than Whites for both sub-scales. The current study expands this previous research by using individual indicators of everyday and major discrimination and examining differences not only between older Whites and Black Americans, but also differences within the Black population between African Americans and Black Caribbeans.

**Black Ethnic Differences in Discrimination**—Studies focusing on the experience of discrimination among Blacks in the United States typically examine African Americans, that is persons of African descent who are native to the U.S. and likely the descendants of American slavery. Far less work examines Black immigrants' experiences with discrimination. This research is exclusively based on ethnographic and other qualitative methods and as such, the generalizability of this work is limited. Several early studies suggest that Black immigrants do indeed experience discrimination (Foner and Napoli 1978, Vickerman 1999a, Waters 1999). Previously, it was thought that since African Americans and Black immigrants are both 'Black' they mostly likely experience similar kinds and amount of anti-Black discrimination (Sowell 1978). However, subsequent studies have

suggested that Black Caribbeans might experience less discrimination or have different kinds of experiences with discrimination (Bryce-Laporte 1972, Foner and Napoli 1978, Ifatunji 2021, Waters 1999). That is, while these studies certainly show that Black immigrants experience racialized forms of discrimination, they also appear to be aware that they are often treated differently from and/or better than African Americans (Foner and Napoli 1978, Vickerman 1999b, Waters 1999). For example, Waters once speculated that, “[Black Caribbeans] provide a Black face for Whites to look into without seeing the sorry history of American race relations mirrored back. This puts Whites at ease, and a cycle of expectations is created. [Black Caribbeans] don’t expect strained relations with Whites and Whites don’t expect strained relations with [Afro Caribbeans]” (1999: 172). Given this, it’s been suggested that differential expectations and experiences of discrimination contributes to Black immigrants’ greater successes in the workplace relative to African Americans (Ifatunji 2021).

Researchers have now complemented these ethnographic and in-depth interview studies with social surveys that use probability samples to assess population-level differences in the average levels and correlates of discrimination, as experienced by these Black ethnic groups. For example, a recent study showed that one in ten Black Caribbean Americans experience everyday discrimination on a weekly basis (Taylor et al., 2019). Drawing on the Multi-City Study of Urban Inequality, Benson (2006) showed that African Americans and Black Caribbeans do not report differences in housing and labor market discrimination. In addition, Greer ‘s study (2013) of African American and Black immigrant union workers in New York City did not identify any meaningful differences in their experiences with racial discrimination. More recently, using a national sample of African Americans and Black Caribbeans, Ifatunji (2021) found no differences in labor market discrimination, and this was true for comparisons between African Americans and Black Caribbeans from both English and non-English speaking countries. Lastly, similar to African Americans (Taylor et al., 2018) and the total population (Kessler et al., 1999), older Black Caribbeans report less frequent everyday discrimination than their younger counterparts.

In summary, the current scope of the literature features a few studies of racialized discrimination among Black immigrants, with some work documenting the similarities and differences in experiences of discrimination for African Americans and Black immigrants. In addition to the scarce survey research on discrimination among Black Caribbeans, none of this work, to-date, focuses on older Black Caribbeans. Currently, we do not have solid information as to the nature and prevalence of experiences with discrimination among African American, Black Caribbean, and non-Latino White older adults.

### **Focus of the Current Study**

Given that discrimination is detrimental to physical and mental health of the older adult population, it is important to understand the prevalence of discrimination among this group. The purpose of the current study is to: 1) determine the prevalence of specific types of major and everyday discrimination in adults 55 years of age and older, and 2) to investigate differences in discrimination between African Americans, non-Latino Whites, and Black Caribbeans. This study uses data from the National Survey of American Life. Research

on everyday discrimination indicates that older African Americans are more likely to have everyday discrimination than their older non-Latino Whites. What is not known is whether there are racial differences in experiencing major discrimination events, although it is expected that African Americans and Black Caribbeans may be more likely to have experienced most types of major discrimination. Also, it's not known whether older Black Caribbeans are significantly different than African Americans and non-Latino Whites in the prevalence and types of discrimination they experience.

## METHODS

### Sample

The National Survey of American Life: Coping with Stress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (NSAL) was collected by the Program for Research on Black Americans at the University of Michigan's Institute for Social Research. The NSAL was part of a National Institute of Mental Health Collaborative Psychiatric Epidemiology Surveys initiative. 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 multi-stage probability design which consists of 64 primary sampling units (PSUs). Fifty-six of these primary areas overlap substantially with existing Survey Research Center's National Sample primary areas. The data collection was conducted from February 2001 to June 2003. Most of the interviews were conducted face-to-face (86%) in respondents' homes, whereas the remaining 14% were telephone interviews; respondents were compensated for their time.

A total of 6,082 interviews were conducted with persons aged 18 or older, including 3,570 African Americans, 891 non-Latino Whites, and 1,621 Blacks of Caribbean descent. Among persons 55 years of age and older, 837 were African American, 298 were non-Latino Whites and 304 were Caribbean Blacks for a total of 1439 persons 55 years of age and older. The overall response rate was 72.3%. Final response rates for the NSAL two-phase sample designs were computed using the American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) guidelines (for Response Rate 3 samples) (AAPOR 2006) (see Jackson et al. 2004 and Heeringa et al., 2004 for a more detailed discussion of the NSAL sample). The NSAL data collection was approved by the University of Michigan Institutional Review Board.

### Measures

**Dependent Variables.**—This analysis investigates racial and ethnic differences in two types of discrimination: major discrimination and everyday discrimination. Our analysis examines 9 indicators of major discrimination including: unfairly fired, not being hired for a job, denied a promotion, stopped/searched/threatened by police, discouraged from continuing education, prevented from moving into a neighborhood, moved into a neighborhood where neighbors made life difficult for you or your family, unfairly denied bank loan, and received service from someone such as a plumber or car mechanic that was worse than what other people get. These variables were dichotomized with response values of 1 (experienced this type of discrimination) and 0 (never experienced this type of discrimination).

The measure of everyday discrimination (Williams et al., 1997) was designed to assess interpersonal forms of routine experiences of discrimination. A total of ten items were used to measure everyday discrimination: being treated with less courtesy, treated with less respect, received poor restaurant service, being perceived as not smart, being perceived as dishonest, being perceived as not as good as others, being feared, insulted, harassed, and followed in stores. Response values for each item were: 5 (almost every day), 4 (at least once a week), 3 (a few times a month), 2 (a few times a year), 1 (less than once a year), and 0 (never). In addition, these ten items were combined to create a summary scale, with higher scores on this summary scale indicating higher levels of discrimination.

Respondents who reported any form of everyday discrimination were asked to identify the primary reason for such experiences (e.g., race, ethnicity, skin color, gender, sexual orientation, income, age, height, weight). Based on this item, the summary everyday discrimination scale was recoded to reflect: 1) perceived discrimination that was attributed to race and 2) perceived discrimination that was attributed to nonracial reasons (some other cause). In total, there were thirteen everyday discrimination dependent variables in this analysis. This includes ten specific indicators of everyday discrimination, the summary of everyday discrimination, the summary of race-related everyday discrimination, and the summary of everyday discrimination attributed to other non-racial reasons (Cronbach alpha of summary variables = .90).

**Independent Variables.**—Sociodemographic factors (i.e., age, gender, family income, education, marital status and region) are utilized as control variables. Age and education are coded in years and income is coded in dollars. The staff of the Program for Research on Black Americans imputed missing data for education for 74 cases (1.2% of the total NSAL sample) and income for 773 cases (12.7% of the total NSAL sample). Marital status is a categorical variable indicating whether the respondent is married/cohabiting, separated, divorced, widowed, or never married. Region is coded: Northeast, North Central, South and West. The demographic description of the sample and the distribution of the dependent variables are presented in Table 1.

**Analysis Strategy**—All analyses were conducted with SAS 9.13 which uses the Taylor expansion approximation technique for calculating the complex-design based estimates of variance; in addition, all tests of significance are complex sample design-corrected estimates. Logistic regression was used with the dichotomous dependent variables. Ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis was used with the everyday discrimination variables. Odds ratio estimates and 95% confidence intervals are presented for logistic regression analyses, and beta estimates and standard errors are presented for OLS regression analyses. In all analysis, race/ethnicity is represented by a dummy variable with African Americans as the excluded category followed by analysis where Black Caribbeans are designated as the excluded category. For each dependent variable, the regression models assess the impact of race/ethnicity while controlling for the effects of sociodemographic characteristics (i.e., age, gender, marital status, education, family income, and region). Data used in these analyses are weighted to correct for unequal probabilities of selection, non-response, and to obtain results that are generalizable to the population.

## RESULTS

Table 1 presents the means and frequencies for the demographic variables used in this analysis. Women comprise 55.42% of this older sample with an average age of 66.7 years. The mean number of years of formal education is 12 and the mean household income is \$36.7 thousand. Roughly half of the sample is married (46%) and 56% of the sample resides in the South.

Reports of major discrimination were fairly uncommon with only 4 -16% reporting any events (Table 2). The most frequent type of major discrimination was employment related (being unfairly fired, not being hired, and denied a promotion). Overall, African Americans and older Black Caribbeans were more likely to have experienced a major discrimination event than their non-Latino White counterparts. This is particularly true for being denied a promotion, stopped by the police, denied a loan. For everyday discrimination, most respondents indicated that they had experienced some form of discrimination (Table 2). The most frequent types of everyday discrimination were treating people with less courtesy and being perceived as not as good as others. The least frequent types of everyday discrimination were being feared, insulted, and perceived as dishonest.

### Major Discrimination

**African Americans and Non-Latino Whites.**—Table 3 presents the logistic regression analysis of racial and ethnic differences in major discrimination. There are 9 different types of major discrimination measured and of those, African Americans were more likely than non-Latino Whites to experience 6 types of major discrimination. In particular, older African Americans were more likely to indicate in comparison to non-Latino Whites, that they were unfairly not hired for a job, unfairly denied a promotion, unfairly stopped by the police, unfairly discouraged from continuing their education, unfairly prevented from moving into a neighborhood, and unfairly denied a bank loan. There were no significant differences between African Americans and non-Latino Whites with regards to being fired, moving into a neighborhood where neighbors made life difficult, and receiving poor service from a plumber or car mechanic.

**African Americans and Black Caribbeans.**—It is important to note some of the analysis of differences in major discrimination with Black Caribbeans includes some false positive findings (see footnote of Table 3). That is, although the p-values indicates significance, other indicators indicate that the odds ratios are not significant. In particular, if there is a significant difference between African Americans and Black Caribbeans in logistic regressions when African Americans are the comparison category, then there should also be a significant difference in the logistic regressions where Black Caribbeans are the comparison category. This was not the case in the false positive relationships. All of the false positive relationships involved differences between Black Caribbeans and African Americans. These 5 false positive relationships are noted in Table 3 but will not be discussed or acknowledged further. We believe that these false positives occur because of the weighting of the Black Caribbean sample which uniquely impacts Black Caribbeans who are aged 55 and older. Consequently, there were no significant

differences between African Americans and Black Caribbeans in the 9 different types of major discrimination.

**Black Caribbeans and Non-Latino Whites.**—There were 2 significant differences between the types of major discrimination encountered by Black Caribbeans and non-Latino Whites. Black Caribbeans were more likely to be unfairly prevented from moving into a neighborhood and denied a loan. As noted earlier, there were several statistical inconsistencies in the analysis comparing the older Black Caribbean sample. In this case, there are four significant relationships ( $p < .05$ ) between Black Caribbeans and non-Latino Whites where the confidence intervals cross the number 1, which is generally considered an indicator of non-significance. Based upon an examination of bivariate differences and other analysis we do believe that these are true significant differences. However, the more cautious approach is to trust the confidence intervals over the p-values (American Statistical Association, 2016; Attia, 2005). As such, we will not acknowledge or discuss these specific findings in the remainder of the article.

### Individual Indicators of Everyday Discrimination

**African Americans and Non-Latino Whites.**—Our analysis investigated 10 different types of everyday discrimination and 3 different summary variables of everyday discrimination. This analysis is presented in Tables 4 and 5. Older African Americans reported that they experienced 8 of the 10 types of discrimination significantly more frequently than their non-Latino White counterparts (Table 4). In particular, older African Americans reported that they were more frequently followed in stores, received poor service, were threatened or harassed, treated with less courtesy, treated with less respect, being perceived as not smart, and the perceptions that others felt they were better than them and that others were afraid of them. There were no significant differences between older African Americans and non-Latino Whites with regards to being called names and insulted as well as being threatened or harassed. The regression analysis of racial/ethnic differences in the 3 summary everyday discrimination variables are presented in Table 5. African Americans were more likely than non-Latino Whites to report that they had experienced any everyday discrimination and any everyday discrimination specifically due to race. Non-Latino Whites, however, were more likely to report that they had experienced discrimination due other factors (e.g., gender).

**African Americans and Black Caribbeans.**—There were no significant differences in the individual types of everyday discrimination between African Americans and Black Caribbeans.

**Black Caribbeans and Non-Latino Whites.**—Older Black Caribbeans reported that they experienced 8 of the 10 types of discrimination significantly more frequently than their non-Latino White counterparts (Table 4) (please note that being perceived as dishonest bordered significance  $p = .053$ ). The same significant differences in everyday discrimination found between African American and non-Latino Whites were also found between Black Caribbeans and non-Latino Whites. In particular, in comparison to non-Latino Whites, Black Caribbeans were more likely to report being followed in stores, receiving poor service, being



considered dishonest, treated with less courtesy, treated with less respect, being perceived as not smart, and the perception that others felt they were better than them and that others were afraid of them. There were no significant differences between Black Caribbeans and non-Latino Whites with regards to being called names and insulted as well as being threatened or harassed.

### Summary Variables of Everyday Discrimination

The regression analysis of racial/ethnic differences in the 3 summary everyday discrimination variables are presented in Table 5. African Americans were more likely than non-Latino Whites to report that they had experienced any everyday discrimination and any everyday discrimination specifically due to race. Non-Latino Whites, however, were more likely to report that they had experienced discrimination due other factors (e.g., gender). There were no significant differences in the 3 summary variables of everyday discrimination between African Americans and Black Caribbeans. In addition, Black Caribbeans were more likely than non-Latino Whites to have experienced more everyday discrimination as well as more race-based everyday discrimination (Table 5).

### Discussion

The current study is based on older participants from the NSAL who reported experiencing everyday and major discrimination. Most studies of racial differences in discrimination have involved adolescents (Raabe & Beelmann, 2011) or adults across the age range (Taylor et al., 2018; Williams et al., 1997). Relatively few studies have focused specifically on older adults (Barnes et al., 2004, 2008), while a specific segment of this population, older African American adults, have arguably experienced the most egregious forms of discrimination in our current history. Despite the historical relevance of discrimination to this population however, reports of major discrimination were relatively few, with less than 20% of the sample reporting major discrimination. This is consistent with prior reports (Barnes et al., 2004). However, this is to be expected because, by definition, major discrimination are the types of occurrences that are infrequent but significant in their impact such as unfairly not being hired for a job, denied a promotion, stopped/physically threatened by the police and being prevented from moving into a house or apartment. Our analysis found that roughly 1 in 5 older African Americans and Black Caribbeans were unfairly denied a promotion or not hired for a job. Also 1 in 5 older African Americans (19.7%) were unfairly stopped by the police.

Consistent with the research of Mouzon et al., (2020) and Barnes et al., (2004) on African Americans, instances of disrespect and condescension (treated with less courtesy, treated with less respect, being perceived as not smart) were also the most frequent types of everyday discrimination reported by Black Caribbeans and African Americans. Similarly, the most infrequent type among all three populations were the more toxic and behavioral forms of discrimination (being feared, insulted, harassed, and followed in stores).

As noted in the literature review, older African Americans and Black Caribbeans report lower levels of everyday discrimination than their younger counterparts. This is probably because they are less likely to be in the labor force and in public situations where

discrimination could occur (e.g., restaurants, shopping). It is important to note that instances of major discrimination may be underestimated because they may be more likely to be subject to recall bias. Because instances of major discrimination are so upsetting, many people try to not think about them so that they do not ruminate about them. Although there is not much in the discrimination literature to directly support this claim, this idea would be consistent with experimental literature that has investigated intentional forgetting in trauma survivors or persons with PTSD (Anderson & Levy, 2009). The under-reporting of major discrimination by older adults is also consistent with research that demonstrates older adults are more likely to focus on positive social emotional experiences and connections as their time horizon shrinks, placing less importance on negative experiences like discrimination and other forms of mistreatment, and thereby protecting their mental health (e.g., Bonanno et al., 2004). In addition, in many if not most cases, bringing attention to major discrimination causes high levels of emotional intrusion and disturbance and for many unwanted stress.

Consistent with previous research, older African Americans were more likely to report both major and everyday discrimination than older non-Latino Whites (Barnes et al., 2004). African Americans were more likely than non-Latino Whites to report discrimination in the work settings (e.g., not being hired or promoted), in access to opportunities (discouraged to pursue education, move into certain neighborhoods, denied loans), and in dealings with the police. African Americans also experienced 8 of the 10 types of everyday discrimination more frequently than non-Latino Whites and attributed these events to race. When older non-Latino Whites reported discrimination, it was due to factors other than race (e.g., gender). The results suggest there are persistent racial differences in experiences of discrimination between older African Americans and non-Latino Whites.

This study extends the literature by examining discrimination experienced by older Black Caribbeans, a group that shares some but not all social experiences with older African Americans. There were no differences in the experiences of major or everyday discrimination between African Americans and Black Caribbeans. In addition, both African Americans and Black Caribbeans were more likely to experience discrimination than non-Latino Whites. There are questions about the degree to which Black Caribbeans might under-report discrimination. That is because they have immigrated from countries where race is not a salient issue and they may fail to recognize or see discrimination when it occurs (e.g., I was refused a loan fairly, not because of my race). Or they may attribute a discriminatory event to a personal reason (e.g., I did not receive the promotion that others are receiving because I have not worked hard enough). However, what is clear from our findings is that older Black Caribbeans experience the same levels of discrimination as older African Americans.

Collectively, these findings are consistent with previous research on Black Caribbeans which indicates that although race is not an issue in their home countries in the United States race is a “master status” (Foner, 2005). In their home countries, race is one of many factors including education, wealth, and occupation that define social status (Vickerman, 2001). In the United States, however, race is a master status by which we mean it is a central and defining issue in determining an individual’s social status (Foner, 2005). Consequently, like

African Americans in the United States, Black Caribbeans' African ancestry is not only devalued and stigmatized, it is their most salient social characteristic.

It is important to note that the context where discrimination occurs—workplace, educational and neighborhoods—matters. Because of racial segregation many African Americans reside in all Black neighborhoods, went to all Black schools and were employed in occupations that had Black supervisors. For example, the vast majority of African Americans who lived in Nashville or Chicago and are 70 and over went to all Black elementary, middle and high schools. Also, if they went to college they went to an historically Black college or university. As such, the rates of discrimination will probably be much higher if these variables were controlled. Similarly, evidence indicates that Black Americans who are the only Blacks in their school are the victims of frequent and harsh forms of discrimination. Research by Assari & Lankarani (2018) find that the racial composition of the workplace is associated with the frequency of discrimination. That is, African Americans experience more discrimination in workplaces that have a high percentage of White workers.

In most research null findings are not discussed. However, one of the strengths of this analysis is the examination of individual indicators of discrimination. Thus, even though previous research has indicated that African Americans report more everyday discrimination than non-Latino Whites this research was based on summary variables. The findings of this study indicate that there are types of major and everyday discrimination where there are no significant racial differences. With regards to major discrimination, there were no differences in being unfairly fired, neighbors making life more difficult or receiving poor service. We believe, however, that the reasons attributed to these types of major discrimination differ by racial group. In terms of everyday discrimination, there were no significant differences in being called names or insulted, and being threatened or harassed. As noted in the literature review these types of more serious and toxic everyday discrimination are more prevalent among younger adults where there is a difference between African Americans and non-Latino Whites (Kessler et al., 1999).

This study investigated racial and ethnic differences in the prevalence of major and everyday discrimination among older adults. An important advantage of this study is the ability to investigate ethnic differences in discrimination between African Americans and Black Caribbeans as well as the use of a national probability-based sample. Despite these advantages, several limitations must be acknowledged. The Black Caribbean sample excludes individuals who do not speak English (i.e., persons who only speak Spanish, Haitian-French, or Creole dialects). This population may potentially face more discrimination due to the combination of race and language or they could receive less discrimination if the majority of their time is spent in ethnic enclaves (e.g., Haitian community of Miami). We did not investigate summary variables of major discrimination due to space issues. We also did not examine differences in the prevalence of discrimination based on other identities, such as gender, income, or rural/urban residence. Previous reports have documented the importance of intersectionality in discrimination (Harnois & Ifatunji, 2011), but our sample sizes for some groups were too small to fully investigate this issue. Nonetheless, the significant advantages of the sample provided a unique opportunity to

examine race/ethnicity differences in major and everyday discrimination across these three populations.

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**Table 1.**Demographic Description of the Older Adult Sample<sup>a</sup>

	%	N	Mean	S.D.	Min	Max
Race/Ethnicity						
African American	40.73	837				
Black Caribbean	2.74	304				
Non-Latino White	56.53	298				
Sex						
Male	44.58	543				
Female	55.42	896				
Age		1439	66.72	8.85	55	94
Education		1439	12.05	3.42	0	17
Income		1439	36705.55	38913.10	0	640000
Marital Status						
Married/Partner	46.02	494				
Separated	3.35	88				
Divorced	18.13	279				
Widowed	25.98	450				
Never Married	6.53	112				
Region						
Northeast	20.65	343				
Midwest	12.85	192				
South	56.02	820				
West	10.48	84				

<sup>a</sup>Percentages are weighted and frequencies are unweighted.

**Table 2.**

Percent of Older Adults who experienced Discrimination<sup>a</sup>

	African American		Black Caribbean		Non-Latino White		Total Sample	
	Mean	% Who experience discrimination	Mean	% Who experience discrimination	Mean	% Who experience discrimination	Mean	% Who experience discrimination
<b>Major Discrimination<sup>b</sup></b>								
Unfairly fired	0.17	17.24	0.16	16.08	0.14	14.48	0.16	15.64
Not been hired for a job †	0.21	21.09	0.27	26.67	0.12	12.21	0.16	16.16
Denied Promotion ††	0.21	20.70	0.21	20.83	0.12	11.81	0.16	15.66
Stopped, searched, questioned, physically threatened or abused by police †††	0.19	19.47	0.15	15.37	0.08	8.42	0.13	13.09
Discouraged from continuing education	0.09	9.10	0.12	11.54	0.06	5.76	0.07	7.29
Prevented from moving into a neighborhood †††	0.09	8.53	0.09	8.57	0.01	1.42	0.04	4.49
Neighbors made life difficult ††	0.08	8.14	0.03	3.24	0.05	4.59	0.06	5.99
Denied bank loan †††	0.14	13.72	0.12	11.65	0.02	1.50	0.07	6.67
Received poor service	0.15	14.89	0.15	15.27	0.10	10.39	0.12	12.34
<b>Everyday Discrimination</b>								
Treated with less courtesy	2.18	65.72	2.16	64.56	1.79	59.83	1.96	62.36
Treated with less respect	2.10	61.26	2.04	58.86	1.74	48.65	1.90	54.05
Poor restaurant service	1.96	56.25	1.90	54.77	1.53	41.28	1.71	47.72
Not smart	2.12	57.66	2.31	67.47	1.75	47.54	1.92	52.19
Being feared	1.68	39.73	1.99	42.90	1.38	28.11	1.52	33.24
Being dishonest	1.72	40.35	1.61	38.93	1.33	27.37	1.49	32.95
Not as good as others	2.33	61.25	2.59	67.52	1.99	58.67	2.14	59.95
Insulted	1.56	36.32	1.59	36.18	1.50	35.64	1.52	35.93
Harassed	1.38	28.48	1.44	31.60	1.34	31.54	1.36	30.30
Followed in stores	1.78	42.40	1.83	47.00	1.19	18.21	1.45	28.76
<b>Everyday Discrimination Summary Variables</b>								

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	African American		Black Caribbean		Non-Latino White		Total Sample	
	Mean	% Who experience discrimination	Mean	% Who experience discrimination	Mean	% Who experience discrimination	Mean	% Who experience discrimination
Sum of Any Everyday Discrimination	8.76		9.40		5.53		6.95	
Sum of Any Everyday Racial Discrimination	5.70		6.06		0.81		2.96	
Sum of Any Everyday Other Discrimination	1.93		2.80		2.99		2.55	

<sup>a</sup> Percentages are weighted and frequencies are unweighted.

<sup>b</sup> The major discrimination variables are dichotomous. Consequently, the means and the percentages are equal.

<sup>†</sup>  $p < 0.05$ ;

<sup>††</sup>  $p < 0.01$ ;

<sup>†††</sup>  $p < 0.001$  for % who experience

**Table 3.** Logistic Regression Analysis of Race and Ethnicity Differences of Indicators of Major Discrimination<sup>1</sup>

	African Americans Excluded Category			Black Caribbeans Excluded Category		
	OR	95%CI	N	OR	95%CI	N
Unfairly Fired						
Black Caribbeans	0.79	0.41, 1.53	1396	African Americans	1.26	0.66, 2.42
Whites	0.74	0.45, 1.21	1396	Whites	0.94	0.43, 2.05
Not Been Hired for A Job						
Black Caribbeans	1.23	0.45, 3.32	1367	African Americans	0.82	0.30, 2.20
Whites	0.44*	0.25, 0.78	1367	Whites	0.36#	0.12, 1.10
Denied Promotion						
Black Caribbeans	0.84	0.47, 1.50	1384	African Americans	1.19 <sup>†</sup>	0.67, 2.13
Whites	0.48*	0.28, 0.83	1384	Whites	0.57##	0.27, 1.19
Stopped, Searched, Questioned, Physically Threatened or Abused by Police						
Black Caribbeans	0.64	0.28, 1.48	1403	African Americans	1.57 <sup>††</sup>	0.68, 3.62
Whites	0.32*	0.16, 0.67	1403	Whites	0.50#	0.17, 1.51
Discouraged from continuing education						
Black Caribbeans	0.96	0.35, 2.65	1395	African Americans	1.04	0.38, 2.87
Whites	0.46*	0.24, 0.86	1395	Whites	0.48#	0.16, 1.45
Prevented From Moving into A Neighborhood						
Black Caribbeans	0.72	0.27, 1.92	1399	African Americans	1.39 <sup>†††</sup>	0.52, 3.68
Whites	0.13 <sup>***</sup>	0.06, 0.30	1399	Whites	0.18 <sup>***</sup>	0.05, 0.61
Neighbors Made Life Difficult						
Black Caribbeans	0.42	0.16, 1.10	1405	African Americans	2.40 <sup>†</sup>	0.91, 6.35
Whites	0.58	0.32, 1.04	1405	Whites	1.39	0.50, 3.84

	African Americans Excluded Category				Black Caribbeans Excluded Category			
	OR	95%CI	N	N	OR	95%CI	N	N
Denied Bank Loan								
Received Poor Service								

† All logistic regression models control for age, gender, family income, education, marital status and region.

\* p < .05;

\*\* p < .01;

\*\*\* p < .001; Standard Significance

† p < .05;

†† p < .01;

††† p < .001; False Positives: P values are significant but these are not significant relationships

# p < .05;

## p < .01;

### p < .001; P values are significant and although the CI includes the number 1, the relationship is believed to be significant.

**Table 4.** Linear Regression Analysis for Race and Ethnicity Differences in Indicators of Everyday Discrimination<sup>†</sup>

	African Americans Excluded Category			Black Caribbeans Excluded Category		
	$\beta$	SE	N	$\beta$	SE	N
Better than You	Black Caribbeans	0.33	0.19	African Americans	-0.33	0.19
	Whites	-0.28*	0.11	Whites	-0.61**	0.19
			1390			1390
Not Smart	Black Caribbeans	0.16	0.12	African Americans	-0.16	0.12
	Whites	-0.30*	0.13	Whites	-0.46**	0.16
			1399			1399
Less Courtesy	Black Caribbeans	-0.09	0.07	African Americans	0.09	0.07
	Whites	-0.39***	0.08	Whites	-0.30***	0.08
			1404			1404
Less Respect	Black Caribbeans	-0.08	0.09	African Americans	0.08	0.09
	Whites	-0.36***	0.09	Whites	-0.29**	0.11
			1401			1401
Afraid of You	Black Caribbeans	0.29	0.18	African Americans	-0.29	0.18
	Whites	-0.30***	0.08	Whites	-0.58**	0.18
			1402			1402
Followed in Stores	Black Caribbeans	0.02	0.12	African Americans	-0.02	0.12
	Whites	-0.60***	0.07	Whites	-0.62***	0.11
			1398			1398
Received Poor Service	Black Caribbeans	-0.09	0.10	African Americans	0.09	0.10
	Whites	-0.43***	0.08	Whites	-0.34**	0.11
			1405			1405

	African Americans Excluded Category			Black Caribbeans Excluded Category		
	$\beta$	SE	N	$\beta$	SE	N
Dishonest						
Black Caribbeans	-0.16	0.11	1400	0.16	0.11	1400
Whites	-0.39***	0.08		-0.24#	0.12	
Called Names/Insulted						
Black Caribbeans	0.01	0.09	1406	-0.01	0.09	1406
Whites	-0.02	0.09		-0.03	0.14	
Threatened or Harassed						
Black Caribbeans	0.03	0.08	1407	-0.03	0.08	1407
Whites	-0.05	0.05		-0.08	0.09	

All analyses control for age, gender, family income, education, marital status and region.

\* p < .05;

\*\* p < .01;

\*\*\* p < .001;

# p = .053

**Table 5**

Linear Regression Analysis of Race and Ethnic Differences in Three Summary Variables of Everyday Discrimination

	Sum of Any Everyday Discrimination	Sum of Any Everyday Racial Discrimination	Sum of Any Everyday Other Discrimination
	$\beta$ (SE)	$\beta$ (SE)	$\beta$ (SE)
<b>African Americans Excluded Category</b>			
Black Caribbeans	0.39 (0.67)	0.03 (0.72)	0.99 (0.54)
Non-Hispanic Whites	-3.10 (0.65) ***	-4.80 (0.49) ***	1.20 (0.47) *
<b>Black Caribbeans Excluded Category</b>			
African Americans	-0.39 (0.67)	-0.03 (0.72)	-0.99 (0.54)
Non-Hispanic Whites	-3.49 (0.77) ***	-4.83 (0.69) ***	0.21 (0.73)
<b>F</b>	25.5 ***	23.39 ***	10.93 ***
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	0.18	0.20	0.06
<b>N</b>	1408	1338	1338

All analyses control for age, gender, family income, education, marital status and region.

\* p < .05;

\*\* p < .01;

\*\*\* p < .001