

Research Article

Neighborhood Racial Composition, Institutional Socialization, and Intra-racial Feelings of Closeness among Black Americans

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Relying on nationally representative data from the most recent wave of the National Survey of Black Americans (NSBA), the current study examines how past and present neighborhood racial composition is associated with feelings of closeness toward black Americans, black Africans, and black West Indians. In addition, this research tests whether race-based socialization messages received from caregivers or religious socialization messages explain this relationship among a sample from the adult black US population. The findings show that past neighborhood composition is associated with present feelings of closeness toward black Americans and black West Indians but are not associated with close feelings toward black Africans. Current neighborhood racial composition is not associated with feelings of closeness toward any of the groups. Racial socialization messages are associated with closeness towards them all but are found to be largely a function of having a two-parent family during childhood. Religious socialization is also associated with intra-racial feelings of closeness. Results suggest that neighborhood racial composition is important to help facilitate positive feelings toward others who share the same race but a different ethnicity.

1. Introduction

Dating back to The Chicago School [1], there has been a plethora of research on the effects of neighborhood on various social outcomes in urban cities such as physical health [2], education [3], exposure to crime/violence [4], and family formation [5]. Moreover, research suggests that neighborhoods influence certain psychological dimensions such as the extent to which members of a racial/ethnic group feel close to its respective membership base [6] and feelings of alienation [7]. The effects seem to transcend time [8] and affect persons throughout the entire life course [9, 10]. Most of these effects are thought to be disadvantageous for racial and ethnic minorities, particularly black Americans [11].

To clarify, race is a social grouping of individuals who are treated as distinct based on certain physical characteristics (such as skin color) that have been assigned as socially important. In the US context, white and black are the two consistent racial groupings. Similarly, ethnicity is a social group within a larger cultural context and social system that share what they believe to be common origins and experiences, and they feel

an affinity for one another that leads to congregation [12]. In the US context, groupings within Latinos or Asians are two popular examples of ethnicity. Race and ethnicity can be combined, such as having Hispanic blacks, which creates a diversity within races and ethnicities.

Where racial and ethnic groups live in the US is not randomly patterned. Due to various social policies and structural conditions designed to maintain racial homogeneity across place, neighborhoods, particularly in metropolitan areas, are often racially segregated. However, while there are some findings that suggest that racial residential segregation is declining for blacks [13], there is an increase in economic segregation of blacks relative to whites. That is, blacks are less likely to live in racially segregated areas but more likely to live in areas that are of high poverty. Moreover, these areas also tend to have a high proportion of blacks. Quillian (2012) calls this “three segregations,” which indicates the complexities in the spatial patterning of black Americans.

Residential segregation between blacks and whites has declined over time, but it remains high [14]. In 2010, the “typical” black American lives in a neighborhood that is

45.2% black and, in general, whites live in neighborhoods with low minority representation while blacks live in neighborhoods with high minority representation [15]. There is a similar story regarding poverty among black Americans. Among individuals who live in census tracts where the poverty rate was less than 20% (i.e., low-poverty neighborhoods), blacks represent 8% compared to 69% for whites [16]. However, among individuals who live in census tracts where the poverty rate was greater than 20% (i.e., high-poverty neighborhood), blacks represent 20% compared to 37% for whites. Thus, there is less representation of blacks in low-poverty areas compared to high-poverty areas.

In light of these statistics, the literature has not provided a thorough understanding of how neighborhood racial composition affects how close one feels towards individuals within one's race (but not one's *ethnicity*). This paucity is important, as cities are the places where difference is created and solidified more so than places outside of the metropolitan landscape [17]. Moreover, there has been a demographic shift in the US population, as the minority of population has increased over the course of a decade. Recent 2010 Census estimates suggest that 13.6% of the population identifies as black/African American, which is a 15% increase since 2000 [18]. The number of individuals who identify as black with another nationality other than American has also increased, from nearly 1.7 million in 2000 to over 3 million in 2010, marking an increase in excess of 75% [18]. The percentage of foreign-born blacks has nearly tripled from 1980 to 2005 with nearly two-thirds of this population originating in the Caribbean and Latin America [19]. There has been a clear rise in diversity within the black US population, driven by a numerical increase in African Americans, black immigrants, and black American-born nationals. The increased ethnic diversity within the black population over time has been thought to lead to some negative social outcomes. Drawing from McKenzie's invasion-succession theory [20], scholars suggest that the incorporation of these new black immigrants in majority black neighborhoods may breed irascible relations amongst both members of the same race and across races [21, 22].

In addition to the lack of research exploring how contextual influences this population, little is known about the role of family context in outlining this relationship, that is, how families contribute to the neighborhood effects on social phenomena. The family context, in particular, is generally regarded as the most influential agent of socialization that solidifies a sense of self and connection to others. It is possible that parents and other persons in the household may hold negative feelings towards members of a particular racial/ethnic group, which could be adopted by other members within that household. However, the root of these negative feelings may come from many sources, including prior socialization messages passed on intergenerationally, one-on-one interactions among people within the neighborhood with similar feelings or general malaise regarding the changing urban landscape and population.

This study addresses the complexity of major social institutions (i.e., families, neighborhoods, and religion) in understanding feelings of closeness among blacks. Specifically, this

research adds to the prior literature in two distinct ways. First, this research considers interethnic intimacy within black Americans as a locus of interest. Within the social sciences, there has been a recent push to expand upon "blackness" and its meaning within certain ethnic groups such as West Indians and Africans [23–25], mainly because there is an assumption that the black community is a monolithic group with a strong sense of consonant black identity. This exploration into how black Americans identify with other members in the pan-African diaspora allows for further expansion of blackness.

Second, this research adds to the literature by exploring the mediating role of family context in the explanation of how neighborhoods influence interethnic intimacy. By incorporating family-level indicators, this research can illuminate the multitiered processes by which individuals identify with members of their own race and within their own ethnicity. To clarify, it is important to know how both neighborhood characteristics and family dynamics dictate feelings of closeness among members of the pan-African diaspora.

2. Literature Review

Racial and ethnic identity is commonly defined as a feeling of closeness toward other individuals or groups who share similar ideologies, feelings, and thoughts *as well as some racial or ethnic symmetry* [26]. Social psychological research suggests that identity is shaped by multiple levels of influence including social institutions such as the family and religion [27] as well as the neighborhood and environmental context where one resides [28]. Racial identification has various components [29] that are influenced by the reflected appraisals of others [30], social cues [31], opportunities to engage in ethnic activities [32], and the racial composition of his/her immediate social context [33]. These factors are also important for black Americans generally and thus contribute to identity formation. The proximity of individuals to one another in neighborhoods may be influential in an individual's racial identity formation due to the inevitable contact with others that a neighborhood may foster.

The family context is generally regarded as the most influential agent of socialization, as it solidifies a child's sense of self and connection to others. Thus, the extent to which a child is racially and religiously socialized is central to understanding black identity. Childhood socialization through the family occurs through the number of family members present and through the presence of intergenerational members within the household. Often this socialization occurs within the household or within the neighborhood in which one resides. In addition to childhood socialization, family structure serves as a factor that influences black identification. The interpersonal relations with family and friends are important contexts for formation of attitudes toward self and others and is highly and positively associated with feelings of closeness [34]. As such, intact families and extended families can enhance or deflate feelings of closeness because intact families provide two constant sources of socialization and extended families provide a myriad of different kinds of socialization based on the cohort in which the family's members were born [35].

As conduits, black parents judge whether race is more or less salient than their past experiences [36]. However, Peters' [37] analysis of racial socialization in black families suggest that black parents stress self-respect or pride which aids in the development of identity. Here, race-neutral socialization creates individual drive, which trumps racial identification. It is important to note that racial identification for blacks is also reinforced by the overall black community. The strong connection to the black community may or may not be present in one's neighborhood. The racial socialization messages imprinted on individuals within their neighborhood are of particular interest to this study, because they often occur within the larger social context of the black community. Many studies have illustrated that racially congruent areas (defined as neighborhoods with a sizable plurality of individuals who share the same race) have positive influences on occupational and education aspirations [38], decreasing prejudice [39] and increasing perceived quality of life [40]. The key component of racially congruent neighborhoods is positive feedback through racial identification. Those individuals who live in racially congruent areas are likely to develop a positive self-concept (defined as relaying positive meanings to one's self and one's existence in the world, see Brownfain's [41] work) as a result of being exposed to persons of their same race [42]. As such, a racially congruent neighborhood is likely to promote a prominent sense of self and their values and may only be further enhanced when other agents of socialization also promote high self-esteem.

2.1. Neighborhood Context and Black Identity. In addition to the family as a unit of socialization, another important interpersonal dimension of black socialization is religion. The church provides opportunities for blacks to occupy a role within an institution and commune in a racially congruent place. Both could be denied to blacks in the wider society. Religion also bolsters feelings of self-respect and self-evaluative sentiments towards one racial group [43]. Prior work on religion and identity suggests that identity is largely shaped by churches through civic engagement and political activism [44]. These positive religious experiences also bolster high levels of satisfaction with life and its meaning, particularly for black Americans who are more likely to feel and express dissatisfaction with the structural inequalities that place them in social disadvantage [45]. In sum, multiple sources of socialization can facilitate even stronger racial identification through its strong ties to the black community.

The neighborhood is often an agent of socialization that enhances any family and institutional socialization that people may experience. As evident in the African proverb, "it takes a village to raise a child," members of various communities feel that positive socialization within their neighborhood is paramount in ensuring the success of children living in those neighborhoods. Indeed, research suggests that parents in neighborhoods with high levels of neighborhood-child involvement were more likely to socialize their children with a balance of cultural socialization emphasis and egalitarianism [46]. Negative socialization may also occur within a disadvantaged context. Neighborhood processes such as racial residential segregation is psychologically harmful to

the development of a positive racial-ethnic identity because it strips an individual of their ability to perform self-improvement functions. That is to say, being in a racially or ethnically concentrated neighborhood may have a negative effect on black identity due to the lack of perceived mobility for members of the neighborhood [47]. Living in these areas often leads to exposure to violence, drugs, risky sexual behavior, and poor health [48]. Generally, location of residence matters in blacks' feelings of closeness towards black Caribbeans [49], but no research to date has explored whether location matters in blacks' feelings of closeness towards black Africans.

While one may be exposed to these negative outcomes living in low-income, majority-minority neighborhoods, it is not the case that parental involvement is irrelevant to socialization. Some research suggests that the socialization messages that parents receive is not predicted by the number of low-income families in their neighborhoods [46]. Moreover, socialization messages may stem from deep-seated tensions with racial groups within a neighborhood. In urban communities, the strongest predictors of racial perceptions are one's views on the general direction of their neighborhood, gang prevalence, and public safety concerns [50]. When these perceptions are pervasive, conflict in the neighborhood could occur.

Further, if neighborhoods are going through transitions brought about through macrochanges (such as gentrification or neighborhood revitalization), there could be resentment towards members of the groups that could be a source of conflict [51]. According to invasion-succession theory [20], the "invasion" of a new racial group in a neighborhood may create tension for long-term residents. The source of conflict could stem from low levels of trust, competition in the labor and housing market, and violence between ethnic and racial groups in these transitioning communities [50].

Research on the residential placement differences among blacks is mixed. Across nativity status, Black immigrants, both from Africa and the Caribbean, were less likely to live in the suburbs than white Americans. In contrast, they were more likely to live in the suburbs than native-born blacks [52]. However, in other research, West Indians are often confined to residential spaces that have large black concentrations, due to their lack of access to predominantly white spaces [53]. While some research has compared residential placement across nativity among blacks, there is a paucity of research that explores how the characteristics of those places affect one's feelings of closeness within the African diaspora. This lack of research is the impetus of the current study. Considering the evidence presented in this review of the literature, we examine how the racial composition of one's past and present neighborhood affects feelings of closeness toward different black ethnic group and how socialization messages from family and religious institutions may mitigate a strong neighborhood effect.

3. Data, Measurement, and Methods

This study uses data from the fourth wave of the National Survey of Black Americans (NSBA). The NSBA is a nationally

multistage probability sample of blacks with the specific focus of capturing neighborhood-community integration, religion, and racial dynamics. The full sample is comprised of 2,107 self-identified blacks, 18 years of age and older. These black Americans were interviewed in 1992 and theoretically include a diverse pull of ethnic groups that include African Americans, West Indians, and Africans. We include respondents who had valid measures on all variables used in the analyses, resulting in a sample of 1,049 blacks.

3.1. Dependent Variables. Cross-ethnic intimacy or feelings of closeness toward groups outside of one's ethnicity are captured by three variables for this black sample. It is important to note that this is only one of many ways to define and operationalize closeness. In this study, respondents were asked how close they feel toward black Americans. This measure was created using responses on how the respondent felt toward specific black American subgroups. These subgroups include variables such as income, age, and religion (poor blacks, religious church-going blacks, young blacks, middle-class blacks, working-class blacks, and older blacks). Using 4-item Likert scale, individuals were asked to choose one of the following responses: very close, fairly close, not too close, or not close to all. We then averaged the score on these subgroups, leading to a range of 0 to 3 for the composite measure. Cronbach's alpha was 0.78, indicating strong internal consistency between the items that comprise the scale.

The other two dependent variables measure how close the respondent feels toward black Africans and black West Indians. Unlike the black American closeness variable, these two variables are taken directly from the survey questionnaire and are not made into a scale. However, each of the dependent measures ranges from 0 to 3. All closeness variables were reverse-coded such that higher scores reflect more perceived closeness toward that particular ethnic group.

3.2. Neighborhood Measures. Neighborhood racial composition is captured by two variables. First, survey participants were asked to think back retrospectively to the neighborhood that they lived in during childhood. Then, they were asked to specify on a scale of 1–5 the extent to which their past neighborhood was all white or all black. The qualitative attributes for this variable are all black, mostly black, about half black, mostly white, and all white. This variable was reverse-coded such that higher values on this ordinal measure correspond to increasing blackness of the neighborhood.

Similar to the previous measure, participants were also asked to think of the neighborhood where they presently reside. In a similar fashion, they were asked to specify on a scale of 1–5 the extent to which their current neighborhood was all black or all white. This variable was reverse-coded such that higher values on this ordinal measure correspond to increasing blackness of the neighborhood.

3.3. Socialization Measures. Two institutions that are essential to one's socialization are explored in this research: the family and religion. Several measures are used to capture family socialization. Family structure is coded into six distinct

categories that correspond to who were present in the household up to age 16: dual parent family (either intact family or stepfamily), single parent family (mother or father present only), dual parent extended (with grandparents or great-grandparents living in household), single parent extended, and extended family only (solely with grandparents or great-grandparents living in household). Respondents who lived in other family formations (e.g., respondents reared by aunts or friends) were removed from the analytic sample.

In addition, racial socialization corresponds to a series of questions that asks what were some of the important racial things that were told to respondents about being black, likely from their familial upbringing. Respondents were asked if there were things that their caretakers taught them about what it meant to be black. There are 45 responses for this question, and these responses were categorized as being in one of four types: white-focused, black-focused, race-absent, and no messages. White-focused messages are statements that emphasize a deference to or defiance of whites. Examples of such statements are "Stay away from whites" and "try to get along with/understand whites." Black-focused messages are statements that emphasize a deference to or defiance of blacks. Examples of such statements are "I was taught that being black meant you were less/that you couldn't amount to nothing" and "be proud of being black." Race-absent messages emphasize individual messages of success that do not mention race in the statement. Examples include "You are as good as anyone else" and "You must work hard to get a good education/job." Individuals who stated that they did not receive any messages, did not remember any messages, or did not have family or parents were coded as having not received any socialization messages. It is important to note that respondents could select up to three of these responses. However, less than 10 percent chose more than one option. For those individuals, only their first mention was used in this categorization.

For religion, survey participants were asked to evaluate how important religion was to him/her while growing up. Higher values on this scale (with a range of 0–3) indicate that religion was increasingly important. In addition, religious affiliation is used to capture socialization. Based on Steensland et al.'s [54] exploratory analysis of religious affiliation groupings, this sample was divided into five specific macrodenominations: black Protestant, mainline Protestant, Evangelical Protestant, Catholic, and others/no religion.

3.4. Individual Control Measures. Respondents were asked to evaluate how satisfied he/she is with the current neighborhood. Higher values correspond to greater satisfaction of the current neighborhood. Length of residence, which was captured in the original data as an ordinal measure, is divided into the following categories: less than 2 years, 2–5 years, 5–10 years, and greater than 10 years. Closeness to neighbors is an ordinal variable that indicates the number of the respondent's neighbors that know the respondent well enough to visit or call. Responses range from none to many. In order to maximize sample size retention, individuals who indicate having no neighbors were recoded as "none." Neighborhood involvement is a binary variable that indicates whether

the respondent is involved in at least one neighborhood group (block club, community association, social club, helping groups, etc.).

Residential mobility and constraints are also included as control variables. The number of relatives that reside in the current neighborhood is continuous variables where respondents were asked to count the number of their kin who currently live in the same neighborhood as the respondent. Health status is an ordinal variable: respondents were asked to self-report their current health as excellent, good, fair, or poor. The number of moves is an ordinal measure, indicating if the respondent has never moved or moved once or twice or more than two times during their lifetime.

Sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents are also employed in this research as controls. These measures include gender, educational level (measured by years of education), employment status, and age in years.

3.5. Analytic Strategy. Since the dependent measure is approximately continuous, weighted ordinary least squares (OLS) regression is employed using Stata 12.1 [55]. While there are some other ways to analyze data where the dependent measure is ordinal, researchers and statisticians suggest that OLS is appropriate as well [56]. To explore the association between neighborhood composition, socialization, and feelings of closeness among black Americans, models were built for each of the three dependent variables. In the first model, past and current neighborhood racial composition is included. The second model includes neighborhood composition and family structure. For Model 3, neighborhood composition and measures associated with family socialization messages about race are entered. Model 4 includes neighborhood composition and variables associated with religion. The final model is the full model with all measures, including the control variables. Statistically significant model fit is assessed using the *F* test and the strength of association between the multiple independent variables with each of the dependent variables is assessed with the *r*-squared (*R*²) statistic.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Statistics. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for all variables used in the analyses. In this sample of black Americans, the highest average feeling of closeness is for other black Americas. Specifically, the average closeness score to black Americans is 2.1, compared to 1.6 to black Africans and 1.4 to black West Indians. In addition, the neighborhood where the sample grew up had slightly more blacks, on average, than their current neighborhood (3.3 versus 3.1 resp.).

For the family measures, more than half of the sample (52.4%) was raised in a dual parent extended family. Over 72 percent (72.4%) of the sample was raised in at least a dual parent family. There is similar representation of single parent and extended families (5.7%); however, there are a sizable percentage of single parent extended families in this sample (16.3%). In addition, the majority of this sample received no race-based socialization messages (40.1%), although

TABLE 1: Descriptive statistics of all variables.

Variable	Mean/%	Range
Feelings to closeness		
Closeness to black Americans	2.12	(0-3)
Closeness to black Africans	1.63	(0-3)
Closeness to black West Indians	1.36	(0-3)
Neighborhood racial composition		
Past neighborhood composition	3.29	(0-4)
Current neighborhood composition	3.06	(0-4)
Family socialization		
Family structure		
Dual parent	19.94%	(0-1)
Single parent	5.71%	(0-1)
Dual parent, extended	52.44%	(0-1)
Single parent, extended	16.25%	(0-1)
Extended family only	5.66%	(0-1)
Socialization messages		
White-focused	35.84%	(0-1)
Black-focused	15.73%	(0-1)
Race-absent	40.61%	(0-1)
No messages	7.82%	(0-1)
Religious socialization		
Importance of religion	2.69	(0-3)
Religious affiliation		
Black Protestant	66.67%	(0-1)
Mainland Protestant	17.04%	(0-1)
Evangelical Protestant	4.38%	(0-1)
Catholic	6.40%	(0-1)
Others or no religion	4.87%	(0-1)
Individual control measures		
Neighborhood satisfaction	2.18	(0-3)
Length of residence	2.28	(0-3)
Closeness to neighbors	1.45	(0-3)
Involved in neighborhoods	14.92%	(0-1)
Relatives in current neighborhood	24.64	(0-62)
Health status	2.33	(0-3)
Number of moves in lifetime	0.54	(0-2)
Male	38.26%	(0-1)
Education	10.93	(0-17)
Employed	57.41	(0-1)
Age	43.00	(17-101)
<i>N</i>		1,049

Source. Wave 4 of National Survey of Black Americans.

a sizable percentage of this black American sample did receive white-focused messages (35.8%). Still only 15.7% received black-focused messages and 7.8% received no socialization messages at all.

For the religion measures, the average score on the importance of religion is 2.7, indicating that on average the sample was socialized to view religion as important. Two-thirds (66.7%) of the sample are of the black Protestant denomination. Mainline Protestants represent 17% of the sample.

Evangelical Protestants and those indicating non-Christian faith have similar percentages in this sample (4.4% and 4.9%, resp.). Catholics are slightly higher in representation, with about 6.4% of the sample following that religion.

The control measures suggest that the sample is diverse in their neighborhood characteristics, mobility constraints, and sociodemographic information. On average, the sample is satisfied with their current neighborhood. This fact is also echoed by the average duration of their residence, which is about 2–5 years. However, on average, the sample does not feel close to their neighbors. Yet, 14.9% of the sample is involved in their neighborhood. So while respondents on average are satisfied with their neighborhood, they are also very removed from it, which could be, in part, driving their satisfaction. The mean number of relatives in their neighborhood is around 25. On average, the sample is in good health. On average, respondents have made about 1–2 moves by survey date. The sample is overwhelmingly female (61.7%). The average number of years of education approaches 11th grade (10.9 years). The majority of the sample is employed (57.4%). Lastly, the average age of the respondents is 43 years.

4.2. Multivariate Results. Tables 2–4 present the ordinary least squares (OLS) regression coefficients for modeling black American's closeness to black Americans, black Africans, and black West Indians. In each table, Model 1 includes neighborhood racial composition, Model 2 includes neighborhood composition and family structure, Model 3 includes neighborhood composition and racial socialization messages, Model 4 includes neighborhood composition and religious measures, and Model 5 is the full model with all measures. The results are discussed by dependent variable.

4.2.1. Closeness to Black Americans. Table 2 presents the OLS estimates for feelings of closeness toward black Americans. In Model 1, only the neighborhood where the respondent was raised, not the neighborhood where the respondent currently lives, is statistically related to feelings of closeness toward blacks Americans. Specifically, a higher aggregation of blacks in the past neighborhood is associated with increased closeness to black Americans ($\beta = 0.03$). When adding family structure indicators in Model 2, the relationship stays the same after controlling for family structure. In addition, compared to individuals who grew up in a dual parent family, living in a single parent family or single parent with extended family during childhood is associated with lower feelings of closeness toward black Americans ($\beta = -0.10$ and -0.12 , resp.). Similarly, compared to living in a dual parent family, being raised in a family with no parents present (i.e., an extended family) is also associated with lower feelings of closeness toward black Americans ($\beta = -0.13$). Indeed, the nuclear family unit creates more salience in racial consciousness than any other alternative family forms.

In Model 3, past neighborhood racial composition is positively associated with feelings of closeness net of any racial socialization messages that were learned during childhood. Compared to having race-absent (or achievement-focused) socialization messages, receiving black-focused messages is

associated with an increase in closeness towards black Americans ($\beta = 0.08$). As seen in Model 4, religious socialization is also statistically associated with feelings of closeness toward black Americans. The degree of importance placed on religion during childhood is positively associated with the degree of closeness felt toward black Americans ($\beta = 0.16$). In addition, compared to being a black Protestant, being an Evangelical Protestant, a Catholic, or a non-Christian is associated with lower feelings of closeness towards black Americans ($\beta \approx -0.11$ for all three religious affiliations).

The full model (Model 5) has some interesting changes in results from the previous models. The past neighborhood racial composition is no longer statistically related to feelings of closeness toward black Americans, holding the other variables constant. Further, the current neighborhood racial composition is statistically significant and is negative, suggesting that an increase in the number of blacks in the current neighborhood is associated with decreased closeness to blacks Americans ($\beta = -0.04$). Religiosity maintains its statistical significance ($\beta = 0.11$) but, after controlling for neighborhood characteristics, mobility constraints, and sociodemographic characteristics, the effects of family structure, race, and religious socialization become statistically unrelated to feelings of closeness toward black Americans.

There are several controls that predict closeness to black Americans. Being close with one's neighbors is positively associated with closeness ($\beta = 0.04$). This effect persists while controlling for black representation in one's current neighborhood. In unshown auxiliary analyses, the interaction of closeness to neighbors and black representation in current neighborhood was not statistically significant, indicating that the closeness to neighbors and closeness to black Americans relationships are not moderated by the extent to which there are more blacks in the neighborhood. Having relatives in the current neighborhood and being generally healthy are also positively associated with closeness to black Americans ($\beta = 0.01$ and 0.07 , resp.). In addition, increasing education and age are negatively associated with closeness to black Americans ($\beta = -0.02$ and -0.01 , resp.). In unshown auxiliary analyses, the interaction of education and current neighborhood racial composition is not significant, indicating an independent effect of education that is not conditioned by neighborhood racial concentration.

4.2.2. Closeness to Black Africans. Table 3 presents the OLS estimates for feelings of closeness toward black Africans. The analyses presented here show that the postulated effects of neighborhood, family structure, and race/religious socialization are not predictive of closeness to black Africans. In a couple of models, there are statistically significant effects. In Model 2, single parent households are less likely than dual parent households to be feeling close to black Africans ($\beta = -0.23$). In Model 4, the degree of importance placed on religion during childhood is positively associated with the degree of closeness felt toward black Africans ($\beta = 0.15$), and having a non-Christian faith compared to being black Protestant is positively associated with the degree of closeness felt toward black Africans ($\beta = 0.21$). However, these results are attenuated when simultaneously controlling

TABLE 2: OLS estimates of closeness to black Americans.

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Neighborhood racial composition					
Past neighborhood composition	0.03**	0.03**	0.04*	0.03**	0.02
Current neighborhood composition	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00	-0.04*
Family socialization					
Family structure (dual parent)					
Single parent		-0.10*			-0.06
Dual parent, extended		-0.05			0.04
Single parent, extended		-0.12**			-0.02
Extended family only		-0.13**			-0.07
Socialization messages (race-absent)					
White-focused			0.00		0.00
Black-focused			0.08*		0.07
No messages			0.01		0.02
Religious socialization					
Importance of religion				0.16***	0.11***
Religious affiliation (black Protestant)					
Mainland Protestant				-0.03	-0.04
Evangelical Protestant				-0.11*	-0.02
Catholic				-0.11*	0.05
Others or no religion				-0.12*	-0.14
Individual control measures					
Neighborhood satisfaction					0.01
Length of residence					0.02
Closeness to neighbors					0.04*
Involved in neighborhood					0.07
Relatives in current neighborhood					0.01*
Health status					0.07***
Number of moves in lifetime					-0.01
Male					0.05
Education					-0.02**
Employed					-0.01
Age					-0.01*
Constant	1.99***	2.05***	1.99***	1.61***	1.62***
F statistic	5.00***	3.82***	1.69	15.99***	4.46***
Adjusted R-squared	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.06	0.14

Source. Wave 4 of National Survey of Black Americans. Contrast categories in parentheses.

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

for neighborhood, mobility, and sociodemographic controls. Thus, more research outlining the specific processes by which black identify with black Africans is necessary, as the covariates that have been chosen for this study may not be the characteristics that researchers should use to predict black Americans' feelings of closeness toward black Africans.

4.2.3. Closeness to Black West Indians. Table 4 presents the OLS estimates for feelings of closeness toward black West Indians. Recall that, in the univariate analyses presented in Table 1, black Americans felt the least closeness toward black West Indians. In Model 1, only the neighborhood where the respondent was raised, not the neighborhood where the respondent currently lives, is statistically related to feelings of

closeness toward blacks West Indians. Specifically, an increase in the number of blacks in the past neighborhood is associated with decreased closeness to black West Indians ($\beta = -0.05$). When adding family structure indicators in Model 2, the relationship stays the same after controlling for family structure. In addition, living in a dual parent family with extended relatives or in a family with no parents present (i.e., an extended family only) during childhood is associated with lower feelings of closeness toward black West Indians, relative to individuals living in a dual parent family ($\beta = -0.16$).

In Model 3, past neighborhood racial composition is still statistically associated with feelings of closeness net of any racial socialization messages that were learned during childhood ($\beta = -0.04$). Compared to having race-absent (or

TABLE 3: OLS estimates of closeness to black Africans.

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Neighborhood racial composition					
Past neighborhood composition	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Current neighborhood composition	0.00	0.00	0.02	-0.01	0.02
Family socialization					
Family structure (dual parent)					
Single parent		-0.23*			-0.14
Dual parent, extended		-0.06			0.09
Single parent, extended		-0.12			-0.03
Extended family only		-0.18			-0.12
Socialization messages (race-absent)					
White-focused			0.04		0.04
Black-focused			0.06		0.10
No messages			-0.14		-0.12
Religious socialization					
Importance of religion				0.15***	0.05
Religious affiliation (black Protestant)					
Mainland Protestant				0.02	-0.01
Evangelical Protestant				-0.32	-0.02
Catholic				-0.09	0.12
Others or no religion				0.21*	0.19
Individual control measures					
Neighborhood satisfaction					0.02
Length of residence					-0.02
Closeness to neighbors					0.06
Involved in neighborhood					0.12
Relatives in current neighborhood					0.04
Health status					0.00
Number of moves in lifetime					0.03
Male					0.24
Education					0.01
Employed					-0.12
Age					0.00
Constant	1.63***	1.70***	1.57	1.26	0.96**
F statistic	0.02	1.12	0.72	4.03***	1.44
Adjusted R-squared	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.05

Source. Wave 4 of National Survey of Black Americans. Contrast categories in parentheses.

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

achievement-focused) socialization messages, receiving no socialization messages is associated with decreased feelings of closeness towards black West Indians ($\beta = -0.22$). As seen in Model 4, religious socialization is also positive and statistically associated with feelings of closeness toward black West Indians. The degree of importance placed on religion during childhood is positively associated with the degree of closeness felt toward black West Indians ($\beta = 0.11$). In addition, compared to being a black Protestant, being a Catholic or a non-Christian is associated with heightened feelings of closeness towards black West Indians ($\beta = 0.19$ and 0.37 , resp.).

The full model (Model 5) has some interesting changes in results from the previous models. The past neighborhood

racial composition is no longer statistically related to feelings of closeness toward black West Indians, holding the other variables constant. After controlling for neighborhood, mobility, and sociodemographic variables, several statistically significant effects are attenuated (i.e., having a dual parent extended family, no socialization messages, and religious importance). The effects that remain in the full model are the negative effect of being in an extended only family that has feelings of closeness to black West Indians ($\beta = -0.39$) as well as the positive effect of being Catholic or a non-Christian, relative to being a black Protestant ($\beta = 0.48$ and 0.34 , resp.). Interestingly, being a mainline Protestant emerges as a positive influence on feelings of closeness toward black

TABLE 4: OLS estimates of closeness to black West Indians.

Variable	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Neighborhood racial composition					
Past neighborhood composition	-0.05*	-0.05*	-0.04*	-0.04*	-0.05
Current neighborhood composition	-0.01	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02
Family socialization					
Family structure (dual parent)					
Single parent		-0.16			-0.01
Dual parent, extended		-0.16***			-0.05
Single parent, extended		-0.10			-0.04
Extended family only		-0.27*			-0.39*
Socialization messages (race-absent)					
White-focused			-0.08		-0.08
Black-focused			0.03		-0.02
No messages			-0.22*		-0.16
Religious socialization					
Importance of religion				0.11***	0.02
Religious affiliation (black Protestant)					
Mainland Protestant				0.08	0.08
Evangelical Protestant				0.04	0.29*
Catholic				0.19*	0.48*
Others or no religion				0.37***	0.34*
Individual control measures					
Neighborhood satisfaction					-0.03
Length of residence					0.05
Closeness to neighbors					0.06
Involved in neighborhood					0.14
Relatives in current neighborhood					0.00
Health status					0.02
Number of moves in lifetime					0.03
Male					0.15*
Education					0.00
Employed					0.04
Age					0.00
Constant	1.55***	1.69***	1.58***	1.26***	1.24***
F statistic	3.11*	2.78**	1.37	4.13***	1.55*
Adjusted R-squared	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.05

Source. Wave 4 of National Survey of Black Americans. Contrast categories in parentheses.

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

West Indians, relative to being black Protestant ($\beta = 0.29$). Lastly, in this model, gender is the only significant control variable that predicts feelings of closeness toward black West Indians, with being male associated with increased feelings of closeness toward black West Indians ($\beta = 0.15$).

5. Discussion

This study examined the effect of neighborhood composition, family structure, and family socialization on how close blacks feel towards members of the pan-African diaspora. The established link between minority members in a neighborhood and racial identification created the impetus for this research. Because of the nature of minority status within American

society, it was important to look at various blacks in American society in order to tease out how blacks felt about other black Americans, black Africans, and black West Indians. It was also important to see whether family structure and socialization mediated the effect of the presence of minority members in a neighborhood and racial identification as proxied by perceived closeness to a racioethnic group.

The results suggested that black Americans differed in how they rate their closeness to other black ethnic/cultural groups. Indeed, the group that they felt the closest to was other black Americans, and this closeness accounts for age and social class. In contrast, black Americans felt the least close to black West Indians. Ethnic differences in intraracial closeness have been shown in other works [57]. However,

there is not a lot of research on this population in the literature, perhaps because of the assumption that the black community is a monolithic group with strong sense of identity. Results from the current study challenge this assumption with evidence supporting that, for this population, they feel closest toward individuals who also share their racial identification (regardless of any other characteristics that could ordinarily be divisive such as social class) compared to individuals who do not share it.

The lack of significant findings regarding black Americans' feelings of closeness toward black Africans serves as a research note and a direction for new research to investigate. Individual, family, and neighborhood characteristics did not explain the low ratings of closeness that this population felt for black Africans. Some research indicates that immigrants tend to maintain their ethnic identity and remain separate from the black American community, although this phenomenon stems from research on individuals from West African and the Caribbean [58]. However, to date, no research has explored black American's feelings about black Africans using a national sample. Based on the analyses presented in this study, it is axiomatic that new tools, sophisticated methods, and generally more research would be necessary to get a clearer sense of the factors that produce low feelings of closeness that black Americans feel towards black Africans.

The neighborhood experiences were found to shape black's feelings of closeness toward other black ethnic groups. Past neighborhoods with black representation were found to be positive forces in maintaining feelings of closeness toward other black Americans. This finding provides some evidence of a benefit for black Americans to being reared in racially consonant neighborhoods. However, the opposite was found in the case of West Indians. That is, racially consonant neighborhoods in which black Americans grew up were associated with a decline in the feeling of closeness toward black West Indians. According to some research, black immigrants are more likely to express a common racial identity if they did not live in neighborhoods with many other blacks and more likely to express a differing identity if they lived with more blacks [59]. This "othering" is not always accomplished by distancing. Particularly for new immigrant communities like Caribbean communities, black Americans have often viewed immigrant gains unfavorably [60, 61]. These gains are seen as taking advantage of civil rights policies that black immigrants did not struggle to gain [62]. Thus, the exclusionary treatment of black West Indians to native-born black Americans could also result in an "othering." Future research should specifically see how the development of space itself to be majority-minority could create positive or negative sentiment across all racial/ethnic and nativity groups.

One of the more interesting statistical findings is the divergent but attenuated effect of past neighborhood racial composition on closeness. Having more black representation in the neighborhood where one was reared was associated with a greater feeling of closeness toward black Americans but a lesser feeling of closeness toward black West Indians. It may be true that there is social distancing between black Americans and black West Indians that stems from what both groups learn about the other group in their respective

cultures [63]. Negative stereotyping from both groups can help explain the divergent feelings of closeness that black Americans feel toward black West Indians, compared to how they feel to other black Americans. However, given that these effects were attenuated in the full model (in both cases, with the addition of gender), these results should be interpreted with caution. The explained variance varies by model and within dependent measure, which also affects the extent to which the results can be extrapolated. The study may not have not been powered for stratified analyses. If that is true, then future research should see if the effects are seen in a larger sample.

Religiosity had a positive effect on how close black Americans felt toward all other black groups (i.e., black Africans and black West Indians). This finding suggests that, as an institution, religion confers psychosocial benefits that can increase feelings of closeness to black diasporic groups (black Africans and black West Indians). Religion integrates people into a group of individuals who may be a part of these black groups. If individuals are having positive interactions with these groups in their religious establishment, it could increase positive feelings. Also, generally, religious messages tend to be altruistic and supportive in nature, which could potentially increase one's disposition to feel close toward all individuals. The religiosity effects were more statistically significant than religious affiliation, suggesting that the importance of religion itself, regardless of one's denomination, can confer feelings of closeness for black Americans. Future research should attempt to explore whether this effect is seen in a more diverse black population.

This study was not without its limitations. First, the sample was entirely black American, so it would have enhanced the findings if we were able to capture different black racioethnic groups. Second, this study drew from the final wave of the NSBA which was taken in 1992. Future research should use more current data to test whether these effects are contemporaneous or cohort effects. Third, the sample is somewhat homogenous. The majority of the sample heavily predominated in one category of the variables in this study. Blacks in the sample were in majority dual parent extended families when growing up, received race-absent socialization messages, were black Protestant, and were middle-aged females. Additionally, there are no objective measures of neighborhood racial composition. Given that this information was self-reported, some of the information may be slightly inaccurate and subject to recall bias. As such, the generalizability of these findings for blacks in the United States is partially compromised.

Even though this study embodied limitations, there are many strengths as well. First, the study assesses black Americans' closeness towards members of the pan-African diaspora. This feat has not been done in the literature and thus is a great strength of this paper. Second, this study uses retrospective measures of socialization from childhood to assess current feelings of closeness. By using childhood measures, direct and indirect links can be made about how childhood influences permeate throughout adulthood. Third, this study has provided an analytical framework to identify

how both family structure and family socialization affect identity. Thus, future research can employ this framework to assess inter- and intraracial consciousness.

Disclosure

A version of this paper was presented at the 2008 annual meeting of the American Sociological Association in the Regular Session on Blacks and Black Americans in Boston, MA.

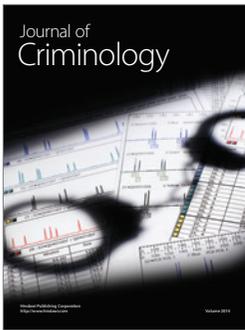
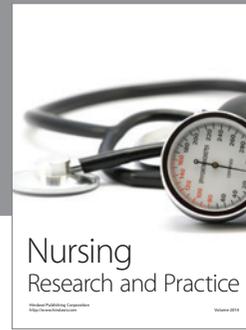
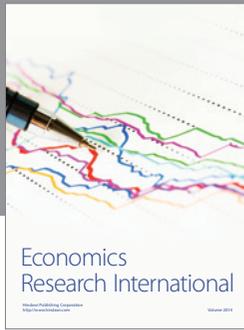
Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of this paper.

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