

James S. Jackson and the Program for Research on Black Americans: Contributions to Psychology and the Social Sciences

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James S. Jackson (1944–2020) is remembered as a groundbreaking social psychologist whose career contributions in scholarship, research, and service were fundamental to the field of psychology. This article briefly outlines his career-long work and contributions. A strong believer in interdisciplinary work, his research spanned other related social science disciplines (e.g., sociology, political science), as well as health and social welfare professions (public health, social work, medicine). As the founding director of the Program for Research on Black Americans at the Institute for Social Research, James Jackson initiated and led a long-standing program with a dual focus on research and training and mentoring doctoral students, postdoctoral scholars, and early career scientists. Jackson's efforts in the development of several nationally representative surveys of the Black population in the United States (e.g., National Survey of Black Americans, National Survey of American Life) revolutionized research focusing on the lives of Black Americans. James Jackson's international influence and reputation included numerous prestigious positions within national science organizations and honors and awards for his scientific contributions. Among James S. Jackson's most enduring legacies is the vast network of current scientists, researchers, and academics who were trained under his direction and leadership.

Public Significance Statement

James S. Jackson made many contributions to the discipline of psychology as founder and director of the Program for Research on Black Americans. He developed a body of empirical knowledge on the lives of Black Americans that furthered our understanding of stress and coping processes and the impacts of racism and discrimination on the health and well-being of Black Americans. He mentored many early career scholars that continue this work.

Keywords: Black psychology, African American survey research, mentoring, mental health research

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James S. Jackson (1944–2020) made many unique and groundbreaking contributions to the field of psychology, in addition to other social science disciplines and professional fields. He is ranked in the top 2% of cited scientists across all disciplines/areas in the world (Baas et al., 2021). Although his primary training was in social psychology, he made major contributions in understanding Black American life in areas as diverse as gerontology, families and generational analyses, psychiatric epidemiology, health behaviors, race and ethnicity, political behavior, immigration, and survey methodology. One of James Jackson's major legacies is his role as founder of the Program for Research on Black Americans (PRBA) and Principal Investigator of major national surveys of Black Americans. These surveys, and the unparalleled data resources they generated, significantly broadened our understanding of Black American life. Equally important is the fact that these data sets are publicly available. As such, numerous students and scholars who are not associated with PRBA have the opportunity to publish using these data. These surveys provided dissertation data for many doctoral students and publications for both PRBA and non-PRBA affiliated scholars. Combined, there are over 1,000 published articles and over 100 dissertations based on the National Survey of Black Americans (NSBA), the National Survey of American Life (NSAL), and the National Survey of American Life–Adolescent survey (NSAL-A).

This article is organized around James S. Jackson's major accomplishments spanning the areas of scientific innovation, professional leadership, and mentoring. It begins with a brief section noting the honors received by Dr. Jackson. This is followed by a discussion of the major surveys he developed, with subsections describing the research findings from these data collections. Next, the article focuses on the creation and impact of the Everyday and Major Discrimination Scales and

the Environmental Affordance Model. The article concludes with a discussion of the breadth and impact of James Jackson's activities as a mentor to students, postdoctoral scholars, and early career faculty.

James Jackson Honors

Throughout the course of his career, James Jackson made impactful contributions as a national and international leader in numerous organizations. Jackson was a visionary leader and trailblazer from his early years growing up in Inkster, Michigan where he helped to desegregate Dearborn Heights Robichaud High School. In 1971, Jackson was hired as the first Black tenure-track professor in social psychology at the University of Michigan. Arguably, his most significant impact as a national leader came early in his career when as a graduate student, he became the president of the Black Student Psychological Association (BSPA). Perhaps as a sign of his career-long focus on disrupting racism and discrimination, he confronted the leadership of the American Psychological Association (APA) by interrupting the major plenary session at the 1968 annual APA convention and calling for an end to structural racism in the organization (Jackson & Kraut, 2014). Building on his BSPA leadership, Jackson also served as the president of the Association of Black Psychologists from 1972 to 1973 where he helped to advance the importance of an empirical foundation for the emerging field of Black psychology.

Jackson's trailblazing work had a tremendous impact in psychology and numerous other social science disciplines. His influence has been formally recognized by several scientific, professional, and academic bodies through the establishment of awards commemorating his work. This includes the National Institute of Mental Health's James Jackson Memorial Award, the Association for Psychological Science's James S. Jackson Lifetime Achievement Award for Transformative Scholarship, the Alzheimer's Association's James Jackson Memorial Lecture, the University of Michigan's James S. Jackson Distinguished Career Award for Diversity, and the James Jackson Mentoring Award from the Gerontological Society of America. Table 1 provides a listing of the many honors, academic appointments, and data collections launched by Dr. Jackson.

NSBA and NSAL

NSBA

James Jackson discussed the idea of the NSBA for several years with colleagues Anderson J. Franklin and Patricia and Gerald Gurin. Two of his major goals were to conduct a first-of-its-kind national probability-based survey of Black Americans and to establish a research program that was dedicated to the inclusion and mentoring of graduate students and postdoctoral scholars. The NSBA, as the first nationally

Table 1*James S. Jackson's Career Accomplishments*

Years	Selected positions, honors, and major surveys
Selected positions	
1969	President, Black Student Psychological Association
1971–1986	Assistant to associate professor of psychology, University of Michigan
1972–1973	President, Association of Black Psychologists
1976–2020	Founding director, Program for Research on Black Americans, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan
1982–2011	Faculty associate, Center for Afro-American and African Studies, University of Michigan
1986–1995	Professor of psychology, University of Michigan
1986–1988	Postdoctoral research fellow, Groupe D'Etudes et de Recherches Sur La Science, Ecole Des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, France
1988–2005	Faculty associate, Institute of Gerontology, University of Michigan
1987–1992	Associate dean, Rackham School of Graduate Studies, University of Michigan
1990–2000	Director, African American Mental Health Research Center, University of Michigan
1990–2007	Professor, Health Behavior and Health Education, School of Public Health, University of Michigan
1992–2003	Chercheur invite, Groupe D'Etudes et de Recherches Sur La Science, Ecole Des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, France
1995–2020	Daniel Katz Distinguished University Professor of Psychology, University of Michigan
1996–2005	Director, Research Center for Group Dynamics, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan
1998–2005	Director, Center for Afro-American and African Studies, University of Michigan
2005–2015	Director, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan
2016–2017	Russell Sage Foundation's visiting senior fellow, New York, New York
Selected awards and honors	
1983	Distinguished Early Career Contributions to Psychology in the Public Interest Award, American Psychological Association
1989	Fellow, American Psychological Association
1989	Fellow, Association for Psychological Science
1991	Fellow, Gerontological Society of America
1994	Robert W. Kleemeier Award for Outstanding Contributions to Research in Aging, Gerontological Society of America
2000	Peace and Social Justice Award, Society for the Study of Peace, Conflict, and Violence, American Psychological Association
2000	Harold R. Johnson Diversity Service Award, University of Michigan
2001	Distinguished Career Contribution to Research Award, Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues, American Psychological Association
2002–2005	Member, Medical and Scientific Advisory Council, Alzheimer's Association
2002	Member, Institute of Medicine, National Academies of Science
2003	Mentoring Award, Minority Task Force, Gerontological Society of America (Renamed the James Jackson Outstanding Mentorship Award in 2021 and expanded to a society wide award).
2003	21st Century Award for Achievement, International Biographical Centre, Cambridge, England
2004	Distinguished Mentorship in Gerontology Award, Behavioral and Social Science Section, Gerontological Society of America
2005	Fellow, American Association for the Advancement of Science
2006	Distinguished Service Award, Social–Personality Psychology, Society for Personality and Social Psychology
2007	James McKeen Cattell Fellow Award for Distinguished Career Contributions to Applied Psychology, Association for Psychological Science
2007	Fellow, International Demographic Association, St. Gallens, Switzerland
2008	Presidential Citation, American Psychological Association, for Dedicated Research, Scholarship, Service, and Leadership to the Discipline of Psychology
2008	Health Disparities Innovation Award, National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities, National Institutes of Health
2008–2017	Member, Aging Society Network, MacArthur Foundation
2009	Fellow, Society of Experimental Social Psychology
2009–2013	Member, NIH Director's Advisory Committee
2010	Fellow, American Academy of Arts and Sciences
2010	Fellow, New York Academy of Medicine
2010	Medal for Distinguished Contributions in Biomedical Sciences, New York Academy of Medicine
2011	Pearmain Prize for Excellence in Research on Aging, Edward R. Roybal Institute on Aging, University of Southern California
2010–2014	Senior Health Policy Investigator, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
2012	W.E.B. Du Bois Fellow, the American Academy of Political and Social Science
2012	Solomon Carter Fuller Award, the American Psychiatric Association
2014–2020	Member, National Science Board, National Science Foundation
2015	Warren E. Miller Award for Meritorious Service in the Social Sciences, Inter-University Consortium in Social and Political Science Research, Institute for Social Research
2015	Life-Time Distinguished Service to the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues Award
2016	APA Award for Distinguished Service to Psychological Science
2016–2020	Member, board of trustees, Dartmouth College
2017	Distinguished Diversity Scholar Career Award (Renamed James S. Jackson Distinguished Career Award for Diversity Scholarship), University of Michigan
2017	Emily Mumford Award, Department of Psychiatry, Columbia University
2017–2020	Member, National Advisory Council, National Institute of Minority Health Disparities
2018	Rema Lapouse Award, Mental Health, Epidemiology, and Applied Public Health Statistics Sections, American Public Health Association
2019	Warren J. Mitofsky Innovators Award from the American Association for Public Opinion Research

(table continues)

Table 1 (continued)

Years	Selected positions, honors, and major surveys
	Major data collections and studies
1979–1980	The National Survey of Black Americans
1981	The National Three Generation Family Study
1987–1992	The National Panel Survey of Black Americans II
1984	The National Survey of Black Youth
1984–1988	The National Black Election Study Panel
1986	Americans Changing Lives
1988–1989	International Perspectives on Racism
1992–1994	Detroit Psychiatric Institute Diagnostic Study
1993–94	The National Black Politics Survey
1995	Detroit Psychiatric Epidemiology and Detroit Area Survey
1997	International Perspectives on Racism
2001–2003	The National Survey of American Life: Coping with Stress in the 21st Century
2001–2003	The National Survey of American Life–Reinterview
2001–2003	The National Survey of American Life–Adolescent Supplement
2004–2004	National Survey of American Life: Multi-Generational and Caribbean Cross-Section Studies, Guyana, Jamaica
2004 & 2008	National Politics Study (NPS)
2020	Detroit Area Study of COVID-19
2021	NPS–Post Election

Note. NIH = National Institutes of Health.

representative survey of Black Americans, was a prime opportunity to explore diverse facets of life for this population. The NSBA was collected in 1979–1980 and resulted in 2,107 completed interviews (for a more detailed discussion of the NSAL sample, see Jackson, 1991).

The NSBA is notable for several major survey methodological contributions. First, James Jackson developed a new geographic screening technique to cost-effectively locate Black households in low-density Black census tracts. Second, the NSBA sample was based on the distribution of the Black population. This is in contrast to national studies that oversample the Black population, which creates a sample of individuals that reflect the distribution of the total U.S. population, but does not reflect the Black population (Jackson, 2014a). Consequently, large cities that have small Black populations like Pittsburgh, Seattle, and Boston are automatically included (i.e., certainty area) in most national samples of the U.S. population, but they are not in the NSBA. To date, only the studies conducted by the PRBA are based on the distribution of the U.S. Black population.

At the time, the most controversial aspect of the NSBA was its exclusive focus on Black Americans. This was antithetical to the prevailing notions that one can only legitimately study Black Americans using a White comparison group (Azibo, 1988). As James Jackson noted, it was “heretical” that you could study Black Americans without comparing them to the larger White population (Jackson, 2014a, 2014b). Numerous articles based on the NSBA were rejected solely due to this issue. Unfortunately, 40 years later, this remains a major issue in academia in which the insistence on a White comparison group reifies the notion of Whiteness as the normative standard.

One of the many advantages of the NSBA was that due to its large sample size, for the first-time analyses could be conducted on subgroups of the Black population such as

older adults, men and women, mothers, and unmarried adults. This allowed for an intersectional approach to be taken with regard to data analysis. The NSBA also included issues that were not explored in other surveys such as racial identity, racial socialization, and fictive kin (e.g., Jackson et al., 1996). The NSBA provided the opportunity to fully explore within-group diversity for many aspects of Black American life and specifically refuted stereotypical portrayals of the Black population (Bowman, 1983). On many occasions, James Jackson would note that the major contribution of the NSBA is the understanding that “we (Black people) are not all alike.” Overall, roughly 400 articles, four edited books, and over 50 dissertations are based on NSBA data.

NSAL

By the mid-1990s, it was clear that another national survey of the Black population was needed. James Jackson, Cleopatra Caldwell, Steve Heeringa, Harold Neighbors, Robert Joseph Taylor, and David Williams started conceptualizing and writing the NSAL proposal. The NSAL: Coping With Stress in the 21st Century (NSAL) data collection was conducted from February 2001 to June 2003 (for a more detailed discussion of the NSAL sample, see Jackson et al., 2004). The NSAL is part of the Collaborative Psychiatric Epidemiology Surveys (CPES) which consists of three nationally representative surveys: the NSAL, the National Comorbidity Survey Replication, and the National Latino and Asian American Study. All three CPES studies shared identical mental health questions with regard to various psychiatric disorders, functional impairments, and help-seeking. The CPES studies were also designed to allow integration of design-based analysis weights to combine individual data sets as though they were a single, nationally representative



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study. Consequently, some of the analyses for psychiatric disorders using the NSAL compare African Americans, Black Caribbeans, non-Latino Whites, Asians, and Latinos (e.g., [Valentine et al., 2019](#)), whereas others are within-group analyses of African Americans ([Erving & Cobb, 2021](#)) or Black Caribbeans ([Lincoln et al., 2021](#)).

The NSAL incorporated several innovations as compared to the NSBA. First, the NSAL is based on a larger sample than the NSBA. Second, the NSAL includes a sample of Caribbean Blacks to reflect the changing distribution of the Black American population. Third, the major issues in the mental health field with regard to Black Americans still centered around racial comparisons. The NSAL includes non-Latino White respondents so as to allow both comparative and within-group analyses. Fourth, the NSAL has an expanded mental health section that assessed psychiatric disorders and includes the recently developed everyday discrimination scale. As of September 21, 2022, there were 566 articles on adults, 68 articles on adolescents, and 82 dissertations based on NSAL data.

Caribbean Blacks

The NSAL included Caribbean Blacks who were defined as Black individuals who (a) were of West Indian or Caribbean descent, (b) were from a country included on a list of Caribbean area countries presented by the interviewer, or (c) indicated that their parents or grandparents were born in a Caribbean-area country (see [Jackson et al., 2004](#)). Despite a robust research literature on Caribbean Blacks, the majority of studies were ethnographic, and none were based on a national probability sample. Research using the NSAL for the first-time illuminated important aspects of Black Caribbean life such as family social support networks, religious participation,

experiences of discrimination, and levels of psychological well-being and psychiatric disorders. Analyses examining ethnic diversity within the Black American category find that, in several respects, Caribbean Blacks and African Americans were similar to one another (i.e., religious participation, informal support networks, and levels of self-reported discrimination; e.g., [Williams et al., 2012](#)); however, distinct from prior studies of gender differences, Black Caribbean men had significantly higher levels of depression and suicidal behaviors than Black Caribbean women (see review by [Taylor & Chatters, 2020](#)).

Mental Health in the NSBA and NSAL

The earlier NSBA was interested in understanding the social and psychological forces related to help-seeking in response to culturally grounded idioms of distress. The edited volume *Mental Health in Black America* ([Neighbors & Jackson, 1996](#)) provides an example of the breath of research on mental health based on the NSBA. The NSBA occurred before the publication of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (3rd ed.; *DSM-III*), while the NSAL was driven by the *DSM-IV*'s epidemiologic questionnaire, the Composite International Diagnostic Interview. Both the NSBA and the NSAL were based on the conceptual model that posited that exposure to race-based stress was a chief determinant of mental health in Black Americans.

Research using the NSAL has produced several of the first major studies of African Americans' mental health issues including suicidal behaviors ([Joe et al., 2006](#)), major depressive disorder (MDD; [Williams et al., 2007](#)), anxiety disorders ([Himle et al., 2009](#)), help-seeking behaviors ([Neighbors et al., 2007](#)), and the use of complementary and alternative medicine for mental disorders ([Woodward et al., 2009](#)). These studies uncovered several important nuanced relationships. For instance, [Williams et al. \(2007\)](#) found that compared to non-Latinx Whites, African Americans and Black Caribbeans had lower rates of lifetime MDD, but their MDD was more severe and disabling. Additionally, due to the relatively large sample size of the NSAL, some studies focus on subpopulations of Black Americans. For example, Jones, Mays, and colleagues have published studies of psychiatric and substance use disorders among Black women ([Jones et al., 2020](#)) and Black men ([Mays et al., 2018](#)).

One of the assets of the NSBA and NSAL surveys is that they embody a strength-based perspective. Distinct from other mental health studies, the NSBA and NSAL include measures of many of the strengths and protective factors for African Americans including family support networks, religious participation, and racial identity. Published articles using these data sets include investigations of help-seeking for psychiatric problems using both professionals and family members ([Woodward et al., 2008](#)), the use of clergy for mental health and other problems ([Chatters et al., 2017](#)), religion as a protective factor for depression ([Taylor](#)



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et al., 2012), church member social support as a protective factor for suicidal behaviors (Chatters et al., 2011), and family and friendship support in relation to posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD; Nguyen, Chatters, & Taylor, 2016).

African American Families and Social Support in the NSBA and NSAL

Research on African American families has been a major emphasis of work published using PRBA data. There have been several avenues of research on African American families. The vast majority of research in this area investigates extended family members as sources of social support, including research on emotional support and instrumental (e.g., transportation, help during an illness) aid (Cross, Nguyen, et al., 2018; Taylor et al., 2021). A second area of research examines the impact of emotional support from family, as well as negative interactions with family members (e.g., criticisms) on various mental health outcomes. This research finds that although negative interactions occur much less frequently than emotional support, they are highly correlated with depression, suicidal ideation, and other mental health problems (Nguyen, Chatters, Taylor, Levine, et al., 2016; Nguyen et al., 2017; see review by Taylor & Chatters, 2020). A third area of research analyzes the combined influence of family and church support networks on mental health (Chatters et al., 2018). This research shows that both family and church member social support networks are protective of mental health. A fourth area of research investigates both the correlates of social isolation (Taylor et al., 2016), as well as the association of social isolation with depression and depressive symptoms (Taylor et al., 2020). This research indicates that infrequent contact (objective social isolation) and diminished emotional closeness

(subjective social isolation) from family and friends are associated with higher levels of depressive symptoms and serious psychological distress for both African Americans and Caribbean Blacks (Taylor et al., 2020). A fifth area of work examines fictive kinship networks of African Americans and Caribbean Blacks. Research on this topic finds that nine out of 10 respondents have a fictive kin relationship, six out of 10 routinely receive help from their fictive kin, and the average number of fictive kin is 7.5 (Taylor et al., 2022). Another area of research using the NSAL concerns the impact of mass incarceration on families. This work finds that incarceration is associated with negative impacts on the physical and mental health of parents, children, and other support network members of those who are imprisoned (Mouzon et al., 2016). For instance, Lee et al. (2014) found that among African American women, family member incarceration was associated with higher odds of obesity, heart attack, or stroke.

Religious Participation in the NSBA and NSAL

Prior to the NSBA, there was very little survey-based research on African American religious participation. Many of the basic questions about religious behaviors such as frequency of reading religious materials, prayer, service attendance, and watching/listening to religious programs were either unknown or underinvestigated. Both the NSBA and the NSAL provide extensive coverage of religion/spirituality content in contrast to the few items typically found in most national surveys. Collectively, there are over 60 published articles and one book (Taylor et al., 2004) on religious involvement based on PRBA data. The issues addressed include the correlates of religious participation, as well as associations between religious involvement and various mental health outcomes. This work generally finds that (a) African Americans and Caribbean Blacks have higher levels of religious participation and spirituality than non-Latino Whites (Chatters et al., 2009), (b) African Americans and Caribbean Blacks do not significantly differ in their levels of religiosity and spirituality (Chatters et al., 2009), and (c) for both African Americans (Taylor et al., 2014) and Caribbean Blacks (Taylor et al., 2010), women and older adults have higher levels of religious participation than their male and younger counterparts. Research using the NSAL and NSBA has also contributed to our understanding of connections between religion and mental health with studies on religion and depression (Taylor et al., 2012), religion and suicide (see review by Nguyen, 2020), and religious coping (Chatters et al., 2008).

Church-Based Social Support in the NSBA and NSAL

Focus group conversations were a vital part of the item development process for the NSBA. James Jackson and



Phillip J. Bowman

Phillip Bowman noted that focus group participants discussed relationships with church members using terms typically associated with family. Consequently, they developed questions about social support from church members in the NSBA that were identical to questions about family social support networks. Based upon these questions, the field of church-based social support was established. To date, there are roughly 20 articles on church support networks using NSAL data. PRBA research in this area is both qualitative and quantitative (Taylor et al., 2004) and includes investigations of the correlates of church support (Taylor et al., 2017), the interface between family and church support (Nguyen, Chatters, & Taylor, 2016), church support and suicide (Chatters et al., 2011), and church support and depression (see review by Nguyen, 2020).

Racial Identity in the NSBA and NSAL

Several notable articles on group and racial identity are based on PRBA data. The first major articles on racial socialization were published using NSBA data (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Thornton et al., 1990). Thornton also published several articles on Black Americans' subjective closeness to other population groups. In addition, former PRBA graduate student Robert Sellers created the Racial Centrality Scale (Sellers et al., 1998) which has been heavily utilized.

Colorism in the NSBA and NSAL

Research on colorism (skin tone stratification) using the NSBA and the NSAL has had a major impact in sociology. This research finds that skin tone is associated with measures of social and health status, that is, darker skinned Black Americans report lower levels of educational attainment, occupation, and income than their lighter skinned counterparts

(Keith & Herring, 1991; Monk, 2014). Darker skinned African American men were also more likely to be arrested and to have been incarcerated (Monk, 2019). Darker skinned African Americans also had worse physical health outcomes than lighter skinned African Americans (Monk, 2021). In addition, African Americans with darker skin suffered higher levels of discrimination (Keith et al., 2017). Despite the fact that there are only a few articles examining skin color differences, this work is heavily cited and has had a major impact in sociology.

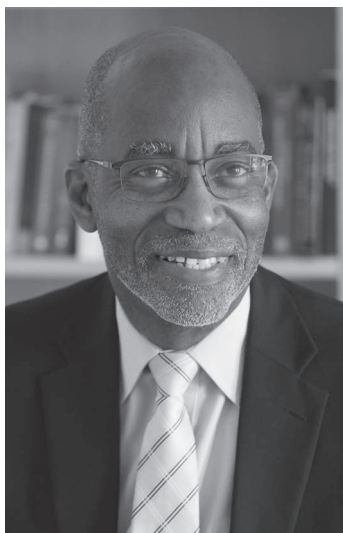
Research on African American Aging in the NSBA and NSAL

Research using the NSBA and the NSAL includes some of the first major articles on African American aging. This research encompasses a variety of areas including help-seeking, religion, family support, psychiatric disorders, marriage, and discrimination. For example, PRBA data produced the first articles on the correlates of marriage and romantic involvement among African Americans and specifically older adults. It is important to note that prior to the NSBA and NSAL, the majority of research on dating and romantic involvement had been among adolescents and college students. Analyses using the NSBA and the NSAL found that older women who are not married and not in a romantic relationship often prefer not to be in a romantic relationship (e.g., Mouzon et al., 2020). In particular, Mouzon et al. (2020) found that half of African American women who are 55 and older have no desire to be married or in a romantic relationship.

Other work (Mouzon et al., 2017) found that older African Americans' reports of racial and nonracial everyday discrimination were consistently associated with worse mental health (measured by *DSM-IV* psychiatric disorders and depressive symptoms). In a series of studies, Ann Nguyen and colleagues found that church support mitigated the association between discrimination and poor mental health outcomes. In particular, they found that frequency of contact with and subjective closeness to church members mitigated the association between discrimination and any 12-month *DSM-IV* disorders and generalized anxiety disorder (see Nguyen et al., 2022).

Black Adolescents NSAL-A

James S. Jackson also made remarkable contributions to the knowledge base on Black adolescents. He was the Principal Investigator of the groundbreaking NSAL-A. The NSAL-A includes nationally representative samples of African American and Caribbean Black youth, with a total of 1,810 Black youth ages 13–17 years (Jackson et al., 2004). The NSAL-A has produced articles across a number of topics, including psychiatric disorders, suicide ideation, intermittent explosive disorder, psychological well-being, eating disorders, racial identity development, racial



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discrimination influences, racial socialization, religiosity, sexual initiation, educational experiences, pubertal development, family social support, social integration, and obesity.

A hallmark of this work is the discussion of similarities and differences in the cultural context and lived experiences of African American and Caribbean Black youth. Early work indicated that although the prevalence rates for most psychiatric disorders were similar for African American and Caribbean Black adolescents, important ethnic differences were evident in demographic risk factors for specific disorders (Joe et al., 2009). Using *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fourth edition, text revision (DSM-IV-TR)* criteria, anorexia was identified as the rarest eating disorder among both Black adults and adolescents. Binge eating was the most prevalent eating disorder for both adults and adolescents. Although gender differences in eating disorders were found for adults, no gender differences were found among adolescents (Taylor et al., 2007).

The most prominent work with the NSAL-A data involved a series of studies of discrimination as a risk factor for multiple indicators of psychological distress among African American and Caribbean Black youth. Findings showed that the majority of Black adolescents reported at least one discriminatory episode within the previous year. Males reported more discrimination than females, older adolescents reported more discrimination than younger adolescents, and reports of discrimination were linked to more depressive symptoms, and lower self-esteem and life satisfaction for all adolescents (Seaton et al., 2008). Racial discrimination was predominant in the lives of Black youth; however, discrimination based on age, physical appearance, and gender was also deleterious to psychological well-being of adolescents (Seaton et al., 2010a).

African American and Caribbean Black youth share a number of characteristics related to discrimination, racial

identity, and well-being, regardless of gender. This is perhaps due to the strong ethnic homogenizing forces that are prevalent in American society. However, unique findings from the NSAL-A demonstrated the complexity of race and gender as embedded social identities (Caldwell et al., 2006; Seaton et al., 2010b). More recent research has examined the role of parental nativity, discrimination, and depressive symptoms. Among African American adolescents and Black Caribbean adolescents with immigrant parents, discrimination was associated with lifetime anxiety disorder. Among Black Caribbean youth with U.S.-born parents, there was no significant association between discrimination and lifetime anxiety disorder (Smith, 2020). Research with this national data also showed that among African American males, high household income was associated with higher risk of lifetime, 12-month, and 30-day MDD. In contrast, Black Caribbean youth from high-income households had lower odds of 30-day MDD (Assari & Caldwell, 2018). Further, Black Caribbean adolescents were more likely than African American adolescents to assess financial and practical assistance as the most helpful type of support they received from family members (Cross, Taylor, & Chatters, 2018). Finally, African American and Black Caribbean youth were similar with respect to who (e.g., parents, relatives, friends, other adults) conveyed racial socialization messages, and this was consistent across sex, age, ethnicity, or region of the country (Brown et al., 2020).

National Black Election Studies (1984–Present)

After the success of the NSBA, James Jackson launched a study exclusively focused on Black politics in 1984. The National Black Election Studies (NBESs) were modeled after the American National Election Studies, but like the NSBA, the NBESs focused on Black Americans and examined within-group variability. Initial work starting in 1984 led to numerous studies including one that is based on a multi-ethnic sample that has been followed since 2004. The results from the first NBES were published in the book, *Hope and Independence: Blacks' Response to Electoral and Party Politics* (1990) written by Gurin, Hatchett, and Jackson. The most recent political science book, *Race and the Power of Sermons on American Politics*, was published in 2021 by Khari Brown, Ronald Brown, and James Jackson.

Development of the Everyday and Major Discrimination Scales: 1995 Detroit Area Study

Both the Everyday Discrimination Scale and the Major Experiences of Discrimination Scale were fielded for the first time in the 1995 Detroit Area Study (Williams et al., 1997). In 1992, David Williams (then an associate professor at the University of Michigan) shared with James Jackson his interest in developing measures of self-reported discrimination. Williams indicates that James Jackson became his “cheerleader” (Williams & Griffith, 2019) and not only



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provided support for his idea, but joined him in coteaching the Detroit Area Study, a three-course practicum in survey research in 1995. Moreover, Jackson raised additional funding to more than double the sample size of the survey and oversample African Americans.

Williams notes that Jackson made pivotal contributions to their discussions on how to best capture discrimination. Questions about race-related phenomena were known to be sensitive, and research on race-of-interviewer effects had found that when talking to White interviewers, Black respondents were reluctant to reveal their true racial beliefs on race sensitive questions. For example, one study found that Black respondents were much more likely to be deferential to White interviewers on questions probing their perceptions of racial discrimination as compared to attitudes on other race-related questions such as race-associated policies, Black politics, and the pace of civil rights (Krysan & Couper, 2003).

Another issue they faced was whether questions about racial discrimination were best measured with one-stage or two-stage questions. A one-stage query would directly ascertain whether respondents had been treated badly or unfairly because of their race. The two-stage approach would first assess if the respondent had been treated unfairly or badly and, if yes, a follow-up question would query what the main reason was. An earlier study found higher reports of both racial and gender discrimination among Black students and women, respectively, when asked as a one-stage question versus two-stage questions (Gomez & Trierweiler, 2001). Further, higher reports of discrimination were not necessarily more accurate. They could be driven by demand characteristics of the interview experience in which repeated questions phrased as “because of your race” could lead respondents to seek to please the interviewer, resulting in response bias. However, response bias could be minimized by the use of

neutral terminology. Jackson and Williams opted to develop questions that were as simple and objective as possible, by providing a clear, neutral description of the incident (e.g., “You were treated with less courtesy than others”). After respondents reported their experiences, they would be asked, “What do you think was the main reason for these experiences?” This approach allowed them to capture all types of perceived experiences of unfair treatment, discrimination, and bias that individuals had encountered in everyday settings, as well as assess respondents’ subjective sense of what was the source of their experiences. An added benefit of this approach is that it could minimize attributional ambiguity in cases where respondents are uncertain about the reason for a specific incident. Formats that build attribution into the question (e.g., “because of your race”) could underestimate discriminatory encounters where attribution was uncertain.

The Everyday Discrimination Scale has gone on to become one of the most widely used measures of discrimination. James Jackson was also successful in working with the APA to include both Everyday Discrimination and the Major Experiences of Discrimination measures in APA’s 2015 national survey on Stress in America that incorporated a focus on discrimination (American Psychological Association, 2016). This survey provided a national picture of the levels and types of discrimination in the United States. Further, this national survey provided a previously unavailable glimpse of the levels of discrimination experienced by the American Indian population. Looking across U.S. population groups, for most indicators of discrimination, Native Americans reported the highest levels of discrimination, followed by African Americans, Latinos, and Asians and Whites. Finally, in over 400 published articles using the Everyday Discrimination Scale, experiences of everyday discrimination have been linked to worse status on a broad range of physical and mental health indicators in the United States and elsewhere (see Williams et al., 2019).

Environmental Affordances Model

Over the past 2 decades, a growing body of research has increased our understanding of the neurobiological stress response systems (e.g., hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal axis) and their implications for both behaviors (e.g., eating, exercise, substance use) and health more generally (McEwen, 2013). This perspective is strongly evident in James Jackson’s Environmental Affordances Model of Health Disparities (EA Model; Jackson et al., 2010; Jackson & Knight, 2006; Mezuk et al., 2010, 2013, 2017), which proposes nuanced connections between social status, stress, and behaviors as a framework for explaining population patterning of mental and physical health in the United States as a function of race. The EA Model aims to motivate research on how stress and self-regulatory (i.e., stress-coping) behaviors contribute to the widely replicated observation that



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while African Americans have substantially poorer physical morbidity and mortality relative to non-Hispanic Whites (NHW), this group has similar, and in many studies lower, risk of common mental disorders, that is, major depression, anxiety disorders (except PTSD), and substance use disorders than NHW (Mezuk et al., 2013).

Briefly, the EA Model rests on four premises. First, exposure to repeated and chronic stressors is associated with risk for both mental and physical health problems. Second, when faced with stress, individuals engage in behaviors to self-regulate their psychological distress experience. These behaviors include not only traditional “approach-oriented” coping strategies (e.g., seeking advice, problem-solving) but also behaviors that are traditionally conceptualized as “avoidant” coping strategies that have implications for physical health, for example, tobacco, alcohol, drug use, eating high-fat/high-caloric foods, physical (in)activity. Third, the use of self-regulatory coping behaviors is shaped by contextual characteristics (e.g., gender, socioeconomic status [SES], race) and changes over time. Fourth, these self-regulatory behaviors may have differential effects on mental and physical health over the life course. That is, the same behaviors (e.g., tobacco/alcohol use, high-fat foods) that increase the risk of physical health problems (e.g., cancer, heart disease, diabetes) *long-term*, when used as coping strategies in high-stress/low-resource contexts, may protect mental health *short-term*. Several independent analyses in diverse population-based, mixed-race samples have provided support for various paths of the EA Model (Boardman & Alexander, 2011; Jackson et al., 2010; Mezuk et al., 2010, 2017), although others have not (Keyes et al., 2011).

In a 2012 keynote address at the Association for Psychological Science conference entitled “The Masquerade of Racial Group Differences,” Jackson articulated the empirical

observations that motivated the development of the EA Model and some of the first empirical research derived from it. He explicitly linked this framework to the field of Black psychology when he stated:

There’s something wrong with [these empirical findings]. Do Blacks and Whites have different biology? We think this is a clear instance when indeed the complex context of life masquerade as racial group differences ... “Race” is not a variable. Instead, “race” is a very complex construct that in adulthood captures a wide set of life experiences that are difficult to array along a single dimension. We argue that individuals become racialized through their lived experiences over the life course, within a particular culture during unique periods of historical time. (Jackson, 2012)

In sum, the EA Model provides an innovative framework for transdisciplinary research exploring the ways that contextual factors (like race), stress, and behaviors shape mental and physical health over the life course.

PRBA and Mentoring

One of the unique aspects of James Jackson’s vision for the PRBA was the incorporation of graduate students, postdoctoral scholars, and junior faculty at every level of the research process. For example, undergraduate and graduate students assisted in the development of the NSBA questionnaire, interviewer training, data analysis, writing articles, and proposal development. In addition, the training and mentoring of students has become intergenerational with James Jackson’s former students mentoring several new cohorts of students. The PRBA developed several formal mentoring programs including the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)-funded *Survey Research Training and Black Mental Health* (1978–1983), directed by Phillip J. Bowman. This training program had both summer and full-year postdoctoral scholars. This early postdoctoral training program provided the foundation for PRBA’s rich legacy of mentoring not only graduate students at Michigan but also postdoctoral scholars and junior faculty from across the nation.

Former graduate students and postdoctoral scholars who were mentored at the PRBA have gone on to become widely recognized experts in their fields. Several of his former students have, like him, achieved the status of being in the top 2% of cited scientists across all disciplines/areas in the world (Baas et al., 2021). This includes David R. Williams, Vickie Mays, Linda Chatters, Robert Joseph Taylor, Harold W. Neighbors, and Robert Sellers who are in the category of the top 2% in citations over their careers and Lisa Barnes and Karen Lincoln for the top 2% citations for the year 2020. Under James Jackson’s leadership, the PRBA provided a platform of mentoring and research support that allowed every student and postdoctoral scholar the opportunity to realize their potential in becoming a very successful scholar. Table 2 provides a list of select individuals who were mentored by

Table 2
Selected PRBA Alumni

Name	Rank/administrative position	Current university
Psychology		
Lisa Barnes ^a	Alla V. and Solomon Jesmer Professor of Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine	Rush Medical College
Ruby Beale ^a	Chair, Department of Business Administration	Hampton University
Phillip Bowman ^c	Professor, school of education; founding director, National Center for Institutional Diversity	University of Michigan
Kendrick Brown ^a	Provost and senior vice president for academic affairs	Morehouse University
Cleopatra Caldwell ^a	Chair, Department of Health Behavior & Health Education, School of Public Health	University of Michigan
Linda Chatters ^a	Paula Allen-Meares Collegiate Professor of Social Work and Professor Department of Health Behavior & Health Education, School of Public Health	University of Michigan
Angela Cole Dixon ^b	Associate provost and professor of psychology	Howard University
Jacqueline Mattis ^a	Dean of faculty and professor of psychology	Rutgers–Newark
Vickie Mays ^b	Professor of psychology and public health	UCLA
Wayne McCullough ^a	Director of the MPH program, College of Human Medicine	Michigan State
Harold W. Neighbors ^a	Professor of public health (emeritus)	University of Michigan
Eleanor Seaton ^b	Professor of social and family dynamics	Arizona State
Robert Sellers ^a	Vice provost for Equity, Inclusion and Academic Affairs	University of Michigan
Belinda Tucker ^c	Charles D Moody Collegiate Professor of Psychology Vice provost and professor emerita of psychiatry and biobehavioral sciences	UCLA
Sociology		
Tony Brown ^a	Distinguished professor of sociology	Rice
Khari Brown ^a	Professor of sociology	Wayne State
Prudence Carter ^b	Sarah and Joseph Jr. Dowling Professor of Sociology	Brown
Bridget Goosby ^b	Professor of sociology	Texas
Mosi Ifatunji ^b	Assistant professor of African American studies and sociology	Wisconsin
Krim Lacey ^b	Associate professor of African American studies and sociology	Michigan–Dearborn
Thomas LaViest ^a	Dean, School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine	Tulane
Mignon Moore ^b	Chair, Department of Sociology	Barnard
David Williams ^d	Florence Sprague Norman and Laura Smart Norman Professor of Public Health	Harvard
Social work		
Letha Chadiha ^a	Rose Gibson Collegiate Professor of Social Work (emeritus)	University of Michigan
Courtney Cogburn ^a	Associate professor	Columbia
Karen Lincoln ^a	Associate professor	USC
Waldo Johnson ^b	Vice provost and professor of social work	Chicago
Sherrill Sellers ^a	Associate dean for undergraduate education	Miami of Ohio
Robert Joseph Taylor ^a	Harold Johnson Endowed Professor of Social Work, Director PRBA	University of Michigan
Political science/economics		
Robert Brown ^a	Associate professor of political science	Spelman
Ronald Brown ^a	Former chair, Department of Political Science	Wayne State
Darrick Hamilton ^b	Henry Cohen Professor of Economics and Urban Policy	The New School
Todd Shaw ^a	Distinguished Associate Professor of Political Science and African American Studies	South Carolina
Medicine/public health/nursing/government/other		
Ishtar Govia ^a	Senior lecturer, Caribbean Institute for Health Research	U. West Indies
Carmen Green ^c	Dean, School of Medicine	CUNY
Julia Hastings ^b	Associate professor of public health	SUNY-Albany
Briana Mezuk ^b	Associate chair, Department of Epidemiology, Public Health	University of Michigan
Jacquelyn Taylor ^c	Helen F. Pettit Professor of Nursing	Columbia
Nicholas Jones ^a	Director of race and ethnic research and outreach	Census Bureau
Rashid Njai ^a	Health scientist in the Office of Noncommunicable Diseases, Injury and Environmental Health	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Anna Riley ^b	Scientific review officer	Center for Scientific Review, NIH
Susan Frazier-Kouassi ^c	Director, Texas Juvenile Crime Prevention Center	Prairie View A&M

Note. MPH = Master of Public Health; UCLA = University of California at Los Angeles; PRBA = Program for Research on Black Americans; USC = University of Southern California; CUNY = The City University of New York; SUNY = The State University of New York; NIH = National Institutes of Health. Earliest period working with Jackson and PRBA.

^a Doctoral student. ^b Postdoc fellow. ^c Junior faculty. ^d Faculty.

James Jackson and PRBA (because of space limitations the complete list of PRBA alumni could not be presented).

Mentoring in Gerontology

James Jackson was the Principal Investigator of the National Institute on Aging (NIA)-funded Michigan Center for Urban African American Aging Research (MCUAAAR). Under his leadership, this center was funded and refunded four times and continues to operate over a period of 24 years. MCUAAAR represents an important model for advancing research, mentoring, and community outreach in the area of aging. MCUAAAR hosts numerous programs for African American older adults in Detroit and Flint, Michigan, including programs on financial literacy, dental care, eye care/glaucoma, hearing loss, brain health, COVID-19, sleep, and grief and loss. The MCUAAAR also provides research funding and training for three junior professors per year. Over the tenure of MCUAAAR's existence, 66 junior professors have received pilot grants to support their research (see Taylor, 2022, for an in-depth discussion of Jackson's impact in the field of gerontology).

An additional indicator of the impact of James Jackson's mentoring is that several of his students are regarded as leaders in the field of gerontology. For instance, research on the history of gerontology (Brown et al., 2014; Smith, 2014) shows that Letha Chadiha, Linda Chatters, Robert Joseph Taylor, Rose Gibson (the first and only African American editor of *The Gerontologist*), as well as James Jackson are pioneers in the field of African American Aging.

Mentoring in Social Work

The PRBA has made a substantial contribution to the field of social work through its mentoring of social work scholars. This is evident by the contributions of African American social work scholars trained by PRBA (see Table 2). Further, citation analysis (Huggins-Hoyt, 2018) finds that six of the top 20 most cited African American social work faculty received training at PRBA (1. Robert Joseph Taylor; 2. Linda Chatters; 7. Karen Lincoln; 10. Sean Joe; 17. Trina Shanks; 18. Daphne Watkins).

Conclusion

As authors of this article, we represent several of the many former students and colleagues of James Jackson and who were affiliated with the PRBA. Several of us worked with him for over 40 years as collaborators on grant proposals, co-authors on articles, copresenters on conference panels, and during interviewer training sessions and on-site fieldwork for the national surveys. We are quite familiar with his outstanding record of accomplishments given our firsthand knowledge of his many innovative and pivotal contributions in the areas of scholarship and research. He has earned the distinction of being in the top 2% of cited scientists across all

disciplines/areas in the world (Ioannidis et al., 2020). This measure of the collective impact of his research and scholarly contributions is a lasting testament to his intellectual breadth, rigor, and originality. Perhaps James Jackson's most important personal legacy is exemplified by those who are the grateful beneficiaries of his mentorship and training. In closing, we believe that James S. Jackson's body of work and career-long accomplishments assure his recognition as a preeminent Black scholar who has made foundational contributions in psychology.

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