You ain't got principle, you ain't got nothing: Verbal negation in Bahamian Creole *

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The present study investigates the system of verbal negation in Bahamian Creole and relates it to the respective systems of historically connected varieties in North America, i.e., contemporary as well as earlier varieties of African American Vernacular English and Gullah. Building on a corpus of roughly 98,000 words, the study provides a variable analysis of the all-purpose negator *ain't* and its competitors and offers some remarks on invariant *don't*, negative concord, and the preverbal past-tense negator *never*. It shows that in particular the syntactic and temporal distribution of *ain't*, which have repeatedly been discussed in connection with the debate about the origins of African American Vernacular English, reveal striking similarities between Gullah and its immediate descendant Bahamian Creole, while confirming a more distant relationship with African American Vernacular English.

Keywords: Bahamian Creole; Gullah; African American Vernacular English; negation; *ain't*; invariant *don't*; negative concord; Varbrul

multifactorial approaches; cluster analysis; logistic regression

1.   Introduction

Features such as *ain't* and negative concord, as in the title quote, are among the most severely stigmatized elements of present-day English grammar. Negative concord, which had been common (although apparently never obligatory) in English for hundreds of years, disappeared from the vernacular of the socially mobile middle classes around 1600 (Nevalainen 1999: 523). *Ain't*, whose predecessors *en't* (< *am not*, *are not*) and *han't* (< *have not*) had only appeared in the seventeenth century (Walker 2005: 4), was used liberally, together with third-person singular *don't*, in informal educated and upper-class speech as late as the mid-nineteenth century, when, in conjunction with hardening ideologies toward linguistic correctness, it turned into a shibboleth of "corrupt", "vulgar", or "barbarous" language behavior (Görlach 1999: 38). Of course, all three features are alive and well in non-standard varieties of English; in fact, negative concord and "invariant" *don't* are among the most frequently attested and pervasive features in the *Electronic World Atlas of Varieties of English* (*eWAVE*; Kortmann and Lunkenheimer 2013), with negative concord even ranked among the small group of "vernacular angloversals" (Kortmann and Wolk 2012: 908). All of them occur in Bahamian Creole as well.

That said, it is obvious that there are "[m]any ways of saying no" (Schneider 2000: 210). In other words, even if varieties show identical feature inventories, there will be different ways of using these features, subject to different language-internal and -external constraints. Thus, while in many varieties *ain't* occurs only as the negated form of BE and HAVE, in some, it can also act as a "generic" negator in full-verb contexts. Accordingly, in his typological study of negation patterns in postcolonial Englishes, Schneider (2000: 215) states that the "[s]tatus and function of this form will have to be assessed individually for each variety". The present paper attempts to do precisely this for Bahamian Creole, a mesolectal member of the western branch of Caribbean English-lexifier creoles (CECs). After a short survey of the sociolinguistic context of the variety (Section 2), we will briefly report on previous research on negation in varieties of English in general and Bahamian Creole more specifically (Section 3) and introduce our data and method (Section 4). Section 5 provides a descriptive and statistical account of verbal negation in Bahamian Creole, focusing on the "all-purpose" (Anderwald 2012: 311) negator *ain't* (5.1) but including invariant *don't* (5.2), negative concord (5.3),

and the preverbal past-tense negator *never* (5.4). Section 6, finally, discusses our findings and presents concluding remarks. Throughout, we will make reference to patterns of negation found in related varieties, i.e., Gullah and contemporary as well as earlier varieties of African American Vernacular English.

2.   Bahamian Creole in its sociolinguistic context

Bahamian Creole (BahC) is spoken in The Commonwealth of The Bahamas,[1] an archipelago of 700 islands and 2,400 cays extending between southeastern Florida and Hispaniola. The population of the Bahamas totals ca. 370,000. The country is heavily urbanized, with roughly two thirds of all Bahamians living in the capital, Nassau. Some 85 percent of the Bahamian population are black. The Bahamas is one of the wealthiest Caribbean countries, its economy fuelled by service-oriented industries such as tourism and offshore banking.

The national language of the Bahamas is English. Monolingual speakers of standard English, however, are a minority. Most black Bahamians speak BahC, which is locally termed "dialect". This English-lexifier creole is not an indigenous development but was imported at the end of the eighteenth century by free blacks and the slaves of loyalist North Americans. Historical and linguistic evidence (Hackert and Huber 2007) suggests that the Gullah-speaking areas, and South Carolina in particular, played a prominent role as a point of origin for these settlers, which makes it very likely that what was taken to the Bahamas was an early form of Gullah rather than of African American Vernacular English (AAVE), as had been assumed earlier (Holm 1983).

As in other English-speaking Caribbean countries, Bahamian standard English and BahC exist in a continuum of gradual but patterned structural transitions. Functionally, by contrast, there is still a fairly strict division of labor between the varieties. Even though the "dialect" is now generally viewed as a vital aspect of the Bahamas' cultural heritage and national identity, its use is mostly restricted to private, informal interaction or if humor, authenticity, and the like are to be conveyed. In public, formal situations or if "serious" topics are at hand, standard English is the form of speech called for. Most Bahamians today speak a mesolectal form of BahC. Basilectal speakers tend to be older and/or live on the remoter islands, especially in the southeastern Bahamas. Since the vast majority

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[1] There are also diaspora speakers of BahC in Florida; their exact number is unclear, though.

of the Bahamian population resides in urban areas, urban BahC may be taken to best represent contemporary BahC; it is the variety that is investigated here.

3.   Negation in English: Forms, functions, and previous research

At its most basic level, negation is "a phenomenon of semantical opposition". As such, it "relates an expression *e* to another expression with a meaning that is in some way opposed to the meaning of *e*" (Horn and Wansing 2016). A distinction is often made between clause negation and constituent negation. Clause negation is frequently achieved through verb negation. In standard English, the clause negator *not* is inserted immediately after the operator (Quirk et al. 1985: 776), i.e., the first or only auxiliary verb, as in *The children might not be doing their homework*, or after copula BE, as in *They are not teachers*. If no auxiliary is present, the dummy auxiliary DO must be introduced, as in *The children did not do their homework*. In colloquial use, *not* is often contracted and merges with the preceding element, as in *They aren't home*, but auxiliaries, too, can be contracted, as in *I'm not coming*. Non-standard varieties of English permit what has been called "negative concord" or "multiple negation," i.e., the use of more than one negative element in a clause, as in *I didn't do nothing*, with that clause still interpreted as negated only once – a phenomenon that is not only widespread in other languages but also occurred in earlier forms of English.

Apart from Anderwald's landmark studies on negation in British English (2002, 2005) as well as worldwide (2012), research on negation in varieties of English has focused on African American English, including modern (Labov et al. 1968; Labov 1972; DeBose 1994; Weldon 1994; Sells, Rickford, and Wasow 1996; Winford 1998; Howe 2005) and earlier AAVE (Schneider 1989; Howe 1997; Howe and Walker 2000; Kautzsch 2000, 2002; Walker 2005) as well as Gullah (Mufwene 1993; Weldon 2007; Troike 2012).[2] This is owed to the fact that at least some of the properties that distinguish negation in AAVE from the standard English system have parallels in CECs; accordingly, "[n]egation has recently begun to occupy a place at the forefront of the debate over the origins of African American Vernacular English" (Howe and Walker 2000: 109).

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[2] We use the term *African American English* to refer to all black vernaculars presently and formerly used in North America. This includes both contemporary AAVE and Gullah as well as earlier varieties of the former, as represented in textual documents and the so-called "diaspora varieties" spoken in Samaná and Nova Scotia. Where necessary, we distinguish between them.

Furthermore, a number of Caribbean Englishes have received some attention regarding negation, such as, for example, Guyanese (Bickerton 1975, 1996), Jamaican (Bailey 1966), and Trinidadian Creole (Winford 1983) as well as Jamaican and Trinidadian standard English (Deuber 2014). Walker and Sidnell (2011) provide an in-depth analysis of variable negation in Bequia, and Schneider (1997, 1999) looks at the "cline of creoleness" in various English-lexifier varieties of the Caribbean based on negation patterns. His typological study of negation patterns in postcolonial Englishes (2000) also includes Caribbean varieties.

Throughout these studies, there is consensus about the existence of a generalized creole preverbal negator *na* or *no*, which is not restricted in terms of tense, aspect, or syntactic context. *Ain't* has also been studied; unlike its counterpart in white English vernaculars, however, creole *ain't* occurs not just as a negator of BE or HAVE and in the present tense but has a much wider distribution. Some researchers have described this distribution as a result of decreolization, whereby *na/no* would have been replaced by the superficially more English-like *ain't*, which, however, would have retained the syntactic and semantic properties of the creole marker (e.g., Bickerton 1975: 96–100). In contrast to African American English, where empirical work on negation patterns abounds, truly quantitative studies of verbal negation in CECs are rare; they include Winford (1983), Bickerton (1996), and Walker and Sidnell (2011).

With the exception of Shilling (1978: 90–142), who provides a chapter-length account of the distribution of various negators in white and black Bahamian vernacular as well as a comparison with Guyanese Creole, Gullah, and AAVE, negation in BahC has attracted only a few isolated comments so far (McPhee 2003: 34–36; Hackert 2004: 134–135; Reaser and Torbert 2004: 400). The aim of the present study is to fill this gap in the literature and present a detailed and accountable description of the phenomenon, focusing on patterns of variation involving *ain't*.

4.   Data and method

The data used for the present study form part of a larger corpus of urban BahC speech collected by Stephanie Hackert in Nassau in 1997 and 1998 (Hackert 2004: 17–24). This corpus consists of extended sociolinguistic interviews with twenty speakers, male and female, between the ages of 25 and 81, from different social backgrounds. While all of these speakers had resided in Nassau for most of their lives, many had been born and raised on other, more rural islands. The interviews

covered topics such as work, traditional crafts, family life, life on the "Out Islands" of earlier times, individual episodes in Bahamian history, or folklore. Narratives of personal experience also played an important role. The sample chosen for the present study consists of ten of these interviews; its word count amounts to ca. 98,000 (ca. 125,000 including the interviewer). The data were processed with WordSmith 6 (Scott 2014).

In order to analyze the data statistically, we employed GoldVarb X, a member of the Varbrul family of programs (Sankoff, Tagliamonte, and Smith 2005).[3] We are aware, of course, of newer approaches to the statistical analysis of sociolinguistic data, most notably mixed-effects models. Because we were primarily interested in linguistic constraints on the choice of negator operative in BahC, the analysis presented below is based on a small sample of ten speakers, and we included only a single language-external factor group in our analysis, i.e., individual speaker, modeling this factor group as a fixed effect (Paolillo 2013). In all of our analyses, variation by speaker turned out to be the strongest factor group, stronger than any of the linguistic factor groups tested. This is typical of mesolectal CECs, which are characterized by extensive inter- and intraspeaker variation. As Figure 1 shows, however, despite tremendous frequency differences, the speakers of the present sample appear to possess identical grammars of negation, their variable output evidencing the same conditioning of variability in terms of the direction and strength of constraints influencing it. For reasons of space, we will not discuss interspeaker variation in detail but simply note that the use of *ain't* by the various speakers represented here corresponds very well to their use of other non-standard features, such as unmarked past-reference verbs (Hackert 2004: 203–219).

[Insert Figure 1 here]

Figure 1. *Ain't* by speaker and grammatical constraint[4]

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[3] For details on the theory and practice of Varbrul, cf., e.g., Tagliamonte (2006: 128–157).

[4] Figure 1 was created using *R* (R Core Team 2017) and the data visualization package *ggplot2* (Wickham 2009). It is based on a cross-tabulation of speakers against four linguistic factor groups. Only binary factor groups (e.g., stative versus non-stative, past versus non-past) were selected, as token numbers per cell were often five or less for the multinomial factor groups.

In accordance with previous studies of verbal negation in varieties of African American English, our analyses are restricted to indicative declarative clauses. They exclude interrogatives (N = 33), because these were too few in number to be submitted to quantitative analysis (cf. Weldon 1994: 361). Negated modals (e.g., *can't*, *couldn't*, *shouldn't*, *wouldn't*; N = 234), *will* + *not* constructions (N = 3), imperatives (N = 50), and contexts involving only inherently negative lexical items such as *never* were also discounted. Of course, we also excluded false starts, repetitions, and unclear cases. Altogether, we analyzed 1,326 tokens, which is a sample size in-between those of Weldon, whose total token count for Gullah negation is 631 (2007: 359) and 907 for AAVE (1994: 389), and Walker and Sidnell, who look at 1,720 tokens of negated verb structures in three Bequia communities (2011: 6). Table 1 presents an overview of the contexts and negative variants that will be discussed in the following.

Table 1. Negative variants by context

[Insert Table 1 here]

5. Verbal negation in BahC: A descriptive and statistical analysis

To begin, we present two extended passages illustrating the use of verbal negation in BahC.

(1) You think I gon take my money and go and buy food, and I **don't** know where his-own going? No, I rather go in my neighbor's house and eat her food if it's dirty – just to know I had a belly full and I **didn't** have to share it with him. No, no, no, when you have these men who **don't** care about their home […] – o- he only need to cry, Oh, I **ain't** got it! You fool, you go in the food, 'cause – in the food store, 'cause you – you want show off – you **don't** want **no** one to come there and say, **Ain't no** food, **ain't no** this, **ain't no** that (Jeanne 8: 14–20).[5]

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[5] As BahC does not possess an orthography (yet) and the focus of the present study is on grammar rather than on phonology, all examples are given in standard English spelling. Speaker names (as well as names occurring in the data) are pseudonyms; the numbers refer to page and line of the original transcript (Hackert 2004: 21–30). Interviewer speech is rendered in italics.

(2) When he start he **ain't** go this, he **ain't** go that, I say, **Don't** do it, when
I see you really **ain't** do it, I'll find a man that is gonna do it. […] but he
don't know how to – you – he know what I'm about, but he **can't** handle
me. He – he **doesn't** want to socialize with my friends, my family – he
don't want me to socialize with my friends, my family, so he want me –
I ax him if he want me sit in the house and get fat and old (Jeanne 11: 37–
43).

The three non-standard features observable in these passages are, first, the frequent
use of *ain't*; second, variation between third-person singular *doesn't* and *don't* in
contexts of full-verb negation; and third, the occurrence of negative concord. The
first two features also occur in Shilling's (1978: 92) summary of the BahC system
of negation: "from basilect through mesolect the system changes from one in
which the favored negator is *ain't* in all contexts save non-past (habitual) non-
stative and past copula to a system similar to SE [i.e., standard English] except
that person-number concord is not fully established". Apart from the fact that this
description is premised on a no longer current view of the creole continuum as a
result of decreolization qua "debasilectalization" (Mufwene 2015: 462), it clearly
indicates that verbal negation in BahC is a variable feature crucially involving *ain't*
and influenced by at least three factors: lectal level, temporal-aspectual properties
of the verb situation, and syntactic context.

5.1   *Ain't* as an all-purpose negator

Ain't is "well-known and widely commented upon as the negator of finite forms
of *be* or *have*" in varieties of English worldwide (Schneider 2000: 213). In *eWAVE*,
these two uses are attested in over 40 percent of all varieties covered; at 60 percent,
their "pervasiveness" value, which provides a measure of the variety-internal
frequency of a feature, is quite high (http://ewave-atlas.org/parameters). An
example from the passage represented in (1) is *I ain't got it*. The occurrence of
ain't in full-verb contexts, or "generic" *ain't* (Anderwald 2012: 311), as in *I see
you really ain't do it* in (2), is more rarely attested and basically restricted to rural
enclave dialects in the American Southeast, varieties of AAVE, and the mesolectal
creoles of the Caribbean (http://ewave-atlas.org/parameters/157#2/7.0/7.7). It also
occurs in Liberian Settler English and Vernacular Liberian English, both of which,
however, originated in or were heavily influenced by earlier forms of AAVE
(Singler 2012a: 358, 2012b: 370). In BahC, *ain't* negates both BE and HAVE as well
as full verbs. The following sections cover each of these uses in turn.

5.1.1 Ain't *as the negated form of BE*

In this section, we look at the use of *ain't* as a negator in copula and auxiliary contexts[6] of the type illustrated in (3) through (9). In such contexts *ain't* varies with full, contracted, or zero forms of BE + *not* (or *-n't*) in non-past environments and *wasn't* (or, very rarely, *weren't*) in past ones. Table 2 presents the results of a Varbrul analysis of *ain't* for BE. Following Walker (2005: 11) and Walker and Sidnell (2011: 11), we included all non-*ain't* forms in a single category, which we then opposed to *ain't*.

(3) *How old is he – an old cat or young?* He **ain't** that old (Mrs. King 25: 4–5).

(4) I **am not** gonna be alone! I **am not** gonna be. **I'm not** afraid – there are too many men out there (Jeanne 11: 4–5).

(5) […] now these younger people look to me they don't want to work. And they **not** tidy (Mrs. Smith 9: 60).

(6) *And she was hurt?* Uh-huh. Sh- she – child, she **ain't** hurt, because she get up and walk to the seat (Viola 9: 11–12).

(7) I always believe it **isn't** too good for the country (Sidney 26: 23–24).

(8) I was too upset. And me and him **wasn't** speaking for two weeks (Jeanne 2: 12–13).

(9) Yeah, and that – that mean, you **weren't** idling. You went amongst people (Mrs. King 6: 43).

Table 2. *Ain't* as the negated form of BE in BahC

[Insert Table 2 here]

As Table 2 shows, *ain't* frequently occurs as the negated form of be in BahC. We tested for a number of factors which had either been considered in the literature on negation in African American English or which we hypothesized as influential based upon prior inspection of our own data. The following paragraphs discuss each of these factors in turn. We also remark on other, related features, such as copula deletion in affirmative contexts and variation in the use of future markers.

With regard to temporal reference, we retained past and non-past verb situations in a single model because preliminary analyses had shown that when the

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[6] Following Sharma and Rickford (2009: 54), we "subsume both types under the term 'copula,' but distinguish them where necessary".

dataset was split, the direction and strength of the other factor effects remained very similar, but small token numbers (N_{past} = 140, $N_{non-past}$ = 279) resulted in numerous knockout, i.e., categorical, factor groups, which would have been unusable as input to Varbrul. Table 2 clearly shows that copula *ain't* is not restricted to non-past contexts in BahC but also (albeit much less frequently) occurs in the past, as in Example (6) above. This actually contradicts Shilling (1978: 93), who found no such examples in her data but reports between 2 percent (mesolect) and 9 percent (basilect) tokens of *ain't been*.[7] Interestingly, the frequencies observed for copula *ain't* in our data are very close to those found for Gullah by Weldon, who reports occurrence rates of 75 percent for non-past and 22 percent for past contexts (2007: 345–346). In non-past contexts, our figures also resemble Weldon's AAVE figures, where *ain't* features a frequency of 63 percent (1994: 371). Importantly, though, copula *ain't* is not used in past-reference contexts in contemporary AAVE. In earlier forms of the variety, most samples contain a few tokens of the marker, but Kautzsch (2002: 56) finds that, in his data, "*ain't* (copula, past) only occur[s] […] before 1844, which clearly documents that this function became obsolete very early". As a result, negated "past tense copular constructions involve practically no variability" in modern AAVE (Weldon 1994: 361) but are almost categorically restricted to *wasn't*, with occasional instances of *weren't*. Copula *ain't* does not have past reference in white vernaculars, either, and Feagin (1979: 215) reports a single token from Alabama (*They ain't like they is now*), which, incidentally, corresponds exactly to the syntactic structure to which past-reference *ain't* is restricted in earlier AAVE: "(X) *ain't* (Y) *like* (Z) … present tense verb … *now*" (Howe and Walker 2000: 116). In sum, with regard to the temporal distribution of copula *ain't*, there is a clear divide between BahC and Gullah on the one hand, where the marker may have both past and non-past reference, and AAVE, where it is highly restricted in earlier and inexistent in contemporary samples in past contexts.

Except for their polarity, negated BE constructions are equivalent to affirmative structures employing finite BE in copula or auxiliary position. Copula variation is one of the most frequently discussed features of AAVE grammar, and similarities with the copula systems of CECs have played an important role in the debate about the putative creole origins of AAVE. One of the variables influencing

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[7] *Been* may function as a variant of the past copula in BahC. It is not restricted to perfect contexts but occurs with absolute past reference as well: "When I **been** Miss Moxey thing Saturday, they say, Oh, your hair look good!" (Viola 24: 45) Our negative data set includes two past copula *been* tokens. Absolute past copula *been* is also attested for Gullah (Mille 1990: 80); just as in BahC, it may also be combined with *ain't* (Weldon 2007: 346–347).

the phenomenon is following grammatical environment, with noun phrases generally evidencing lower rates of zero copula than adjective phrases; auxiliary BE followed by V-*ing* or *go/gon/gonna* is most frequently deleted. Weldon tests the influence of following grammatical environment on *ain't* in both contemporary AAVE (1994: 376) and Gullah (2007: 345). While the factor group fails to reach statistical significance in AAVE, despite a favoring effect exerted by *gonna*, in Gullah, *ain't* is considerably more frequent in auxiliary contexts than in copula environments, with especially high rates before *gon*.

The research question at hand was, of course, whether and in what way following grammatical environment constrains the occurrence of negators in BahC. Because prior inspection of our data had suggested that existentials, as in (18) through (24), show a particularly high frequency of *ain't*, we treated these structures separately, despite the fact that they invariably contain noun phrases in predicate position. Near-categorical behavior was also found in the case of passives, as in (10), and structures where the following grammatical environment is zero, as in (11). As seen in Table 2, the picture for the "traditional" grammatical environments resembles that found by Weldon for AAVE, with *go/gon/gonna* noticeably favoring the occurrence of *ain't*.

Whereas the Varbrul analysis pitted *ain't* against a combined BE + *not* (or -*n't*) category, Table 3 shows all variants individually by following grammatical environment and temporal reference. For reasons to be discussed shortly, we also separated the *go/gon* category from *gonna* environments.

(10) No, no, they **ain't baptize** yet, no, no (Sister Brown 21:16).
(11) *That wasn't like that then, huh?* […] Not at all, no, 'e **wasn't** – everything was Bahamians (Mr. Jones 9: 58–60).

Table 3. Raw frequencies and proportional representation of negative variants by following grammatical environment and temporal reference in BahC

[Insert Table 3 here]

As Table 3 shows, negative copula deletion is restricted to non-past contexts in BahC. With regard to following grammatical environment, Ø + *not* is found in exactly the contexts where rates of BE absence are highest in African American English and CECs, i.e., before adjective phrases and V-*ing*, as in (12), and *gonna*, as in (13). Following zero predicates, as in (14), also permit deletion. All tokens occur after a personal pronoun, but they are not restricted to second-person or

plural subjects, where deletion occurs at much higher rates than in other person-number contexts in both African American English (Rickford and Rickford 2000: 116) and other varieties of English in the Bahamas (Reaser 2004: 18).

(12) But then we here – we have it so good and still **not appreciating** it, you know, we **not thankful** (Sister Brown 34: 13–14).

(13) You **not gonna** let your bills go behind (Jeanne 10: 7–9).

(14) […] they lie and say they having sex – when they **not**, but they want to keep up – (Sister Brown 30: 36–7).

When it comes to expressing future temporal reference, BahC has various options: preverbal *go/gon*, as in (15) and (16), *gonna*, as in (17), and *going to* (which may be pronounced [gəɪn tə]; cf. Seymour 2009: 82), but no tokens of the latter occurred in our data.[8]

(15) I **ain't go** hear you talking, I **go** just walk off and leave (Jeanne 9: 1–2).

(16) I **gon** tell you when the changes start (Mr. Jones 12: 8).

(17) I **'m not gonna** tell you to do nothing is wrong. I is the mum! (Sister Brown 29: 34–35)

As seen in Table 3 and Examples (15) through (17), the future markers *go/gon* and *gonna* pattern very differently with respect to negation. Whereas *go/gon* is negated by *ain't* categorically, *gonna* co-occurs with full, contracted, or zero auxiliary followed by *not*. The *go/gon/gonna* category in Table 2 masks this division, which became evident only upon a detailed examination of individual tokens. Interestingly, Weldon's Gullah data (2007: 345) show a similar picture, with *ain't* almost categorical in *gon* contexts but not in *gonna* ones.

In BahC, a split between *go/gon* and *gonna* also exists in affirmative sentences, with the former showing categorical BE absence, the latter variable auxiliary use (Seymour 2009: 124–127). This is in line with what has been described for related varieties. As noted by Winford, BE does not occur with the "pure future" marker *go/gon* in mesolectal CECs, in opposition to "prospective" *goin/gwine*, which permits the auxiliary. For AAVE, he proposes a parallel semantic distinction (1998: 113, Footnote 14). Poplack and Tagliamonte (2000: 329) find no such distinction in earlier AAVE but note that the variants are

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[8] Future temporal reference can also be established by means of *will* (*not*) V, which, however, was excluded from the present analysis (cf. Section 4). For more on future *don't* V, cf. Section 5.1.3.

phonologically conditioned, with *gon* preferred before verbs beginning with an alveolar stop. Weldon (2003: 66), finally, also observes a *gon/gonna* division with regard to copula absence for Gullah but finds no phonological conditioning. In sum, all varieties of African American English show a *gon/gonna* split when it comes to the use of the copula in affirmative contexts, whether semantically or phonologically conditioned. BahC does, too. The distribution of *ain't* in the variety also mirrors this split, with *ain't* restricted to *go/gon* environments and *gonna* preceded by be + *not*.

Next, there are existential sentences. Just like AAVE (Green 2002: 80–83), BahC possesses HAVE and GET existentials as well as *it* and *they* existentials in addition to *there* BE existentials (Shilling 1978: 145–150). Unlike in AAVE, however, no dummy subject need occur in BahC HAVE/GET existentials: "(You were the captain, eh?) Oh, when I bin, yea, but had other captains too you know" (1978: 145). As seen in Examples (18) through (20) and Table 2, negative BE existentials clearly favor *ain't*. Moreover, with the exception of a single token, displayed in (19), all *ain't* existentials occurring in our data involved negative concord (cf. Section 5.3).

(18) […] you don't want no one to come there and say, **Ain't no** food, **ain't no** this, **ain't no** that (Jeanne 8: 18–19).

(19) […] **'e ain't** much places in the Bahamas where the runway is sandy (Sidney 6: 16–17).

(20) […] **there ain't no** shark around – that want bite (Albert 5: 61).

(21) […] **there isn't** anyone else that I know that can do the things (Jeanne 2: 45).

(22) Well, see, after – the hurricane and – uh – **it wasn't** no vessel for us to move on, and **it wasn't** anything to do 'round home, you know? (Albert 4: 53–54).

(23) *And what was it like when you grew up – the gangs back then?* Well, **wasn't no** gang then (Sidney 8: 12–14).

(24) **It don't have** a group of people like how this station and how all the churches what come on this station come in group (Mrs. King 25: 16–17).

Following general practice in work on copula variation in African American English and CECs, we also distinguished different subject types. While this distinction seems to be motivated purely syntactically, it has important phonological correlates. According to Walker (2000: 55, 62–63), a crucial distinction exists between (monosyllabic) pronoun subjects, which enter into sentences consisting of a single phonological phrase and favor contraction, as in

You're going in debt, and (phonologically heavy) full noun phrases, which result in two phonological phrases per sentence, as in *The milk in town | is fifteen*, and favor zero copula. We further singled out personal pronouns, which inevitably end in a vowel, as preceding phonological environment has also been reported to influence not only copula deletion but also the occurrence of *ain't* in AAVE and Gullah (Weldon 1994: 376, 2007: 345). Finally, we looked at *it*, *that*, and *what*, which have been found to strongly favor copula contraction in contemporary AAVE (Labov 1969: 719). Zero subjects were considered a category apart from all others.

As displayed in Table 2, subject type does not significantly affect the occurrence of copula *ain't* in BahC. Of all subject types identified in Table 2, only zero subjects have an effect, substantially favoring the occurrence of *ain't*. Zero subjects are clearly a feature of non-standard English but widely observed only in existential sentences and so-called "gap" relative clauses, such as *The man __ lives there is a nice chap* (http://ewave-atlas.org/parameters/193#2/7.0/7.7). In BahC, existential sentences make up the majority of negated zero-subject structures, too, but other sentence types may occur without overt subjects as well:

(25) **Ain't** good to say it, but it's the true [sic], you know? (Jeanne 9: 24–25)

It thus stands to reason that, instead of mirroring syntactic or phonological constraints, the correlation between *ain't* and zero subjects in BahC may be a simple cluster effect whereby speakers tend to prefer non-standard features in the environment of other non-standard features and standard features if other standard features occur nearby – a phenomenon that is at the heart of the definition of central sociolinguistic notions such as lect, variety, and style (cf. Walker & Sidnell 2011 for similar co-occurrence phenomena with regard to negation in Bequia). This conjecture would be supported by the strongly favoring effect that negative concord – a highly stigmatized non-standard feature (cf. Section 5.3 below) – has on copula *ain't* in BahC, as seen in Table 2.

To close off our discussion of negated BE in BahC, we would briefly like to draw attention to a construction which we excluded from the Varbrul analysis but which is nevertheless characteristic of the variety. It involves a non-finite form of the copula preceded by *don't*, as in (26), and corresponds to affirmative habitual *does/is/'s be* or "lone *be*" (Shilling 1978: 66). *Don't be* is rare overall (N = 8) but categorical in non-past habitual copula environments and cannot be replaced by *doesn't be* or *ain't be*, which is why it constituted a "don't count" case. For more on habitual *don't* V constructions, cf. Section 5.2 below.

(26) *So what do you call that when people have like seizures in church?* […]
Oh, not sei- that – that one **don't be** seizure what's in church, that one
does be – that one **does be** like – like they's have – uh – the Holy Ghost
(Viola 8: 16–18).

5.1.2   Ain't *as the negated form of* HAVE

Ain't can also function as the negated form of have in BahC. In such contexts, it
either expresses perfect meaning or functions as part of the possessive construction
ain't got. The latter is treated as a variant of *don't/doesn't/didn't have* in
conjunction with full-verb negation in Section 5.1.3 below. With regard to the
former, BahC, in contrast to standard English, does not possess a grammaticalized
perfect. The perfect of result is marked by means of preverbal *done*; the
experiential and hot news perfects employ unmarked verbs; and the perfect of
persistent situation takes *been* V-*ing*. Among acrolectal speakers, HAVE V(-*en*)
varies with these constructions (Hackert 2004: 103–107).

Negated perfect constructions are rare (N = 14) in the present corpus and
almost categorically involve *ain't* V, as in (28), or *ain't been*, as in (29). Among
acrolectal speakers, HAVE *not* (or -*n't*) V(-*en*), as in (27), may also occur. Because
of this skewed distribution and the resulting near-categorical occurrence of *ain't*
in perfect contexts in our data, we excluded perfect constructions from the Varbrul
analyses.

(27) Well, it ha- that **hasn't** cha- on this side **hasn't change**, because this was
here […] (Mrs. Smith 13: 62).
(28) *What happened to her?* She mus'e coming down with the flu. Yeah, I
ain't see her for about two days (Sister Brown 15: 31–32).
(29) Yeah – everybody going to church, but – […]. You got some people **ain't
been** church for so long (Sister Brown 21: 8).

5.1.3   Ain't *as the negated form of* DO

As outlined by Anderwald (2012: 312) in her survey of negation patterns in
varieties of English worldwide, generic *ain't*, i.e., *ain't* in full-verb contexts, in
which standard English has the negated dummy auxiliary DO, is found only in
North America and the Caribbean. It may be described as a true "areoversal," i.e.,
a feature characteristic of, or even restricted to, a particular world region

(Kortmann and Wolk 2012: 935). The geographical restrictedness of *ain't* obviously invites speculation as to the origins of the construction, which Anderwald (2012: 312) pinpoints during the formation of the CECs: "the negator that was frequently employed by the slave holders to negate the frequent verbs *have* and *be* was overextended by the slaves themselves to a more general use". Sentences (30) and (31) illustrate the use of generic *ain't* in our data. Table 4 shows its distribution in non-past environments, Table 5 that in past ones.

(30) Missy, where you put the towel? I **ain't know** where she throw it (Shanae 18: 27).

(31) *So you traveled for that to New Orleans or – no?* No, I **ain't travel** there for it, but it was a company there (Mrs. King 3: 30–31).

The variable context of full-verb *ain't* evidences partial overlap in the sense that, whereas in non-past situations *ain't* varies exclusively with *don't* (and, rarely, *doesn't*; cf. Section 5.2 below), in past contexts both *didn't* and *don't* occur. Tokens of past-reference *don't* are infrequent (N = 28), though, and are mostly preceded by an overtly past-marked clause, as in Example (34). The following Varbrul analyses excluded two types of temporal-aspectual reference: future and past habitual. Future verb situations were exceedingly rare (N = 8) and almost exclusively involved *if*-clauses containing *don't* V structures, as in the following example.

(32) **If** he **don't do** good, this five years, they will – let him go (George 28: 14).

Past habituals (N = 22) were excluded because *ain't* does not occur in such contexts. There is *didn't use to* V, as in

(33) […] when he make to cut me with the cane, I dosh – I dodge it like that, and I gone! I u- I **didn't use to let** him beat me! (Albert 4: 30–31)

as well as *don't* V, particularly when past reference has already been established in the preceding context:

(34) I used to get beaten like this: In the morningtime, when I going to school […] and I **don't say** "Morning" to that person, that person come and – and hold me and beat me, you know? (Albert 4: 39–41)

Table 4. *Ain't* as a generic negator in BahC, non-past contexts

[Insert Table 4 here]

Table 5. *Ain't* as a generic negator in BahC, past contexts

[Insert Table 5 here]

As displayed in Tables 4 and 5, the likelihood of *ain't* to occur as a generic negator is much smaller than in copula contexts. The past/non-past distinction does not make much of a difference, again in contrast to copula environments, where the form was much rarer in the past. Incidentally, at 27.1 percent and 27.7 percent, the frequencies of *ain't* for past BE and as a generic past-tense negator are basically identical.

Similar to past copula *ain't,* there has been considerable debate about generic *ain't* in past-reference contexts in varieties of African American English. As Weldon (2007: 355) puts it, the variation between *ain't* and *didn't*

> is perhaps most significant, among the negation patterns, for the creole origins debate. The fact that it varies with *didn't* in Gullah and in AA[V]E (as described in Weldon 1994), but not in other varieties of English, at least opens up the possibility that Gullah (or a Gullah-like creole) is the source of this alternation in AA[V]E.

Table 6 shows the proportional representation of *ain't* and *didn't* in past-reference full-verb contexts in AAVE (Weldon 1994: 384), Gullah (Weldon 2007: 353), and our own data.[9] While *didn't* constitutes the majority variant, all three varieties freely permit *ain't* in past-reference full-verb contexts, in sharp contrast to earlier AAVE (Schneider 1989: 200–201; Howe and Walker 2000: 120; Kautzsch 2002: 45) and other non-standard varieties of American English (Feagin 1979: 215), where *ain't* for *didn't* is exceedingly infrequent.

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[9] We here exclude past-reference *don't*; as a result, totals and percentages in Tables 5 and 6 do not match.

Table 6. *Ain't* versus *didn't* in past-reference full-verb negation in AAVE (Weldon 1994: 284), Gullah (Weldon 2007: 353), and BahC

[Insert Table 6 here]

As for situation aspect, stativity constitutes one of the most frequently discussed factors putatively influencing verbal marking in both African American English and CECs. The factor has also been claimed to affect the tense-aspect interpretations of *ain't* in AAVE (DeBose 1994: 128). For Gullah, Mufwene (1993: 101) maintains that the combination of *ain't* with non-stative predicates results in a past interpretation, while statives can assume both past and non-past readings, depending on the context. This is confirmed by Weldon (2007: 360). For AAVE, she finds that stativity does not significantly affect the variation between *ain't* and other forms in perfect (1994: 379) and past contexts (1994: 387); in non-past full-verb contexts, *ain't* does not occur, except before *got*(*ta*).[10]

Even though the stativity value of any particular verb situation is, of course, crucially dependent on the verb's inherent *Aktionsart*, we did not simply code for stativity on the basis of the lexical verb alone but, following Smith (1997: 17–18), considered every verb in its discourse environment. Thus, individual verbs could assume different stativity values, as illustrated by *have a car* (stative) versus *have a row* (non-stative) or *I know* (stative) versus *Suddenly he knew* (non-stative). In our data, stativity closely interacts with temporal reference, in the sense that non-past non-stative verbs disfavor *ain't*, while this is reversed in past contexts.

A special case of full-verb negation involves stative *got* (or, more rarely, *get*; Hackert 2004: 133), which occurs in the following contexts: (1) existential, as in (35); (2) possessive, as in (36); and (3) "modal idiom" (Quirk et al. 1985: 141–142) *got to*, *gotta*, or *gotty*, expressing necessity or obligation, as in (37). In all three uses, *got* (*to*) varies with *have* (*to*).

    (35) […] **they got** American man coming here now, dealing with it now, with drugs (George 3: 8–10).

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[10] In contrast to Howe and Walker (2000: 117), we tested for stativity only in the case of generic *ain't* and not of BE constructions, because copula structures are by necessity stative. This would have left us with auxiliary BE contexts, but in contrast to Walker (2005: 9), we do not simply assume that "auxiliaries take on the stativity of the main verb". Clearly, progressives and statives must be distinguished, as the former constitute a grammatical, the latter a situational aspect; nevertheless, semantically, there are many similarities between them (Smith 1997: 84–86) and, in fact, in English, they stand in complementary distribution, in the sense that the progressive "is available neutrally only to non-statives" (Smith 1997: 85).

(36) I ain't **got** that much – I **got** 'bout twel' teeth now (Mrs. King 26: 25).

(37) And the student-them saying that – that – they – don't like to walk down that way late in the night. So now – they **gotty** have school there in the day (George 29: 10–12).

Both may be negated with either *ain't* or *don't*, but *got* (*to*) far more frequently (ca. 80 percent) combines with *ain't*, while there seems to be a slight preference for *don't* with *have* (*to*).[11]

(38) If you **ain't got** – you **ain't got** principle, you **ain't got** nothing (Mr. Jones 12: 18).

(39) No, you **don't gotty** speak no proper English (George 26: 10).

(40) They ain't d- they **ain't have** the man head on the body (Sister Brown 13: 13–14).

(41) Now like – if you is governor people, right, you **don't have to** pay (Viola 10: 11–12).

Again, it is interesting to compare the negation pattern of BahC *got* (*to*)/*have* (*to*) with those occurring in varieties of African American English. For contemporary AAVE, Weldon (1994: 362) observes that *ain't* and *don't* vary when combined with *got* or *gotta*. *Have* (*to*) also combines with both negators (Howe 2005: 181). No such variation exists in either earlier AAVE or Gullah. In both varieties, *ain't* is categorical before *got* (Weldon 2007: 357). Unfortunately, as Weldon (2007: 362, Footnote 14) indicates, no tokens of *gotta* were found in her Gullah data. A search of the electronic Gullah Bible (Sea Island Translation Team 2005) did not yield any *gotta* tokens, either; however, the equivalent expressions *got fa* and *haffa* are both categorically negated by *ain't*, as is *ain't hab* 'have':

(42) […] cause dat one man Jedus Christ hab mussy pon we, an we **ain got fa** pay fa dat (Rom 5.15).

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[11] Because not enough negative *got* (*to*) versus *have* (*to*) contexts occurred in our interviews, we conducted a small online survey with 59 participants, all of whom were Bahamian by nationality. 95 percent of the respondents had been born in the Bahamas, 88 percent were black. In contrast to the interview data, most survey participants had completed secondary or even tertiary education and were either college students or held clerical or professional jobs. Not unusual among highly educated Bahamians, roughly a third had lived abroad, for periods ranging from a month to 14 years. Most were in their (early) twenties, three quarters female. Almost 80 percent of the respondents had spoken both BahC and standard English at home while growing up, with about ten percent each indicating the exclusive use of either variety as the vernacular.

(43) Den wen dey pass oba, dey **ain haffa** come yah ta dis place weh A da suffa tommuch (Luk 16.28).

(44) Dey bless fa true, dem people wa **ain hab** no hope een deysef, cause God da rule oba um (Mat 5.3).

Earlier AAVE, by contrast, has *ain't gotta*, but *have* (*to*) is negated with *don't* (Kautzsch, p.c.). Table 7 summarizes the possible combinations of negator + *got* (*to*)/*have* (*to*) in BahC and varieties of African American English. It clearly shows that, for the feature at hand, BahC most closely resembles earlier AAVE.

Table 7. *Ain't* versus *don't* in non-past negative existential, possessive, and modal constructions in BahC and varieties of African American English

[Insert Table 7 here]

In past-reference contexts, speakers of BahC can choose between *ain't had*, *didn't had*, and *didn't have*:

(45) I **didn't had** it hard, too hard, because I **ain't had** no children (Mrs. King 16: 32).

(46) […] he just know everything, you know. He **didn't have** to look in no book, he just could – (Mrs. Smith 9: 16–17).

To return to Tables 4 and 5, as in the case of copula structures, subject type has only a minor effect on full-verb *ain't*. Negative concord, by contrast, consistently favors the occurrence of the form, albeit also not always to a statistically significant degree. For more on the phenomenon, cf. Section 5.3 below.

5.2   Invariant *don't*

Invariant *don't*, i.e., the use of *don't* as the negative dummy auxiliary for all persons in the present tense, is

> a rather inconspicuous dialect feature overall; in contrast to multiple negation
> […], it is not overtly stigmatized, does not appear in prescriptive grammars,
> neither historically nor today […], and does not generally attract comments
> in letters to the editors. (Anderwald 2012: 305)

Despite its "invisibility", the feature is both widespread (68 percent) and pervasive (65 percent) in varieties of English around the world (http://ewave-atlas.org/parameters/158#2/7.0/7.7).

Invariant *don't* is very frequent in BahC. Of all tokens of the negative dummy auxiliary occurring in third-person singular present-tense contexts, a full 96 percent (N = 76/79) are tokens of *don't*. Moreover, the three tokens of *doesn't* include a hypercorrect one, displayed in (47).

(47) But I **don't** – I – **I doesn't** want to say it like that because I is feel bad and sometime I explain (Sidney 4: 11–12).

As described in Section 5.1.1 above, *don't* remains invariant in BahC even when it corresponds to habitual *does* in affirmative sentences (Shilling 1978: 66, 95). Example (48) illustrates this for full-verb contexts.

(48) How they **does** act. They **don't** act like no baby (Mrs. King 6: 33).

5.3   Negative concord

At an attestation rate of 80 percent and a pervasiveness value of 77 percent, negative concord, or multiple negation, is the most widespread negation feature in non-standard varieties of English today (http://ewave-atlas.org/parameters). Its geographical distribution is heavily skewed toward the Caribbean and North America.

In negative concord, "two or more negative morphemes co-occur […] without logically cancelling each other out" (Anderwald 2005: 113):

(49) But see, I **ain't** putting up with **none** – uh-uh (Sister Brown 13: 17).
(50) They hard. They **ain't no** comfortable bed to have **no** baby on (Shanae 19: 18–19).

The following quantitative analysis includes the spread of verbal negation to following indefinites in the same clause, as in (49), as well as across clause boundaries, as in (50). Table 8 presents rates of co-occurrence between various negators and negative (e.g., *no*, *no more*, *nobody*, *nothing*, *never*) and non-assertive (e.g., *any*, *any more*, *anybody*, *anything*, *ever*) indefinites (Quirk et al. 1985: 377) in BahC. It shows that, if an indefinite is present, multiple negation is favored across all forms, with *ain't* co-occurring with it almost categorically.

Table 8. Co-occurrence between various negators and negative and non-assertive indefinites in BahC

[Insert Table 8 here]

Our count of negative concord structures includes those occurring in negative inversion, i.e., constructions in which "the initial negated auxiliary is followed by a negative indefinite noun phrase" (Green 2002: 78). In the literature on African American English, negative inversion proper, as in *Don't no game last all night long* (2002: 78), is sometimes distinguished from existentials occurring in negative inversion, as in (51) and (52). In our data, only the latter were found.[12]

(51) And **ain't nobody** live there (Sidney 10: 29–30).
(52) So that morning **it ain't** no sun come out, and it was raining and rainy (Mrs. Smith 5: 44).

5.4   The preverbal past-tense negator *never*

A feature to be mentioned for the sake of completeness is *never* as a simple past negator, i.e., a form of *never* that is equivalent to *didn't*, as in example (53) below. As Anderwald (2012: 305) notes, "relatively little" can be said about this feature, apart from the fact that it occurs almost equally frequently in non-standard varieties of English of all types and all over the world. Of course, preverbal past-tense *never* is also attested in BahC, but in our data it is rare: only nine out of 211 tokens of *never* in our corpus are actually interchangeable with *didn't*, most instances of the form having a meaning of 'not at any time'.

(53) I **never knew** him in fucking high school. When he – I di- I **didn't know** him (Jeanne 4: 37).

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[12] As our online survey (cf. Section 5.1.3) indicates, constructions such as *Can't nobody stop it* or *Didn't nobody get hurt* are accepted as grammatical by some (ca. 15–25 percent) BahC speakers. Whether there is a correlation between individual acceptance of these constructions and exposure to AAVE, however, cannot be seen from the survey.

6.   Discussion and conclusion

The present study has investigated the system of verbal negation in use in BahC, a mesolectal English-lexifier creole of the western Caribbean with strong historical links with the North American mainland and, more specifically, its Gullah-speaking areas. We presented not only a descriptive and statistical analysis of the all-purpose negator *ain't* and its competitors but also briefly described the workings of invariant *don't*, negative concord, and the preverbal past-tense negator *never*. With regard to the distribution of *ain't*, it was found that the marker is favored in copula contexts and near-categorical in perfect ones. It also occurs as a generic negator, but much less frequently. *Ain't* may have both non-past and past reference, and while the latter constitutes a disfavoring factor in BE environments, in full-verb contexts, past *ain't* is actually slightly more frequent than present *ain't*. Non-past non-stative verbs greatly disfavor *ain't*, while this effect is reversed in past contexts. Subject type does not appear to affect the variation much, but the presence of negative concord consistently and strongly favors *ain't*.

Our analysis has taken an explicitly comparative perspective, based on the insight that, as outlined in Section 3, negation has come to play a central role in the debate about the history and development of AAVE. The key feature in this regard has the distribution of *ain't* across syntactic and temporal contexts. Proponents of the creole-origins argument (e.g., DeBose 1994) have pointed out that, first, AAVE *ain't* functions not just in copula or perfect environments, as in white non-standard vernaculars of English, but also in full-verb ones, much like CEC *na/no*, and that, second, it may have both non-past and past reference, again resembling a creole universal negator. Advocates of the English-history position, by contrast, emphasize the finding that, in earlier forms of the variety, *ain't* was severely restricted in past BE contexts and vanishingly rare for *didn't*, describing "contemporary AAVE's preference for *ain't* in all environments" as a recent, spectacular innovation (Howe and Walker 2000: 124).

While comparisons between AAVE and CECs may, of course, contribute important evidence with regard to the origins of AAVE, there are two varieties that are even more relevant to the debate because they came into being in North America itself: Gullah and BahC. With regard to negation, Weldon (2007: 358) concludes that

> *ain't* has a much wider distribution in the Gullah data than in the AAE data examined in Weldon (1994), where *ain't* occurs variably in present copula, present-perfect, and past *do*-support constructions, and in the environment of *got*(*ta*). In the Gullah data, by contrast, *ain't* occurs variably in both present

and past copula constructions and present and past *do*-support constructions, as well as appearing categorically in present-perfect constructions and in the environment of *got*.

As demonstrated in detail in Section 5 of this paper, this description of Gullah *ain't* applies equally well to *ain't* in BahC. This should not come as a surprise, as, contrary to earlier opinion, which had seen contemporary BahC as an offshoot of earlier AAVE, BahC must be described as an immediate descendant of late 18th-century Gullah.

Admittedly, this tells us nothing about the earlier history of AAVE. However, if we move beyond the traditional creolist and Anglicist positions and take into account the massive sociohistorical and textual evidence on the earlier history of AAVE that has become available since the late 1980s, our findings align well with the conclusions that have been drawn from it. The most important of these conclusions is that AAVE "was never itself a creole" (Winford 1997: 308). Quite obviously, AAVE has English origins, in the sense that the farmers, indentured servants, and other settlers who provided the model for the slaves and other blacks who acquired English in the colonial South were speakers of non-standard varieties of English – the predecessors of the vernaculars spoken by white Southerners today.

At the same time, AAVE "was created by Africans, and bears the distinctive marks of that creation" (Winford 1998: 149), such as, for example, the grammatical conditioning of copula absence, which is not found in second-language learning data but best accounted for by a "limited substrate explanation" (Sharma and Rickford 2009: 86). The fact that contemporary AAVE contains more "non-English" features than earlier forms of the variety, finally, may be explained if we follow Mufwene (2014: 359), who maintains that the Jim Crow system, which separated blacks from whites in the South and eventually set in motion the Great Migration of millions of African Americans from the former plantation states to the inner-city ghettoes of the North and West, where their speechways came to be dissociated from those of the rural American South and instead associated with ethnicity, "invented AAVE".

The analyses and comparisons presented in this paper tie in with the origins scenario just presented. Rather than constituting immediate ancestors of contemporary AAVE, Gullah and BahC may be said to stand in a mother-daughter relation themselves, which would account for their close similarities in terms of negation patterns; their relationship with AAVE may be said to be that of more distant cousins. It is hoped that our discussion of negation patterns in BahC, together with those found in Gullah and earlier and contemporary AAVE, will not

only lead to a better understanding of the grammatical system of the former but also make a meaningful contribution to the debate about the origins of AAVE.

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Table 1: Negative variants by context

Context	Negative variant	N	%
BE			
Non-past	*ain't*	197	71%
	-'m not	21	8%
	-'s not	15	5%
	is not	14	5%
	not	11	4%
	are not	7	2%
	isn't	6	2%
	am not	5	2%
	-'re not	3	1%
	TOTAL	279	
Past	*wasn't*	95	68%
	ain't	38	27%
	was not	5	4%
	weren't	2	1%
	TOTAL	140	
HAVE			
Perfect	*ain't*	12	86%
	haven't	1	7%
	hasn't	1	7%
	TOTAL	14	
DO			
Non-past	*don't*	430	78%
	ain't	114	21%
	doesn't	3	<1%
	do not	1	<1%
	didn't	1	<1%
	TOTAL	549	
Past	*didn't*	199	63%
	ain't	87	28%
	don't	28	9%
	TOTAL	314	
Past habitual	*didn't use to*	16	73%
	don't	6	27%
	TOTAL	22	
Future	*don't*	8	100%
	TOTAL	8	

Table 2: *Ain't* **as the negated form of** *be* **in BahC**

	N	%	f.w.
TEMPORAL REFERENCE			
non-past	279	70.6	.694
past	140	27.1	.163
FOLLOWING GRAMMATICAL ENVIRONMENT			
zero	14	0.0	
_NP	70	50.0	.366
_AdjP	93	50.5	.404
_LOC	42	52.4	.609
_V-*ing*	101	51.5	.443
_*go/gon/gonna*	38	68.4	.637
existential	48	85.4	.641
passive	13	92.3	.908
SUBJECT TYPE			
it, *that*, *what*	87	48.3	[.394]
noun phrase	51	47.1	[.461]
personal pronoun	225	54.7	[.486]
zero	56	82.1	[.739]
NEGATIVE CONCORD			
no	314	47.1	.386
yes	105	82.9	.801
SPEAKER			
Mrs. Smith	23	8.7	.177
Jeanne	72	41.7	.262
Sister Brown	110	60.0	.432
Mrs. King	39	51.3	.523
Sidney	40	70.0	.531
Mr. Jones	8	37.5	.564
Shanae	30	43.3	.610
George	27	63.0	.647
Albert	28	67.9	.658
Viola	42	88.1	.874
Total/p$_i$	**419**	**56.1**	**.600**

Log likelihood = -194.167, significance = 0.001

Table 3: Raw frequencies and proportional representation of negative variants by following grammatical environment and temporal reference in BahC

non-past	*ain't*		BE + *not* (or -*n't*)[13]		Ø + *not*	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
_NP	33	73	12	27	0	0
_AdjP	42	62	21	31	5	7
_LOC	18	86	3	14	0	0
_V-*ing*	45	70	17	27	2	3
_go/gon	21	100	0	0	0	0
_gonna	0	0	8	80	2	20
existential	29	94	2	6	0	0
passive	9	90	1	10	0	0
zero	0	0	7	78	2	22
Total	**197**	**71**	**71**	**25**	**11**	**4**

past	*ain't*		*wasn't/weren't*	
	N	%	N	%
_NP	2	8	23	92
_AdjP	5	20	20	80
_LOC	4	19	17	81
_V-*ing*	7	19	30	81
_go/gon	5	100	0	0
_gonna	0	0	2	100
existential	12	71	5	29
passive	3	100	0	0
zero	0	0	5	100
Total	**38**	**27**	**102**	**73**

Table 4: *Ain't* as a generic negator in BahC, non-past contexts

	N	%	f.w.
SITUATION ASPECT			
stative	399	26.3	.629
non-stative	150	6.0	.198
SUBJECT TYPE			
it, *that*, *what*	20	0.0	
noun phrase	40	5.0	.234

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[13] This category includes all inflected forms of BE, i.e., *am*, *are*, and *is*, whether full or contracted.

	N	%	f.w.
personal pronoun	489	22.9	.524
NEGATIVE CONCORD			
no	474	20.3	[.484]
yes	75	24.0	[.598]
SPEAKER			
Albert	3	0.0	
Mrs. Smith	39	5.1	.174
Sidney	45	6.7	.226
Jeanne	88	9.1	.303
George	47	6.4	.314
Sister Brown	118	15.3	.472
Shanae	43	25.6	.657
Mr. Jones	18	33.3	.714
Mrs. King	87	41.4	.758
Viola	61	44.3	.827
Total/p_i	**549**	**20.8**	**.142**

Log likelihood = -223.492, significance = 0.036

Table 5: *Ain't* **as a generic negator in BahC, past contexts**

	N	%	f.w.
SITUATION ASPECT			
stative	174	17.8	.344
non-stative	140	40.0	.690
SUBJECT TYPE			
noun phrase	36	11.1	[.325]
personal pronoun	272	29.8	[.523]
it, *that*, *what*	6	33.3	[.535]
NEGATIVE CONCORD			
no	256	21.5	.440
yes	58	55.2	.775
SPEAKER			
Mrs. Smith	48	2.1	.071
Sidney	12	8.3	.311
Jeanne	46	8.7	.322
Mr. Jones	22	13.6	.342
George	22	27.3	.513
Sister Brown	46	32.6	.665
Albert	7	42.9	.699
Mrs. King	48	37.5	.719

Viola	31	54.8	.803
Shanae	32	59.4	.846
Total/p$_i$	**314**	**27.7**	**.184**

Log likelihood = -134.089, significance = 0.000

Table 6: *Ain't* vs. *didn't* in past-reference full-verb negation in AAVE (Weldon 1994: 284), Gullah (2007: 353), and BahC
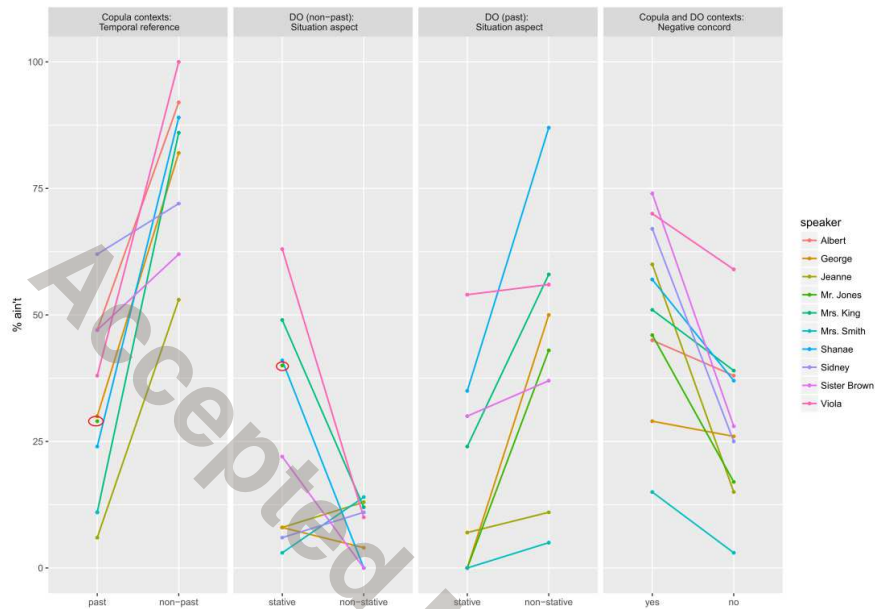
	AAVE		**Gullah**		**BahC**	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
ain't	62	38	52	20	87	30
didn't	100	62	202	80	199	70
Total	**162**	**100**	**254**	**100**	**286**	**100**

Table 7: *Ain't* vs. *don't* in non-past negative existential, possessive, and modal constructions in BahC and varieties of African American English

BahC	**Gullah**	**Earlier AAVE**	**Contemporary AAVE**
ain't (don't) got (to)	*ain't got (fa)*	*ain't got(ta)*	*ain't/don't got(ta)*
(ain't) don't have (to)	*ain't hab/haffa*	*don't have (to)*	*ain't/don't have (to)*

Table 8: Co-occurrence between various negators and negative and non-assertive indefinites in BahC

	ain't	*don't/ doesn't*	*didn't*	*am/is/are + not* (or -*n't*)	*wasn't/ weren't*
Negative	137 (>99%)	60 (88%)	23 (72%)	3 (60%)	15 (83%)
Non-assertive	1 (<1%)	8 (12%)	9 (28%)	2 (40%)	3 (17%)
Total	**138 (100%)**	**68 (100%)**	**32 (100%)**	**5 (100%)**	**18 (100%)**

Figure 1: *Ain't* by speaker and grammatical constraint[14]