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Papa Was a Rolling Stone and I Am Too

Paternal Caregiving and Its Influence on the Sexual Behavior of Low-Income African American Men

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This study focuses on the relationship between the level of paternal caregiving received as a child and its influence on the development of personal attachment style as adults, and whether or not the affected child experiences monogamy. To test this relationship, a sample of 266 low-income, African American males between the ages of 16 and 78, recruited from an inner-city sexually transmitted disease (STD) clinic in the Southeast, are analyzed. Multivariate and logistic regression analysis reveals that: (a) paternal care predicts the level of anxious attachment style of the respondent and (b) the level of paternal care, anxious attachment, and presence of the father significantly predicts the experience of monogamous relationships with women.

Keywords: *fatherhood; sexuality; monogamy; attachment; Black males*

In recent years, the structure of African American families has received attention from those within and outside of the African American community. The primary concern is the increasing number of low-income and female-headed households. Today, 48% of all African American families are headed by females, compared to only 16% of White families (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). As a result, African American males are often characterized as being promiscuous, irresponsible, and emotionally detached not only from their sexual partners but from their families, the African American community, and society at large (Majors 1992; Staples, 1999).

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Furthermore, the perception of the "absentee father" has been strengthened by events such as the Million Man March, the Promise Keepers movement, and other calls from African American community leaders for men to "atone" for shirking the responsibilities of being a husband and a father (Murray, 1996; Staples, 1999). The underlying sentiment behind these events is that African American men need to reclaim their traditional role as breadwinner and household leader (i.e., their traditional manhood). This notion is problematic and, for some, unrealistic given the inability of many African American men to earn a living wage (Becker, 1991; Wilson, 1996).

Sadly, the trends in research mirror public sentiment; for the most part, research regarding African American families has focused on two areas: (a) the strengths of the extended matriarchal family (McAdoo, 1993; Stack, 1974) and (b) the dysfunction of this type of family structure (Moynihan, 1967; Murray, 1996). Research in this area often ignores potential contributions of African American men because it assumes they are either absent or estranged from the matriarchal family structure (Staples, 1999). Furthermore, although this characterization may appear to be unfounded, research suggests that a segment of the African American male population fits this profile. For example, African American adolescents are more likely than their White counterparts to engage in intercourse, initiate intercourse before the age of 13, and have had more than four sexual partners (Centers for Disease Control, 2003). These patterns of behavior continue into adulthood with a higher proportion of African American men having more than five sexual partners in the last year, five years, and since the age of 18 compared to their counterparts of all races (Laumann, Michael, Gangon, & Michaels, 1994). It appears as though at least some African American men remain unattached from their partners, and there is a need to understand what causes these patterns of behavior among the low-income segment of African American men.

The purpose of this article is to understand the causes and consequences of the sexual behavior of low-income, African American men. Of specific interest is how paternal caregiving influences the relationship patterns of this group. In particular, two aspects of this potential relationship will be examined. The first goal is to explore the possibility that the father's level of paternal caregiving may influence the personal attachment style (i.e., one's desire and ability to maintain intimate relationships). The second goal is to determine if paternal care and attachment have an effect on monogamy.

This research is important because the majority of the attachment literature does not adequately address the contribution of fathers. In addition,

although there has been considerable public comment with regard to the importance of having a father figure—biological or otherwise—present in the lives of African American boys, empirical studies in this area have focused more on easily measured distal factors such as academic achievement, delinquency, drug use, and violence than they have on proximal factors such as mental health outcomes, social networks, sexuality, and attachment. More research in this area is needed because most of the research focuses on either the influence of the mother on child development in two-parent families or on the effect of single motherhood on African American children. By examining dimensions of family structure, paternal caregiving, and relationship attachment style, this study attempts to provide a psychosocial and socioeconomic explanation of sexual behavior focusing on relationship patterns of African American men. The research also contributes to the understanding of how changes in social policies and the economy influence family processes and child development.

We begin with a review of relevant literature regarding the sexual behavior of low-income, African American men. First, a macrostructural description of low-income, African-American communities is provided with an emphasis on: (a) family structure with respect to the high incidence of male underemployment and (b) the formation of sexual behaviors among male children. Second, a theoretical framework will be described by synthesizing Pierre Bourdieu's (1965/1990) concept of habitus and personal attachment theory. Third, hypotheses and methods are described. Finally, the results, discussion, and implications for future research will be presented.

African American Family Structure in Postindustrial America

To gauge the effect that African American fathers have on their children, one must consider the changes in African American family structure that have occurred within the last 30 to 35 years. During this period, there has been a structural breakdown in many African American families. The cause of family breakdown has often been attributed to changes in the job market and economy (Anderson, 1990; Wilson, 1987). The changes in the job market have been problematic for many African Americans because a significant number do not have the level of education necessary to compete in the new economy; consequently, today a disproportionate number of African Americans are in nonprofessional occupations (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). Previously there was no need for higher levels of education because

African Americans were able to obtain unskilled employment such as factory work. However, as companies began to mechanize many factory operations, there was less unskilled, blue-collar work available, and this absence left African Americans—males in particular—without the employment opportunities that earlier generations were able to enjoy.

To help families survive and compensate for lack of income, in the mid-1960s the federal government instituted limited social service programs, such as family assistance, food stamps, and Medicaid. These services were designed to provide food and housing along with basic medical care for low-income Americans. Contrastingly, this was also a time when gender-role expectations dictated that a man be self-sufficient. The political battle to win these programs was further tainted by the conflicts of the civil rights movement. It was widely recognized that a disproportionate share of assistance would be made to minority families, and racist stereotypes depicted African American men as shiftless. In this context, when these programs were moved through the labyrinth of congressional politics, they passed with strict eligibility requirements that had grave implications for the structure of poor American families. The restriction was that a family receiving assistance could not have a male above the age of 18 residing in the household. This “male exclusion” rule and other eligibility restrictions on public assistance, along with the disappearance of once abundant blue-collar work, devastated the institution of the African American family.

Because of stipulations that would push the family from a level of subsistence to abject poverty, the father’s physical and symbolic presence was removed from the home entirely. Furthermore, stipulations indirectly encouraged low socioeconomic status (SES) couples not to marry because it was unlikely that African American men would be able to fulfill the provider role in a marriage or relationship (Darity & Myers, 1987; Laumann, Ellingson, Mahay, Paik, & Youm, 2004; Wilson, 1987; Wilson & Neckerman, 1986). Because the gainful employment opportunities of prior generations were no longer available, the burden of supporting the family fell to the mother and to social services (Kelley & Colburn, 1995). Additionally, male unemployment created a lack of “marriageable” men; thus, many women were left to decide whether or not to raise fatherless children and families (Cochran, 1990; Kelley & Colburn, 1995). As a result, the role of the father figure was assumed by others within the extended family or community (Collins, 1990; Stack, 1974; Staples, 1999). Overall, research is inconclusive about the paternal involvement of African American fathers; some studies suggest greater involvement and visitation (King, 1994; Mott, 1990; Seltzer, 1991), whereas others see no differences from the general population (Seltzer & Bianchi, 1988).

The most important cause of the deterioration of low-income, African American communities is the loss of the working-class economic base. Most African American males became unemployed because they were not able to survive industrial mechanization and obtain gainful employment as a result of their modest level of education. Simply put, African Americans—particularly males—were not able to adapt to changes in the job market, which moved from domination by industrial occupations to skilled occupations (Wilson, 1996). Although public assistance programs were originally designed to strengthen low-income communities, they have weakened the structure of African American communities because of the stipulations that removed the male presence from both the home and the community; there is a disproportionate number of single-parent, female-headed households. As Anderson (1990) explains:

Coming from a single-parent household, often headed by a nearly destitute mother, children may have almost no effective adult supervision. As some people in the community say, “they just grown up.” Many become “street kids,” left largely on their own, and by the time they are preteens some are becoming “street smart,” beginning to experiment with sex and drugs. The local play group may become something of a family for youths who lack support at home. (p. 91)

These males and their peers may be searching for their manhood as well, and as a result may not be the optimal father figure that a child needs when constructing his sexual identity.

Sexual Identities in Low-Income, African American Communities

Although the aforementioned historical view of sex and sexuality may lead many African Americans to be more sexually active today, in the past the community regulated sexuality by monitoring the dating patterns of children and young adults (Staples, 1999). This was particularly true when an urban or rural community was cohesive. Typically, dating behavior was organized in the context of the neighborhood, church, and school. For the most part, dating was a very casual process in which women and men formed attachments to each other and got married. In this form of dating, the community had powerful sanctioning and monitoring functions. Essentially, community members were highly vigilant of the opposite-sex

relationships among their children. Consequently, young people were made aware that they had reputations to uphold, so they were not blatantly promiscuous. As the communities declined, the monitoring function of the community did as well.

In particular, the economic changes in African American communities have had an impact on men through their reconstruction of roles, masculinity, and sexual identity. One change that Anderson (1990) sees as critical to the socialization of African American children is the decline of the relationship between "old heads" and "young boys." Typically, an "old head" was a socially and economically stable man who preached and practiced the values of hard work, family orientation and obligation, and being active in the church. One of the most important duties was to socialize young men with regard to how to conduct themselves and contribute to their community and the larger society as a devoted worker, lover, husband, citizen, and church member. The "old heads" also acted as surrogate fathers and mentors for young men who needed attention, care, and moral support. Anderson notes that as meaningful employment has become absent for young men, the stature of the "old head" has diminished. Young boys no longer look to them for guidance because they view the "old head" as being outdated and irrelevant to them.

As the stature and number of the "old heads" decline within a community a new type of "old head" has emerged: one who opposes family values and has a "string of women" and children toward whom he feels no obligation (Anderson, 1990). He displays his success through ostentatious materialism—flashy cars, clothes, and jewelry. Often the "new old head" obtains his income through illegal activities. Unpromising financial futures may lead young men to emulate the lifestyle of the "new old head," including a masculine identity that is often based on sexual conquests.

Demoralized by their perceived unpromising financial situation, young men abandon the ways of the traditional "old head" and adopt the ways of the "new old head." Given the imbalance ratio of females to suitable males, men realize that women have a strong desire to be married and take advantage of it by making vague promises of love and marriage (Dixon, 1998). Women often fall for this ruse, become pregnant, and are then abandoned by their partners, who move on to another woman. Simply put, the men feel less pressure to develop deep commitments with their sexual partners and children (Cochran, 1990). In addition, there are fewer "old heads" to mentor the young men in the ways of manhood and sexuality; consequently, the young boys adopt the ways of the "new old head," which leads to a cycle of absent fatherhood. The concept of habitus is helpful in explaining how this cycle is perpetuated.

Habitus

Habitus, as described by Bourdieu (1965/1990), is the internalization of external social structures and conditions by individuals, which produce enduring orientations toward actions that consistently channel behavior in particular ways as opposed to others. The habitus is formed through childhood socialization and life experiences reflected through the individual's class circumstances. Early experiences in particular become fixed in an individual's mind as a "habit-forming force" and a "set of deeply interiorized master patterns" (Bourdieu, 1965/1990, p. 23). People in the same groups, classes, and society are likely to share the same habitus (Swartz, 1997).

In sum, the social situation of a group or class, along with its position in the world and society, influences the development of a specific habitus, or dispositions to act in a given way. Habitus is constructed and internalized from social activities that occur in families, schools, workplaces, and elsewhere. The concept of habitus is particularly applicable to understanding the sexual behavior of low-income, African American men because it focuses on the influence of early socialization, class-rooted behavior, and the environmental context of behavior.

After reviewing the literature regarding the social and economic structure of low-income, African American communities, it is clear that some low-income, African American men have developed a habitus that influences their sexual dispositions and actions. This is especially likely because the social structure that produced the "new old head" has been internalized by many, and, more importantly, the "new old head" is esteemed and consequently emulated. As a result, a habitus is constructed that promotes widespread promiscuity and a lack of emotional attachment to sexual partners. However, it is important to remember that not every member of a group internalizes the surrounding structure the same way; thus, there will be some men who do not adopt the promiscuous habitus.

Potential roots of this habitus may be the level of paternal care they received from their fathers, which in turn may influence their manner of personal attachment to their potential mates. In other words, if the male child receives low levels of paternal care, it may influence the manner of attachment style that he develops. Another aspect of habitus formation to consider is the presence of the father. For instance, if the male child has little or no contact with his father because the father does not reside in the home, or if the father is not present at all, the child may deduce that it is acceptable for him to do so as well. It seems likely that when the child sees the absence of the father in the home and the community, the child will learn that it is well within the habitus for a man to be uncommitted to his sexual partners and children.

In the same way, the rise of the “new old head” is problematic. This change in community structure perpetuates and affirms the social and sexual praxis that habitus dictates. As a result, this situation may lead to a cycle of unattached fathers and sons, which leads to female-headed households and the potential substitution of the “new old head” for the father.

Attachment Style, Relationships, and Sexual Behavior

Although attachment is formed in childhood, attachment theorists have found that personal attachment has implications well into adulthood. Researchers such as Hazan and Shaver (1987) furthered the work of Bowlby (1969/1982) and Ainsworth (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978) by defining childhood-acquired attachment styles and their consequences for adult behavior. Hazan and Shaver defined three attachment styles: secure, avoidant, and anxious-ambivalent. Secure adults generally describe their parents as being warm and supportive of them. They form relationships easily, are comfortable depending on others and having others depend on them, and do not fear abandonment. Avoidant adults are characterized as being uncomfortable in developing close relationships with others. Anxious-ambivalent adults often report that others are reluctant to become as close as they would like. Although they have a need to be one with someone else, they often worry that others do not truly like them. This attachment style is hypothesized to be the result of inconsistency in the parental care they received, which is often characterized by periods of closeness and subsequent abandonment.

Hazan and Shaver (1987) found that parents play a key role in the shaping of a child's style of attachment. The strongest predictors of attachment style were the respondents' perceptions of the quality of their relationships with their parents and the attachment styles of the parents' themselves. The study found that the level of “warmth” in the relationship between the parent(s) and child had an effect on the attachment style the child developed. The warmth of the relationship was determined by a respondent's perception and description of parental relationships as caring, affectionate or disinterested, unresponsive (Hazan & Shaver 1987). Those reporting warm parental relationships were more likely to have secure attachment styles; those with cold parental relationships were likely to have avoidant attachment styles; and those with uncertain parental warmth were likely to have anxious-ambivalent attachment styles (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2004).

Brown (1982) has suggested that parental separation/estrangement is crucial to the development of attachment and that the father may be as important in shaping the child's attachment style as the mother.

Feeny (1993) examined attachment styles and differences in the relationship patterns of 17- to 20-year-olds. Secure participants reported higher-quality relationships and were likely to have a steady sex partner. Both the avoidant and the anxious-ambivalent participants were more likely to date multiple partners, rapidly develop romantic relationships, and engage in intercourse in the early stages of a relationship. Anxious-ambivalent respondents reported limited involvement with strangers (new partners), possibly because of their fear of rejection.

Paternal Care and Child Development

Several studies have explored the relationship between child development and paternal care using single- and two-parent African American families. In male children, school adjustment and performance, graduation, personality disorders, higher self-esteem, and hypermasculinity are all influenced by the presence of a father (Amato & Rezac, 1999; Barclay & Moran, 1988; Battle, 1998; Brooks-Gunn, Guo, & Furstenburg, 1993; Connell, Spencer, & Aber, 1994; Espinoza & Ehrlich 1989; Heimer & Matsueda, 1987; Leung & Drasgow, 1986). Still, there is a gap in the research regarding the relationship of the father to shaping the attachment style of the child. Although some studies have looked at the effect of the father on his infant's maternal care, few have looked directly at the father's role in helping to shape attachment style (Stewart, 1978). Moreover, few studies compare ethnic groups, and most utilize predominantly White, middle-class participants. This is problematic given the differing structures among low-income, African American families; these studies are not generalizable to this population. Therefore, research is needed on paternal influence on attachment in the African American population.

Present Study

This study attempts to examine the effect of the father-son relationship in childhood on the subsequent relationship attachment style and experience of monogamy of the adult son. Paternal presence and warmth in a child's early socialization will lead to lower levels of anxious attachment.

Anxious-ambivalent individuals generally long for intimate companionship but often become distressed when others do not share the same desires in a relationship. As a result, anxious-ambivalent individuals may not have the relationship skills and security necessary to develop and maintain monogamous relationships. Paternal caregiving may be reflected in the presence of a father, and a warm paternal relationship will have an effect whether or not the individual has been in a monogamous relationship.

The rationale behind these predictions is that those who report the presence of a father would observe some sort of lifelong commitment between their parents (biological or stepparents). It seems likely that the son would internalize and model his behavior after his present father and therefore be monogamous. Additionally, respondents who report high levels of paternal warmth would observe their fathers' relationship skills and be more likely to be monogamous by incorporating this behavior into their habitus. For these reasons, respondents who report (a) the presence of a father, (b) higher levels of paternal caregiving, and (c) high levels of paternal warmth will be more likely to report having been in a monogamous relationship.

Method

Participants

The initial data were obtained during the summer of 1996 from a county sexually transmitted disease (STD) clinic in a major metropolitan area in the Southeast. The sample consisted of 266 men between the ages of 16 and 70. Respondents were recruited while they waited to be voluntarily examined in the STD ward. It is safe to assume that the sample drawn from this population is low income because, typically, county-funded clinics serve the lower classes (Cockerham, 2003). Respondents were compensated US\$6 for participating and were made aware of their right to terminate the interview at any time with compensation. Participants did not lose their place in line while they waited to see a doctor, through the use of a computer system that held their place. The study has a 97% recruitment rate, so the sample bias is small.

Survey Instrument

The 25-minute questionnaire was administered by African American male college students to heterosexual African American male clinic clients while

they waited for their voluntary appointments. Topics included in the survey were sex-role attitudes, nature of the relationship with sexual partners, and measures of sexual risk-taking behavior. The respondents' ages and their ages the first time they had sex were used as control variables for the hypothesis. Current ages were obtained from clinic records. To determine the age at which the respondent first had sex, respondents were asked "How old were you when you first had sex with a woman?"

Paternal Variables

Paternal caregiving. The father's level of parental care was operationalized by eight Likert-scaled statements rated by each respondent. The items used were taken from Lynn Miller's study of paternal caregiving (Miller & Fishkin, 1997). The reliability of the scale in the current study was very high (Cronbach's alpha = .93). The statements were designed to assess the warmth in the father-son relationship through the recollection of experiences of the (respondent) son. These responses were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating that *the statement did not describe his father*, 3 indicating that *the statement somewhat described his father*, and 5 indicating that *the statement accurately described his father*. The statements were as follows:

- He was always comfortable with you.
- You were never his top priority. (reverse scored)
- You thought he sometimes wished he had not had you. (reverse scored)
- He loved you but did not always show it. (reverse scored)
- He was warm and responsive to you.
- He was inconsistent in the way he felt about you—sometimes warm, sometimes cold. (reverse scored)
- He was very supportive of you.
- He was often very cold and distant to you. (reverse scored)

If the respondent indicated that he had no involvement with his biological father and that no stepfather was present, no measurements were taken. To create a paternal caregiving variable scaled toward warmth, the eight items were then summed to create a score. The summed paternal caregiving score was used to create three ordinal variables necessary for the analysis.

Presence or absence of father. To assess the influence of the presence or absence of the father, frequencies of the paternal caregiving score or lack thereof were used. Frequencies revealed that a large portion—108, or

40.6%—of the sample did not have a biological father or stepfather present. The coding of this “dummy” variable was 0 = *absent* and 1 = *present*.

Warm/cold fathers. This variable was created to analyze the effect of warm fathers as opposed to those who were emotionally cold or absent. The “warm” and “cold” categories were created using a dichotomous split of the mean. Those with scores lower than the mean were considered “cold” and were scored 0. Respondents with scores higher than the mean were considered “warm” and were scored 1.

Father present warmth. This variable was created to determine the importance of paternal warmth among present fathers. It also uses the same dichotomous split of the previous variables. Present fathers who were considered “warm” were scored 1; all other options (cold present fathers and absent fathers) were scored 0.

Anxious Attachment Style

The attachment style was operationalized by seven questions that were rated according to the degree to which they accurately described the respondent. The attachment measures used a shortened version of the Collins and Read (1990) scale. The Collins and Read scale contained 18 items and three dimensions: dependency, anxiety, and closeness. In the current study, there were 7 items measuring attachment: 2 items measured secure/avoidant attachment and 5 items measured anxious-ambivalent attachment.

Secure or avoidant. Statements included: “You are comfortable depending on others”; “You find it relatively easy to get close to people.”

Anxious-ambivalent. Statements included: “In relationships you often worry that your partner will not want to stay with you”; “In relationships you often worry that your partner does not really love you”; “You are not sure that you can depend on people to be there when you need them”; “You want to get close to people, but worry about being hurt by them”; “When you show your feelings for people, you are afraid that they will not feel the same about you.”

The reliability for the secure/avoidant and anxious-ambivalent subscales is .55 and .80, respectively. These statements were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating that the statement did not accurately describe the respondent (*not at all like me*) and 5 indicating that the statement accurately

described the respondent (*very much like me*). Because of the low Cronbach's alpha of the secure/avoid measures, only the anxiety-related items were suitable for analysis.

Monogamy

Monogamy was measured by following question: "Have you ever had a relationship with a woman that lasted a year or longer in which you had sex only with each other and nobody else?" Monogamy was coded as 1 = *yes* and 0 = *no*. We chose a 1-year cutoff because monogamous relationships that last a year or longer are seen to be serious and significant.

Results

Table 1 shows that the sample is relatively young ($M = 28.32$ years) and started having sex slightly earlier than the current national average ($M = 14.82$ years) (Centers for Disease Control, 1997). Second, the sample scored relatively low on anxiety. Most of the respondents were single (87.2%), with the rest of the respondents reporting as either married, separated, or divorced. Those who reported having fathers gave a mean paternal caregiving score of 27.9. It is important to note that 108 respondents (40.6%) reported not having a father (biological or stepfather) in the home. The distribution of monogamy reveals that 90 respondents—more than a third of the sample (34.1%)—had never experienced a monogamous relationship that lasted a year. Roughly a quarter of the sample had fathers that could be considered cold. Finally, about one third of the sample (32.8%) had warm fathers.

Significant Linear Regression Coefficients and Models: Anxious Attachment

There was a significant relationship between the paternal caregiving score and the level of anxiety in attachment, controlling for age of respondent ($p < .001$). Calculation of the slopes reveals that for a 1-unit increase in paternal caregiving score, there is a 0.193-point decrease in anxiety score. The percentage of variation in anxiety that is explained by age and paternal care is only 7.2%. Overall, the model is significant at the .01 level (see Table 2).

Table 1
Selected Descriptive Statistics

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Missing
Age	28.33	8.62	2
Age at first sex	14.82	2.42	1
Paternal caregiving score	19.88	6.26	1
Attachment—warm avoidance	3.61	2.48	0
Attachment—anxious	7.00	4.91	1

Note: *N* = 266.

Table 2
Regression Model of Predicting Anxious Attachment

Models	1			2			3		
	β	<i>b</i>	<i>T</i>	β	<i>b</i>	<i>T</i>	β	<i>b</i>	<i>T</i>
Paternal caregiving score	-.263	-.193	-3.360***						
Age	.088	.0454	1.129	.038	.0216	.612	.040	.0293	.653
Presence of the father				-.012	-.124	-.201			
Paternal warmth							-.066		
<i>R</i> ²	.074***			.002			.006	-.686	-1.068
<i>N</i>	155			262			262		

Note: *R*² = explained variance; one-tailed test.

****p* < .001.

Significant Logistic Regression Coefficients and Models: Monogamy

The first model demonstrates a significant relationship among anxiety score, age, and monogamy ($\chi^2 = 28.720$, $p < .001$). Standardized logic coefficients reveal a positive relationship between age and monogamy controlling for anxious attachment style ($\beta = .085$, $p < .001$). Through transformation of the logic coefficient by 100 ($e^b - 1$), the logic coefficients can be interpreted in percent increase in odds. Therefore, a 1-year increase in age corresponds with an 8.9% increase in the odds of having been monogamous, controlling for anxiety. Second, there is a positive relationship between anxiety and monogamy controlling for age ($\beta = .075$, $p < .05$). Thus, a 1-point increase in anxiety score is associated with a 7.8% increase in the odds of having been monogamous in the respondent's lifetime (see Table 3).

Table 3
Logistic Regression Model Predicting Lifetime Monogamy

Model	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Variables	β	β	β	β	β	β	β
Age	.085***	.084***	.089**	.086***	.085***	.091***	.086***
Anxiety score	.075**	.075**	.134**	.089**	.082**	.123**	.088**
Age of first sex		-.004	.041	-.019	-.041	.040	-.036
Paternal caregiving			.061*				
Paternal warmth				1.165***			
Presence or absence of father					1.102***		
Father present warmth						.675*	
Constant	-2.112	-2.039	-3.941	-2.307	-2.180	-3.073	-2.316
χ^2	28.720***	28.304***	22.295***		43.084***	21.324***	46.252***
<i>df</i>	2	3	4		4	4	5
<i>N</i>	261	260	153		259	153	259

Note: One-tailed test.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

As age of first sex is added in the second model, the coefficients and overall model remain significant. However, age of first sex does not attain significance. The third model reveals a significant relationship between age, anxiety score, paternal caregiving score, and monogamy ($\chi^2 = 22.295$, $p < .001$). Age and age of first sex remain significant when controlling for variables, although their significance is reduced. The third model reveals a positive relationship between paternal caregiving score and monogamy, controlling for age, anxiety score, and age of first sex ($\beta = .061$, $p < .05$). A 1-unit increase in paternal caregiving score corresponds with a 6.3% increase in the odds of being monogamous at least once in the respondent's lifetime.

In the fourth model, paternal warmth was added and paternal caregiving was removed as a result of multicollinearity and attenuation concerns. Similar to the third model, there is a significant relationship between age, anxiety, age of first sex, paternal warmth, and monogamy ($\chi^2 = 41.657$, $p < .001$). This model demonstrates a positive relationship between paternal warmth and monogamy, controlling for age, age of first sex, and anxiety ($\beta = 1.165$, $p < .001$). Having a warm father increases the odds of having been in a monogamous relationship by 26.3% compared to having a cold father. Presence of the father was added in the fifth model. The model and control variables maintained their statistical significance ($\chi^2 = 43.084$, $p < .001$). There is a significant relationship between age, anxiety, age of first sex, presence of the father, and monogamy. The presence of a father increases the

odds of having been in a monogamous relationship by 24.9% compared to those with who did not grow up with a biological father or stepfather.

In the sixth model, father present warmth was added to compare the effect of paternal warmth among present fathers to cold and absent fathers. The model retained significance and the father present warmth variable obtained significance ($\chi^2 = 21.324, p < .001$; $\beta = .675, p < .05$). Having had a present, warm father increases the odds of having been in a monogamous relationship by 12.6% compared to those who had cold and absent fathers. In the seventh and final model, both paternal presence and warmth were added. Overall, the model retains its significance ($\chi^2 = 46.252, p < .001$). Both paternal warmth and paternal presence were shown to be significant when controlling for age, anxiety, age of first sex, and each other. Paternal warmth is associated with a 13.1% increase in the odds of monogamy compared to those who had cold or absent fathers ($\beta = .705, p < .05$). The mere presence of the father is associated with a 13.7% increase of the odds of being monogamous compared to those who had absent fathers ($\beta = .737, p < .001$).

Discussion

The present study provides critical information about the potential causes and consequences of the sexual behavior among low-income, inner city, African American men. As predicted, level of paternal care was found to have an impact on the development of an anxious attachment style. Specifically, there is a negative relationship between paternal care received and level of anxious attachment of the son. However, the relationship is weak and insignificant when using dichotomous paternal care variables. It is possible that maternal care is more influential than paternal care in the development of attachment, but an exploration is outside the scope of this study.

The findings regarding the relationship between anxious attachment and monogamy contradicted the hypothesis. Our research uncovered a positive relationship between anxious attachment style and monogamy, whereas a negative relationship was predicted. One possible explanation for this finding is that although patterns of attachment are formed in childhood, it seems possible that if one has had a monogamous relationship lasting a year or more in which he was the victim of infidelity, he may reactively become anxious in his attachment style. Unfortunately, this study did not examine relationship history and experiences (e.g., faithfulness or infidelity), which may influence the development of personal attachment style and monogamy. Additionally, given the discomfort or lack of skills in intimate relationships common to

those with an anxious attachment style, it is possible that the development of an anxious style hinders the ability to be faithful to partners.

Still, this finding seems logical given the social forces that influence African American heterosexual relationships. For instance, it is possible—given the limited number of “marriageable” African American men—that African American women may find themselves initiating relationships with anxious men. This notion is important because the literature suggests that anxious men are fearful of rejection in relationships. It stands to reason that if there were no shortage of eligible bachelors today, they would not be in relationships, whereas it is likely that anxious men did not have as many relationships in the past. Consequently, African American women may now find themselves having to initiate relationships with anxious men, only to move on when better prospects present themselves or they lose interest.

Furthermore, the monogamy measure may not be sensitive enough because it only measures whether or not one has been in a monogamous relationship for a year. The 1-year time frame may not be long enough to adequately make predictions about monogamy. It is possible that anxious men are prone to multiple year-long monogamous relationships. Therefore, it seems logical that men who are anxious in their attachments would be more likely to have monogamous relationships.

Third, the findings reveal a link between paternal caregiving and monogamy. All of the paternal caregiving measures have significant positive relationships with monogamy. Among those who reported having fathers, higher levels of paternal caregiving were associated with having been in a monogamous relationship at least once. Those who reported high levels of paternal warmth were more likely to be monogamous than those who reported cold and absent fathers. In addition, respondents who reported the presence of a father were more likely to have ever been in a monogamous relationship than those who reported their fathers as being absent from their lives. Those respondents who reported having a warm and present father were also more likely to have been in a monogamous relationship than those who reported absent and cold fathers.

Theoretically, these results emphasize the importance of both the presence and caregiving of the father. It appears that high levels of paternal warmth and the presence of the father in the child’s life are the strongest indicators of monogamy. When considering the two variables in the same model, both variables suffer a reduction in the beta coefficients but remain statistically significant. Still, presence of the father has a slightly stronger relationship with monogamy than paternal warmth.

These are several explanations as to why paternal presence and warmth have a positive effect on monogamy. One explanation could be that men who have present fathers and fathers who are warm observe the relationship between their mother and father and desire a monogamous relationship. Furthermore, observing the relationship between their mother and father may instill the skills necessary to maintain a monogamous relationship.

These findings are significant because they demonstrate the importance of a father to his son's interpersonal and sexual behavior. Additionally, the findings are consistent with Bourdieu's (1965/1990) concept of habitus. Because the habitus is a product of early socialization and life experiences, these results suggest that the presence of the father and the level of paternal caregiving the son receives from him influence the development of the son's sexual habitus. As the concept of habitus suggests, these patterns are produced and reproduced by the internalization of social and economic conditions. Habitus is applicable in this instance because these results demonstrate the pervasive influence of social structure on agency, meaning that social structure tends to shape and organize individual behaviors (acts). Specifically, these findings seem to suggest that men who did not have fathers present in their life tend to adopt the group sexual habitus of low-income, African American males. In turn, the social environment that gives rise to the habitus is reproduced as well; it is a cyclical process. However, these results indicate that the presence and caregiving of the father increase the likelihood that the son will reject the group habitus and adopt an antithetical personal sexual/relationship habitus.

Conclusion

Overall, this study fits within the area of research that demonstrates the salience of a father figure in the development of male children. In the past, research has demonstrated that children—particularly males—experience many disadvantages as a result of growing up without a father (e.g., Amato, 1998; King, Harris, & Heard, 2004; Seltzer & Brandreth, 1994). However, this study determines the important role that fathers play in shaping key developmental processes. The presence of a father and the level of warmth in the father-son relationship (bonding and nurturing) have an influence on the type of attachment style the son develops and uses in relationships in his adult life. Moreover, the current research suggests the existence of a sexual habitus among low-income, African American men that promotes promiscuity.

In particular, the results support the notion that dwindling economic opportunities and public assistance stipulations create a cycle of sexual identity and family formation that are difficult to overcome. Specifically, the structural and economic factors in one generation hamper men's ability and desire to form stable family relationships with women and children. Weak ties between fathers and children in one generation may make it even more difficult for children to form stable bonds as adults. Thus, there is a sustained transmission of sexual and relationship habitus that is cyclically transferred to subsequent generations. The issue is thus cross-generational.

Although the study supports the hypotheses, there are limitations that challenge the validity of the data. First, it is possible that some of the questions concerning attachment reflected cultural biases. To increase resonance with the target population, questions were reviewed and modified by the African American male members of the research team. Second, the data are prone to recall and self-presentational bias because they are based on the memory of the respondent. Third, the information collected about fathers was limited in that no distinctions were made between biological and nonbiological fathers. The lack of distinction is problematic because it may influence paternal warmth. Additionally, the survey did not collect any demographic information on the parents; however, it is reasonable to assume that the parents have a similar SES as the son. Fifth, given the likelihood that those treated in the clinic were of low income, the sample is not representative of all African American men. However, the study population is appropriate because the goal of the study was to examine sexual behavior of low-income, African American males.

The present study provides direction for future research in several areas. First, attachment researchers need to thoroughly examine the effect of paternal care on the attachment patterns of children and behaviors in adulthood. Such research regarding the effects of attachment and sexual-risk behavior could examine condom use, partner selection, and partner turnover as they relate to attachment style. The present research should be extended to other populations. Additional research is needed on the effect of different types of fathers (present, absent, and absent but participating) and fathering styles on male children. Finally, research is needed in the area of habitus and sexual risk, especially in the context of the impact of social policy and changes in economic opportunity on African American family processes and child development.

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