

HANDBOOK OF FATHER
INVOLVEMENT

Multidisciplinary Perspectives

Edited by

*Catherine S. Tamis-LeMonda
New York University*

*Natasha Cabrera
National Institute of Child Health
and Human Development*



LAWRENCE ERLBAUM ASSOCIATES, PUBLISHERS
Mahwah, New Jersey London

2002

Fathers in the "Hood":
Insights From Qualitative
Research on Low-Income
African-American Men

Robin L. Jarrett

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Kevin M. Roy

Linda M. Burton

Purdue University

Pennsylvania State University

The oppressive fear that American society has held and continues to hold of African American males, and which tremendously diverts these men's ability to participate in family life, is a context often left unseen. Family studies, in general have long been oriented toward examining women, not only because of reproductive concerns, but because of the social construction of the household as a "women's sphere" that is supported by men from the outside. Since this male role is restricted for African Americans, the men become invisible to household analysis. (Miller, 1993, pp. 266-267)

African-American fathers in low-income urban communities often have been characterized as invisible, irresponsible dads who are marginalized in their families and contribute little economically to the well-being of their children (Allen & Duberly, 1996; Burton & Soyler, 1996; Gadsen, 1999; Harter, 1997; Margolis, Amato, Day, & Laro, 2000). Over the past four decades, this perception of African-American fathers has been heatedly contested in academic, public, and policy arenas with both supporters and critics of this image framing their arguments in culture of poverty perspectives (Basa Zinn, 1989; Coconan, Duncan, & Quinn, 1985; Elwood & Banc, 1987; Morynhan, 1965; Rabinowitz, 1970), the underclass debate (Auletta, 1982; Darity & Meyers, 1984; Joe, 1984; Mead,

1986; Murray, 1984; Sapich, 1983; Williams, 1978; Wilson, 1987; see also Jarrett, 1994, for an overview of the debate), and more recently, child support and welfare reform policies (Garfield, McLanahan, Meyer, & Schizer, 1998; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994; Mutry & Pomeroy, 1997; Roy, 1999a). Further, those involved in this discourse have supported their arguments with data from nationally representative surveys (see Eggebeen, Chap. 8; journalistic accounts of "ghetto" fathers (Dash, 1989; Koford, 1991; Lerman, 1986) and to a lesser degree, qualitative and ethnographic studies on urban African-American family life (Martin & Martin, 1978; Stack, 1974).

In this chapter, we consider the perspectives that qualitative studies provide concerning the roles low-income, urban, African-American fathers play in the lives of their families and children. Indeed, a rich tradition of qualitative studies describes the lives of low-income, urban African-American families and fathers, capturing the meaning of key parenting relationships and behaviors for men and their children (for classic studies, see, for example, Hanover, 1969; Ledwood, 1967; Martin & Martin, 1978; Rahnswasser, 1970; Schulz, 1974; Valentine, 1978; Williams, 1981; for contemporary studies, see, for example, Anderson, 1990, 1999; Edin & Levin, 1997; Furstenberg, 1992, 1995; MacLeod, 1987, 1995; Newman, 1999; Sullivan, 1992; Williams & Kornblum, 1985, 1994).

Qualitative researchers have utilized traditional anthropological approaches—participant observation and various forms of interviewing—to intimately understand the contextual dynamic, and subjective aspects of African-American fathering (see Becker, 1970; Burner, 1986; Burgess, 1982; Donoh, 1970; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Emerson, 1981; Fetterman, 1989). For example, the *in situ* nature of participant observation allows firsthand observation of the specific ecological conditions that affect fathers and families (Burton & Graham, 1998; Jarrett, 1995). By sometimes living with and/or immersing themselves in the daily lives of African-American fathers and significant others for extended periods of time, qualitative researchers observe dynamic interchanges between people and local neighborhoods. Moreover, participant observation allows the researcher to experience the everyday routines and realities of men and significant others over time. It can provide detailed descriptions of the roles that men play, as well as portrayals of household processes and interhousehold linkages (Burton, 1995a; Jorgensen, 1989; Ledwood, 1967; Stack, 1974; Sullivan, 1992; Williams, 1991; Williams & Kornblum, 1994).

In addition, the subjective nature of qualitative interviewing allows the researcher to access, individually, personal interpretations of experiences and activities that are not apparent from observation alone. By talking to African-American fathers and other significant others, qualitative researchers come to understand the meaning systems that undergird the parental role, how meaning systems are socially constructed, and how deeply held beliefs and values are influenced by opportunities and constraints. More generally, qualitative methods reveal interlevel individual, group, and neighborhood processes and patterns that are missed or obscured by less-intensive methods (Furstenberg & Hughes, 1997; Jarrett, 1992, 1994).

In this chapter, we draw on classic and contemporary qualitative studies to provide insights into the lives of low-income African-American fathers. The review concentrates on studies from the 1970s through the 1990s, although some earlier studies are included. The extended time period increases the number of cases available for review and provides an indication of change or continuity in men's roles.

The studies reviewed were primarily descriptive and use an array of qualitative data-collection strategies, including life-history, in-depth, retrospective, semi-structured, open-ended, and group interviews, as well as various forms of ethnography, including focused ethnography, microethnography, participant observation, and community studies. Despite diverse substantive foci from the major fields of anthropology, education, human development, and sociology, the studies share an interest in men within the context of inner-city neighborhoods.

We begin our review by reporting on findings from qualitative studies that shed light on African-American men and the paternal role. Verbatim quotes from relevant studies are used to describe the intimate lives of inner-city fathers and their significant others. The qualitative findings are organized around four themes. These include: (a) the neighborhood context of fatherhood and the opportunities that they provide; (b) negotiation between fathers and mothers in a system of kin work; (c) the meaning of fatherhood and the social process of father involvement; and (d) the diverse set of father figures who fulfill a variety of flexible paternal role obligations. We consider each of these issues from the multiple perspectives of men, women, youth, and children. We conclude our review with a discussion of the implications of the qualitative findings for future policy development and research.

MEN AND JOBS: THE NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT OF FATHERING

If just gets to the point... where you can't tell your landlord I'm trying, or you can't sell a hungry child, I'm trying, wait a few more days wait daddy gets his check, then he'll buy some food. That money doesn't go for me, it goes for my children. (Acunaz & MacAlum, 1994, p. 82)

Neighborhoods, by virtue of their institutional, economic, and social resources, shape opportunities for men and their families. In inner-city neighborhoods, key resources are quite limited. Such areas exhibit unstable institutions, low rates of education, high rates of unemployment, social problems, and the concentration of the most impoverished families (Burton, 1990; Newman, 1999; Sullivan, 1989; Wilson, 1987, 1996).

Lack of Job Opportunities

In particular, inner-city neighborhoods provide few jobs for men. Typical of many inner-city neighborhoods, a resident of the Proseville community in New York City describes its declining economic base (see also Burton, 1991; Valentine, 1978; White, 1999):

When I was little, there were lots of stores around the grocery store, and all the people in the stores knew all the little kids. I used to work for the newspaper on the corner, running little errands here and there. Now, most of these stores, and the houses where we used to live too, are all burned down. (Sullivan, 1989, p. 75)

Other qualitative work echoes the loss of local jobs and limited opportunities for good-paying, steady employment (Kaplan, 1997; MacLeod, 1992; Williams, 1991). Dexter's discussion of job training programs succinctly underscores this point: "...There ain't no jobs. What do I need training for when there ain't no jobs to go to?" (Williams & Korblum, 1994, p. 132).

In addition to limited job opportunities for African-American men, education—at systems in impoverished neighborhoods that prepare young men for work—are deficient (Furie, 1983; Kaplan, 1997; Moore, 1999; Ogburn, 1974; Talge, 1974). Consider the description of a typical high school that serves inner-city youth:

At Powell High it was rumored that the school had a forty percent failure rate, two of every five courses, students took, they failed. Over five years, the dropout rate exceeded fifty percent. The average of math, reading, and language scores for non-middle/10th graders placed the school in the 24th percentile nationally; the lowest middle/10th graders placed the school in the 24th percentile nationally; the lowest middle/10th graders placed the school in the 24th percentile nationally. (McQuinn, 1998, pp. 23, 78)

Most men understand that "your chances of getting a workable job [are few] unless you have a high school diploma" (Johnson, 2000, p. 239; see also Clark, 1983; Fordham, 1996; Sullivan, 1989; Williams & Korblum, 1994). However, critical factors discourage school completion. For Todd, a 21-year-old father, the disconnect between education and employment, as well as the pressures of family survival, outweigh the benefits of staying in school:

When I was going to school, we were not learning the skills I needed to get a job. I had a part-time job, and I was learning more in that job about work than I was in school. So I quit school because I had to help out my parents and younger sisters. My mother wanted me to stay in school but I could not see how it would help me. (Johnson, 2000, pp. 238–239)

Often African-American fathers began their early work careers with errands for older local residents, or publicly funded, neighborhood youth employment programs (Johnson, 2000; Sullivan, 1989; Williams & Korblum, 1985; see also McLaughlin, Hoy & Langman, 1994). It is unclear, however, if these local programs serve as conduits for young men into full-time jobs. Most adolescents find that few public jobs "look good when you apply for another job" (Williams & Korblum, 1985, p. 35). At the very least, these programs provide temporary work experiences and income that keep youth engaged in the labor force (Williams & Korblum, 1985).

Qualitative research identifies the range of economic opportunities available to father-very adult men. Fathers are refigured as the most insecure jobs in the sec-

ondary labor market, such as car wash attendance, fast food clerks, grocery store stock and bag checks, informal car repair, lawn work, street parking, and street salvage (Jarratt, 1994). Men who work for cash in temporary day labor agencies and in seasonal, part-time jobs pass in and out of their jobs almost weekly (Roy, 1999b). If young fathers are employed at all, they typically work in several part-time, low-skilled positions (Kaplan, 1997; Rosier, 2000; Williams, 1991) and sometimes are put in the position of competing with their own fathers for the same jobs, as indicated in the comments of 16-year-old James:

It's hard for a man to get a job here. Sometimes me and my friends go to apply for a job, and our fathers and grandfathers are trying for the same jobs, too. It's not fair" (Benton, Ochsallain, & Allison, 1996, p. 408)

Facing limited options in their local communities, some African-American fathers seek employment outside of the local neighborhood. Often, they are faced with discrimination in job hiring and practices (Reeves, 2000; Sullivan, 1989; White, 1999; Williams & Korblum, 1985). For example, a young father in Grand Rapids, Michigan, confronted his supervisor about the lack of promotions for African-American workers:

I've seen people come in there for six months, they put them in an office. I finally want to [improve myself]. I've been with the company . . . for three years, unless I just really don't understand what is the problem with me when getting into positions. I said, "The better men [holding the title in my life], I said, what do you as the owner have to say about this?" (Johnson & Doolittle, 1996, p. 33)

Men also identify more subtle discriminatory factors that exclude African-American fathers from conventional jobs (Reeves, 2000; Williams & Korblum, 1985). Theo, a 20-year-old father of two daughters, acknowledged a growing Chicago economy but also a new emphasis on "soft skills." Employers focus on skills such as appearance, language, and conversational fluency/s of workers that adversely impact many young African-American men:

I think that there are more jobs out there than before. You have all these malls and stuff like that. But I think it's getting stricter now. You have to look a certain way, appearance, how you present yourself, how you keep your frame of mind. (Roy, 1999b, p. 83)

African-American men growing up in inner-city neighborhoods are further disadvantaged by the lack of well-developed job networks. Sullivan's study (1989) highlights the limits of his sponsorship:

Youths entered the period of work establishment with fewer personal connections to jobs. . . . They were more [job] actively isolated. . . . Many of their parents had no jobs at all, and those parents who were employed tended to work in government jobs that recruited by bureaucratic means . . . instead of personal networks. (p. 80)

When job networks are available, they are typically linked to low-paying jobs. Typical of many males in the community, Jamal relies on a few key peer acquaintances to hook [him] up with job leads.

Some of [Jamal's acquaintances] are local no goods who live on his block, guys who deal drugs or guns or a home. But the others, the ones he depends upon when he needs to find work, have jobs in other fast food firms, small grocery stores in Queens, convalescent hospitals in the Bronx. (Newman, 1999, p. 62)

In other cases, even men with marginal jobs are unable to link their kin to low-paying jobs. Jasper, a father from Grand Rapids, explains: "It makes no sense. I can't get my son a job, can't get my nephew a job, [Johnson & Doolittle, 1996, p. 33]. As qualitative data shows, inadequate education, limited job training, and discriminatory job practices keep many poor fathers out of the labor force (Newman, 1999; Young, 2000).

Alternatives to Formal Employment

Informal and underground economies, well-developed in impoverished inner-city neighborhoods, provide viable alternatives to limited conventional economies (Anderson, 1990; Burton, 1991; Fine & Weis, 1998; Williams & Korsham, 1985). A field worker in New York observes how poor education and job options encourage involvement in alternative economies, particularly for young men:

C. C. and Zoro are among the countless youth who are on the street because they have dropped out of school, cannot find jobs, or both. When they aren't hanging out at the candy store [a store for drug paraphernalia] or trying to sell their sneakers, they spend their time stealing bicycles or engaging in petty crimes of various sorts, including drug favors for more successful hustlers. (Williams & Korsham, 1985, p. 49)

The emergence of the "crack economy" in the inner city during the late 1980s offered impoverished men another source of income (Sullivan, 1989). Due to the difficulty of obtaining a good-paying job, some turn to dealing. Russell, a young criminal father in Chicago, details his situation:

Getting a stable job like mine is not easy for Black men. We don't know anyone who can help us to get these jobs so we settle for what we can get. For a lot of friends, that means doing illegal things. But these guys are not criminals. At least, they don't set out to be criminals. They are just trying to make it in the world. (Johnson, 2000, p. 215)

Many fathers indicate that hustling is a way out of poverty, and they become involved at a young age (Hagedorn & Maroon, 1988; MacLeod, 1995; Roy, 1999b). One young survivor often notes: "[whenever I steal], it's motivated by my child's needs for survival" (Adhuz & MacCallum, 1994, p. 82). Richard, a young father in Buffalo, further underscores the point that men are "forced" into crime by economic deprivation.

9. FATHERS IN THE 'HOOD'

Because of the job situation, they are kind of forced into [selling], or led into it. You know, cause after a period of time . . . they don't want to work at McDonald's and make. I don't know these something else how. They can make a couple of thousand [dollars] a week, you know, fourteen or fifteen years old. . . . You weigh that. It's like, why not? (Fine & Weis, 1998, pp. 70-71)

As one teacher observes, "The boy makes more in one week than I make in months. And I'm telling these kids to work at Popeye's or something" (White, 1999, p. 29; see also Anderson, 1990; Fine & Weis, 1998).

Although many families rely on resources from informal and sometimes illegal economies, in the most extreme cases street incomes cause problems for families. Whites and girlfriends sometimes view these activities as in conflict with parenting roles (Herndon, 1988; Sullivan, 1992). For example, one mother, Jeanne, moved in with the father of her child, a man who is known as "Poison Pappa" because he sells heroin and cocaine. Initially an involved father, his behavior became erratic and dangerous as he began to use more of the drugs than he sells. Eventually Jeanne and her child were forced to leave him altogether (Herndon, 1988, pp. 116-117).

The reality of hustling—high payoff but likely exposure to violence and chance of incarceration—leads other fathers to "retire" from hustling. Alfred, a father in his late thirties who retired from his hustling career, highlights this point: "I retire to go out on the corner and sell drugs. I am too old for that and I am not going to jail for that. It's not a play thing" (Roy, 1999b, p. 92).

Despite low expectations and achievements in the labor market and foray into the underground and informal economies, African American fathers maintain a traditional work ethic (Sullivan, 1992; Williams & Korsham, 1984). Super, a young father, has "completely conventional goals to have a place of his own, get married, and raise a family" (MacLeod, 1995, p. 211). Corred, a young father in Chicago, realizes that "I ain't just trying for myself no more. I got my daughter and son to live for, you know. If I go, I want [them] to have something to collect something from me" (Young, 2000, p. 150). Aunnie, a 35-year-old unemployed father of a 2-year-old daughter in Chicago, asserts that:

I want to work. I want to work so bad. It's time for money now, something with benefits that's stable. I ain't firm to borrow. I have to do this for my daughter. Something that will keep me physically busy. I couldn't sit at a desk. I love using my hands. I don't have a certificate or anything, but where are people at, what do they need? (Roy, 1999b, p. 80)

The availability of job opportunities often affects whether or not fathers are actively involved in their children's lives. The following example telescopes how job instability discourages active fathering:

Charlie began to work less and less frequently at the car wash. The nice weather had begun. . . . Whenever the weather came, Rose would explain that Charlie was responsible for paying the rent. . . . As an epilogue to these events, the economic strains per-

used in the home of the Tower family until they separated after three years of marriage. Rose took the children and Charle took to the streets. (Williams, 1981, pp. 66-67)

Unable to provide financial support to their children and female companions, men became less involved with family life. This account, over 20 years old, continues to reflect the experiences of many contemporary fathers (see also Johnson, 2000; Johnson & Doolittle, 1996; Roy, 1999b). In a more recent account, a father from Harlem describes the impact of joblessness:

The jobs is what's wrong. They hire you for two weeks, get you hopes up, squeeze in a white boy. I don't want to go home and face her and the kids with no work. I don't want to go to jail. (Sullivan, 1992, p. 12)

Similarly, job stability buttresses family life and, relatedly, paternal role involvement. The following example of Lincoln Harrison illustrates the link between job stability and fathering in a Chicago family (see also Anderson, 1990; Williams & Kornblum, 1994):

Off and on . . . Lincoln has worked two (and sometimes three) jobs to support [his] family. He has always worked primarily as a cook, both in short order diners, and in the kitchens of a well-known local restaurant. The relationship between the children and Lincoln can best be described as "respectful" . . . Because of Linlie's consistent references to his devotion . . . they appreciate his efforts on their behalf. (Fudge, 1974, p. 180-181 & 193)

In more contemporary ethnographies, Alvin stands out as a father who stabilized his work career. After many years toiling from job to job, Alvin finally secures a solid job as a truck driver. He becomes a "constant presence in [his daughter] Lanyo's life" and in the family household due to the stability of that job (Newman, 1999, p. 183).

In summary, the focus on neighborhood context identifies how the lack of economic and institutional resources influences men's job options. Inner-city neighborhoods offer only limited opportunities for stable employment. In the absence of these resources, alternatives to the formal labor market emerge in poor communities, often in the form of informal and underground economies. Both of these factors—limited opportunities and alternatives to formal employment—form the difficult context of men's family relationships.

FATHERS, MOTHERS, AND KIN: A PLACE IN THE FAMILY

I tell her now, it's not about me and her. It's about the kids. I'm not coming in her face telling her, look baby, you can trust me. I show it by faithfully coming around and having something, not just taking all the time. If we don't hook up and

9. FATHERS IN THE "HOOD"

listen now, we're going to lose these kids to the streets or to [the Department of Family Services]. (Roy, 1999a, p. 448)

Shaped by the forces of the local job market and neighborhood context, men and women in low-income African-American communities look for ways to establish partnering relationships and parental commitment. These relationships often take nontraditional forms, outside of marriage and across multiple residences. Men and women, in turn, rely on the resources of kin networks to support their efforts to be involved partners and parents.

Normative Expectations of Marriage

Normatively defined life course models place fatherhood within the context of legal marriage, with parenting then following in sequence. Poor unmarried men and women aspire to conventional parenthood like other members of American society (Anderson, 1990; Jarrett, 1988). However, given the limited economic opportunities of poor African-American men, fatherhood and motherhood not only precede marriage, but often occur in the absence of marriage altogether. For example, Tisha had children before marriage and feels that she is "going back" somewhere along the line. I'm going to catch up with everyone! She" (Jarrett, 1994, p. 36). Men desire conventional roles associated with marriage as well (see also Roy 1999a, 1999b):

I said no [to marriage]. It's not time. How could we? We're both living at home. We can't afford a place, there's just no way. It'd be crazy. But it would be nice, too, though. (McLeod, 1995, p. 233)

Economic instability has direct consequences for marital trajectories (Ascherbrenner, 1975; Clark, 1983; Henchy, 1988; McLeod, 1995; Merry, 1981; Williams, 1981). Fathers in inner-city neighborhoods describe how economic prospects depress marriage opportunities. As James professes his love for his girlfriend, he admits, "What kind of husband would I be? I need a job, man. I need a job" (McLeod, 1995, p. 233). Leon, a 37-year-old father of two sons, is frustrated repeatedly by his partner's and his work and family trajectories being "off-time" and out of sync:

We've been together since the seventh grade. I always say my wife, but we're not married. We just ain't really right. I'm not working, but she's working. When I was working, she wasn't working. So now we're hoping that both of us will be working and we can get the thing going right. (Roy, 1999b, p. 126)

Women also reflect on how their marriage prospects are delayed because of economic constraints (Henchy, 1988; Jarrett, 1998; Merry, 1981; Williams, 1991). Consider the following comment from Kenya, a single mother, who describes the link between male economic marginality and marriage:

I could do bad by myself . . . If we get married and be's working, then he has the job. I'm going to stand by him and everything, I don't want to marry/anybody that don't have nothing going for themselves . . . I don't see no future. I could do bad by myself (Jarrett, 1994, p. 38)

As men consider potential mates, they similarly consider women's economic contributions. Kevin, the father of a son from a previous marriage, finds secure high-paying employment, but is hesitant to commit to a long-term relationship with Kyesha because of her future economic prospects:

[Kevin] might feel differently if he thought Kyesha was going to make something of herself over the long run—move up, maybe take a managerial job at Burger King. But Kyesha doesn't seem inclined toward a job with much more responsibility than the one that she has. (Newman, 1994, p. 372)

To be sure, factors other than economic conditions come into play. Men and women both cite compatibility and personal preferences in the deliberations concerning marriage (Aschkenhauer, 1975). A single mother in Chicago expresses her view on compatibility: "I don't want to marry him 'cause me and him would never get along; but I like him. Somehow our waves just won't click" (Jarrett, 1994, p. 35). Another father, who is proud of his ability to provide the basics, still loses his relationship due to his partner's preferences:

She said [that] I'm always working and when I'm not working I'm too tired and never wanna do nothing with her. I'm a good provider. She said I was boring. [But there's] a lot of men out there that be tired and their women understand (Acharz & MwaAllima, 1994, p. 82)

Similarly, Dunner describes men's search for "finding the right woman. Rather than being in the dominating position, many [men] are anguished by their inability to meet women who share their ideas and values" (Dunner, 1992, p. 41).

Dynamic Intimate Relationships

Despite the obstacles to marriage, some biological fathers marry the mothers of their children and live concordantly. Married residential fathers play a positive role in the lives of inner-city children and teens. For example, ethnographers focusing on inner-city children and youth provide insight into the life of Marisa, one of the "Upward kids," who lives with her mother and father in the Johnson projects (Williams & Korshum, 1994); of Marc Gilliland, his married father, and two other teenage children (Williams & Korshum, 1985); and of Kent, who lives

9 FATHERS IN THE 'HOOD

with his mother, four younger siblings, and his father (Furtham, 1996). Earlier research notes Lincoln Harrison and his wife, Little, who have children ranging in age from 11 to 19 (Clay, 1974; see also Aschkenhauer, 1975; Martin & Martin, 1978; Valentine, 1978).

Many of these fathers establish supportive and caring relationships with their wives and children. For example, Boyd Chivers is the primary breadwinner in his family and, along with his wife, is "oriented toward the goal of 'making it,' being a successful human being in society" (Clark, 1983, p. 39). Despite their residence in a deteriorating inner-city neighborhood in Philadelphia, Mr. and Mrs. James are "extremely proud parents" in a "supportive and affectionate family" (Furstenberg, Cook, Eccles, Elder, & Sameroff, 1999, p. 105). Many Ricky is married to Ammie and the father of six young children. He holds several jobs to support his family and is a regular member at church (Rosen, 2000, p. 47).

The qualitative data also indicate that a number of maternal relationships are established that result in children. Some of these nonmarital relationships are remarkably stable, considering the economic constraints that both women and men face. In Marisa's household, her son Jeremiah's father, James Matthews, is described as "deeply involved with the family" (Rosen, 2000, p. 124). George and Renee remain committed to each other and their 1-year-old daughter, even with George's very sporadic work as a community organizer (McKern, 1981, p. 76). Another unmarried mother acknowledges her long-term partner's consistency and her affection for him:

I'm not married. I got 3 kids. But their father is there with the kids. He been there since I was 16. I been with the same guy since I was 16 years old and I'm still with him now. (only had really one man in my life (Jarrett, 1994, p. 39)

Several factors shape the trajectories of intimate marital or nonmarital relationships. In addition to economic factors, some mothers and fathers live within the context of kin networks that may or may not have the resources to buttress relationships (Aschkenhauer, 1975; Burton, 1994; Jarrett, 1994; Jarrett & Burton, 1999; Stack, 1974). Also, relationships emerge at distinct life-cycle stages for fathers. For example, older men may have more established work histories and developmental maturity that allow them to plan for relationships and families. Younger men, in contrast, often have more unstable work histories and are developmentally unprepared for the requirements of a relationship and family life.

Men's residence patterns play a significant part in relationships. As illustrated in previous examples, many fathers co-reside and have strong relationships with their partners and children. However, a relationship can remain stable despite changes in residence, as men move in and out of the household (Williams, 1991). For example, Martin Davis, a "descent daddy" to both his biological son, Termy, and his nonbiological son, Terry, spent many years living apart from his family before marrying his girlfriend, Joanne, and moving into the household (Anderson, 1999).

James' father has a positive relationship with his wife and exerts a positive influence on James. Yet James' father is not a continuous presence in the household: "He comes and he goes" (McLeod, 1995, p. 54). Coresidence is not always an indicator of a solid relationship either (Clark, 1983). For example, Norris' parents are married but his father has no influence on him, and his mother runs the family household, virtually single-handedly (Froehman, 1996).

As previously discussed, job stability is central to consistent involvement in a family household. Successful fathers are committed to work that allows time for parenting as well. However, this is a rare situation and poor fathers who frequently work multiple jobs to provide for their children find it difficult to remain actively involved in daily family life. For example, Mr. Gaines, father of 11 children, is "busy making money for the family" and is minimally involved in their lives (Clark, 1983, p. 151).

Related to job stability, men's access to and willingness to share scarce resources impacts household involvement. They can "stay" with their partners and children in a stable situation if they can hold down a job and, therefore, "pay" for the privilege (Edin & Levin, 1997; Newman, 1999). One father describes how his precarious job situation can lead to his exit from the household, and from his partner's and children's lives:

You could say I work and pay my rent. I pay for where I stay at with my girl. My girl is my landlord, but nobody knows that. She does want money. I don't like to say this as my own head, 'cause I don't like to be caught up in that. "I'm gonna kick you out." So I always stay in contact with my family. . . . I'm on the edge when it comes to financial things. Cause if I lose my job at Burger Barn, I'm off. (Newman, 1999, p. 202)

Men who are unable to contribute financially or emotionally to the household become increasingly isolated from family life (Achuz & McMillan, 1994; Shack, 1974). Elliott's preoccupation with his job loss led him to withdraw from his partner and children after less than a year of living together (see also Johnson 2000; Johnson and Doolittle, 1996; Roy, 1999b):

For several months, John and Elliott shared a small apartment and their relationship was strong. Elliott was very proud of his baby. On weekends he would spend an entire day carrying the baby around to his sister's house and would show it to his friends on the street. After five months, Elliott was laid off from his job at the factory which threw seasonal help. Elliott began spending more time with his friends at the local tavern and less time with John and their children. (Shack, 1974, p. 109)

Finally, men's expectations of intimate relationships and family life also influence the viability of involvement. Some men feel obligated to children and a long-term relationship with their partner, even in the absence of a legal contract. Derek, who lives with his common-law wife Maria and their children, is unable to save to buy a house and, as part of this inability to get ahead, has not pursued marriage either. His commitment is based on a notion of obligation to family:

9. FATHERS IN THE "HOOK"

I felt an obligation, a moral obligation [to be involved with kids]. . . . I provide for my kids. . . . I know, marriage, that's just not for me. But [my relationship with my kids is] working. (McLeod, 1995, p. 235)

However, some men become fathers through short-lived relationships, as a result of sexual encounters or their dating episodes (Anderson, 2000). Typically, their fathering a child does not result in father involvement. Susan met 17-year-old Jency at a party and became pregnant by him. Jency, who already has a 4-year-old son, assured her that "if you don't wanna keep it, just give it up for adoption. Whenever you do, that's ok" (Kaplan, 1997, p. 40). In this instance, the young father placed the responsibility for the child solely on the young mother and failed to "step up" and provide any support for the child.

Some young fathers, developmentally and economically unprepared for long-term relationships, are unwilling to give up their nondomestic lifestyle despite demands from their partners. One father in Northern Ohio said that "if [my wife] had the baby, then she got me, you know. And that's the way she done me. [She] thought that's your 'trap me.' That I'm all hers after she done have this baby" (Anderson, 1996, p. 121). After more than a year of a "good" relationship, another young father says that his girlfriend is "catching an attitude" and pressuring him to leave his pets behind in order to spend time together. He claims:

Then she started complainin' that I don't spend enough time with her and I only come in and come out when I want to. . . . She wanna' start keeping tabs on me asking all kinds of questions like she was my mother. (Achuz & McMillan, 1994, p. 41)

Conflicts surrounding control issues lead to relationship instability and sometimes dissolution (Hamer, 1969; Liebrow, 1967). A single mother in Chicago asserts: "I'm not married to him so I can do what I want to do. But when I get married, I can't do it at all. He says, 'I pay the bills.' But you don't get to boss me" (Jarratt, 1994, p. 35). In some instances, extreme conflicts around domestic control issues lead to emotional or physical abuse (Edin & Levin, 1997). Gloria, a mother from Buffalo, tells of how a violent relationship ended her husband's involvement with her and her children (see also Roemer, 2000):

My safety for my kids had to come first. He would want to be the controller. He wanted me to listen to him. He wanted me to bow down to his rules. He used to tell me, he used to make me believe that I was nothing. . . . My son walked into the room and he seen me get dressed real fast, to the point where I went to the hospital and I was abused from the night down, from the back down, and my son was like, "Well, you still going to let that man abuse you, Mommy?" . . . So I had made my decision for myself, on my own. I got rid of him. [Told him, Fine & West, 1998, pp. 170, 172]

As the examples illustrate, stable and unstable relationships exist among low-income African-American men and women, regardless of marital status. These

intimate relationships are shaped by a variety of factors, including patterns of men's residence, economic stability and ability to share resources, and expectations for family life that include moral obligations, acceptance of domestic lifestyle, and coping with interpersonal conflict.

Negotiations Within Kin Systems

The context of kin obligations and family systems plays an important role in paternal involvement and relationships. Some fathers help to create and sustain interhousehold connections among networks of family members who provide flexible and interchangeable care for children (Ackenhorn, 1975; Jarrett, 1994; Stack, 1974). For example, Asante, who provides money and resources sporadically for his daughter, turns to his kin when his resources are depleted:

I might give you \$200 at the end of the month, and I don't care if the courts know or not. The lady, manna, always know, I don't care how mad they are at me, they call me if they need something. . . . If I can't do it, and their manna can't do it, they've got grandmothers and grandfathers. It's going to come together. (Hoy, 1999a, p. 444)

Indeed, paternal relations and resources can play a formative role in children's lives, especially when the mother and her family are unable to provide housing and care (Henry, 1988). Paternal involvement encourages some paternal kin to commit time and money toward children's well-being (Stack, 1974). Asana, a 20-year-old father in New York, lives with his grandmother and 3-year-old son and is "one of those rarely talked about African American males who is taking care of his child" (Williams & Kortman, 1994, p. 64). Similarly, Joe, a 40-year-old father in Chicago, leaves a substance abuse treatment program to return home to his young son, who lives with Joe's mother through informal custody arrangements:

My son had been with my mom for three years—the mother is in a correctional institution. She knew what kind of people that my family were, and she felt safe since I was the father. . . . Let her know that I didn't have a job, so I couldn't really take care of the child, but let her know that I would do my best. (Hoy, 1999b, p. 142)

Some fathers negotiate with maternal kin in order to gain support for their involvement. Many of them are considered to be "remedial relatives" (Stack & Burton, 1993) by female kin, given their experiences with other men's prior lapses and absences from the family. Jordan, a father in Baltimore, can do little to prove his commitment to being a father to his partner's mother:

All I know is that I was trying. Her mother wouldn't let me take [my daughter]. "Well, you have to wait until they come home." So I felt that way cause it happened to me twice. . . . I say, "Well, I'm her father." (Frenschberg, 1995, p. 131)

9. FATHERS IN THE "MOOD"

Sometimes kin members resist father involvement due to fathers' histories of irresponsible behavior and absence. Bird, a 20-year-old father and former gang member who had been incarcerated in Chicago, details how he is treated as a second-class parent. When his daughter's mother is absent from the household, Bird has to answer to her aunt, who questions his commitment:

To see [my daughter] now, the aunt is straight about me seeing her, but she be acting like she doing me a favor by bringing me through. . . . When she picks up the baby, she's like "Thank y'all for watching her," be like, "Hold on, that's mine, you can't get to thank me for taking care of mine. It's what I want to do." (Hoy, 1999b, p. 143)

Both Jordan's and Bird's examples illustrate how frustrated efforts over time become obstacles to continued paternal involvement. In these instances, women believe that female kin are more reliable sources of child care and support (Burton, 1990; Newman, 1999; Stack, 1974).

Under certain circumstances, maternal kin support fathers' involvement. For example, Ricky, a 22-year-old father from Baltimore, has been consistently involved with his partner's family since childhood. As a result of this long-term history, his partner's mother encourages him to play the role of both biological and social father in the family:

Ricky checks on us because my mother made him promise to make sure we OK. . . . She always know he always been around and be a big part of our lives. (Frenschberg, 1995, p. 127)

In summary, intimate relationships are shaped and sanctioned by kin networks. Paternal kin can enhance men's involvement through an extension of their resources for children's well-being. Maternal kin can also encourage men's involvement, although they often prove to be skeptical of male involvement due to unmet expectations from previous father figures. The complete extended family context suggests that low-income fathers must cope with a variety of social obligations and expectations in order to fulfill the role of parent.

FATHER INVOLVEMENT: SOCIAL PROCESSES OF PARENTING

I was 18 years old at the time and I hardly had a commitment to myself. I just want't into taking care of someone else, not even my daughter that I truly love. . . . I do not have those crazy ideas now. I know what I must do for my newborn. (Johnson, 2000, p. 249)

Father involvement among low-income African-American men is a dynamic process. It entails negotiations around roles and responsibilities that are

influenced by social and biological considerations. The meaning of a "good father" varies, based on men's (and significant others') beliefs about biological relationships and interpretations of their social roles. Men's involvement also changes qualitatively across the life cycle. With consideration of dynamics over time, we are able to more clearly discern patterns and processes of involvement, as well as how social disadvantage accumulates and reconfigures over many years.

Biological and Responsibility

Conversations with more-caring parents reveal the complex way in which they construct definitions of fatherhood. Sometimes this discussion is presented as a distinction between "fathers" and "daddies" (Furstenberg, 1992). The "father" is the actual progenitor of the child who is related by blood. The "daddy" is the man who actively assumes the rights and responsibilities associated with the role of the father, whether he is biologically related or not. Families assess men's parenting behaviors by assigning these terms, distinguish biological relations from actual involvement in children's lives (Achenbrenner, 1975; Sullivan, 1993; Roy, 1999a).

One group of fathers believes that a biological relationship demands male involvement, because a father should not take it out on the child if he does not want responsibility. Bucks, a 24-year-old father from Trenton, works in a fast-food restaurant and supports his daughter and her disabled mother. He remarks that if fathers "do the crime," then they must "do the time" (Waller, in press).

Some men who link biological fatherhood to involvement are motivated to "be there" for their children because their own fathers were not involved with them (Allen & Doherty, 1996; Roy, 1999b; Sullivan, 1992). One young couple's histories with their own fathers shape their commitment to each other: "Jockey's absent father and her boyfriend's experience of being cut off from his first child motivated the couple to establish intimacy and commitment" (Williams, 1991, p. 74). Another father states:

My mom and my grandmother raised me. My dad? All I know is [what] his name was. And when I was about [my] child's age, he left my mom. I want to be a father-child memory [to my son]. I don't want to be like just a name. I want to be part of his life. I want him to say, "My dad is right there." I want to take him to ball games. I want to keep him strong. I want to be [at] his life. (Allen & Doherty, 1996, p. 149)

For some fathers, a relationship with their children is a moral obligation that extends beyond any commitment to an intimate relationship with a partner. Their student premises represent both a plan for future action and a social commitment to the role of "daddy" (Acharz & MacAllum, 1994; Johnson, 1996; Sullivan, 1992, 1993):

Jordan promised his girlfriend Amy that she should "do" whatever you want to do. I'll do what I have to do. Amy explained that "he was going to take care of his daughter. He was going to be the father. Be the man he supposed to be and take care

9. FATHERS IN THE THOOD¹

of his responsibilities by taking care of the child. . . . He was going to be there for Nicole when [she] needed him, and he was going to be there even when she didn't need him. (Furstenberg, 1995, p. 124)

Some male peer groups in impoverished communities encourage men to "step off" and walk away from responsibility to their children and their partners (Anderson, 1990). Other community members, however, condemn such behavior: "Fathers who neglect their kids don't get no respect from me on that. I can understand if it happens, but it ain't nothing to brag about" (Sullivan, 1993, p. 59). A commitment to a child may set new social expectations in motion and prompt men to change their peer-oriented lifestyle. Rubin, a father of three boys in Chicago, "snapped out of his nonsense" with the birth of his first son. He realizes that fatherhood pulled him off the streets and may have saved his life (see also Sullivan, 1992):

[Her pregnancy] was about the only thing that slowed me down. I decided that you're going to have nobody to carry your name on, and there ain't no need to be going out no way. (Roy, 1999a, p. 440)

Another group of fathers believe that the biological tie to children must be established, particularly if they are not in an established relationship with the mother of the child. These fathers typically look for physical resemblances with the child before they accept that the child is indeed their own (Anderson, 1990):

No one even told me I had a daughter until two weeks after she was born, and that just proved it more that she wasn't my child. But [my mom and grandmother] matched up baby pictures . . . and said it was definitely my child. But I kept on denying the baby for a year. . . . It was [when] I held her for the first time and really looked at her. She had a lot of qualities just like me and I just started getting into her from that day on. (Acharz & MacAllum, 1994, p. 44)

Adolescent fathers and mothers in fragile relationships are involved in some of the most difficult negotiations around involvement. Young men express awe at the profound meaning child brings to their lives, describing it as an "unexplainable feeling. . . . He looks at you and your body tingles. . . . It's almost like catching the Holy Ghost or something" (Allen & Doherty, 1996, p. 152). Many teen fathers, however, withdraw from their children's lives due to confusion, depression, and inability to approach fatherhood with maturity (Acharz & MacAllum, 1994; Allen & Doherty, 1996; Johnson, 2000; Kaplan, 1997). For example, John's continued attempts at providing for his child are dismissed by his girlfriend. He finally decides not to visit his son in the hospital because "I [don't] have anything to take. I asked my mother to bring me out but she started sweating me [giving a lecture]" (Johnson, 2000, p. 251).

A final group of fathers reject the children's mother or her influence (Acharz & MacAllum, 1994; Allen & Doherty, 1996; Roy 1999a; Sullivan, 1992). Despite efforts by the mother of his children, Kevin, a father of three girls in Chicago,

admins. "I knew [the baby] was mine, but I denied it because I was living with another girl. . . . The second time I denied it again" (Roy, 1999a, p. 440). Another father directly links his poor relationship with his child's mother as the reason that he cannot be an involved "daddy":

Like when me and [my partner] weren't fond of each other, it hurt me and my son equal. She would always [say], "I don't want to see you daddy," or "I would want to see my son, and me and her were fighting, I would say, 'Well, I'm coming over' and she'd say 'No, you don't' and leave. And I would come over and she'd get [Allen & Dobson, 1998, p. 150].

Some men with children from different partners also have a difficult time being "daddies" for each child (Kaplan, 1997; MacLeod, 1995; Roy, 1999b; Sullivan, 1992). Denise, a young mother, says that her son's father does not visit or pay child support because "he has so many children that my son is just one more" (Kaplan, 1997, p. 103). Moreover, involvement can look qualitatively different for each child. For example, demands for financial support from two mothers sometimes conflict with the time that Juan has to spend with his two children:

I really screwed up my life. Two children and two different mothers. . . . Now I've got to work every chance I get. Except Sunday's, that's my day with my kids. . . . [My boss says I have to work], [and I say], "You need me here!" My kids need me over here. "You've got to put your kids first, that's how I look at it, I have no choice" (MacLeod, 1995, p. 234).

In other instances, mothers see men's contributions to their children to stabilize children of nonpartnering fathers, leading to ongoing couple conflict (DeFren, 1997). Some mothers current relationships threaten fathers, who see current boyfriends as potentially usurping their parenting role (Sullivan, 1993). Some fathers' current relationships also stand between fathers and children, such as when Rudy visits her father to pick up Easter shoes and encounters his new wife who "shook me and called me all kinds of low-down names and told me that I didn't have no father" (Stack, 1974, p. 13; see also Johnson, 2000).

The negotiation over linking biological "fathers" to the rights and responsibilities of social "daddies" suggests that low-income fatherhood is socially constructed between family members. Men may be biological fathers but unable or unwilling to perform the duties of an involved parent. Because there are many paths to paternity, many men and family members struggle with an appropriate definition of fatherhood.

The Meaning of the Good Father

Qualitative research clarifies how low-income parents give meaning to the concept of involvement. Conventional expectations of father involvement typically equate "good fathers" with providing financial resources. Men know that "if

9. FATHERS IN THE "HOOD"

you cannot take care of yourself, you cannot take care of your kids" (Sullivan, 1992, p. 9). Sean, who works two jobs, at Burger Barn and a security agency, sets high expectations for employment in order to be a responsible "daddy." He declares:

[People] come to me and say "I can't find a job, it's hard." I say, "Keep on trying. Don't give up." I know, believe me, I know how it feel to be down. . . . I have to ask somebody for something, I know. You just keep trying, keep trying, love first, and you'll be all right. (Newman, 1999, p. 212)

Both fathers' and mothers' conventional notions about providing sometimes discourage men's initial involvement with their children. Trane does not want his young son to live with him until he has a job; his son's mother does not allow Trane to visit until he can provide a home. Consequently, Trane has not seen his son for over three years and has only spoken on the phone to him a few times (Johnson & Doehle, 1986). A young father from Harlem describes how his friend withdrew from his child's life because he cannot find a good job:

See, he didn't have a job, and maybe he didn't want to, you know, put his foot in his mouth and say he was gonna do something even though he couldn't do it. Right now I'm quite sure he's regretting it, and I know he wants to see the baby. . . . [But] he has no visitation rights. (Sullivan, 1991, p. 60)

Men with unstable work often provide informal contributions to their children. Fathers with young children offer disposable diapers, baby clothes, or new shoes, as well as sporadic contributions of money when it is available (Furstenberg, 1995; Jarritt, 1992; Roy, 1999b; Sullivan, 1992). These ad hoc monetary contributions serve as proxies for monetary support and are typically accepted by mothers as evidence of traditional involvement.

Some involved providers drop out of their family's lives when they transition out of the work role. One mother tries to predict the involvement of her child's father into the future, but realizes that "I shouldn't plan on depending on him, because this job can end at any time," due to job instability. She began to plan for his eventual absence because he is "hard pressed to provide any assistance" without a job (Edin & Lein, 1997, p. 165). Another father "thought that if I could make it real hard, I could make it get married, buy a little rental house and fix it up real nice." His determination and motivation to get ahead eventually eroded with a court summons for child support. He is fired as his job performance slips, and his involvement with his children—defined as providing—ends (Axtz & MacAlum, 1994, p. 89).

"Daddies" receive traditional notions of the good provider role. For some families, responsible "daddies" give priority to time, not money. These fathers realize

that "I don't need to have lots of money to be a good father; the main thing that I need to give [my son], is love and spend a little time with him" (Achara & MacAulain, 1994, p. 37). The emphasis on time reflects a different notion of men's commitment to children. Families use a common term to describe a commitment to responsible parenting, "being there" (Allen & Connor, 1997; Newman, 1999). Some fathers realize that they hurt their children when they withdraw due to lack of finances. Acker, an 18-year-old father with a newborn daughter, illustrates this point:

The main thing that people talk about is financially taking care of their children providing good, clothing, shelter. And the second thing is just spending time with them . . . The system takes away from the second thing, and they really just emphasize the first thing. And that really hurts the children (Hoy, 1999a, p. 477).

Research is also adamant about the importance of time and nonmonetary commitment. To him, money does not provide the intangible support that involved fathers can provide.

To me, that's the easy way out [the kids] some money and then run off. The money doesn't comfort them at night. They can't say, "Hey, Dollar Bill, I had a nightmare last night" and expect the Dollar Bill to rock them and hold them. Money is there because it's a necessity. But if you give a child love and attention, money is the last thing they are going to look for. (Hoy, 1999a, p. 432)

Mothers often acknowledge the difficulty that men have finding employment. Consequently, women broaden their expectations of fathers to include alternative forms of support. One mother claims that "I wouldn't care if he didn't give [his son] nothing. I would have paid child support if he would just spend a little more time with the children" (Furstenberg, 1995, p. 125). Yet, we acknowledge her child's father's economic limitations and acknowledge symbolic support instead. Yovetich suggests that even a show of interest in her child is a positive sign of involvement—even though it means lowering expectations for a father:

If you don't do it, how you do it, I don't expect him to buy my baby snowsuits and boots . . . It's just the thought. When Keith's [my son's] birthday came around, [his father] and I got to give him a quarter, he ain't got to send him a card. You could pick up the phone and wish him a happy birthday. If they don't have it, they just don't have it. You can't get blood from a turnip. (Jarrett, 1994, p. 43)

Although financial contributions and fatherhood are tightly linked, many low-income families reject singular definitions of fatherhood based on men's economic abilities. Instead, they construct a notion of fatherhood that encompasses the time men spend with their children as well as other expressions of care and concern. Broader definitions of the "good father" allow men attainable measures of responsible fatherhood in the absence of economic markets.

9. FATHERS IN THE "HOOD"

Cycles of Engagement and Disengagement

Father involvement is a dynamic process that unfolds—and changes—over many months and years. Fathers and families move through distinct transition points. For example, the breastfeeding of a relationship sometimes changes family structure and the meaning of involvement altogether. Consider the example of Tally, who over the course of the ebb and flow of his relationship with Bess becomes estranged from his son (see also Newman, 1999, for more recent examples):

After the birth of [my] baby . . . after she and Tally had stopped going out together, Bess came to the corner only on Tally's pay day . . . sometimes bringing the child along, sometimes not. But as Bess and Tally rediscovered their attraction for each other, she began to bring the baby regularly, coming now on Friday or Saturday evenings and sleeping over with the baby in Tally's room until Sunday night or Monday morning. On these weekends, Tally sometimes took the boy into the car—out shop for a soda or, on one occasion, matched up the street with the child on his shoulder, proudly announcing that Bess had "sent the man to get a loaf of bread." But after a few weeks, Tally and Bess had a fight. Bess stayed away from the neighborhood, and Tally's contacts with his son—dependent as they were on his relationship with Bess—ended abruptly. (Lambson, 1967, p. 90)

These transitions accumulate, resulting in rhythms or cycles of father involvement. Some cycles show patterns of consistent father involvement (Clark, 1983; Williams & Kornblum, 1983). For example, Vernon's persistence in his relationship with Fani keeps him attached to her and engaged with his children. He says, "Sometimes you get a little depressed, but we still stay together. I can say that anything bad that happened between us in the past that made us strong" (Furstenberg, 1995, p. 141).

Other "toe nudge" fathers move in and out of their child's lives in an inconsistent pattern over time (Kajfala, 1997; see also Furstenberg et al., 1999; Kotler, 2000). Eighteen-year-old Sherna lives with her grandmother and "saw her father only sporadically" (Williams & Kornblum, 1994, pp. 41–42). Referring to a similar pattern, Lonedo described for six months after the partner Wanda became pregnant. When the baby was born, he reappeared and worked: "He will be with me one day. I'll see to that. . . . I want him to know that I am his father." "I'll do all I can for him" (Furstenberg, 1995, p. 128). However, even after having a second child with Wanda, Lonedo is unemployed and does not pay child support. He has not seen either child in six months and attributes much of his absence to a "family misunderstanding," in which he refused to return his children after a scheduled visit.

As Lonedo's pattern of involvement suggests, cycles are shaped by job ability. For example, numerous transitions between jobs led Arvin, father of three daughters, into sporadic involvement over many years (Newman, 1999). He finally finds

work as a truck driver, and the job alone solidifies his place in the household primarily. However, it is the fathers of his daughters' children who now cycle in and out of their children's lives. In this way, cycles of engagement and disengagement overlap across generations, shaped by the economy, individual stages of development, intergenerational relationships, and personal choices.

Reconciliation between fathers and children is a common and, sometimes, problematic process (Furstenberg et al., 1999; Roy, 1999b; Williams, 1991). When children initiate reconciliation, they run the risk of rejection. Selma queries whether children initiate reconciliation, even calling into doubt his paternity (Zoller, 1983). Jackie's father "occasionally showed up and bought [her] things she wanted and didn't want," and she longed for him to be more involved in her life (Williams, 1991, p. 74). Absent fathers also ran the risk of rejection from the family. For example, one mother is reluctant to allow her daughter's father back into her life because of past lapses. She says:

When I was talking to him on the phone yesterday, it was the same thing, "You know I want you back, I've changed." I say, "Well, how can you prove to me that you've changed? You just last month told me you was gonna take her Easter shopping. She did not see you." (Furstenberg, 1995, p. 137)

Despite their absence, fathers often make efforts to connect with their children across great distances and with gestures of affection (Roy, 1999b; Sullivan, 1993; Waller, in press). One young father's efforts to search for his son lead him far away from his job and home:

I don't get to see my son since he moved away, but I think about him every day.... For a year, I went him hours of books, toys that he could put together himself, plastic tools sets. [His mother] never wrote back.... I have no way to know if he's even alive. [I] hit my job and drove [1,500 miles] one day and night, so get out there. I found out my job and drove [1,500 miles] and bought a map. (Achnar & MacAllum, 1994, p. 53)

Some fathers become involved during their children's teen years, a period when inner-city youth are seen as being particularly vulnerable to local risks and dangers (Ascherbrenner, 1975; Wilson, 1987; Zoller, 1983). Sometimes these first encounters are difficult for fathers and children, but as Dexter, a teen in Harlem who had called to his father once when he was 9 years old, explains, "I ain't no mystery anymore" (Williams & Kornblum, 1994, p. 151). Other men recognize when they become grandfathers, and their children seek them out for guidance and support in the parenting role (Ascherbrenner, 1975; Williams, 1991).

Men may reach new levels of understanding about involvement as they age. They reflect on earlier decisions and see opportunities for "second chances" with children after a string of disappointments as students, workers, sons, and partners (Achnar & MacAllum, 1994; Allen & Doherty, 1996; Roy, 1999b). For example,

Hensley fought with his first partner about involvement and, several years later with other children and a new partner, takes a more responsible attitude. Over many years of struggling to be involved, he develops a new understanding that "having a child means taking care of her and for me, that means working to take care of her" (Johnson, 2000, p. 249).

In summary, fatherhood is a dynamic process, characterized by periods of involvement and absence. Several factors influence men's level of consistency or inconsistency in their children's lives. These include job status, male-female relations, and personal decisions. These transition points accumulate over time and emerge as cycles of engagement and disengagement. As men move in and out of their children's lives, reconciliation may become problematic, even though it proves significant to both children's and their fathers' development.

FLEXIBILITY AND VARIETY OF FATHER FIGURES

With him accepting and helping me out with her, that's all right. Most men they not going to do no much except maybe like buy her a little something, play with her and call it a day. But he accepts my daughter. And seeing that it is not his, I think that's a big responsibility. Because if I ask him for something for my daughter, he'll give it to me. So I figure that right there is a man. (Jarrett, 1994, p. 43)

With variable patterns of involvement for many biological fathers, low-income African-American families rely on a wide variety of men to fulfill the paternal role (Burton, 1993a; Jarrett, 1994). The flexibility and interchangeability of the paternal role means that children receive care and concern from multiple individuals. In many instances, when the need arises for a father figure, men from both inside and outside the family are recruited.

Variety of Father Figures

Qualitative research points to a wide range of father figures who are found in the lives of poor children and youth.

Biological Fathers. In many instances, biological fathers assume the paternal role. The concern of this father is "to support the children that [he] brought into the world" (Schulz, 1969, p. 139). For example, a 25-year-old father assumes economic responsibility for his daughter and brings her into his relationship with his new family (Williams, 1991). Single biological fathers, like Steven, a 37-year-old father of three boys, also take care of their children (Burton, 1991).

Male Companions. When biological fathers do not or cannot act as "dad-figures," some mothers turn to their male companions to act as father figures

(Aaschehenren, 1975; Liebow, 1967; Schulz, 1969). Liebman finds that her new partner "accepts my daughter" and decides to remain involved because his personal commitment is matched by responsible behavior (Jarrett, 1994). A 16-year-old male in an ethnographic study of teenage pregnancy remarks:

Triffany (a pseudonym) is not my baby, but she needs a father. To be with her, I work in the day care center at school during my lunch hour. I feed her, change her diapers, and play with her. I buy her clothes when I can because I don't make much money. I keep her sometimes. Her mother and her family appreciate what I do and Triffany loves me too. Every time she sees me she reaches for me and smiles. (Baron, 1995, p. 157)

In still another example, one father assumes responsibility for his partner's child, even though paternity is still unresolved (see also Roy, 1999a; Sullivan, 1992):

When she told me she was pregnant . . . I jumped at the opportunity to claim it. I always knew that she was probably with other men and that the baby might not be mine . . . He's three years old now, and I still don't know if he's mine biologically, but he's mine because I've always loved him and I'm the person he calls daddy. (Fahiz & MsaAlum, 1994, p. 30)

Stepfathers. Stepfathers play important roles in children's lives. Sometimes they are second fathers or biological fathers, whereas at other times they supplant biological fathers altogether. For instance, Jimmie Martin is loved not only by his stepdaughter, Angela, but by her children and her cousin as well (Aaschehenren, 1975). The Miles children in Chicago have come to regard their stepfather as their father once their mother lost contact with their biological father (Zollit, 1985). Tammy, a promising teen in Cleveland, has two supportive stepfathers. She gave them "cards on Fathers' Day and wished them a happy Fathers' Day" (Williams & Kornblum, 1985, pp. 21-22).

Foster Fathers. Foster fathers provide yet another avenue to social fatherhood. Deacon Griffin, who lives in the Belmont neighborhood of Philadelphia, raised three foster children. Neighbors described them as "well-mannered and recognized as being different and distinctive from other children" (Williams, 1981, p. 54).

Uncles. Some uncles become social fathers to children (Furstenberg et al., 1999; MacLeod, 1995). Harold provides an example. He suggests that his experience as a parental figure started early in life with his sister and her 2-year-old son, both of whom lived in the household when Harold was growing up (Sullivan, 1992). Another father in Baltimore "is the only steady male figure that's been there" for his nephews and nieces, who "call him daddy" (Furstenberg, 1995, p. 137). Yethe discovered that her uncle was not her real father when she was 14 years old, but the revelation "didn't stop me from thinking of him as my father".

He had done so much and just been there. He was always Daddy. My father's also one of the people who helped me just to realize. "Yes, you've got to make something of yourself. You see your cousin. They're not doing anything. . . ." So I guess my cousin got jealous that there was someone in my life who was actually paying my tuition to go to this school, who was actually picking me up from school every day, helping me do my homework. (Anderson, 1999, pp. 57-58)

Grandfathers. Grandfathers can be called on for paternity help (Baron, 1992). In some instances women live coeducationally with their fathers, who assist them with child care. In other instances, grandfathers take full parenting responsibility for their grandchildren. One grandfather notes:

Many more black grandfathers take care of babies and everybody that you think. We're just quiet about what we do. These babies live on top, just look at how this one follows me around all the time. (Baron, 1995b, p. 34)

In addition, grandfathers offer advice to their grandchildren on how to progress in life. Beretta tells of her grandfather's encouragement: "My granddaddy he want me to hit the sky. He want me to go to school for college, university—everything. He want me to do everything" (O'Connor, 2000, p. 113).

Older Brothers. Older brothers who are often in the same households aid their mothers by caring and monitoring their siblings, as well as providing financial contributions. For example, Anthony Hayes mentions "[My brother] took the place of my father" (Clark, 1983, p. 73). John Brown, father of four, plays a fathering role in his biological family: "My father left seven years ago, and I try to help my mom as much as I can. I'm her oldest son. My brother is just a baby" (Anderson, 1990, p. 39).

Unrelated Family Friends and Mentors. Nontomantic male friends of the family play an important father figure role as well (Rostler, 2000). Tyson turns to Reggie Jones, his gymnasium coach, because "if you don't have no father, [Mr. Jones is] the guy to be with" (McLaughlin, 1993, p. 25). John, an academically promising youth, relies on father figures from his church. His unaccustomed mother, Pamela, "sought help from men in her church. She hoped that these experiences would help him become a better citizen. . . . And a young man who would one day assume responsibility as a parent" (Furstenberg et al., 1999, p. 123). Sometimes, unrelated older men in the neighborhood serve as social fathers, or "old heads" (Anderson, 1990, 1999). These men promote mainstream values and serve as bridges to conventional developmental trajectories. As one young woman relates to an older man, youth in inner-city neighborhoods look up to "ol' heads" as father figures:

I really love you. Me and my older sister used to pretend that you were our father. You were the father that we always wanted because you didn't drink, we never saw

you drunk. We never saw you staggering down the street. We never saw you messing with anybody. (Anderson, 1999, p. 184)

As these examples suggest, a wide variety of men are induced into the paternal role. These men include a variety of partners of mothers, as well as family members related to mothers. Friends and community members also become central to children's and youth's lives when they dedicate themselves to the paternal role.

Paternal Roles and Activities

In many respects, poor African-American fathers, regardless of their marital status or biological relationship, perform common role activities. Some of the paternal role activities are traditional, such as playing with children, providing discipline, and serving as role models. Other activities are more nontraditional and reflective of "new" or "emergent" fathers, such as domestic work and primary child care (Larossa, 1993).

Recreation and Play. Frequently fathers are involved in play activities. Recreational play activities serve multiple purposes. They enhance the development of children and shape the attachment between children and fathers (Forthun, 1996; Williams & Korshak, 1985). One promising teen in his inner-city neighborhood recounts his father's involvement in recreational activities, despite having limited time:

My Dad, he's busy, so he hook up, especially . . . on the weekends and stuff. And you know, go out, play sports, cause he's athletic . . . And me, we're alike, so I play basketball a lot. We play chess, he taught me how to play chess. (Frumenberg et al., 1999, p. 100)

Fathers like Robert monitor and comfort children during play activities. They encourage communication and creative learning through their interaction with boys and girls:

When [the children] fall or were hit or had an object of value taken from them, they ran to Robert if he was there. He comforted them, laughed with them, and articulated their thoughts. He painted pictures for them, made plywood canoes of the Seven Dwarfs for them, and brought home storybooks. (Larson, 1967, p. 84)

Play also alleviates some of the pain that men experience while failing to find secure employment. One young father looks forward to play with his new baby for this reason:

Usually, my routine was I'd get up, go out and look for a job in the morning. Then, I would go over to my girl's house in the afternoon and see the baby; you know, play with her and stuff. . . . Seeing her smile always made me feel better 'n

9. FATHERS IN THE "HOOD"

I was steady downplay[ing] the fact that I couldn't find any job and everybody knowing about "oh, we ain't hangin'" or "we need someone that's got so many years of experience" or "no but, you should have been here last month." (Ashby & MacAuliffe, 1994, p. 50)

Domestic Work and Child Care. Some men assume daily domestic chores associated with housework and child care. Although their contributions are less than children's mothers, men's involvement is significant to the household. Leroy, a mother's boyfriend, is involved in grooming as he "bathed the children, brushed the girls' hair and washed their clothes at the 'kitchen'" (Larson, 1967, p. 83). Sam is a 65-year-old retired factory worker who cares for his three nieces: "We gets ready really early in the morning. I comb the girls' hair, I dress and feed them. Then I take them to school" (Burton, 1991, p. 56).

Other fathers take on cooking duties, some on a regular daily basis, dependent on the employment status of the mother. Cory, a 27-year-old wrestler with three children, assumes key child care and domestic tasks, even though "usually the woman stayed at home, but I reversed it. . . . [T]hat was my philosophy" (Roy, 1999a, p. 448). Isaiah does all of the shopping and cooking for his girlfriend's family:

She used to work nights, and I used to go home and cook to make sure her three girls had something to eat. I did all of the shopping. Her family made a joke about how I could take \$60 for meat and stuff and make it last for four people over a month. (Roy, 1999b, p. 146)

Men sometimes focus on the health of their children, as well. They realize that one parent cannot monitor and care for children's health as well as two or more parental figures. Calvin, for example, played with the children during the day when they were well and stayed up with them at night when they were sick" (Larson, 1967, pp. 84-85). GK, a teen father with a young son, visits his child and goes to "extraordinary lengths" to care for him:

My son was seven months old, and he had a hair mark on his face. I asked [my girlfriend] who did it, and she said she didn't know. I asked her did she take him [to the emergency room], 'cause at the time she was staying [in] a place where cars and dogs was, and I figured, well, if a dog or something hit him, he should go in for shots. [So I took him to the clinic.] (Allen & Oakley, 1996, p. 159)

In some instances, fathers became primary parents. Even young fathers, such as 23-year-old Jehan, provide stable home environments for their children when mothers lose custody. They often rely on their own kin support networks to aid them in this responsibility. Jehan shares his story: "My son's mother, I don't know where she is. . . . I think she's in a state prison. I had been taking him on the weekends and summers, and she called me up and asked me to take him for

three years" (Roy, 1999a, p. 448). Children are sometimes prone to nonbiological fathers who express love, concern, and a desire to keep a child. Onebiological 30-year-old resident of the Falls, asks to keep his ex-girlfriend's baby girl when they "quit."

I asked if he would give the baby to me. She said fine, and my "daughter" has been living with me, my mother, my grandmother, my sisters and brothers ever since. My daughter is ten years old now. She sees her mother now and then, and her father takes her to church . . . sometimes, but our family is really the only family that she's ever had. (Snick, 1974, p. 66)

Role Models for Masculinity. Fathers establish themselves as role models for proper masculine behavior. David, a 15 year old, acknowledges that he "changed" with my old man. We is bested! I guess we both just men" (Burton, Allison, & Obichiahin, 1995). James insists that fathers' "respectful behavior is needed to counter less-positive alternatives for their sons" (see also Williams & Kornblum, 1994):

Here is a sixteen-year-old son, and my son here [to have respect for me]. And your kids, only do what they see you do. If you sit and smoke a cigarette or a joint on the porch, then that's what they're going to do . . . they'll think it's alright to do it because their daddy did it . . . You feel if your alright to bring women in and out of your house, and you've got a son or daughter there, well . . . they think that's going to be alright when they . . . you know, well, you did it. So why can't I do it? (Finn & West, 1998, p. 77)

Other men provide youth with a roadmap and tips on how to "get ahead." One "old head" tells of his relationship with three of his "boys," who he steered into legitimate careers in the military, even supporting them with his own money:

I got three of my boys in the [military] service right now, and another is on the way. Just the other day, a young guy come up to me in the neighborhood and say he need 25 dollars to get some underwear and clothes so he can get ready to leave for the army. We talked for awhile and then I reached into my pocket and come up with two items and a five and handed it to him. (Anderson, 1990, p. 70)

Discipline, Protection, and Supervision. Modeling masculinity also entails establishing fathers as authority figures and ensuring the safety and protection of children in the community. In the Northern community "certain fathers with discerning dispositions make territorial claims on a dwelling, informing their children's friends that this is my house, I pay the bills here, and all the activities occurring under its roof are my singular business" (Anderson, 1990, p. 122; see also 1999).

Men talk with their children "about how to behave" (Holloman & Lewis, 1978, p. 216; see also Zolotor, 1985). At times, fathers' guidance keeps their sons from choosing a lifestyle of the streets. One mother in Chicago, who sent her son to

live with his father in a Southern community, believes that under his father's supervision, her son will be protected from the hazards of street life:

I have a thirteen-year-old. I sent him away when he was nine because he was off his feet at that age though, because he wouldn't join. . . . They took his gym shoes off his feet. They took his clothes . . . took his jackets off his back in subzero weather. A boy pulled a gun to the head and told him, "If you don't join, next week you won't be here." I had to send him out of town. His father stayed out of town. [My son] came here last week for a week. He said, "Mama, I want to come home so bad." I said no. (Wilson, 1996, p. 4)

Men insist on teaching children "what is right and wrong," which often involves discipline. Some father figures administer discipline according to the age of the child. As Adam's father suggests:

If [Adam] does not do what he should be, I know that he will suffer some way or another. Not physically, you know, with beating or anything like that. You can discipline a child without beating. If beatings are necessary, oh, be 11 first than . . . but at his age, I don't think beating is necessary. (Friedman, 1996, p. 152)

Socializing children involves monitoring their travels outside of the household, and even escorting them from place to place (Clark, 1983; Williams & Kornblum, 1994). Sade's father escorts her and her friends home from flag girl practice every week. He admits "we don't like the darkness to catch up with her. . . . You know, we try to emphasize being home before dark" (Friedman, 1996, p. 115; see also Davidson, 1996). Sam makes sure that his niece are "in the house by three o'clock. . . . [because] I don't want them to turn out like the low-life drug-heads their mama and daddy are" (Burton, 1991).

Some men are particularly vigilant in screening youth's relationships with their peers (Anderson, 1999). Steven says that "I worry about [my sons]. There is so much to get into. But I call my boys every hour and come home on my break" (Burton, 1991, p. 36). Men's monitoring of their teen daughters' relationships is particularly pronounced in qualitative studies (see also Paulino-McCoy, 2000). Dana feels that her father is "way overdone" in his need to protect her from potential boyfriends:

You know, last week when we were in the mall and Paul came by and said, "What's up?" . . . and Dad went off, saying that he was disappointed with the way that he was acting. Now daddy's got my interest in mind, but why, he gotta do that? (White, 1999, p. 46)

Role Models for Achievement. Men are often strong role models for achievement (Clark, 1983; Davidson, 1996; Fordham, 1996). They promote education as integral to the advancement of their children. For example, Mr. Troppit recalls his conversations with his son:

work; (c) the meaning of fatherhood and the social process of father involvement; and (d) the diverse set of father figures who fulfill a variety of flexible paternal role obligations. Overall, the qualitative research suggests that:

- Local economic opportunities shape the lives of poor African-American fathers at every juncture. Men aspire to conventional work values but cannot always find jobs. Men's inability to find good jobs and create a consistent job record hampers their potential as involved parents. It also constrains marital relationships with partners and family.
- Fatherhood is not a static relationship but a dynamic process over time. Important factors, such as past and present economic situations, relationship status, personal history, and developmental maturity influence men's movement in and out of children's lives.
- Negotiations within families allow fathers to tailor active roles in their children's lives. If they are not providers, then they can offer their time and other in-kind support. If they cannot commit to marital relationship, many enter nonmarital relationships.
- African-American families depend not only on biological fathers in parenting children, but on social fathers as well. Fatherhood is an active, flexible relationship in low-income African-American communities, and men other than children's biological fathers are often well suited to take on the responsibility of parenting.

We argue, with these considerations in mind, that assumptions embedded in contemporary public policy concerning poor fathers need to be closely reexamined. Current social policies, such as welfare reform, are predicated, *at least implicitly*, on the assumption that some men do not expose a mainstream work ethic and need "parental" or "supervisory" programs to modify their "responsible" behavior (Ahean, 1997). Such policies will not address the lived experiences or motivations of low-income African-American men, who as our review suggests have conventional aspirations for work, for marriage, and for parenting and, in many instances, contribute in-kind support to their families and children (Achariz & MacAllum 1994; Edin & Lata, 1997; Jarrett, 2000; Johnson, 2000; Johnson & Doolittle, 1996; Roy, 1999a; Sullivan, 1992; Waller & Piontek, 2001).

In order to more effectively address the needs of low-income African-American fathers, policymakers must move past current "public" assumptions concerning low-income fathers and craft policies with three goals in place. For example, appropriate fatherhood policies should take men's developmental stages into account. It is difficult to promote economic provision as a measure of responsibility for teen fathers; perhaps, additional policies can promote early attachment to their children. By the same token, older fathers have different concerns, particularly with problematic reentry into a child's life and the kin network.

9. FATHERS IN THE FLOOD

In addition, public policy would benefit greatly from acknowledging the effective and informal family arrangements that are tailored for many father-child relationships. Policies must reflect an understanding of the degree of interdependence that exists even between children and their unmarried fathers who live outside the household. Such an acknowledgment would also recognize the importance of nonbiological social fathers in nurturing children, as well as nonmonetary contributions of time, material, and care.

It is problematic to tune policies finely enough to address only fathers. Broad-er mandates for policy changes at the neighborhood level, as qualitative evidence shows, would strongly shape men's involvement in the family. Initiatives to provide job training and placement would enhance opportunities for cohorts of low-income fathers who have never had stable employment histories. Education reform and innovative approaches to neighborhood safety would promote social and geographic mobility for poor families, diminishing other barriers that exist between parents and children.

To be sure, despite our consideration of extant qualitative research on African-American fathers and our ruminations about public policy, there are limits to the insights we have offered in this discussion. Indeed, more systematic studies of African-American men should be conducted giving attention to the informal roles that they play within the family, the various contributions that they make to children's well-being, and the multiple types of relationships that are formed with women and children. As we suggested previously, we encourage researchers to explore issues related to men's development in the context of family, work, and neighborhood. Further insights on the effects of development, age, and cohort on fatherhood are surely needed as well.

Given the current renewed scientific interest in qualitative methods, mixed method studies that utilize complementary strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods promise to provide new and unexplored insights on this topic. Combining some of the methods used in studies described in this review with contextually sensitive survey measures will offer coming generations of researchers both breadth and depth in understanding the "visible" place and roles of men in low-income families.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing and research for this chapter were supported by a Hatch Award and University of Illinois Research Board Award to Robin L. Jarrett; grants from the Social Science Research Council's Program on the Urban Underclass to Robin L. Jarrett and Linda M. Burton; grants to Linda M. Burton from the National Institute of Mental Health (R29 MH44057-01; R01 MH49694-07), and a grant from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (R01 HD36693-02) to Andrew Cherlin, Ron Angel, Linda M. Burton, Lindsay Chase-Lansdale, Robert Moffitt, and William Julius Wilson.

REFERENCES

- Achuz, M., & MacAllum, C. (1994, Spring). *Young street fathers: Report from the field*. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.
- Allen, W., & Curtis, M. (1997). An African American perspective on generative parenting in a Harvard A.D. Dabshier Ethn. *Community Gathering: Beyond African perspectives* (pp. 25-30). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Allen, W., & Doherty, W. (1998). The responsibilities of fatherhood as perceived by African American teenage fathers. *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Sociology*, 29, 142-155.
- Anderson, E. (1990). *Streetwise: Race, class, and change in an urban childhood*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Anderson, J. (1975). *Letting a black father at Chicago*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Baca Zinn, M. (1989). Family, race, and poverty in the eighties. *Sign: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 14, 858-874.
- Becker, H. S. (1970). *Socialized work: Method and substance*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Bulmer, M. (1986). The value of qualitative research. In M. Bulmer, K. G. Binney, S. Blume, M. Carr, & C. H. Wren (Eds.), *Social research and social policy* (pp. 180-200). London: Allen & Unwin.
- Burgess, R. G. (1984). *In the field: An introduction to field research*. Boston: Allyn and Unwin.
- Burton, L. M. (1990). Teenage childbearing as an alternative life-course strategy in multigenerational black families. *Human Nature*, 1(2), 123-143.
- Burton, L. M. (1991). Coming for children. *The American Enterprise*, 2, 34-37.
- Burton, L. M. (1992). Black grandparents rearing children of drug-addicted parents: Stressors, outcomes, and social service needs. *The Gerontologist*, 27(6), 748-751.
- Burton, L. M. (1994). Intergenerational legacies and intimate relationships: Perspectives on adolescent mothers and fathers. *ESPR Evolution*, 10(2), 2-5.
- Burton, L. M. (1995a). Family structure and nonmarital fertility: Perspectives from ethnographic research. In Department of Health and Human Services, *Research in Demography and Family Change* (Advisory Panel Report 147-153). Hyattsville, MD: Department of Health Services, (PHS No. (PHS) 95-1257).
- Burton, L. M. (1995b). Eminent domain in an ethnographic study. In K. W. Schaie, V. L. Bengtson, & K. M. Johnson (Eds.), *Intergenerational issues in aging* (pp. 79-96). New York: Springer.
- Burke, L. M., Allison, K., & O'Connell, D. (1995). Social context and adolescence: Perspectives on development among inner-city African American teens. In L. J. Crockett & A. C. Cozier (Eds.), *Fatherhood through adolescence: Individual development in relation to social context* (pp. 119-138). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Burton, L. M., & Graham, J. (1991). Neighborhood rhythms and the social activities of adolescent mothers. In R. Larson & A. C. Cozier (Eds.), *Youngest mothers as adolescents: Context, outcomes, and the conclusions of daily life* (pp. 7-22). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Burton, L. M., O'Connell, D., A. C. Allison, K. (1996). Ethnographic insights on social context and adolescent development among inner-city African American teens. In R. J. Akers, A. Cozier, & R. Shewler (Eds.), *Ethnographic and human development: Context and meaning in social inquiry* (pp. 395-418). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Burton, L. M., & Seigel, A. R. (1998). The invisible man revisited: Comments on the life course, history, and men's roles in American families. In A. Booth & A. C. Cozier (Eds.), *Men in families*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Calk, R. M. (1983). *Family life and school achievement: Why poor black children succeed or fail*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Cecilia, M., Duncan, G. J., & Gennep, P. (1985). Males and early: The causes and persistence of poverty. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 4, 516-530.
- Darity, W. A., & Moyock, S. L. (1984). Does welfare dependency cause female hardship? The case of the black family. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 46, 763-779.
- Davisson, A. L. (1996). *Making and making identity in schools: Student narratives on race, gender, and academic engagement*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Doherty, L. (1989). *When children were children: An inside look at the crisis of teenage parenthood*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Duarte, M. (1992). *Streetwise: Race, respectability, and masculinity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Duarte, N. K. (1970). *The research act: A theoretical introduction to anthropological methods*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Duarte, N. K., & Lamoth, Y. S. (1994). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Edin, K., & Lan, L. (1997). *Making and more: How single mothers survive welfare and low-wage jobs*. New York: Russell Sage.
- Ellis, D., & Fine, M. (1997). Community of AFDC on family structure and living arrangements. *Research in Family Process*, 37, 117-207.
- Farrington, D. M. (1989). *Observational field work*. Annual Review of Sociology, 7, 351-378.
- Farrington, D. M. (1990). *Ethnography: Step by step*. Norbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Fine, M. (1985). *Disjointed out of high school: An inside look*. Social Forces, 16, 43-50.
- Fine, M., & Weiss, L. (1987). *The adolescent cup: The lives of poor and working-class young adults*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Fordham, S. (1996). *Black out: Dilemmas of race, identity, and success at Capital High*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Furstenberg, F. F., Jr. (1992). Daughters and fathers: Men who do for their children and men who don't. In E. F. Furstenberg, Jr., K. E. Sherwood, & M. L. Sullivan (Eds.), *Caring and paying: What fathers and mothers say about child support* (pp. 34-56). New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation.
- Furstenberg, F. F., Jr. (1995). *Fathering in the inner-city: Parental participation and public policy*. In W. Maletzky (Ed.), *Evolutionary Contemporary theory, research and social policy* (pp. 119-147). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Furstenberg, F. F., Jr., Cook, T. D., Eccles, J., Biber, G. H., & Santorelli, A. (1999). *Making up a male of father families and adolescent success*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Furstenberg, F. F., & Higgins, M. E. (1995). The influence of neighborhoods on children's development: A theoretical perspective and a research agenda. In J. J. Heckman, G. Duncan, & J. L. Aber (Eds.), *Psychological poverty: Causes and consequences for children* (pp. 23-47). New York: Russell Sage.
- Gabriel, Y. (1999). *Black families in intergenerational and cultural perspectives*. In M. E. Lamb (Ed.), *Parenting and child development in non-traditional families*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Garfinkel, L., McLanahan, S., Meyer, D., & Selzer, J. (1998). *Fathers under fire: The evolution of child support enforcement*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Hagedorn, L., & Mason, P. (1988). *People and jobs: Gangs and the underclass in a rubble city*. Chicago: Lake View Press.
- Hamer, J. F. (1997). *The fathers of "fatherless" black children: Fatherhood in poverty*. *The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, 28, 564-578.
- Hammers, K. F. (1989). *Schools*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hamber, K. F. (1988). *Unfulfilled women: Beyond childbearing among black women-headed adolescent mothers*. Unpublished dissertation, University of California, Berkeley.
- Holloman, R. E., & Lewis, F. E. (1978). The "vibe": A case study of the black extended family in Chicago. In D. Smolin, E. Shiman, & D. A. France (Eds.), *The extended family in black society* (pp. 201-238). The Hague: Mouton.
- Jarek, R. L. (1992). *A family case study: An examination of the underclass debate*. In J. Gilgun, G. Handel, & K. Blay (Eds.), *Qualitative methods in family research* (pp. 172-197). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
9. FATHERS IN THE HOOD

- Jarrett, R. L. (1994). Living poor: Family life among single parent, African American women. *Social Problems*, 41, 10-49.
- Jarrett, R. L. (1995). Growing up poor: The family experiences of socially mobile youth in low-income African American neighborhoods. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 10, 111-135.
- Jarrett, R. L. (1998). African American mothers and grandmothers in poverty: An additional perspective. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 29, 585-599.
- Jarrett, R. L. (2000). Voices from below: The use of participatory research for addressing public policy. In M. S. Strecher, S. Grady, & M. S. Shattell (Eds.), *Redeigning family policy: Coping with the 21st century*. New York: Columbia Press.
- Jarrett, R. L., & Roy, L. M. (1999). Dynamic dimensions of family structure. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 30, 127-143.
- Jarrett, R. L. (1987). *Living poor: A sociological observer's look of poverty and poverty*. Ann Arbor, MI: Ann Arbor Publishers.
- Joe, T. (1984). *The "top-down" of Black families headed by women: The economic status of men*. Washington, DC: Center for the Study of Social Policy.
- Jones, E., & Donohue, F. (1996). *Low income parents and the Parent First Start Demonstration: An early-deteriorating look at low income non-extended parents and how one policy initiative that attempted to improve their ability to pay child support*. New York: Manpower Development Research Corporation.
- Johnson, W. (1994, March). Parental involvement in fragile, African American families: Implications for clinical social work practice. *Smith College Studies on Social Work*, 64(2), 215-232.
- Johnson, W. (2000). Work preparation and labor market experience among urban, non-resident fathers. In S. Danziger & A. Lan (Eds.), *Coping with poverty: The social context of neighborhood, work and family in the African American community* (pp. 223-240). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Jorgensen, D. L. (1989). *Parent-teacher observation: A methodology for human studies*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Kaplan, E. B. (1997). *Not our kind of girl: Unraveling the myths of Black teenage motherhood*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Katzenbach, J. (1991). *Three men on children's lives*. New York: Anchor Books.
- La Botz, R. (1993). *Rehabilitation of the underclass*. *American Monthly*, 238, 31-57.
- Levinson, R. (1983). *John's story: A study of Negro street corner*. Boston, MA: Beacon.
- Medford, J. (1987). *Are 700 students? A study of Negro street corner*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Medford, J. (1995). *Are 700 students? A study of Negro street corner in a low-income community*. (2nd ed.) Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- Morgan, W., Amato, P., Day, R., & Luthi, M. (2000). Scholarship on interethnic in the 1990s and beyond. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 62(4), 1173-1191.
- Martin, E., & Martin, J. (1978). *The Black extended family*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- McLanahan, S., & Sandefur, G. (1994). *Coming up with a single parent: What hurts, what helps*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- McLaughlin, M. W. (1993). Embedded identities: Embedding balance in urban contexts. In S. B. Heath & M. W. McLanahan (Eds.), *Identity and inner-city youth: Beyond ethnicity and gender* (pp. 36-66). New York: Teachers College Press.
- McLaughlin, M. W., Jey, M. A., & Lurigan, J. (1994). *Urban inner-city neighborhood organization in the lives and fathers of inner-city youth*. San Francisco: Joseph P. Healy.
- McQuilten, P. J. (1998). *Educational opportunity in an urban American high school: A cultural analysis*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Medal, L. (1997). *The new generation: Supervisory approaches to poverty*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institute.
- Medal, L. (1998). *Beyond containment: The social obligations of citizenship*. New York: Free Press.

- Merry, S. E. (1981). *Urban danger: Life in a neighborhood of stragglers*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Miller, A. (1995). Social sciences, social policy, and the heritage of African American families. In M. Katz (Ed.), *The "welfare" debate: Views from history* (pp. 254-289). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Mills, R., & Poulos, H. (1997). *Parentification, child support, and English families*. In L. Medal (Ed.), *The new generation: Supervisory approaches to poverty*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institute.
- Mohr, M., Jr. (1989). *The vertical ghetto: Experiments in an urban poverty*. New York: Random House.
- Morgan, D. P. (1985). *The Negro family: The core for social action*. Washington, DC: Office of Policy Planning and Research, United States Department of Labor.
- Morris, C. (1984). *Living poor: African American social policy, 1950-1980*. New York: Basic Books.
- Nesman, R. S. (1999). *No father in my game: The working poor in the inner-city*. New York: Knopf and Random House Foundation.
- O'Connor, C. (2000). Disenfranchising in the inner city: Dismissing the divide between segregation and expectations. In S. Danziger & A. Lan (Eds.), *Coping with poverty: The social context of neighborhood, work, and family in the African American community* (pp. 185-189). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Ogline, J. U. (1974). *The new generation: An obituary of education in an urban neighborhood*. New York: Academic Press.
- Pullilo-McCoy, M. (2000). Negating adolescence in a Black middle-class neighborhood. In S. Danziger & A. Lan (Eds.), *Coping with poverty: The social context of neighborhood, work, and family in the African American community* (pp. 77-101). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Rosenzweig, L. (1970). *Blacked parents with Black families in a Federal town*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Rosenzweig, A. (2000). Black male employment and self-sufficiency. In S. Danziger & A. Lan (Eds.), *Coping with poverty: The social context of neighborhood, work, and family in the African American community* (pp. 172-200). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Rosenzweig, K. B. (2000). *Working inner-city children: The early school years*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Center for Urban and Community Research.
- Roy, L. M. (1999a). *How become single fathers in an African American community and the requirements for their success*. *Journal of Family Issues*, 20, 432-457.
- Roy, L. M. (1999b). *On the margins of family and work: Life course analysis of low-income single fathers in an African American community*. Unpublished dissertation, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL.
- Schile, D. (1989). *Coming up Black: Parents of black adolescents*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Stack, C. B. (1974). *All our strategies for survival in a Black community*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Stack, C. B., & Burton, L. (1993). *Kenneth's journey: Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 24, 157-170.
- Stack, R. (1985). Changes in black family structure: The conflict between family ideology and structural conditions. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 47, 1005-1013.
- Sullivan, M. (1989). *Getting paid: Black crime and work in the inner-city*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Sullivan, M. (1992). Non-extended fathers' attitudes and behaviors. In F. Furstenberg, K. Sherwood, & M. Sakuma (Eds.), *Going and going: What mothers and fathers say about child support* (pp. 6-23). New York: Manpower Research Demonstration Corporation.
- Sullivan, M. (1993). Young fathers and parenting in two inner city neighborhoods. In R. Letman & P. Cohen (Eds.), *How does father? Changing roles and emerging policies* (pp. 52-73). Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Tagg, T. A. (1974). *Adolescent delinquency: Older delinquents in black American kinship*. Unpublished dissertation, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL.

- Volman, B. L. (1978). *Working and after hard work: Life styles of the ghetto*. New York: Free Press.
- Waller, M. (in press). *My baby's father: Unmarried parents and parental responsibility*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Waller, M., & Pleck, R. (2000). Effective child support policy for low income families: Evidence from street level research. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 20(1), 89-110.
- White, R. T. (1999). *Pinning risk in perspective: Black teenage boys at the end of AIDS*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Williams, C. W. (1991). *Black teen mothers: Pregnancy and child rearing from their perspective*. Lexington, MA: D. C. Heath & Company.
- Williams, M. (1978). Challenged in an urban black ghetto: Two life histories. *Omni*, 2, 169-182.
- Williams, M. (1981). *On the street where I stand*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- Williams, T., & Kornblum, W. (1985). *Growing up poor*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.
- Williams, T., & Kornblum, W. (1994). *The Ghetto kids: Struggle and hope in the projects*. New York: G. P. Putnam.
- Wilson, W. J. (1987). *The truly disadvantaged: The inner city, the underclass, and public policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Wilson, W. J. (1996). *When work disappears: The world of the new urban poor*. New York: Knopf.
- Young, A. (2000). On the search for work in Los Angeles: Black men's conceptions of work opportunity and the good job. In S. Dusziger & A. Lee (Eds.), *Coping with poverty: The social context of neighborhood work and family in the African American community* (pp. 141-171). Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Zoller, A. C. (1985). *A member of the family: Struggles for Black family community*. Chicago: Nelson Hall.

10

Cultural Contexts of Father Involvement

Nicholas Townsend
Brooklyn University

Definitions of good fatherhood and expectations of men's involvement with their children differ from one culture to another. I draw on intensive fieldwork among two groups of men, one in the San Francisco Bay region of northern California, the other in a village in the southern African country of Botswana, to illustrate this variation. Most of this chapter is devoted to a descriptive analysis of two systems of cultural expectations about the appropriate behavior of men and about what fathers are supposed to do for their children. In order to contextualize these cultural analyses, I first discuss four elements of an anthropological approach: (a) the meaning of cultural interpretation, (b) the particularism of anthropological method, (c) the nature of comparison, and (d) the concept of dominant cultural values. Then I consider the cultural specificity of parenthood and the theoretical development of the idea that children develop within a cultural context.

In the first of my two examples, I present an analysis of the way that men from California described the place of fatherhood in their lives, drawing out their assumptions about the life course, work, gender, and fathers' responsibilities. The pattern of these assumptions will be familiar to most readers and may be taken for granted by many of them. But I then turn to an extended analysis of the life story of a man from Botswana and illustrate that his lifelong involvement with his children has been guided by very different assumptions about what men should do to