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RESEARCH REPORT #7

**THE IMPACT OF FAMILY STRUCTURE VARIATIONS AMONG
BLACK FAMILIES ON THE UNDERENUMERATION
OF BLACK MALES**

PART 1: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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THE STUDY OF BLACK FAMILY STRUCTURE

John L. Hudgins, Ph.D.

This section reviews the general and theoretical study of black family structure. Since the black family is often the subject of public policy debates and mass media presentations, its discussion and study continue to be rather controversial. Writing in the November 1980 edition of the Journal of Marriage and the Family, Robert Staples observes that, as white males have dominated the quantitative studies of minority families, they have often discredited their minority counterparts by accusing them of being polemic and substituting speculation and ideology for objective data. This controversy sparked the publication of over 50 books and 500 articles related to the black family between 1970 and 1980. That 10-year period produced five times more black family literature than had been produced in all the years prior to 1970. Along with this expansion of black family research and literature came the development of new perspectives.

Allen (1978) identifies three perspectives that are most common in black family research: (1) the cultural deviant approach; (2) the cultural equivalent approach; and (3) the cultural variant approach. The cultural deviant approach views black families as pathological. The

cultural equivalent perspective confers legitimacy upon black families as long as their family lifestyles conform to the white middle-class nuclear family form. The cultural variant orientation allows that black families represent different but functional family forms. The latter perspective, which views the black family as culturally unique and legitimate, continues to be under-represented in mainstream journals. It is quite likely that this same tendency in the representation of family research perspectives extends to the development and implementation of the census.

Two additional theoretical constructs can also be applied to the study of black families. The first and most common one is referred to as the "Africanity" model. The underlying tenets of this model are that African traits were retained and are manifested in black styles of kinship patterns, marriage, sexuality, and child rearing. The second of these conceptual models is the "internal colonialism" approach. It bridges the cultural equivalent and cultural variant perspectives. Using the colonial analogy, it suggests that racial domination by outsiders can create weaknesses in a group's family structure while acknowledging the existence of functional elements in its family system (Staples, 1980).

Where public policy, including enumeration practices, continues to ignore alternative approaches to family

analysis, inefficiency results. The acceptance and utilization of alternative perspectives has been slow in the academic world and even slower in the development and implementation of public policy. These "different" perspectives provide a wealth of understanding and insight into family structure and functioning that more traditional cultural deviant and cultural equivalent approaches cannot.

In a review of the development of the study of black families, Staples notes that it is generally accepted that the precursor of sociological research and theories on the black family was the late black sociologist, E. Franklin Frazier. Using the natural history approach to the study of black family life, Frazier explained the present condition of this group as the culmination of an evolutionary process, its structure strongly affected by vestiges of slavery, racism, and economic exploitation (Staples, 1987).

Much later, Daniel Moynihan attempted to confirm empirically Frazier's theory that the Black family was disorganized as a result of slavery, urbanization, and economic deprivation. He added a new dimension to Frazier's theory, namely that "at the heart of the deterioration of the fabric of Negro society is the deterioration of the Negro family" (Moynihan, 1965). Although he cited the antecedents of slavery and high unemployment as important variables historically, Moynihan

shifted the burden of Black deprivation onto the Black family rather than onto the American social structure (Staples, 1987). Moynihan's use of Census data called new attention to enumeration and research concerns in the black community.

The first scholar, a historian, to challenge the thesis that the black family was destroyed by slavery was Blassingame (1971) whose use of slave narratives indicated that in the slave quarters Black families did exist as functioning institutions and role models for others. Fogel and Engerman (1974) used elaborate quantitative methods to document that slave owners did not separate a majority of the slave families. They contended that the capitalistic efficiency of the slave system made it more practical to keep slave families intact. Genovese (1974) argues that black culture, through compromise and negotiation between slaves and slave owners, flourished during slavery. Expanding upon this notion, he suggests that the alleged matriarchy existing during that era was closer to a healthy sexual equality than was possible for whites during the same era (Staples, 1987).

Using census data for a number of cities between 1880 and 1925, Guttman (1976) found that the majority of Blacks, of all social classes, were lodged in nuclear families. Through the use of plantation birth records and marriage applications, he concluded that the dual parent household

was the dominant form during slavery.

The Africanity approach to the study of the black family suggests that among the African patterns that were transplanted and transformed by Afro-American slaves were consanguineal kin groupings ("kin networks"), husband-wife relations, sibling bonds, socialization practices, patterns of exogamy, marriage rules and rituals, naming practices, relationships between alternate generations (i.e., grandparents and grandchildren), patterns of respect and deference, and the extension of kinship terminology to elders throughout the community (Sudarkasa, 1980). The predominant form of corporate association in Africa is the kinship group or descent group, termed clan or lineage by anthropologists. The three major aspects of kinship which serve as the basis of the traditional political system are descent, filiation, and marriage. Descent refers to the relationship of a group of persons to a common ancestor through a number of generations. Filiation is the relationship between parent and child. Marriage, often referred to as affinity, is the relationship between a husband and wife and between a person and the family of his spouse (Foster, 1983).

Regarding more traditional study of families, Foster notes, the nuclear family is more compatible with the individualism, materialism, and secularism borne out of the

impersonal nature of many of the relationships characteristic of an urban, industrial, money economy (Martin and Martin, 1978). African families show an interdependence or communal cooperation borne out of the necessity of providing a living in a rural, agricultural environment. The most important difference between the African family and the Western family is that in African societies the conjugal family (the African counterpart of the nuclear family) is subordinate to the consanguineous kinship group. The conjugal family unit tends to assume precedence in western (European) societies. In fact, in African societies the stability of the extended family is not dependent upon the stability of the specific conjugal groups within it. Likewise, because of the extensive kinship ties in many contemporary black families, the departure of a spouse does not have as much a destabilizing effect as the current literature on the black family would tend to suggest (Foster, 1983).

The preoccupation of scholars of family organization with the nuclear family does not derive from its universality or its structural primacy, but rather from the value placed upon it in Western societies. African families were not centered around conjugal unions. The extended family took precedence over conjugal unions, the African counterpart of the Western nuclear family. The same can be said about the black American family.

Sudarkasa (1980) asserts that when this fact is understood, it becomes clear that the instability of conjugal relations cannot be seen as the sole measure of family instability. To the degree that the enumeration process assumes dominance of conjugal unions, persons residing in family situations where consanguinity (real or fictive) is dominant may be undercounted.

The extended family relationships, that have grown out of the kinship networks which African slaves reestablished in America, have historically been greater among blacks than whites. From the period of slavery to the present, "African-Americans" have adapted the African consanguine pattern as a survival mechanism against the destructive and destabilizing impacts of American society on black family life. Considering the extensive kinship network and the large degree of role flexibility in black families, it is clear that other persons in the kin constellation may well perform the functions that would be associated with those of an absent father or mother. Further, that black women can be primary bread winners in their families best exemplifies this adaptability of family roles (Foster, 1983).

There has been a selective focus on the negative aspects of Afro-American family life because scholars do not seem interested in the Afro-American family as an institution in its own right (Billingsley, 1968). The

controversy remains as to whether Afro-Americans have a unique culture and hence a distinctive family organization. Some hold that the norms and values that Afro-Americans hold are simply a reflection of social class factors. Barbee (1981) suggests that Afro-American families should be viewed as forms of social organization with their own cultural dynamics.

Little wonder that a census which is household (nuclear family) oriented may encounter some problems. The census, like many western oriented family and community studies, assumes a generic or standard family model as the departure point. The literature considered above suggests that for any number of reasons, black families often do not approximate that model. The extended family is a major variation in black family structure found most frequently among lower income blacks.

THE EXTENDED FAMILY

Three basic forms of Afro-American family organizations have been identified by Billingsley (1968): nuclear, extended, and augmented. Essentially, these adaptations can be viewed as responses to social and economic changes in a pluralistic society. He describes four classes of relatives who may reside together in extended Afro-American families: (a) grandchildren, nieces, nephews, cousins, and young siblings under 18; (b) parental

peers, for example siblings, cousins, and other adult relatives; (c) elders of the parents, for example aunts and uncles; (d) parents of the family heads. The length of time that a relative may live with the family varies and is often dependent on the reason that the individual came there (Billingsley, 1968). It becomes difficult to characterize all of these possible family members in the language or model most typical of American social science which is reflected in the enumeration process. The enumeration respondent may tend to remedy this difficulty by only identifying individuals who fit the typical categories of the nuclear family model, and to simply omit all others. As we shall note later, it is black men who most often fall into these irregular characterizations and are thus omitted.

Martin and Martin (1978) suggest that the extended family has four defining characteristics: (a) it is comprised of four generations of relatives; (b) it is headed by a dominant family figure to whom the other members look for leadership in holding the family together; (c) it is interdependent in that relatives depend upon each other for emotional, social, and material support; (d) the dominant family figure always resides in the extended family's base household (this base is usually the center of extended-family activities). What may appear to be a nuclear family could in actuality be a subextension of an

extended family base (Barbee, 1981).

Augmented families are those that have unrelated individuals living with them as roomers, boarders, lodgers, or other relatively long-term guests. The importance of kinship to Afro-Americans is exemplified by the number of fictive kin terms in an Afro-American community. Thus, one can find reference to a wide range of "play" relatives, for example, "play mother" or "play brother," etc. Each of these terms refers to a status and identifies the relationship between the speaker and the person being addressed (Barbee, 1981). The classification of a friend as a kinsperson is accompanied by respect and responsibility (Stack, 1974). There is an awareness, however, that these classifications differ from the "standard" American classifications. This may often lead an enumeration respondent to only identify the "real kin" and fictive kin who actually reside in a household may not be identified in any household.

When a residential definition is associated with extended family structure, it has consistently been found that socioeconomic status (SES) is inversely related to the probability of extendedness. It follows that lower SES individuals are far more likely to form extended households because such households are to their long-term economic advantage. Anderson and Allen suggest that black families are more likely than white families to be extended, when

household structure is the indicator of extendedness. This reflects the black family's limited economic resources and greater susceptibility to economic discrimination (Anderson and Allen, 1984).

A second explanation attributes differences in family structure to the existence of distinctive sets of cultural norms and values which have evolved, in part, out of past economic conditions and, in part, out of the historical legacy of slavery and reconstruction. Northern blacks, because of greater upward mobility, contact with white, middle-class values, and urbanization are seen as less affected by this cultural legacy. Therefore, it is expected that black-white differences in family structure will be greatest in the South, and less apparent in the North. It is also possible that both Southern blacks and whites will be more likely than their Northern counterparts to exhibit extended household structures. Work on regional cultures suggests that the South, despite changes over the past few decades, retains a unique set of values and beliefs, including a belief in strong family ties (Anderson and Allen, 1984).

Other research shows that extended households are more common among families headed by single females. The primary explanation for this correlation has been economic, stressing that the economic needs of families headed by women are greater than those headed by a man or a husband

and wife. It is also clear that, regardless of economic position, single, female household heads have social and emotional support needs which may be filled best by including relatives in the household (Anderson and Allen, 1984). This is especially important to this research as the census continues to reflect a disproportionately high number of households headed by single black females.

As the educational level of the household head increases, the probability of maintaining an extended household decreases for both races. The exception to the overall pattern regarding income is that black household heads in the highest income category are equally as likely to head extended households as those in the lowest category. Extended family structure is more common where there are no children of the head of household present, and black families without children in the home are much more likely than their white counterparts to be extended in structure (Anderson and Allen, 1984).

Households headed by both a husband and wife are far less likely to be extended than those headed by either a single male or single female. This pattern is consistent across racial groups. It is interesting to note that there are no significant race differences in the proportion of extended households among non-husband wife-headed households, although differences are apparent among the husband-wife headed households. In general, black

households are about twice as likely as white households to be extended (21.3 percent versus 11.4 percent) (Anderson and Allen, 1984).

BLACK MALES

An essential part of undercount research and the study of the black family concerns the status, roles, and behaviors associated with black males. The specific nature of their participation in black families is the focus of this section.

Gary and Leashore (1982) note that in 1975, a greater percentage of black men than white men aged 14 and over was single (38 percent versus 28 percent), a disparity that increased since 1940, when the percentages of black men and white men who were single was the same. In too many instances, the frustration generated by the economic system has led to the disproportionate involvement of black men with the criminal justice system and other situations less likely to contribute to family formation. Blacks (especially males) face a 37 percent greater chance of suffering an occupational injury and a 20 percent chance of dying from a job related injury than do whites (males).

Owing to their low economic status, many black men experience difficulties in fulfilling their roles as providers and protectors of their families. Thus, many black men are reluctant to take on the obligations of legal

marriage, and many black women who want to marry do not have access to black men who are economically in a position to maintain family life. In some cases, unemployed black men or black men who earn low salaries seek to improve their economic status by participating in the irregular economy by gambling, stealing, buying and selling stolen goods and so forth. Often these activities have serious consequences, such as getting fired from their job, drug and alcohol abuse, homicide, and incarceration. In a more general sense, according to Gary and Leashore (1982), institutional racism is primarily responsible for this vulnerability of black men.

If economic pressures become intolerable, some black men leave their families and do not help the mothers support their children. When a black man leaves his family, the roles once performed by him are often assumed by other family members. For example, in many such families other relatives and nonrelatives--brothers, uncles, cousins, grandfather, mother's boyfriend, and male neighbors--assume the role of the father and are likely to be involved with the children and thereby foster appropriate child development (Gary and Leashore, 1982).

Gaston (1986) makes the point that in the black community, it is the men who need attending to. They are the ones failing in school, losing ground in the labor market, filling up the prisons and dying slowly through

drugs, alcohol, violence, and adventurism. For the black men, attaining any portion of "traditional" manhood is problematic. The adult Black male frequently finds himself on a fantasy island lacking the skills necessary to propel himself into the flow of mainstream America (Gaston, 1986). It is in the mainstream of American family life that the census undercounts are least likely.

The media's influence on the Black male is strengthened in the sometimes apparent absence of a strong cultural base. Few media items are consumed more completely by the Black male than professional sports. Professional sports are expected to be the shortcut to the pinnacle of American society. The images projected by the media make the young Black male's dream of becoming a professional athlete seem far more feasible than seeing himself as a member of a surgical team, or as some other more typical professional. Basketball has become the premiere sport in many Black neighborhoods. Its mastery is a part of the rite of passage for young black males. In a single-parent household, the coach may serve as a surrogate father. The result is that time spent pursuing the professional sport dream is time away from the development of the realistic skills needed to compete economically in the larger society (Gaston, 1986). This affects the ultimate likelihood of such men residing in nuclear households.

Alternatively, research completed by Dawkins actually found no difference between males and females in terms of educational aspirations. The strongest predictors of educational aspirations among both males and females are high school curriculum, academic aptitude, and self-concept. Among males, community size and social class are the most significant predictors of occupational aspirations while among females' high school curriculum, academic aptitude and self-concept are the most significant predictors. For males, social background variables had a stronger influence than other predictors on occupational aspirations, while educational factors tended to be important in predicting educational aspirations only (Dawkins, 1981). The impact of the social background on occupational aspirations is directly related to eventual employment, job stability (or lack thereof) and male participation in nuclear family formation. As noted above, those males who for whatever reason are not active participants in the labor market are less likely to marry and participate in nuclear family households. This sequence of events (or non events) results in their occupying family statuses in which they are much less likely to be enumerated.

Another issue associated with the absence of many black men from family roles involves the allegation of highly antagonistic male-female relationships. Rubin found

scant support for the overall idea that family structure, peer groups, social class, and sex membership determine attitudes concerning male-female relations. Black youth from nonfemale-headed households sought out "internal" dating characteristics of their opposite sex partner more than people reared in female-headed households. There was slight evidence that black males sought out both "internal" and "external" dating characteristics in the opposite sex partner more than females did. Family structure, peer group affiliation, social class and sex were not adequate predictors of differences in attitudes about male-female relations among black youth in this study.

Indeed, Henderson (1967) suggests that the special and peculiar characteristics of a black ghetto explain similarities among its inhabitants which are not explainable by family structure and social class. Goode's (1961, 1965) studies of Northwestern Europe and Africa indicate that it is not the individual or the family, but the community that maintains conformity to, or deviation from, particular norms (Rubin, 1981).

It is conceivable, as Bell (1967) suggested, that some topics like out-of-wedlock pregnancies are irrelevant in the lower class black community and, therefore, are matters of indifference. Females who were affiliated with a same sex peer group did not feel rejected by the people around them if they became premaritally pregnant when compared to

females who were not affiliated with a same sex peer group. Males who were not affiliated with a same sex peer group were found to be more permissive in their attitudes toward female premarital sexual permissiveness than those who were affiliated. Lower class males seemed more accepting of premarital conceptions in regard to their own relationship behavior. Thus, marriage or family formation is not a necessary expectation regarding the pregnancies in which they were involved. White males in this situation have been much more likely to marry and form families as a result of such pregnancies. Participation in such family (household) units has resulted in a far greater likelihood of census inclusion of young white males.

The major implication of this study is that attitudinal change, at least in this type of community (low income, black) may follow alterations in the position and structure of the total community, rather than as a consequence of peer group affiliation or family structure, as Moynihan (1965) suggested (Rubin, 1981).

In other work by Gary, bivariate analysis showed no demographic variables significantly related to the conflict between the sexes index, although some trends were noticeable. For example, male subjects under 30 years of age tended to have more conflict than did those who were older. Married men experience more conflict than did formerly married and never married men who were involved in

relationships. As the educational level increased, there was a tendency for the respondents to have less conflict with women. Men who had a family income of less than \$8,000 a year had the lowest mean conflict score among the various income categories.

In other words, low-income black men reported less conflict in their relationships than did high-income men. Among the demographic variables, age and marital status explained the highest proportion of the variance (Gary, 1986). While these findings have mixed implications for enumerations, a number of assumptions can be suggested. The higher conflict with women reported among black males under thirty supports the likelihood of their not being found in couple-centered nuclear households. The lower conflict scores reported by men in families with low "family" income suggest that variables noted do not have a simple (linear) relationship to between sex conflict and family formations.

In much of the black community, social life has not been couple centered, but sex segregated. Husbands spend more time with work colleagues, male friends in the bars, or in sports activities, whereas wives or girlfriends interact with relatives, children, and female friends. For the black men in Gary's study, the companionship idea of a couple was not operative and this was a major source of disagreement between them and their mates. The data

suggest that black men who are younger (under age 30) live in somewhat larger households (three or more persons), have negative mate communication styles, and have little involvement with neighbors or community activities, and tended to experience more conflict with black women than those men who did not possess these characteristics. Based upon the grand multiple regression model, the best predictors of conflict between the sexes were age, household size, mate communication style, neighboring, and community involvement (Gary, 1986). All of these factors contribute to young low income black males living in situations where they are least likely to be counted.

ALTERNATIVE MALE-FEMALE RELATIONSHIPS

Schultz argues that the greater acceptance of sex as something natural among underclass people generally makes it less an important issue. The tradition that sex is sinful has not affected the poor in the same way that it has affected other classes of Americans. Presumably, the poor have greater freedom to create alternative lifestyles (Schultz, 1984).

According to Schultz, there are four nonmarital types of relationships that seem to be distinctive styles of the underclass. Because marriage can be difficult under any circumstances and next to impossible when you are regularly unemployed, a good number of underclass men have

"boyfriend" relationships with women by whom they may or may not have children (Schultz, 1984). These boyfriend relationships have implications for household membership, family identity and the likelihood of a given male being included in a "household based" enumeration.

One type, the quasi-father, is a father in all but the legal/biological sense of the word. The woman's children may or may not be his, but he cares for them, disciplines them, entertains them, and seeks companionship in the context of the family rather than simply in the context of a man-woman relationship. This "boyfriend" is most likely to reside with the woman and children, be considered a part of the household (family) and thus be included in the census.

On the other hand, a second type, the supportive biological father is a man who is concerned about the children he has brought into the world, but has long since lost interest in their mother (Schultz, 1984). This individual is not likely to be considered a part of this household. He may, however, be counted in some other household in which he is a member, his mother's, or indeed as a part of a family in which he is married.

In contrast to types one and two, the supportive companion is interested in the woman, but not in her children. He provides her with money, but only to buy dresses for herself or to fix herself up. They seek

entertainment outside of her household, and weekends away from home are desirable whenever possible (Schultz, 1984). This individual is not at all likely to be counted as a member of the woman's household. He is far more likely to live in his own apartment or in other situations where he may or may not be counted.

The final type, the pimp, really cares for no one but himself. He uses a woman and lives off of her income. He provides her sexual pleasure in return. While a man who lives off the earning of a prostitute is commonly called a pimp, in the underclass neighborhood, pimp refers to any man who lives off a woman's income and uses her in the way a pimp might use a prostitute (Schultz, 1984). This individual is more likely to be involved with more than one woman and move from place to place. Among "boyfriends," he is probably the least likely to be counted anywhere.

These patterns of commitment are persistent, although a man may change styles during his lifetime. It is not a simple matter to be responsible for another's welfare, especially when it is difficult to secure one's own. A more certain source of income increases the likelihood that marriage will be contracted and maintained, but, as is the case of professional people, a steady job does not guarantee the style of partnership that will result. A serious challenge of empirical research is to determine the distribution of these relationship types among black men

and to more thoroughly define their impact on black family structure(s) (Schultz, 1984).

One significant alternative family structure implicit in the discussion by Schultz is unmarried cohabitation. Clayton and Voss (1977) found that blacks were more likely to choose this living arrangement than whites, and that unmarried cohabitation was more common in large cities. According to Glick and Spanier (1980), it is probable that the apparent increase in unmarried cohabitation is the result, in part, of more honest reporting of marital status and living arrangements. Part of the increase in the number of persons in such living arrangements is due to the larger cohort of individuals born during the postwar baby boom years who are now in their twenties and early thirties--ages during which unmarried cohabitation is most prevalent for those who have never married.

Most never-married individuals who live with an unrelated person of the opposite sex are young. About 85 percent of such persons are under age 35, 8 percent are between 35 and 54 years of age, and 7 percent are 55 years or older. About 1 in 13 or 14 married couples in the United States are black, but about one in four unmarried couples are black. Thus, although the number of cohabiting couples is heavily concentrated among whites, the cohabitation rate among blacks is three times that of whites. In 1975, 92 percent of married men and 44 percent

of married women under age 35 were employed. The remaining 8 percent of married men and 56 percent of married women were unemployed or not in the labor force. Among cohabiting couples, a far greater proportion of never married men under age 35 (29 percent) and a much smaller proportion of never-married women (32 percent) were unemployed or not in the labor force. Thus, whereas cohabiting men were much less likely to be employed than married men, cohabiting women were much more likely to be employed than married women. Low income seems to be much more characteristic of unmarried than married cohabiting couples. Among those under 35 years of age, about one-third of the never-married and one-fifth of the ever cohabitants had incomes below \$5,000 (Glick and Spanier, 1980).

Clearly the enumeration of black males is affected by the many variations in their household participation. These variations are directly related to the often marginal economic status of black males. They are much more likely to be found in extended households (often female-headed), boyfriend relationships, and cohabitation. The lower income young adult black male is least likely to be found in a stable nuclear (conjugal) family household where most American males are counted.

BLACK FEMALE-HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

Bernadette J. Holmes, Ph.D.

The focus of this section is to provide an overview and summary of selected research on black female-headed households. This summary is not exhaustive, but rather it provides insights into the patterns, status, and dynamics of households headed by black women as a variant family form. The salient aspects of the research literature on black female-headed households is germane to understanding the impact of the underenumeration of the blacks in the U.S. Census. It is crucially important, therefore, to examine this critical link between undercounting and the sociocultural and socioeconomic context of variant family patterns. To this end, the structural variation of black families provides the framework for this discussion.

Black Family Structure

Black families have the largest proportion of female-headed households than any other subgroup (Zinn & Eitzen, 1987; Ladner, 1986; Staples, 1986). The number of two parent families has declined dramatically in recent years. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census (1984), more than 44% of black families are female headed and are disproportionately poor. As Zinn & Eitzen (1987: 196)

succinctly state, "there is a clear relationship between income and household formation."

Several factors have been advanced to explain this phenomenon. This variation in structural patterns has been linked to the income marginality of Black males (Zinn & Eitzen, 1987; Staples, 1986; Ladner, 1986; Darity & Myers, 1984). According to Staples (1986), an increase in Black female-headed households is due in part to the lack of "desirable" men available for marriage. For example, between 1976 and 1983 Black families headed by women increased by 700,000, while the numbers of Black males who were unemployed rose by the same number. Examining data over a twenty-five year period reflects the same trend. In 1960, almost 75% of black males were employed and only 21% of black families were headed by females. Consistent with this trend, by 1982 only 54% of black males were employed and 42% of black families were headed by women (Joe & Yu, 1984; Staples, 1986). Thus, it is posited that the less likely a black male is able to fulfill the provider role, the less likely he is to marry or stay in the marriage (Darity & Myers, 1984). The employment status of black males is directly correlated to number of households headed by women (Ladner, 1986).

Divorce and separation accounts for 41% of black female-headed families (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983). The divorce rate from 1970 to 1982 increased 165% for

blacks, compared to 143% for whites (Zinn & Eitzen, 1987). Black separation increased from 172 to 255 per 1,000 married couples between 1971 and 1981 (Staples, 1986). Thus, marital instability is significantly greater among blacks.

High rates of marital instability among blacks is related to a number of social characteristics. For example, education levels, high rates of unemployment and underemployment, and urbanization increases the propensity for marital disruption (Zinn & Eitzen, 1987; Staples, 1986; Hampton, 1980). Data indicate that black males, between the ages of 18 and 24, have the highest rates of crime and incarceration (Eitzen & Timmer, 1985; Michalowski, 1985). Undoubtedly, these trends have a negative impact on black families. As Eitzen and Timmer (1985: 138) succinctly state, "As the bulk of street crime perpetrators are poor, unemployed, or working at low-level, low-paying menial jobs, so are its victims." Consequently, marital instability "represents the response of the poorest, most disadvantaged segment of the black population . . ." (Cherlin, 1981: 108).

Another factor associated with the increase in black female-headed households is the high rate of out of wedlock births. In recent years, teenage pregnancy has increased, regardless of race (Roger, 1987; Ladner, 1986). Black teenagers, however, account for 25% of births. Although,

black youth make up 27% of the teen population they experience 40% of the adolescent births (Ladner, 1986). Consequently, "Having a child out of wedlock and failing to marry accounts for 41% of all Black households" (Staples, 1986: 24).

According to Zinn & Eitzen (1987), many young blacks feel ambivalent about marriage. Black families often encourage females not to marry the fathers because of the added financial burden. In a similar view, Staples (1987) notes that black females realize that "unemployed men do not make good husbands and fathers." Welfare payments, which are frequently contingent of the male not being present, may be perceived of as more reliable income than a partner who is unemployed or out of the labor force (Staples, 1987). Because of the economic realities, blacks tend to be more tolerant of out of wedlock births (Hill, 1977). Increasingly, having children and marriage are perceived as two separate events (Zinn & Eitzen, 1987).

Consistent with this theme, Darity and Myers (1984) examined the "economic motivation" explanation of black female-headed households, an explanation that implicitly assumes the "attractiveness of welfare as an 'inducement for black females to choose to remain unmarried.'" Applying statistical causality tests, the researchers found no short-term effect of welfare on family structure. They concluded, however, that the dramatic increase in female

headed families is statistically linked to the decline in the supply of black males. Darity and Myers (1984) suggest that cumulative effects economic and social forces have contributed to the demise of the male headed black families. They succinctly state:

. . . For blacks the process has been exacerbated by outright disappearance of men in the marriageable years -- via mortality, incarceration, and institutionalization . . . it is an ongoing legacy of past and present during which the black population has become increasingly marginalized. The evidence we find of a declining effective pool of eligible males to head black families undoubtedly is related to the problems of incarceration, military conscription, black male mortality, alcoholism and drug abuse. The black family, the institution of nurturing new generations, has born an ongoing assault that has taken an immense toll. The sex-ratio gap among blacks is a glaring signal of the marginalization of Afro-Americans (Darity and Myers, 1984: 776).

As research indicates the variant family structure which is characterized by the high rate of female-headed households is related to a variety of complex social and economic factors. High rates of unemployment and crime, divorce and separation, and out of wedlock births have all been identified as major factors correlated to the increase in female-headed households. There is a critical link between the status of black men and the structural variation of black family. Accordingly, as black families respond to economic adversity with society, "they use cultural forms to create family survival strategies" (Zinn & Eitzen, 1987).

There is an inextricable link between status and patterns of black families that affect censusing. It is plausible to suggest that the economic marginality and alienation of many black families would be closely correlated with under-reporting of black males. Since many black female-headed families are highly visible and most often dependent on welfare and other forms of public assistance, the likelihood of reporting information to an "official" government agency would be viewed as intrusive. Undoubtedly, these factors would be associated with underenumeration of blacks in general, and black males in particular.

Extended Family Networks

The role of black female-headed households must also be examined within the context of the extended family structure. As noted earlier, the relationship between socioeconomic status and family formation is well documented. Within this context, the extended kin network is an integral part of black family structure.

Obviously, it is beyond the scope of this discussion to explicate the historical development of the black extended family organization. It attempts, however, to provide the conceptual framework for contemporary structural variation among black families.

The historical antecedents of the extended family has been well-documented by scholars. The structural variation in black families has been attributed to African culture (see Blassingame, 1972; Stacks, 1974; Sudarkasa, 1988 for historical discussion). This historical pattern continues to be recognizable in contemporary familiar arrangement (Sudarkasa, 1988).

In black families, the extended family includes a network of individuals, both relatives and "pseudo-kin," whom the person has a close emotional bond and relies on for assistance (Milburn, 1986). The terms social support network, mutual aid network, and serial families have been used to identify this inclusive configuration of black extended families.

Family members, such as spouses, parents, siblings, other relatives, same-sex friends, and boyfriends, may be included in the network (Stacks, 1974; Milburn, 1986; Jewell, 1988). The extended network is viewed as "protective strategies" and "stress buffers" against the structural adversity experienced by black families (Milburn, 1986; Zinn & Eitzen, 1987).

Because of the high rate of children born out of wedlock and disproportionate rates of separation and divorce, the extended family structure provides support and assistance. Zinn & Eitzen (1987: 17) make this observation about the role of extended black families:

This emphasis can be viewed as a protective strategy against the uncertainties of a relationship based on sex. Marriage involves economic as well as affective relationships and greater economic support can be provided by a kinship exchange network than by conjugal bond alone. If we see female-headed households within the context of the larger kinship system, we can appreciate how children and other dependents are cared for when other factors undercut marital unions. Marriage is as much the result of economic security and well being as it is the cause of economic well-being.

Similarly, Jewell (1988: 19) suggests that "black families are undergoing restructuring to accept related children." Marital dissolution and the economically depressed status of black families has facilitated the process of social exchange systems, which usually accommodate women and children (Jewell, 1988).

McAdoo (1978) found that the extended family structure also is an integral part of life for upwardly mobile blacks. Middle-class black families rely on this cultural pattern as an emotional coping strategy as well.

Serial Families

A related structural variation in black extended networks are serial families. Serial families are defined as "movement from one family structure to another." According to Jewell (1988), historically these patterns of family restructuring occurred out of economic necessity and to "maintain" marital stability. For example, after emancipation and during periods of northern migration after World War I and World War II, the entire family would move

seeking better economic opportunities. Through social networking between family and friends in the north, the family would be "put up" on a temporary basis while the family was reestablishing itself (Billingsley, 1965; Jewell, 1988).

Recently, however, patterns of restructuring occur because of marital instability or dissolution. This temporary pattern provides black women and children emotional and financial assistance during this period of uncoupling. Because of the precarious economic situation, single and divorced parents are forced to move between family structures. In serial patterns of family structure, black female single parents, continuously move between family structures and with friends, establishing and reestablishing temporary residences. As Jewell (1988:20) notes, this recent trend in serial family structure is directly related to marital instability.

A resurgence of serial family structuring has paralleled the increase in the rate of marital dissolution among blacks. Once separated or divorced, black female single parents discover their standard of living decreases substantially, making it necessary for them to return to their families of orientation until they can financially afford independent living. Because of occupational segregation and lack of salable job skills, black single parents have financial difficulties that affect the maintenance of independent households. Consequently, for some black single women and their children, particularly unwed adolescents, serial families are an integral part of life.

Thus, it can be argued that this pattern of serial family structure facilitates in the social reintegration of single

mothers and children who are likely to experience economic difficulties in meeting basic needs.

As documented in this discussion, structural variation in black families is related to a variety of complex sociocultural and socioeconomic dynamics. Black female-headed households are a central component of family variation and occurs within the broader context of extended networks and serial relations. The predicament of the black male is central to understanding these variant family forms. Moreover, the implications for establishing the relation of structural variation in black families and the status of black males and its relationship to censusing is of critical importance. These patterns of family structure mediate against the establishment of traditional household arrangements, thus, excluding black males from permanent residence within the family. It is plausible to suggest that the status of black males and subsequent family patterns will directly impact on the underenumeration of blacks and black males in particular. More specifically, the marginal economic and social status of black males has been linked to the problems of inclusion in the census. The profundity of these relationships necessitates further analyses.

POLITICAL ECONOMY AND BLACK FAMILIES

Mamie E. Locke, Ph.D.

As can be seen in the literature, there is a proximal relationship between political, economic, and social forces as they impact on black family life in the United States. These forces combine in many instances to further deteriorate the family, distort reality and our perceptions of black men and women, and create an overall feeling of malaise in the black community.

At the center of this challenge to black family stability is the black male. What has been the impact of the political economy, media portrayals, and conservative trends on the black family in general and the black male in particular? Following is a discussion of political economy, the media, and subsequent policy impacts on and implications for black families. Inherent in this discussion is the relationship of interactive political and socioeconomic forces to the problem of underenumeration of blacks, particularly black men, in the U.S. Census.

Political Economy

At the center of contemporary political and economic discussions on black family life is the notion of a black underclass. These discussions have, in many instances,

become controversial as scholars debate the causes and consequences of the underclass and the role the government and the black community should take in the alleviation of the social, political and economic ills plaguing the underclass community. It is significant also that many of those who are not being counted by the census are a part of the underclass.

Garry Rolison (1986) argues that the political economy of the urban underclass is characterized by the systematic disengagement of black men from employment since 1945. This employment exclusion has led to an urban underclass, a group having no stable relationship to the labor market. The creation of this urban underclass is a consequence of advancing capitalism in the United States. The urban underclass is either unemployed or underemployed, predominantly black, and lacks prospects for social mobility. According to Rolison, female employment since World War II has led to the increase in the number of young black men in the underclass position. As male jobs decrease, white males monopolize those that remain. Rolison concludes, in part, that affirmative action programs need to be expanded and narrowed if the black underclass is to be stopped and eventually eliminated.

There are some scholars who dismiss race as an important factor in the lives of black people in the United States. William Wilson (1978) argues that race relations

in the United States have undergone such a fundamental political, economic and social transformation that the life chances of blacks have more to do with their economic class than their race. In a follow-up study, Wilson (1987) claims that the crises of female-headed households, joblessness, teenage pregnancy, welfare dependency and violent crimes in the black community symbolize social disorganization. These crises cannot be attributed to racism alone. To alleviate such dysfunctional behavior, public policy should focus on methods by which black males can begin to assume responsibility for the families they create. By employing black men and, therefore, making them "marriageable," problems such as teenage pregnancy will dissipate. Wilson defines the underclass in terms of its putative behavior which, in his view, is pathological and morally defective.

Other scholars have arguments that parallel those of Wilson. Thomas Sowell (1981) contends that minorities should use the market, not government programs, to improve their economic condition. In Sowell's view, government programs like minimum wage and affirmative action, are "intervention" strategies that produce economically detrimental results. Thus, since government policy has not necessarily benefitted minorities, the rationale for the use of such policies should be reevaluated.

Glenn Loury (1984) agrees with Sowell that governmental action and traditional civil rights policy cannot effectively address the social pathology of the black community. The problems of the community, according to Loury, stem from the values, social norms, personal attitudes and behaviors of individual blacks. Thus, there is an "enemy within" that has been ignored by black leaders because of a code of silence that blames the problems of the black community on the "enemy without" (that is, white racism). Because the "enemy without" has no interest in the serious problems affecting the black community, then the community should not look to the government or others for deliverance. The solution to problems of teenage pregnancy, welfare dependency and incarceration of black men must come from internally directed action. Issues of values and behaviors must be discussed and only blacks can provide the moral leadership necessary for the deliverance of all black people.

William Darity and Samuel Myers (1984) point out that deteriorating conditions among American families has reached crisis proportions among black families. They concur with Loury and others that female headed households and teenage pregnancies are serious problems within the community. Darity and Myers further argue that "the forces operating to marginalize large segments of the black population have moved into higher gear. The most glaring

index of the worsening condition of blacks . . . has been the deterioration of black family life" (Darity and Myers, 1984: 171). Those forces appear to be the very legislative programs designed to ameliorate problems in the black community. If change is to occur, then it must come from within the black community itself for the "crisis of the black family cannot be resolved for the better by those forces that have contributed to the development of the crisis" (Darity and Myers, 1984: 184).

Assertions by Wilson, Sowell and Loury have been disputed by a number of social science scholars. Mack Jones (1986) has proffered the argument that:

the presence of a black underclass is a logical, perhaps even necessary, outgrowth of the American political economy conditioned by white racism . . . the presence of the black underclass is not a result of either malfunctioning of the American economic process or of the pathology of the members of the underclass (Jones, 1986: 1).

Within the confines of the institutions of American capitalism which have been shaped by the notion of "white supremacy as a dominant American value," the underclass has developed (Jones, 1986: 11). Jones concludes that the solution to the problem of the underclass lies in fundamental changes being made in the political and economic system.

Alphonso Pinkney (1984) takes issue with Thomas Sowell (1978) and William Wilson (1978). He feels that their interpretations are naive and faulty. Like Jones (1986),

Pinkney feels that racism is deeply imbedded in the structure of American institutions. The problems of the underclass (poverty, poor housing, unemployment, etc.) are reinforced through the maintenance of their subordinate status. Pinkney argues that "in many cases, those in power in these [American] institutions profit from the maintenance of racial discrimination, for it is to their economic advantage" (Pinkney, 1984: 2). Contributing to the political and economic ills of the black community is the conservative view of scholars like Sowell and Wilson within an overall climate of conservatism (Pinkney, 1984). The very survival of black people is at the center of Harold Cruse's study, Plural But Equal (1987). He cites a disturbing trend in American society that might lead to blacks becoming an endangered species. It is the "reality of the closed, privileged arena of economic competition for the rewards of social status through economic parity" that is the major issue facing black people (Cruse, 1987: 382). It is the recognition of this reality that will ward off the social, economic, political and cultural destruction of the black community.

Robert Staples (1986) argues that there is a weakening of patriarchal, monogamous and nuclear family patterns in the United States for all racial groups, not just blacks. However, with the decline of the nuclear family has come further black family instability. At the center of this

instability is the declining participation of black males in the labor force. This subsequently has led to a black underground economy. That is, black males who have been pushed out of the labor force are pushed into the extra-legal economy of drug sales, petty thefts and stolen goods. This has increased the percentage of black males in jail to 49%. Staples points out that the future of the black family is inextricably tied to the status, current and future, of black men (Staples, 1986). If black men are seen as marginal to American society, then they are not being counted as a part of it.

Angela Davis and Fania Davis (1986) conclude that the solution to rectifying the ills of the black family is major social change. This conclusion stems from their analysis of the black family and its subjection to what they call ideological blame shifting. As a consequence of Reagan policy, the black family has continued to be labeled pathological, attacked, and subjected to a "blame the victim" syndrome. The authors further point out that there has been a decline in black male employment stemming from industrial decline and cuts in social programs. Given the fact the government census figures undercount the black population, less than one half of black men in the United States actually hold jobs. Hence, fundamental social change is the equalizing factor. Manning Marable agrees that the solution to the political, economic and social

ills of the black community lies in societal transformation. Marable (1984) examines the impact of racism and capitalism on black development in the American political economy. At the root of black exploitation and social stratification is capitalism, a system which exists to underdevelop rather than develop black people. The solution, then, lies in social transformation of American society. That is, if blacks are to overcome their underdeveloped status, then the vision and strategy of the community should be one that seeks to restructure the political and economic system.

What one can discern from the foregoing discussion is conflict in intellectual discourse over the growth and development of the underclass. Based upon one's view of how and why the underclass exists, there are a variety of solutions to the rectification of the problems running rampant in the black community. Politico-economic forces can impact on the census count as well. For example, if one is engaged in an extra-legal economy, one may not want to be found. Examining the problems created by a capitalist economy may well answer questions of undercount.

Media Portrayal of Black Families

We live in an age where youth are media oriented. Many of their views and attitudes are shaped by what they may see on television, hear on the radio, or read in

newspapers or magazines. The media, print and electronic, have had a negative impact on perceptions of black families in the United States. By portraying blacks in negative, distorted and stereotypical images, the media have shaped the opinions and perceptions that many black youth may have about their families, themselves and their future.

Dr. Carolyn Stroman (1986) examines the black family in relation to the mass media, a social institution. She concludes that in the print media the majority of messages presented on black families were either neutral (49%) or positive (33%). However, television programs featuring black families are characterized by stereotypes and other negative connotations. Most shows are situation comedies or shows with blacks in minor roles and low status occupations. Within the television families, we are subjected to internal conflicts, chaos, and cultural deviance.

Particularly distressing in these misleading views is the continual portrayal of fathers not being present in the home and, therefore, not playing an active role in the lives of their families. This presents black men as nonfamily-oriented, nonprofessional, and nonlaw-abiding. Given the tremendous socializing effect of television, its impact is immense. Because of such negative portrayals, black youth may feel that professional and leadership roles are unrealistic goals for them. Thus, black children are

provided unrealistic and negative lessons. Society at large is inclined to accept media images of black families as representative of the reality of black family life. Therefore, Stroman concludes, television programming should be changed so that a variety of images of black family life can be presented.

Where Stroman points out some general problems with the media, David Baptiste (1986) provides some specific examples. He argues that television communicates ideas, values, and attitudes, as well as entertains. What television depicts are unrealistic, pejorative, and distorted images of black families. In his analysis of nine programs, Baptiste found several recurring themes; that of female and maternal dominance, ridicule of black males, and prejudiced black males. He found that the image of black men suffered the greatest distortion. Black men are portrayed as ignorant, shiftless idiots or--even when successful--obnoxious, pompous and uncouth. Baptiste recommends that if it is to be shown at all, then the diversity of the black family must be accurately portrayed in order to provide positive role models to black youths and the community.

In the same way that unexplained statistics can reinforce racial stereotypes, so can the media. If the major source of information for young people is television, then what they see on television becomes reality for them.

Children do not have the sophistication or clarity of vision and thought to make a distinction between media images and reality. Thus, if they see black people in marginal roles on television and in their communities, then they are inclined to adapt themselves accordingly. It necessarily follows that the larger society may also accept the stereotyped, distorted images and dismiss and discount blacks as well.

Policy Impact and Implications

The implications of the political economy and media portrayals of black families can be felt most keenly among black men. They also have an impact on public policy issues like housing and homelessness. Robert Staples (1982) points out that black men are the least studied group in American society. He has sought to expose the negative images associated with black men and explore the reality of black male existence. According to Staples, the underlying ideology in the black male's role in American society is the conflict theory, the black male's conflict with the normative definition of masculinity. The black male falls short of that definition and, therefore, enters into a conflict with the larger society.

Maulana Karenga (1986) explores the implications of the new ethical thrust on the black family. He argues that the black families' and the black community's well-being

and welfare have been posed in ethical terms by conservatives in the 1980s. According to Karenga, this ethical thrust has been used to continue assaults on the black community and to criticize the community and justify policy choices. This emphasis on ethics and morals and values is not genuine, but a cover by the dominant society for its negative discourse and attack on black life. Karenga states that the black family must be strengthened through the healing of wounds and the strengthening of bonds between men and women. There should be particular emphasis on saving the black male while arresting the proliferation of teenage pregnancies and female-headed households (Karenga, 1986). Taking control of these problems can aid in the eventual elimination of the many dilemmas scourging the black community.

Housing policies have serious consequences for black families. Dr. Norweeta Milburn (1987) points out that the homeless population is predominantly male, single, under 40 and ethnic minority. Blacks are the overwhelming majority in the homeless group and, according to Robert Bullard (1985), it is black families that encounter the myriad of problems in obtaining decent and affordable housing. Given the sizable portion of black families living in poverty, they are at a disadvantage in competing in the open market for housing. According to Bullard, the housing problem is further complicated when children are not allowed (black

families are larger and frequently extended). Fair housing laws are not enforced, and lower than average incomes restrict blacks to rental housing. He argues that the future does not look promising if these policy trends continue.

Housing problems, socialization agents, and ethical arguments of conservatives have contributed to the plight of the black community. If one is homeless, there is no address. Thus, one cannot be counted. Or having relatives and/or friends living in an apartment illegally may make one suspicious of the government's questions. These concerns and their subsequent impact on public policy and consequences for underenumeration must be addressed if problems of the black community are to be adequately assessed and, more importantly, redressed.

The political economy has had a negative impact on black family life in the United States. This challenge to black family stability has been further hampered by media portrayal of negative stereotypes which serve as socializing agents for viewers and readers. Consequently, the overall perception of black families in general and black males in particular is a negative one. Public policy (in employment, housing, welfare, etc.) is often shaped and based upon stereotypical views and analysis more than reality. Thus, the political economy can contribute to these problems creating an underclass. Individuals falling

under the general rubric of underclass are the most susceptible to being "missed" by census enumerators. As a part of policy implications, it is imperative that census figures accurately reflect the population of the black community. This is especially important if public policy is to adequately address the many social, economic and political issues having a deleterious impact on black people and their functioning in American society.

SUMMARY

The censusing process, like most family and community studies, assumes a generic (or standard) family model as its departure point. Those most effectively enumerated tend to be found in stable, conjugally based, nuclear families ideally located in middle-class single family dwellings. The literature considered in this paper suggests that for many reasons, black families often do not approximate that model. The degree to which family structures differ contributes significantly to the undercount of populations residing in varying family/ household structures. This is especially the case for urban low income black males, ages 18-30 years old, categorized by some as members of a marginal underclass.

This literature review has examined the family participation of black males in extended families, female-headed households, boyfriend relationships, and cohabitation. Black families exhibit a variety of family forms. Low income families are far less likely to resemble simple (conjugal) nuclear families. The apparent instability of conjugal relations in black families should not be seen as an indication of family instability. Because of the extensive kinship ties in many contemporary black families, the departure of a spouse does not have as much of a destabilizing effect as the current literature on the black

family would suggest (Foster, 1983). To the degree that the enumeration process assumes dominance of conjugal unions, persons residing in family situations where consanguinity (real or fictive) is dominant may be undercounted.

The impact of consanguinity in black families is most directly reflected in extended family structures. It becomes difficult to characterize many of the family members (extended family) in the language or model most commonly assumed by American social science, which is also reflected in the enumeration process. The awareness that the classifications accorded fictive kin differ from the "standard" American classification may lead an enumeration respondent to identify only the "real kin." Fictive kin who actually reside in a particular household may not be identified in any household. It is young black males who most often fall into these less typical characterizations and are thus omitted.

It is clear that regardless of economic position, single, female household heads have social and emotional needs which may be filled best by including others (relatives) in the household (Anderson and Allen, 1984). This is especially important in the context of this research given that the census continues to show a disproportionately high number of black households headed by single females. White males who find themselves in a

situation with a pregnant partner have been much more likely than black males to marry and form families. Participation in such family households has resulted in a far greater likelihood of census inclusion of young white males. Black males are far less likely to marry or to stay in the marriage (Darity and Myers, 1984). The employment status of black males is directly correlated with the number of households headed by women (Ladner, 1986).

Black males who, for whatever reason, are not active participants in the labor market are less likely to marry and participate in nuclear family households. This sequence of events (or nonevents) results in their occupying family status in which they are much less likely to be enumerated. The young adult black male frequently finds himself on a fantasy island (sports or entertainment) lacking the skills necessary to propel himself into the flow of the American mainstream (Gaston, 1986). It is in mainstream American family life where census undercounts are least likely to occur.

It is most plausible to suggest that the economic marginality and alienation of many black families are closely correlated with the under-reporting of black males. Since many black female-headed families are highly visible and most often dependent upon some form of public assistance, the likelihood of reporting "laundered" information to an "official" government agency would be associated with

underenumeration of blacks in general and black males in particular.

The higher conflict with women reported among black males under thirty adds support to the likelihood of their not being found in couple-centered (nuclear) households. However, the lower conflict scores reported by men in families with low "family" income suggest that the variables noted (age, marital status, income) do not have a simple (linear) relationship between sex conflict and family formations. Based upon the grand multiple regression model, the best predictors of conflict between the sexes were age, household size, mate communication style, neighboring, and community involvement (Gary, 1986). All of these factors do contribute to young low income males residing in situations where they are less likely to be enumerated.

Boyfriend relationships (Schultz, 1984) also have implications for household membership, family identity and the likelihood of a given male being included in a "household based" enumeration. The "quasi-father" boyfriend is the most likely of the four boyfriend types to reside with the girlfriend and children, and be considered a part of the family (household).

The "supportive biological father" boyfriend is not likely to be a part of his girlfriend's household. He may, however, be counted in some other household in which he is

a member, his mother's household, or indeed as a part of a family into which he is married. The "supportive companion" boyfriend is not at all likely to be enumerated as a member of the girlfriend's household. He is far more likely to live in his own apartment or in some other situation where he may or may not be counted. The "pimp" boyfriend is most likely to be involved with more than one "girlfriend" and to move from place to place. Among boyfriend types, he is probably the least likely to be enumerated in any household.

The consideration of boyfriend types suggests another aspect of family structure variation, namely cohabitation. Some important differences between married and cohabiting individuals contribute to male underenumeration. Whereas cohabiting men were much less likely to be employed than married men, cohabiting women were much more likely to be employed than married women. Low income seems to be much more characteristic of unmarried than married cohabiting couples. Among those under 35 years of age, about one-third of the never married and one-fifth of the ever married cohabitants had (annual) incomes below \$5,000 (Glick and Spanier, 1980).

This low household income often suggests a certain marginality on the part of the male in these relationships. Where the male is unemployed, household headship (mortgage or lease holding) is more likely to be the responsibility

of the woman. Some quasi-legal factors (his name not on the lease) and informal values (stigmas attached to non-married cohabitation) could easily lead to the male being "officially" not included in the household. This has obvious implications for household enumerations.

Serial family formation is another family structural variation considered. Because of the precarious economic situation, single and divorced parents are forced to move between family structures. In serial patterns of family structure, black female single parents continuously move between family structures and with friends, establishing and re-establishing temporary residences. While this has been an ongoing pattern for low income black men, its more recent appearance among black females strongly suggests the likelihood of increased underenumeration in this population as well.

Housing policies have serious consequences for black families. It is black families that encounter the myriad of problems in obtaining decent and affordable housing. Fair housing laws are not enforced, and lower than average incomes restrict blacks to rental housing (Bullard, 1985). The homeless population is predominantly male, single, under-40, and ethnic minority. Blacks are the overwhelming majority in the homeless group (Milburn, 1987). If one is homeless, there is no address. Thus, one is not very likely to be counted. Living illegally in an apartment

with relatives and/or friends makes one suspicious of questions from the government, often resulting in exclusion from a household based enumeration.

The treatment of black men in social science has been sparse and often controversial. Their position in the larger society is reflected in the variety of ways in which they participate in family structures. The social science informed orientation of the enumeration process which results in an undercount of black males is reinforced by the popular conceptions of black men most obviously reflected in the media. In media, black men are often portrayed as ignorant, shiftless idiots, or, even when successful, obnoxious, pompous and uncouth. Baptiste (1986) found several recurring themes in his analysis of nine programs: female and maternal dominance, ridicule of black males, and prejudiced black males. The expectation of "normal" family involvement on the part of black men is rarely presented in the electronic media. Apart from a series of situation comedies whose number has grown to four or five in the last two to three years, black males are most frequently portrayed as one dimensional "no-family" characters. The prevalence of athletes and entertainers suggests too frequently that black male life is quite circumscribed.

The diversity of the black family must be accurately portrayed in order to provide positive role models to black

youths and the community. These role models are important not only to black youths, but also to policy makers, researchers, and persons involved in the enumeration processes. A greater sensitivity to variation in black family forms and the often marginal status of young black males should contribute to reducing the undercount. This awareness allows censusing to look in places black males are more likely to be found, and not to assume that their apparent absence indicates their nonexistence.

Finally, black family formation, black male marginality, and enumerations must all be considered in the larger sociopolitical context. The undercount is probably more symptomatic of larger social ills, including racism, lack of economic opportunity, and differential valuations placed upon human lives.

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