

# Ninety Two Percent

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examining birth trends, family structure, economic standing, paternal relationships, and emotional stability of biracial children with African American fathers

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The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

## **Introduction**

The family unit is one of the most imperative pillars of society. Every society whether progressive or primitive has been erected around the family. Human beings' working in unison for the amelioration of their children unerringly is the substratum and the glue of the societal edict we relish today. Though there have been copious endeavors to use eremitic uncommitted slackly assembled families as a prototype to construct civilizations, to this day those societies have come and gone. While those singular societies come and go, the monogamous family unit has continued to affirm itself stable. The Reasoning is that children require a family unit constructed upon the conjoint support of the parents, in order for the child to become a healthy, capable, strong future world citizen.

In the United States the family unit is crumbling. Now more than ever children are being raised in single parent households where customarily the mother is taking on the role of mother and father. Single parent homes have proven to be less ideal than a two parent household. Children raised in single parent households with no active father are more likely to end up in prison, on drugs, impoverished and repeating the cycle of single unwed parenthood themselves. Research by Sara McLanahan at Princeton University proposes that boys are significantly more likely to end up in jail or prison by the time they turn 30 if they are raised by a single mother. And also that boys raised in a single-parent household were more than twice as likely to be incarcerated, compared with boys raised in an intact, married home. Bruce Ellis of the University of Arizona found that about one-third of girls whose fathers left the home before they turned 6 ended up pregnant as teenagers, compared with just 5% of girls whose fathers were there throughout their childhood.

It is prognosticated that by 2050 the majority of the American populace will be biracial. While this demographic shift in America is great for diversity and the future of racial equality, we must also take into account that with the emergent trend of diversity and multiculturalism comes the delicate colloquy about the shift in cultural norms. It is well known that in the African American community fatherlessness is a major problem, 70 % of black children are born out of wedlock in the African American community. The tendencies for fathers to be absent from their children's lives has grown into what one can definitely call an African American cultural norm. Due to the access to stats released by the census among many other sources, there has begun a dialogue about the growth of this paternal absence epidemic in the African American community. But the full extent of this epidemic can be lost on the public due to absence of statistics on involvement of black fathers in the lives of their biracial children as well, and the effects that can have on the biracial children in question. This study takes a more all-inclusive look into birth trends, family structure, economic standing, emotional health, and paternal relationships of biracial children with African American fathers.

### **Goals of the Current Research**

1. Amassing data on the Birth trends, family structure, economic standing, and paternal relationships of biracial children with African American fathers.
  - a. Currently there is no definitive research that ventures into this topic, and for many has left them blind to the stats on this seemingly overlooked but vastly growing demographic within the United States.

2. What effects the family structure, economic standing, and paternal relationships of biracial children with African American fathers have on the children's emotional state
  - a. Does the absence of the father have any bearing on the behavior of the child?  
More specifically does the child exhibiting major behavioral problems like aggressive behavior, angry outbursts, excessive tantrums, run-ins with the law, drug use, alcohol use, excessive fighting, trouble in school, etc. when the father is absent.

### **Research Methods**

The type of research that was used in this study is quantitative research. Quantitative research explains phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods. The data was studied through observations in numerical representations, and through statistical analysis. Along with questionnaires that were given out to respondents for the statistical representation of the findings in the study, interviews with the respondents were also conducted. The respondents in this study were females spanning the United States, and 3 diverse racial backgrounds that all have children between the ages of 1-17 whose paternal parent is African American. Participants were approached through media outlets such as newspapers, internet, and radio, most of the respondents were recruited through internet advertisements. Participants that answered to the advertisement were asked to produce documentation that was utilized to collect and verify basic screening information regarding each participant's race thus proving they are in fact Caucasian, Asian, or non-black Hispanic, as well as verifying the paternal parent of their child/children is in fact African American. Participants meeting the eligibility benchmarks were required to provide pertinent locators and tracing info such as cell phone numbers and contact information in order to finalize their enrollment

procedures for the study. Accordingly, those who passed the requirements and were proven eligible were administered the survey. The data amassed was broken down into percentages, and the individual percentages were averaged

## Findings

### Marital status at time of birth

Table 1. At the time of your child's birth were you and the father married

	NO	YES
<b>Caucasian</b>	97%	3%
<b>Asian</b>	85%	15%
<b>Hispanic</b>	95%	5%

Table 2. Did you and the father of your child ever eventually marry?

	NO	YES
<b>Caucasian</b>	80%	20%
<b>Asian</b>	92%	8%
<b>Hispanic</b>	99%	1%

Testing from the 92% Out of Wedlock population.

As shown in table 1, the study started by asking the participants if their children were born in or out of wedlock. 92% of the respondents were not married when they had their child leaving 8% of the women from the group who did have their child in wedlock. Asian women occupied the lowest percentages of children out of wedlock with African American fathers even though the numbers were still prodigiously high. Caucasian women on the other hand had the highest percentage of children out of wedlock with African American fathers that number was 97%.

When the mothers of the children born out of wedlock were asked if they ever eventually married the father of their child the answer was overwhelmingly no, as one can see in table 2.

10% of the mothers married the father of their child even though at the time of the study 100% of the women were single and unmarried meaning that the marriages that did result did not last and ended in divorce, thus leaving the complete population single mothers. 90% of the mothers whom had their child out of wedlock never married the father. Through interviews with respondents the vast majority expressed that there were never definite plans for marriage and the affiliation between the parties tended to last on average until the disclosure of the pregnancy.

### **Number of children**

Table 3. Number of children that the participant has

	<b>1</b>	<b>2-4</b>	<b>5-8</b>	<b>9+</b>
<b>Caucasian</b>	50%	49%	1%	0%
<b>Asian</b>	86%	14%	0%	0%
<b>Hispanic</b>	15%	80%	5%	0%

Table 4. For women with multiple children do the children have the same father?

	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Caucasian</b>	82%	18%
<b>Asian</b>	75%	25%
<b>Hispanic</b>	81%	19%

- 100% of these women said that the father of all of their children were black

In the data accumulated in table 3 we found that half of the participants that had their children out of wedlock had only one child, leaving 50% who had 2 or more children out of wedlock. Hispanic women by far occupied the larger numbers with 85% having more than one child out of wedlock. As seen in table 4 of the 50% participants who had multiple children out of wedlock, 79% said that their children didn't have the same father leaving 21% of the population that had multiple children by the same man. Though 50% of Caucasian participants had 2 or more children and their number weren't as high as Hispanic women in terms of having multiple children out of wedlock, Caucasian women occupied the highest

percentages (82% to be exact) of not having the same fathers for their children. All of the participants reported that all of the children had African American fathers.

**Finances**

Table 5. What are your annual earnings?

	<b>Unemployed</b>	<b>0-10,000</b>	<b>10,000-30,000</b>	<b>30,000-80,000</b>	<b>100,000+</b>
<b>Caucasian</b>	15%	75%	5%	5%	0%
<b>Asian</b>	2%	63%	17%	13%	5%
<b>Hispanic</b>	20%	58%	19%	3%	0%

Table 6. Does the father of your children support financially

	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Caucasian</b>	98%	2%
<b>Asian</b>	81%	19%
<b>Hispanic</b>	86%	14%

When asked about their finances 77% of the participants calculated that their annual income was 10,000 dollars or lower which is displayed in table 5, putting the majority of the participants well under the poverty line. When asked if they received financial support from the father an overwhelming majority of 88% said no, leaving 12% percent who said yes. Because the majority of the participants earned an income below the poverty line, and all of the participants were single at the time of the study, as well as taking into account the dismal paternal financial support rate it was no surprise that when the participants were asked if they ever had to use government assistance 82% percent said yes, leaving 18% who said no, as can be seen in table7 below. Currently over half of the participants are still on government assistance.

Table 7. Have you ever had to use government assistance to supplement your income?

	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Caucasian</b>	3%	97%
<b>Asian</b>	49%	51%
<b>Hispanic</b>	2%	98%

### **Paternal involvement**

Table 8. Is the father active in the child's life?

	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Caucasian</b>	97%	3%
<b>Asian</b>	88%	12%
<b>Hispanic</b>	85%	15%

Table 9. Does your child have a good relationship with their father?

	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Caucasian</b>	94%	6%
<b>Asian</b>	89%	11%
<b>Hispanic</b>	98%	2%

In table 8 the participants were asked if the father of their child was active in the child's life, 90% of the participants said that the father of their child was not active in the child's life, where as 10% of the population said that the father was in fact active in the child's life. Most of the participants that had their child out of wedlock and never married the father subsequently, expressed that at the beginning of the child's life there were many futile promises by the father to see the child but as time went on the lack of ability to connect with their child led the father to completely stop communication. As displayed in table 9. When asked if the participant thought their child had a good relationship with their father and overwhelming amount of 94% said that they didn't feel the father of their child had a good relationship with the child leaving 6% who did feel the relationship between the father and the child was good. Through interviews conducted the vast majority felt as if the father and the child barely had enough time together



(through the father's lack of visitation) that there was no possible way the father and the child could bond properly. Some of the women who had their child out of wedlock and didn't marry the father subsequent, relayed that the father of their child didn't even know the child's name and properly spelling, the child's birthday, or even the child's age.

### **Emotional Effects of fatherlessness**

Unmistakably children who are raised by single mothers are at greater risk than children who are raised by 2 parents in the same household. Children who are raised without an active father tend to suffer from.

1. A dramatically greater risk of drug and alcohol abuse, mental illness, suicide, poor educational performance, teen pregnancy, and criminality.
2. Fatherless aggression: In a longitudinal study of 1,197 fourth-grade students, researchers observed "greater levels of aggression in boys from mother-only households than from boys in mother-father households." (N. Vaden-Kierman, 1995).
3. Psychiatric Problems. In 1988, a study of preschool children admitted to New Orleans hospitals as psychiatric patients over a 34-month period found that nearly 80 percent came from fatherless homes. (Jack Block, et al., 1988)
4. Drug Use: "...the absence of the father in the home affects significantly the behavior of adolescents and results in the greater use of alcohol and marijuana." (Deane Scott Berman, 1995)
5. Drinking problems. Teenagers living in single-parent households are more likely to abuse alcohol and at an earlier age compared to children reared in two-parent households. (Terry E. Duncan, 1994)

Table 10. Have you witness major behavioral problems with your child

	NO	YES
Caucasian	39%	61%
Asian	45%	55%
Hispanic	27%	73%

Testing from the 90% who stated the father was not active in the child's life in table 8

Table 11. Have you witness major behavioral problems with your child

	NO	YES
Caucasian	82%	18%
Asian	89%	11%
Hispanic	79%	21%

Testing from the 10% who stated the father was active in the child's life in table 8

When the 90% participants that said the father of their child wasn't active in their child's life were asked if their child was exhibiting major behavioral problems like aggressive behavior, angry outbursts, excessive tantrums, run-ins with the law, drug use, alcohol use, excessive fighting, trouble in school, etc. 63% said yes that they noticed major behavioral problems in their child whereas 37% said no. When the 10% that claimed the father of their child was active in their child's life were asked if their child was exhibiting major behavioral problems like aggressive behavior, angry outbursts, excessive tantrums, run-ins with the law, drug use, alcohol

use, excessive fighting, trouble in school, etc. 83% stated that they didn't notice behavioral problems, and 17% said they did.

### **Conclusion**

From the data amassed it can be suitably deduced that on average 92% of biracial children with African American fathers are born out of wedlock, with Caucasian mothers leading in that percentage. 90% of women who have children out of wedlock with African American men will not end up marrying that man, where as 10% will wed, yet those that wed or do have their children in wedlock typically end up a single mother nonetheless due to divorce. Of women that had biracial children with African American men out of wedlock 50% had only one child out of wedlock and 50% had more than one child out of wedlock, and when they do have multiple children out of wedlock 79% of the time the children do not have the same father. 77% of biracial children with African American fathers presently live below the poverty line and 82% end up on government assistance at some point. 88% of the time the father of the child does not financial support or help with the economic costs of the child, consequently leaving the encumbrance of fiscal care exclusively on the mother. 90% of biracial children with African American fathers don't have their father in their life. 94% of the surveyed mothers believe the father of their child doesn't have a good relationship with the child. 63% of biracial children who are raised without an active father in their life exhibit major behavioral problems, where as 37% of biracial children raised without an active father don't exhibit major behavioral problem. Biracial children with African American fathers who have an active father in their life exhibit major behavioral problems 17% of the time leaving 83% who won't exhibit those behaviors. Unmistakably it is within the interest of the public to endorse and advocate black fatherhood and find resolutions to remedy black paternal absenteeism.

## Citations

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