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**'Baby daddy' study may draw unfair spotlight to black women**

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**HARVEST**

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**'Baby daddy' study may draw unfair spotlight to black women**



**'Baby daddy' study may draw unfair spotlight to black women**

By Melanie Eversley  
12:30 PM on 04/01/201

There is sure to be much discussion about the new University of Michigan study that shows an increase in the numbers of American women having children by multiple partners. Some African-American women who study and advocate for mothers are issuing cautious glances to the report out of the school's Institute for Social Research.

The study shows that 28 percent of American women with two or more children have done so by more than one man, **and when it comes to African-American women, that figure jumps to 59 percent. Some believe the survey could become another way to attack women of color.**

"There has been a lot of ink spilled on the love lives of black women, a lot of over-sensationalizing," said Avis Jones-DeWeever, executive director of the National Council of Negro Women. "I would call it the Sara Baartman-ization of black women."

Jones-DeWeever was referring to Sara Baartman, a tragic figure in history whose life seemed to exemplify public ridicule of women of African descent. Baartman was a young woman taken out of her native South Africa by a Scottish doctor and a showman, both of whom marveled at the ample size of her rear end. Baartman's captors brought her to London to display her semi-nude as a freak to the public. They called her the "Hottentot Venus".

Now, almost two centuries after Baartman's death, women of African descent are still battling stereotypes and ridicule, Jones-DeWeever said. She fears the University of Michigan study will help perpetuate that. "I have a lot of respect for the University of Michigan, and as a researcher myself, I certainly don't want to discount the value of research," Jones-DeWeever explained. **"What I am concerned about is how it's going to**

***be sensationalized in the media. I am concerned that this will be another way that this country will put a negative label on black women which, in this country, we have a long history of doing."***

Study coordinator Cassandra Dorius, a demographer, could not be reached Friday morning, but the university's press office did point out that the data show that the phenomenon of women having children with more than one man seems to be stretching across all walks of American life.

Dorius is quoted in a university press release as saying that "it is surprisingly common at all levels of income and education, and is frequently tied to marriage and divorce rather than just single parenthood."

Tami Winfrey Harris shares some of Jones-DeWeever's concerns. Winfrey Harris is part of the editorial team of Love Isn't Enough, a blog focused on parenting and race. She said the University of Michigan study could indicate that the country is shifting to a new normal in terms of parenthood.

"If I was a betting woman, I would guess that many people will point to this fact as an example of the decline in American morality and the cause of a great number of societal ills," said Winfrey Harris, who is based in Indianapolis. ***"And because our society likes to police the sexuality of women -- especially women of color -- these troubles will be laid at our feet."***

The shift is not necessarily a bad thing, said Winfrey Harris, who married a man with two children and became a stepmother. "I don't see this news as inherently bad or good. It simply is," Winfrey Harris said. "One married mom and dad is not the magic potion that makes families work. There are millions of successful, healthy, blended and non-traditional families."

The figures are likely a reflection of changing social norms, Jones-DeWeever said.

"Americans, in general, are delaying marriage or choosing not to marry," she said. "I see it as a reflection of the reality that we are living under today not only as black women but as Americans that more people are choosing to delay."

When people wait longer to marry, or decide not to marry at all, they are more likely to have multiple relationships that result in children, Jones-DeWeever explained.

The study, in fact, did turn up that multiple partners were common at all levels of education and income.

Those taking note of the new data should not assume that the children of the mothers in the study were born out of wedlock, said Deesha Philyaw, co-founder with her ex-husband of Co-Parenting 101, a support and resource organization for ex-partners working to parent well.

***"I agree that the study could, irresponsibly, be pointed to as more evidence of black women's wantonness -- not only are we having all these out of wedlock babies, but we're having them with multiple partners," said Philyaw, who is based in Pittsburgh. "There shouldn't be knee-jerk assumptions that all of these are out-of-wedlock children. Neither should the assumption be that these fathers aren't playing an active role in their children's lives. That's the real issue."***

Various family configurations should not necessarily affect children if parents are focused on playing that role well, said Philyaw, who had two daughters with her ex-husband and now is stepmother to her current husband's two daughters. "I think it's more important that kids understand family as people taking care of each other, especially in the African-American community where we have such a long history of taking care of kids and all kinds of configurations," Philyaw said.

Of the study, she added, ***"It invites finger pointing, which is not the point."***

<http://www.thegrio.com/news/multiple-bab...php?page=1>



## **SCANDALOUS**

Failure is not a single cataclysmic event. You don't fail overnight. Instead, failure is a few errors in judgement. repeated everyday.

04-02-2011 01:14 PM



**lovelyone**

Legends of the Forum



**RE: 'Baby daddy' study may draw unfair spotlight to black women**

**Post: #2**

Sorry, it is not an unfair spotlight on Black Women, the truth is never unfair, it is what it is.

Hottentot Venus was on display for her natural assets which were a curiosity to the ignorant in those days.

Gender: Female  
Posts: 791