

**Mandara, Jelani, Carolyn Murray, and Toya Joyner. 2005. "The Impact of Fathers' Absence on African American Adolescents' Gender Role Development." *Sex Roles* 53:207-220.**

**PRIMARY ARGUMENT:** The author argues that father presence influences traditional gender role development in African American adolescents, with father-present homes promoting more traditional gender identities due to the complementary socializing strategies of both parents.

**IMPORTANT DEFINED CONCEPTS:**

- Gender Role Development/Socialization: The process in which individuals form their understanding and expression of gender-specific behaviors and attitudes.
- Balance Theory: a mother's tendency to raise their daughters and love their sons is balanced by a father's tendency to do the opposite; this balance would theoretically create a balanced amount of control and warmth for a child
- Father Absence: This is the physical and emotional absence of a father figure in the household, which the authors explain that it can affect the psychological, emotional, and social development of children.

**PRIMARY FINDINGS:**

1. Father-present boys had higher perceptions of their current masculinity than father-absent boys, even after controlling for other factors, though both groups desired similar levels of masculinity. Contrary to expectations, there were no significant differences in current or ideal femininity between the two groups.
2. African American boys from father-present homes perceive themselves as more masculine than those from father-absent homes, a difference not explained by income, self-esteem, or family functioning.
3. Father-absent girls from lower-income families had higher perceptions of their own masculinity than both father-present girls and higher-income father-absent girls. They were the only group that wished to be less masculine.
4. Mother-only households place more responsibility and pressure on daughters, which may lead to increased masculine traits (e.g., assertiveness, independence, responsibility).

**KEY QUOTE:** "Therefore, in the average two-parent African American household, where the parents have relatively equal influence on their children, the mothers' tendency to raise their daughters and love their sons would be balanced by the fathers' tendency to do the opposite. However, in the average single-parent home, this balance may become upset, and the family environment can become skewed in the direction of the single parent." (210)

**QUESTION:** How might involvement of other males in children's lives like uncles, coaches, or mentors, influence gender role development in African American adolescents growing up without their fathers?