COMMON STEREOTYPES PORTRAY black fathers as being largely absent from their families. Yet while black fathers are less likely than white and Hispanic fathers to marry their child’s mother, many continue to parent through cohabitation and visitation, providing caretaking, financial, and other in-kind support.

This volume captures the meaning and practice of black fatherhood in its many manifestations, exploring two-parent families, cohabitation, single custodial fathering, stepfathering, noncustodial visitation, and parenting by extended family members and friends. Contributors examine ways that black men perceive and decipher their parenting responsibilities, paying careful attention to psychosocial, economic, and political factors that affect the ability to parent. Chapters compare the diversity of African American fatherhood with negative portrayals in politics, academia, and literature and, through qualitative analysis and original profiles, illustrate the struggle and intent of many black fathers to be responsible caregivers. This collection also includes interviews with daughters of absent fathers and concludes with the effects of certain policy decisions on responsible parenting.

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“This book demonstrates the gap in positive procreative stories of responsible black fathers as opposed to a deficit-based model and invites more research on black fathers ‘doing the well’ for black families and children. Comprehensive, largely qualitative snapshots provide the diverse picture of what fathering in black communities looks like.” — Bette Dickerson, American University, and past president of the Association of Black Sociologists