

Research Notes

[In this issue we are introducing a new section to the journal – ‘Research Notes’. The goal is to provide a forum for exchanging ideas on works in progress. The section is intended to publish ongoing works of students. We expect that this would enable them to reach a readership beyond their classrooms and universities. The ongoing work may be a dissertation, a thesis or a term paper that deserves attention and addresses issue(s) that have the potential to generate discussion. We invite political science students to join the forum. With this view in mind we are publishing four research notes. These notes are written for a course offered by Professor Julie Webber at the department of politics and government at Illinois State University. We thank Professor Webber for allowing her students to share their works and also for the introduction. – *Editor*]

Gender and Public Policy

Introduction: Julie Webber

The following research notes are from a course on gender and public policy being taught this semester at the department of politics and government at Illinois State University. The course has made its debut on the department’s curriculum roster this semester. In this course, students have been asked to write research papers that underscore the importance of the shifting dividing lines between the public and private spheres and their gendered determination, not only in the United States but also abroad. An additional focus of our work this semester included understanding how past social movements have influenced public policy proposals in the present, and how the gendered ideas (as affecting not just women but men too) shape the outcomes in political life.

Each of the “research notes” below is a statement of the student’s current progress on a paper due at the end of this term. They are by no means complete research ideas or arguments, and are subject to transformation and editing by feedback from *Critique’s* audience. (We strongly urge you send your comments and suggestions to the respective author. Their e-mail addresses have been included in their papers).

Each note deals explicitly with issues of gender and the way ideas about sex, sexuality, and public policy influence what genders can perform in public life, and what they can’t. Onyekachi Kanu’s note (*Issues of Gender*

and labor policies in Third World Countries: Nigeria as a case study) clearly outlines what Spivak noted, after Lyotard, the problem of the *différend* in understanding the “voice” women may or may not have in many formerly colonized countries (Spivak 1988, 300) Eduardo D. Garza’s (*Public Secondary Educational Policy in the US and the Hijacking of Masculine Identity: Construction the New 21st Century Man*) adds normative and theoretical weight to the study of masculinity (an undertheorized area) and proposes a new masculinity to counteract the violent and militarized one hailed forth by popular culture and schooling. Rachel Spangler’s note (*Lesbian Fiction Between First and Second Wave Feminism*) finds a contradiction in feminist history and argues that the dominant story of American feminism has huge gaps where lesbian fiction acted as an extension of the movement in a form other than that of public protest: the enlightenment of lesbian women to choose their own lives and reveal the value of women’s independence from societal judgment. Jason Water’s note (*HIV/AIDS, risk and African American men*) explores the role of a semi-autonomous (but very important) institution in the United States, churches, and their role in the African American community of denying the reality of gay life and the possible detrimental effect this has had on the African American gay and heterosexual community in dealing with HIV/AIDS transmission.

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Issues of gender and labor policies in the Third World: Nigeria as a case study

Onyekachi Kanu

Gender issues, although fairly well-defined in Western / industrialized nations, at non-governmental organizations and at international institutions, have not always been a concern and remain a big issue in most Third World countries. Taking a global perspective on the issues of gender is a difficult task despite the fact that international organizations such as the United Nations, and the EU/Commonwealth have implemented policies that are supposed to protect such issues, there still seems to be tremendous gender inequality and discrimination in most countries, especially the developing ones. One then tends to ask whom these laws are actually protecting. How are these international laws / policies incorporated into the foreign policies of respective nation states of Third World countries and even of nation states that are members of these international organizations (such as European Union and UN)? The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is designed to eradicate gender inequality in member states that are a party to the convention, under the umbrella of the UN is (UNIFEM) that incorporates principles of equality of men and women in the legal system of the UN and helps/monitors member nations, establishes tribunals and other public institutions to ensure the effective protection of women against discrimination and ensures that all acts of discrimination against women by persons, organizations or enterprises are totally eliminated. As the 1979 convention declares:

"...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men

and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field." (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 1979)

Currently, 177 countries have ratified the Convention, committing them to a legally binding international treaty, including participation in a country-by-country reporting process (see http://www.cedaw.org/facts_countries.htm), yet serious inequality / discrimination against women persists especially in Third World countries. Also with the diversity of culture in the global system, this convention has not been able, from my own point of view, to assist most Third world countries in areas of inequality and discrimination against women.

From a dependency theorist's point of view, the disempowerment of women in most Third world countries began during colonization. For instance, in pre-colonial Nigeria, a sexual division of labor existed prior to colonization; men dominated the social system while the women played an important role in all aspects of the lives in their community. These women were allowed some level of autonomy relative to men in these roles. In Yoruba society in Nigeria, the women had the responsibility of providing material resources (such as food and clothing) of the family. Women believed that providing such resources met their responsibility as women and citizens. Their society considered the work the women did complementary to the work of men, and some women achieved impressive status in the economic and social realms of Yoruba life (Rojas 1994, 1). However, when the colonists (especially Britain) took control over the economies of these developing nations-states, they handed over power to the men through the implementation of indirect rule, where the men / traditional rulers were indirectly ruling the economy while the women took to (imperialy-defined) domestic roles. From the colonial period until the present day, women have been seen and treated as unequal to men and are very disadvantaged in enjoying the socio-economic benefits of the economy.

On the other hand, socio-cultural factors such as religion could be said to play a huge part on the issues of gender in developing countries. Take for instance the Islamic religion as practiced in northern Nigeria,

where the women are known to be subject to the men and are not given ample opportunities. Sharia laws (Islamic law) are known to be very brutal to Islamic women. For instance, in a situation where a woman commits adultery, the woman, according to the sharia law, can be stoned to death in public while the man goes scotch free. This inhuman activity toward women is still today being practiced in most Islamic nations and societies (at least I can talk for Nigeria). Take for instance Lamina Lawal's case in Nigeria. She was sentenced to die from public stoning after having a child out of wedlock (in Northern Nigeria, adultery). (Although she may have been lucky to have her case taken up by Amnesty International and other human right international organizations (through the media), that seems to be one case out of a thousand similar cases in both Nigeria and other Islamic nations. How then can these human right organizations get to the remote parts of these nations and influence the laws against such inhuman act? Is it in fact possible that some day, the women of say Afghanistan would be liberal and treated as equal to men in the society? How far are we from this Beijing Platform goal?

This however is a two way dilemma because on the other hand, the women of these third world countries blames the escalation of most of these human right issues / problems on the Imperialist West, that which they conduct through the media. One could claim that this intervention by the West and international organizations in the cultural affairs of most nations encumbers rather than facilitates its main purpose (protection of human right and against discrimination).

Another example could be the imperial act imposition and its affect on countries now attempting to accept the imposition of CEDAW (which they see as a Western imposition of values in exchange for aid monies). One such example from the past that demonstrates this historical imposition of values is the Contagious Disease Act (CD). As Laura Briggs in "The Families of the New World" edited by Haney and Pollard, notes, this act was mainly imposed in countries where the American and British army officials camped, mainly in developing nations. This dehumanizing act required prostitutes, and any woman having sexual relationships with imperial soldiers, to be registered, inspected internally for signs of venereal diseases (syphilis and even gonorrhoea) at regular intervals and confined to a 'lock' hospital if found ill. These stereotypes on women (branding every

woman that came in contact with these Officials as prostitutes) led to the professionalization of prostitution. Cynthia Enloe also commented on this imperialist act in her book *Banana Beaches and Bases: making feminist sense of international politics* where she stated that:

“....Thus the connection between bases (the military) and prostitution has not been confined to colonies and poor countries. Government in France, the United States and Canada all attempted to create military and civil law to control women for the sake of ensuring soldiers morale and health. When they were not able to carry out those laws at home they tried to put them into effect abroad. Yet today it is mainly in poor countries that prostitution is used politically by opponents of bases to question whether military alliances are in the interest of the local population, as their government argues they are (Enloe 1990, 84).”

This brings me back to my previous question of whom these policies are actually protecting. Looking at the global economy today, with women having unequal educational, political and in the long run, unequal job opportunities, prostitution still exists, this time as a means of income acquisition for women who don't have equal opportunities in the local economy. In the early stages of globalization / market orientation of the society (capitalism) the men have been in charge of most of the job opportunities and appointments, but in today's fast developing global economy, there has been a new trend in prostitution that I refer to as the “modernized prostitution.” This new version of prostitution has in one way created opportunities for women to avoid domestic stereotypes and join the global and local work force, however these job opportunities involve the commodification of one's body (through sex) to get what they want (retain their jobs). This situation is particularly obvious in Nigeria with the economy being capitalized. Most women regardless of their level and type of education are put in the marketing sectors of organization / institutions where they have to do whatever it takes to keep their jobs or even get paid. Having interviewed a couple of women from Nigeria who work for a privately owned banks or international corporations, most of these women say that they go as far as sleeping with their bosses / customer (definitely men) to be able to retain their jobs. Despite the fact that they have legal/

legitimate jobs such as marketing, secretarial and other administrative positions in banks, oil companies and some level of government offices (while the managerial positions are left for the men), these women are still regarded as prostitutes by men in the workforce and treated as such. To refer back to Cynthia Enloe's book on this matter, she notes that most international banks play a masculinized role in the global economy which therein affects the economy of most Third world countries.

This masculinized style has helped sustain cooperative relations between otherwise fiercely competitive male bankers. It has also helped keep women on the margins of the financial world, providing crucial support services but only occasionally gaining promotions that give them chance to make policy decisions" (Enloe 1990, 84)

With this in mind, we have to go back to the question asked earlier on, who are these international human right laws and CEDAW laws protecting, and how do we overlook the internal factors that cause inequalities (e.g. culture, religion) as well as externally imposed ones (e.g. the imposition of the imperial division of labor and attitudes toward women as prostitutes) and tackle the problem of inequality in these developing countries? Issues are still left unsaid in regards to these matters and one has to really realize that they have a problem (acceptance) in order to realize how to fix the problem.

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Lesbian Fiction Between First and Second Wave Feminism

Rachel Spangler

The common belief that nothing was happening between first and second wave feminism can be disproved by looking at three influential work of lesbian fiction (*The Well of Loneliness*, *Odd Girl Out*, and *Rubyfruit Jungle*) as part of a progression that shaped public perception of lesbian issues. This progression is then connected with feminism at large through Rita Mae Brown, who brought together both the post-Stonewall LGBT movement and the women's movement in the early 1970's.

During the 1920's there was a rash of fiction written with lesbian characters pitted as villains, vampires, or sexually depraved predators. Then in 1928, Radclyffe Hall published *The Well of Loneliness*, a story in which for the first time a lesbian character was treated with dignity. Hall did not contradict popular opinions or "medical" beliefs of the time in that she didn't write of lesbians as heroes but rather as helpless and suffering. Hall's main character reflects the dominant views of sexologists in the 19th century; she even compiled elaborate notes on the works of authorities of "sexual inversion" such as Havelock Ellis. She made no attempt to paint lesbians as healthy or capable of leading happy lives; however, she worked hard to dispel the myth that lesbians are in any way dangerous to the general population. She paints lesbians as pitiful and worthy of compassion. According to Lillian Faderman's *Surpassing the Love of Men*, "To arouse sympathy, Hall created the impression that such suffering is merely a matter of course for the lesbian: that it is part of her make-up" (Faderman 1981, 321). She also makes clear her position that "inversion is a congenital defect" (Faderman 1981, 321) and therefore cannot be changed.

While the book was censored by virtually every obscenity board it came before for over thirty years, it was immensely popular. Faderman states that "there was probably no lesbian in four decades between 1928 and the late 1960's capable of reading English or any of the eleven languages into which it was translated who was unfamiliar with *The Well of Loneliness*" (Faderman 1981, 322). Not only was the book read by lesbians. It was also commonplace in college and abnormal psychology classes,

making it the only outlet of lesbian life known to the general population (Faderman 1981, 323). Several other books followed the patterns set by Hall, and over the next few decades the enlightened view of lesbians went from one of fear and hatred to one of pity and sympathy.

By the time Ann Bannon began writing her novels in 1952, popular culture forced her to rely heavily on the view of lesbians as suffering beings, but she put less emphasis on being sick or inverted. She stuck to the ideas that lesbians could not live normal, happy lives; however, she did not represent them as ending up tortured and alone. In *Odd Girl Out*, the first book of her Beebo Brinker series, Bannon presents her main character, Laura, as being hopelessly in love with her roommate, and yet she poses no real threat because when she decides the love is one-sided, she leaves college, sad and dejected, to make a life for herself in New York City. She doesn't get the girl, but she does get a ray of hope in that she knows she is going to finally be able to make a home for herself in the community of other lesbians. As the series continues, each book is resolved in a similar fashion, with the character suffering because she is a lesbian while at the same time being content with her sexual orientation and able to look forward to some minor happiness on the horizon.

The Ann Bannon books and the many like them that sprang up in the 1950's and 1960's helped further shape public opinion about lesbian love in that they were explicitly clear in the idea that lesbians are no threat to heterosexuals and emphasized the importance of gays and lesbians being able to live their lives within the confines of their own communities. While these books were not read as widely as *The Well of Loneliness* by the masses, they did serve as a catalyst for the strengthening of gay communities such as New York's Greenwich Village and San Francisco's Castro. Many young gays and lesbians flocked to the neighborhoods portrayed in the novels they were reading and began to set the stage for a centralized gay and lesbian rights movement. According to Lillian Faderman's *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth Century America*, gays and lesbians were bolstered by new scientific studies such as the Kinsey Report, which in 1953 that found that "50% of American men and 28% of American women had what could be considered homosexual tendencies" (Faderman 1991, 140). Gays and lesbians began to talk more openly among other members of the community, and groups such as the Mattachine Society and the

Daughters of Bilitis began to form (Faderman 1991, 140). These groups began to take some minor political stances as the anti-gay rhetoric of McCarthyism was put into laws and government employment policies, but it was not until 1969 that the gay and lesbian community exploded on the social movement scene with the Stone Wall riots. Following examples of the black power movement, gays and lesbians became outspoken advocates for equality (Faderman 1991, 194).

When Rita Mae Brown sat down to write her breakthrough novel in 1972, the world of gays and lesbians was changing quickly. The American Psychiatric Association was in the process of “removing homosexuality from its list of mental disorders” (Faderman 1991, 132).

The sexual revolution had begun, creating an environment of anything goes, and the feminist movement was empowering women to start living their lives for themselves. Brown, who had been tied to prominent feminist groups in both Boston and Washington D.C., wanted to align lesbian rights with women’s rights and used her writing as a tool to pull the two together. According to Alice Echols’ *Eruption of Difference*, Brown’s group, The Furies, published a newspaper that “contained some of the most powerful and insightful writing to be found anywhere in the [feminist] movement (Echols 1989, 228). Echols also asserts that “certainly, when one thinks of lesbian feminist theorists, one thinks immediately . . . of Rita Mae Brown” (Echols 1989, 228). With her first novel, Brown pulled the feminist belief in the power of one woman’s personal narrative together with the art of lesbian pulp fiction, and the result was the overwhelming success of *Rubyfruit Jungle* among lesbians, feminists, and popular culture in general.

When taking into account the three books outlined here, as well as the countless thousands that followed in their footsteps, the belief that “nothing was happening” between first and second wave feminism is clearly a misunderstanding of the way social movements function. In the early 1920’s, when the first wave of feminism began tapering off, women were not ready to be openly gay, much less accept lesbians into a larger movement for women’s equality. However, as time progressed, authors like Hall, Bannon, and Brown were doing the hard, slow work of using fiction to shape and reshape public opinion and build communities to lay the ground work for the resurgence of feminism and the inclusion of lesbians within second wave feminism. The time in between these waves was not a dead period during which women’s issues disappeared, but rather it was a

time of slow progress and changing perceptions and ultimately led to the formation of a stronger, more inclusive women's movement.

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Public Secondary Educational Policy in the US and the Hijacking of Masculine Identity: Construction the New 21st Century Man

Eduardo D. Garza

Major violent problems US high schools are due to the hyper-masculine stances exhibited by minority adolescent males in America's inner cities. According to Collins, "within inner city neighborhoods, public schools are dilapidated, teachers are underpaid and overwhelmed, guns and the informal drug economy have made African American neighborhoods dangerous, and jobs have vanished (Collins 2004, 79)." Collins attributes the violence of the inner city to the erosion of work and family structures and to the growing assault of guns and drugs pushed into African American inner city neighborhoods. From this frame of reference three questions arise. First, can we attribute the violence in inner city public high schools to the imitation of hyper-masculine hip-hop cultural norms? If so, is the stereotypical combination of "physicality over intellectual ability (Collins 2004, 152)" perpetuated by inner city public high school educational policy? Lastly, would a revolution in secondary education policy require a revolution in masculine identity? From these questions I hypothesize that masculinity in America's inner city high schools has been hijacked by stereotypical fears drawn from hip hop culture. The argument of this paper calls for a revision of masculine identity in terms of the relationships adolescent minority males have with themselves and members of the opposite sex. Going a step further, the argument will be presented as a challenge to educators to teach their male students that the value of social and personal relationships depends upon the willingness of both parties to love and be loved. In essence the argument reconstructs masculinity for the 21st century in three themes; false masculinity in hip hop culture, its effects on educational policy, and recognition of the three myths of false masculinity essential to building the 21st century man.

The argument of this paper calls for a revision of masculine identity in terms of the social and personal relationships that adolescent minority males form with each other and members of the opposite sex;

teaching them that the value of social and personal relationships depends upon the willingness of both parties to love and be loved. The preliminary research findings are as follows. In terms of the hip hop culture, Ro argues in *Gangsta* that hip hop aesthetically “steered youth in a positive direction (Ro 1996, 2).” during its golden age (1977-1988) unlike the gangsta rap and materialist aesthetics that followed. Moreover, Ro uncovers the fact that most of the supposed hard core rappers of the gangsta rap aesthetic (such as Ice Cube, Easy E, Dr. Dre, and Ice-T) fraudulently represented themselves and their life experiences in urban ghettos in an effort to capture the economic success of a handful of reality based rap artist truthfully commenting on their violent lives in urban jungles. Unfortunately, Hayden’s *Street Wars: Gangs and the Future of Violence* (Hayden 2004) denotes how the explosion of gangsta rap in the early 1990s crippled inner city males with the illusion of adopting gangsta identities as a survival strategy for every day ghetto life. I believe Ro’s discovery can be used as a strategy of engagement with urban youth to help them become critical of the truth behind the mainstream reality of the hip hop thuggish culture they embody.

In terms of educational policy Devine argues in *Maximum Security:(.) the Culture of Violence in Inner-City Schools* (1996), that urban school violence is perpetuated by the dominant violence prevention programs that saturate the urban public school curriculum. He goes on to show how such saturation fosters a confrontational ideology in urban schools between the educators/security personnel and the students. I will argue that violence prevention policies are driven by the school’s fear of minority males perpetuated by the gangsta mannerisms they incorporate through hip hop culture. Regarding the construction of 21st Century masculinity, Marx in his interview with Joe Ehrmann in the Chicago Tribune’s Sunday Parade Magazine, *Joe Ehrmann:(.) the Most important Coach in America*, presents the framework for 21st century masculinity in terms of Ehrmann’s uncovering of the three myths of modern masculinity. For Ehrmann, athletic achievement, sexual conquest, and economic success do not measure the value of men in a society; even though they are considered to be the defining features of modern masculinity due to the dominant ideology of domesticity and familialism in the US. This framework will allow me to present the 4 pillars of 21st Century masculinity: love yourself and others, accept responsibility for your actions and enact justice on someone else’s

behave who otherwise can not, serve others, and develop a cause beyond yourself.

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HIV/AIDS, Risk and African American men

Jason Waters

When first thinking about what research question I wanted to pose, my initial idea thought was to cover a subject that doesn't get much attention, but needs to be addressed. Secondly I wanted to do research on something that was out of my range of understanding, something I could definitely gain knowledge from doing. This topic would not be stereotypical. I decided that I wanted to find some answers as to why African American gay men are a population at high risk for HIV/AIDS? Also after reading Patricia Hill Collins I became concerned about how the church's policies of ignoring or suppressing recognition of homosexuality have perpetuated the problem. After reading some of Patricia Hill Collins book *Black Sexual Politics*, I decided that I wanted to ask how gay black males are sexually oppressed in this area. I will do this first by researching black church policies on deal with sexuality, and the spread of HIV/AIDS. Secondly I will take a look at statistics on black males that are infected by HIV/AIDS, using data and information from the CDC, and other sources.

Patricia Hill Collins (2004) examines black masculinity and its relation to the myth European colonial powers created about Africa lacking homosexuality. For Europeans, black Africans were designated as "primitive man". Primitive man is supposed to be closer to nature, ruled by instinct, and culturally unsophisticated, and must be heterosexual, for the purpose of reproduction (Hill 2004, 105). This was the belief that black people could not be homosexual, and, if a black person was homosexual, then they could not be "authentically black." Hill also points out that homosexuality could be defined as an internal threat to the integrity of the (White/colonial) nuclear family. She goes on to point out that beliefs in a naturalized, normal hyper-heterosexuality among Black people effectively "whitened" homosexuality (Hill 2004, 106).

Research from 1982-1992 shows that is AIDS leading cause of death for African American males. The CDC reports that "for African Americans, the rate was more than five times as high as that for whites" (1).

In fact AIDS it is the fast growing cause of death, over that of stroke, suicide, cancer, even homicide (*AIDS and HIV Infection In The African American Community* 1995, 26).

Keith Boykin (1996) talks about his experiences as a black gay man in his book titled *One More River To Cross*, as well as the experiences of other black gay men. Boykin discusses issues with the church's policy on homosexuality and the problems of HIV/AIDS. African Americans have been greatly influenced by Black churches, has played a major role in shaping African American lives since slavery (Boykin 1996, 124-125).

According to Ronald L. Braithwaite the number of reported AIDS cases in the United States in 1998 for African American males was at forty-five percent, the highest of any race while non-Hispanics came in at thirty-three percent (Braithwaite 2001, 72). Braithwaite points out that for African American males intravenous drug use is the primary source for contracting AIDS. Data in 1998 shows thirty-seven percent of African American males reported that intravenous drug use was the main source of transmissions, with twenty-seven percent admitting anal intercourse as the main source of transmission. This could lead one to question and analyze this subject further one could question which is more embarrassing finding out you got AIDS from drug use or through having anal sex. It would be embarrassing for them to admit having AIDS, but for most African American men to have their masculinity question for having anal sex might weigh heavier.

The Fullilove article (1999) points out gays play a major role in church. First we take a look at African American churches how each church has different views on homosexuality. The majority of these churches teach that homosexuality is a sin and goes against God. Most churches consider homosexuality the worst sin of all. In some churches homosexuality is over looked. For example people who are obviously gay and have a hard time hiding it are considered entertainers and not much thought is given to their sexuality. Entertainers are the people who create the music, that bring worshippers closer to God. Though these churches care if you're gay, but their excuse is they "love the sinner but hate the sin" (Fullilove 1999, 1114).

A focus group asked African Americans their views about AIDS-related topics such as sexuality, and AIDS prevents policies in the African America Church (Fullilove 1999, 1114). One man talked about his

experience with a Pentecostal church which had 4,000 members where the minister condemns homosexuality. These particular churches homosexuals are forced to suppress their sexuality or keep it a secret.

Another form of religion is Jehovah's Witnesses, where one man talked about his experiences with the church. He had committed a sin against the church by having several children at a young age out of wedlock, which Jehovah's Witnesses considered a sin. He was not thrown out of the church until he revealed that he was gay. The church treated homosexuals like they were worse than dirt. They had no tolerance for a gay person, which forces those who are not out about their sexuality stay in the "closet" and hide their sexuality (Fullilove 1999, 1115). These kinds of actions lead a lot of people to act straight and marry people of the opposite sex, not because they want to but because that is what is expected of them. This also leads a lot of gay people to get married, so they don't draw attention to themselves and their sexuality doesn't come into question. So many of these gay men get married and mess around on the side, in turn having unprotected sex thinking they will not get AIDS because they are not gay.

When researching the black churches limited information was found in regards on how they deal with the increased epidemic of HIV and AIDS. The biggest majority of the black churches promote is abstinence. They think if they tell people to refrain from having sex that is just what they will do. They are human beings and sex is of human nature as it is an animal instinct. The churches tell the youth to refrain from having sex, but they do not tell them why they shouldn't have sex only that sex is bad.

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