

Psychological and Ethical Factors in African American Custody Litigation

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Abstract : The current study examines psychological factors relevant to child custody litigation among African American fathers. Thirty-seven fathers engaged in various stages of custody litigation involving their children were surveyed about their perceptions of racial stereotypes, parental motivations, and racialized dynamics of the court/ legal process. Data were analyzed using a Critical Race Theory model designed to statistically isolate fathers' perceptions of the existence and maintenance of structural racism through the legal process. Results indicate significant correlations between fathers' psychological measures and structural outcomes of their cases. Findings are discussed in terms of ethical implications for family court judicial systems and attorney practice.

Keywords : ethics, family, legal psychology, policy, race

Conference Title : ICLPE 2016 : International Conference on Legal Psychology and Ethics

Conference Location : London, United Kingdom

Conference Dates : April 22-23, 2016