

# Young Disadvantaged Men: Fathers, Families, Poverty and Policy , A Fast Integrative Overview

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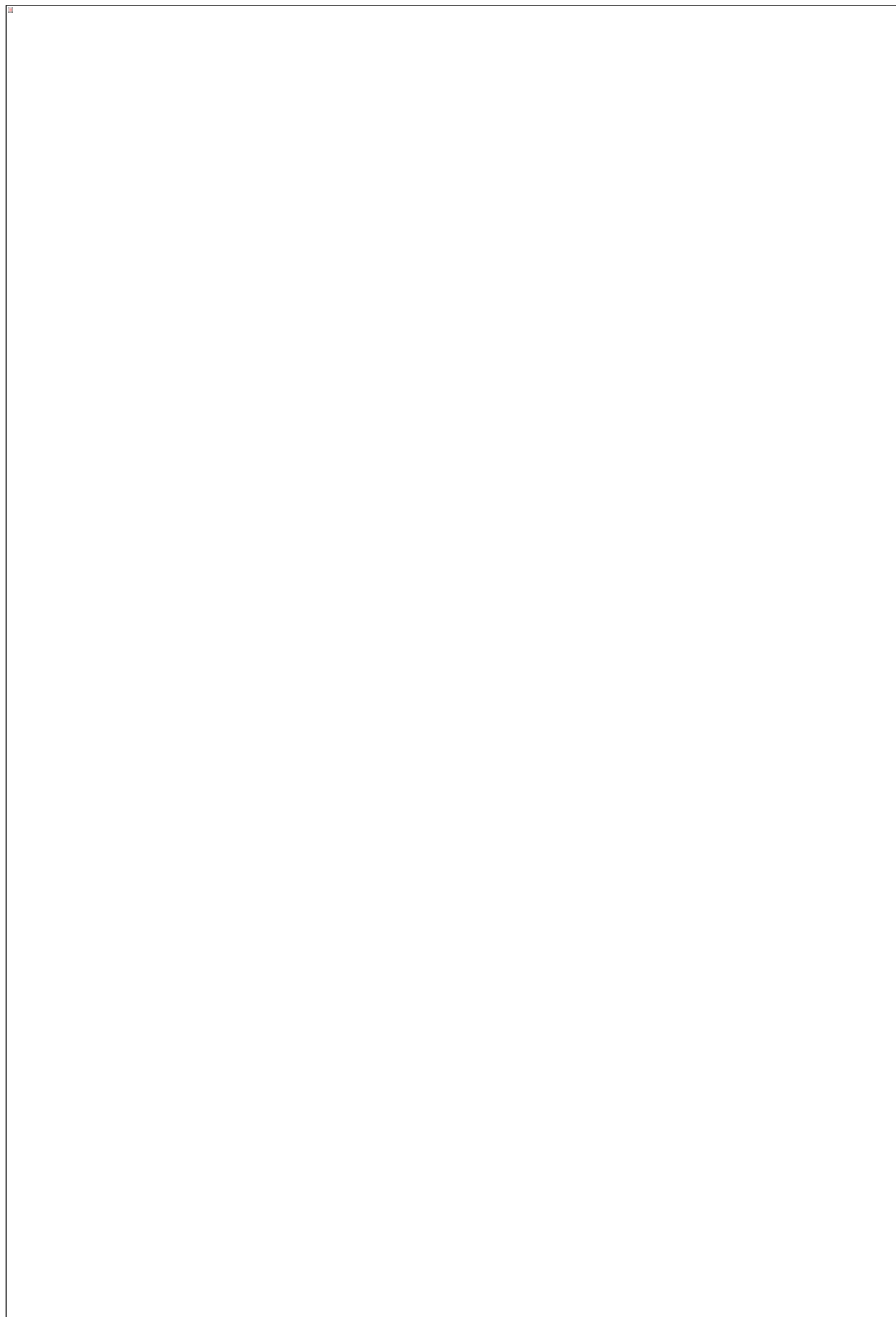
**Young Disadvantaged Men: Fathers,  
Families, Poverty, and Policy**

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Mincy, co –editors**

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**cover below**

**fliers with discount on chairs or in lobby**



# **ANNALS Background : Why?**

- **Fall 2008 – new Director at IRP responded to “Innovative Strategies for Increasing Self-Sufficiency” (ISIS) project from ACF**
- **Issue of low income men arose and was important theme for ISIS and IRP**
- **F 2008: Jim Kemple and “Career Academies” first seminar (thanks Ron)**
- **2008-2011 Recession magnified already chronic jobs problem for low skill men**
- **S 2011:Eloise Anderson and her WI plans— applying lessons to practice**

# Issue Background

- The Great Recession is and was especially damaging for *young (under age 30) undereducated men (secondary school only, including GED, or less)* and structural economic forces are impeding the recovery for men
- **These are the truly “lost generation”**
- **What is the state of knowledge about their condition and their roles as fathers and partners ?**
- **what are the policy options for improving well being amongst fathers and their families ?**

# Quick Overview to Set the Stage

**A. Openers**—young men as fathers and their familial and economic situations

**B. *Perfect Storm***: bad economy( low earnings; unstable families (MPF); rising incarceration rates ; not much policy support— a multidimensional look

**C. Policy and the Situation Now** : not pretty— low skill men become invisible - disconnectedness, long periods of joblessness ,rising poverty

## A. Young Low Skill Men as Fathers

- How many men (high school degree or less) are fathers by age 30 ? **70 percent**
- How much earnings ? **62 percent earn less than \$20,000 ( in 2002!)**
- How about their family situations (mothers and kids) ? **Very unstable and troublesome**

# Who are having the kids? fatherhood, motherhood and having a baby

Two 'extreme' but defining scenarios:

- *FIRST* finish schooling, get decent job/career, find a partner, make a plan, *THEN* have a baby

or

- *FIRST* have a baby—*THEN* worry about school, job/career, partner, and definitely do not have a plan!

**Most young disadvantaged men and women are in the second situation**



**Table 2**  
**Birth Patterns of Women and Men by Level of Education,**  
**Women in 1960–1964 Cohort Observed in 2004**

Level of Education	Percent with First Birth by Age 25 <sup>a</sup>	Percent with First Birth by Age 40 <sup>a</sup>	Average Number of Children Born by Age 40 <sup>a</sup>	Median Age at First Birth <sup>b</sup>		Completed Fertility: Percent of All Children Born <sup>a</sup>
				Women	Men	
<b>Dropouts</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HS Grads<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>64</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>32</b>
Some College	49	81	1.8	23	24	28
College Graduate	20	74	1.6	28	29	24

**Notes:**

<sup>a</sup>Ellwood, Wilde, and Batchelder (2009) using annual CPS files 1960–2004, plus total children born Wilde (2009).

<sup>b</sup> Langton (2010) using 2002 NSFG.

<sup>c</sup>Includes GED holders.

# Many Kids with Poor Life Chances

Over a 'lifetime' (women and men up to age 40 in 2004), the total number of kids (total fertility) in each *mother's* education grouping (similar education or less for fathers) suggests that **48 percent of all kids in the USA today come from parents with low educational backgrounds**

Poverty is high for kids and rising and poverty is not good for kids or for their upward mobility as adults

**Jobs and work skills for parents are solution, meantime, income support for children is an important stop gap for kids**

## **B. Young Father, as Breadwinner, Partner *and* Parent: The Perfect Storm**

- Marriage rates are very low and falling for the youngest adults (under 50 percent overall and only 30 percent for nonwhites under age 30)
- Complication #1—the labor market joblessness and low wages, structurally and cyclically
- Complication #2- multi partner fertility (MPF) outside marriage is high
- Complication #3- incarceration is high especially for dads and for kids of incarcerated dads
- Complication #4 –poor income support system and unforgiving child support system for men
- Rough estimate of overlaps

## **C. Policy for Men, General Principles**

- **First understand the intricacies of low employment , low pay and unstable families and how they affect fathers, partners and children –as WI is doing now**
- **Policy should emphasize both prevention *and* dealing with consequences of bad decisions**
- **Policy should provide more incentives and rewards for good behaviors**
- **Try to maintain and strengthen relationships between father, mothers and their children**

# ANNALS :The Volume

- **Describe the state of affairs** for young (undereducated and disadvantaged) men and their economic status: as fathers, partners, and their interactions with kids
- **Comment across lines** and papers: culture, race, family change and status
- Some **specific policy options** to help families by helping low-income men
- **Comments** on policy realities and discussion

# The State of Affairs:

## Descriptive Surveys of What We Know

- **Economic Situation** of Low-Educated, Low-Income Men (*Andrew Sum, Northeastern University*)
- **Low-Income Men as Fathers** (*Lawrence Berger and Callie Langton, University of Wisconsin–Madison*)
- **Low-Income Men as Partners** (*Kathryn Edin University and Laura Tach, Harvard University*)
- **How Do Low-Income Men and Fathers Matter for Kids?** (*Marcia Carlson and Katherine Magnuson, University of Wisconsin–Madison*)

# Crosscutting Commentary

- **Culture and context**  
(*Alford Young*, University of Michigan)
- **Race**  
(*Devah Pager*, Princeton)
- **Family Structure and Family Change**  
(*Frank Furstenberg*, University of Pennsylvania )

# Policy Perspectives: Helping Families by Helping Low-Income Men

- **Child Support: Responsible Fatherhood and the Quid Pro Quo** *Maria Cancian and Daniel Meyer, IRP and University of Wisconsin–Madison*
- **Schools, Non-Schools and the Transition to Work: Linking Young Men to Stable Jobs** *Carolyn Heinrich, IRP, University of Wisconsin–Madison and Harry Holzer, Georgetown*
- **Incarceration and Prisoner Re-Entry Policy** *Steven Raphael, University of California, Berkeley*
- **Policies that Strengthen Fatherhood and Encourage Healthy Family Relationships** *Virginia Knox, Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation ; Phil and Carol Cowan, UC Berkeley*
- **Income Support Policies for Low-income Men and Non-custodial Fathers : Tax and Transfer Programs** *Ron Mincy, Columbia University*



**The short story**  
***Focus* summer 2011**

<http://www.irp.wisc.edu/publications/focus/pdfs/foc281d.pdf>

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