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Kevin Roy and Nikki Jones (Eds): Pathways to Adulthood for Disconnected Young Men in Low-Income Communities for Child and Adolescent Development: New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, Number 143

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Pathways to Adulthood for Disconnected Young Men in Low-Income Communities, is an edited collection comprised of various studies performed to expose the unique struggles experienced by young disadvantaged men from urban and nonurban communities. The authors of each chapter present one of the unique struggles these young disadvantaged men of racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds experience in comparison to more typical adolescent experiences. Through this, their documented experiences provide a closer examination of how the process of entering adulthood can vary for individuals. Collectively, it is agreed that their individual set of circumstances influence these young men's experiences significantly. However, each chapter evaluates a distinctive circumstance to come to this conclusion. This book's purpose is to educate the reader on the extreme importance of healthy transition into adulthood for any adolescent, but specifically how this is an especially difficult task for the young men presented in the varying studies. This book succeeds in being an important evaluation of less known adolescent experiences that could attract the interests of scholars in the field as well as those new to adolescent studies in general. The book is successful in doing so as the theories discussed and the evidence examined offer a compelling argument. The book persuasively supports its claim that these experiences shape these young men and effectively hinder their ability to enter adulthood in ways that others might deem natural.

Chapter 1, entitled "Theorizing Alternative Pathways through Adulthood: Unequal Social Arrangements in the

Lives of Young Disadvantaged Men," introduces the goal of the book and sets the stage for the following four chapters. Due to the research focusing solely on young disadvantaged men, it becomes clear that their distinctive interactions with their community, family, peers and law enforcement help determine the ease of their transition into adulthood. The goal is then to enlighten the reader of these intervening factors at play and how proper knowledge of these situations could help create interventions to help these young men. All adolescents are expected to transition into adulthood in a very uniform manner. However, as the book showcases, this expectation disregards diversity among adolescents. To ignore diversity and the variability of adolescent experiences can be a key reason why these young men are continuously disadvantaged. The book presents some of the reasons why these young men have even greater difficulty properly emerging into adulthood. The following chapters sustain the goal of representing young disadvantaged men's experiences as critical examples of the nonlinear transition into adulthood and the practice of recognizing their diverse experiences as important for proper intervention and support. This introductory chapter successfully provides proper contextual information about the entirety of the book. The introduction to the studies presented in each chapter of the book allows the reader to understand the purpose of the book as well as its significance.

Chapter 2, "Taking Boys Out of the Hood: Exile as a Parenting Strategy for African American Male Youth," examines the challenges that parents of young adolescents face when they are living in low-income neighborhoods. The challenges faced by these parents are shown to directly affect their children's development. As the authors show, parents in these high-crime neighborhoods have a difficult time finding supportive environments for their children's

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healthy development. The authors stress the importance of "social capital" in correlation with the parent's ability to find such interventions. The authors explain how social capital works in this context. That type of capital refers to the level of involvement the parents have afforded into the local community and the benefits they receive for doing so. Parents with an abundance of "social capital" find it easier to find community resources to help prevent or reduce their children's destructive behavior. The authors suggest that, without proper "social capital," parents often feel forced into a parenting style known as "exile." Exile is "the process of removing children from distressed neighborhoods to safe spaces outside of the community in which they reside" (Richardson et al. 2014, pp. 13–14). The authors state that there are three types of exile. The data used in this chapter was collected from a longitudinal ethnographic study. This study examined the social context of violence among adolescents, specifically among African American youth in the New York City community "Soulville."

According to the authors Soulville was considered a "high-risk" neighborhood, meaning high levels of violence. Life-history interviews were claimed to provide the most compelling data in the study. Interestingly, the authors claim that the study was not intended to examine the parenting styles of the residents of Soulville, but through their investigation, they found a theme of using exile as a parenting strategy. Most often it was used in hopes of safeguarding their children from criminal behavior. One form of exile, temporary exile, involves the parents' sending their child outside of the community for only short periods of time. This possesses both positive and negative attributes. The authors believe, although it is a very short period of time, these temporary exiles can be enough time for the child to escape their community's violence so that they may cope with it in a healthy manner. Additionally, those mothers with ample "social capital" were able to use resources within and around their community, such as after school programs or help from immediate family members. The primary issue of temporary exile is that these short periods of removal may not be enough. Primarily, these children will still be surrounded by criminal behavior. Parents often then turn to more permanent forms of exile. According to the authors, these removals could be accomplished in a few ways. Perhaps the most promising form of permanent exile is when the child is sent to live with a family member indefinitely. However, this is often hard for the mothers to cope with, even if it is in the best interests of their children. However, if these mothers lack "social capital," within the community and also within their family, they may be forced to more drastic measures. These measures came in the form of institutional exile. In this scenario, the parent's would

request that the child be placed into the juvenile system. The authors state that this is an extreme measure that can actually be damaging to the child. Once the child is within the juvenile system, it can actually become easier for them to be influenced by peers and get involved in gangs. Adolescents experiencing unhealthy peer influence are often unable to maturely handle it, and therefore, are more likely to submit to it. The authors thus suggest the less damaging parenting strategies for effective transitioning into adulthood.

As the authors admit, the United States is failing to provide these young adolescents with the proper interventions to feel safe within the community they live in. While these forms of exile discussed can be useful coping mechanisms, they typically do not eliminate this issue. Until this is done, it is the authors' belief that "…parents and the criminal justice system will continue to 'take boys out of the hood'." (Richardson et al. 2014, p. 28) An adolescent's environment can be a key factor in their healthy development. Most obviously, if they are only surrounded by violence, without any evidence of a better life, they are likely to adopt this lifestyle as well. The authors lastly suggest examining how other ethnic and diverse groups use this parenting style, as well as the need for similar research on young African American girls. By suggesting this research, the authors provide the reader with more interesting research questions to continue understanding adolescent development. In its entirety, the authors were successful in examining the parenting style of exile within this African American community, and explaining its significance. However, the study examined used a substantially small sample size of a narrow group of individuals. Still, the study was successful in that it was longitudinal, as this provided an understanding of how these adolescents developed over time and were influenced by their parents' parenting styles.

The third chapter, "'The Regular Routine': Proactive Policing and Adolescent Development among Young, Poor Black Men," introduces the reader to the practice of "proactive policing" that has been growing in popularity for decades (Jones 2014, p. 33). Its popularity stems from the research that shows, at least in the short term, that these practices decrease crime rates. However, as the author points out, the long-term effects have yet to be addressed. Police encounters become a normal part of these adolescent's everyday lives. The author defines it as a "routine" because the young men have become so accustomed to the interaction (Jones 2014, p. 34). Due to its being such a large part of the adolescents' lives, the author believes that it has a much more detrimental effect than most are willing to realize. Policymakers are only concerned with the reduction of crime in these neighborhoods, not considering the social and psychological implications on its resident

adolescents. The author conducted ethnographic field research in the San Francisco neighborhood of Filmore. The research involved formal and informal interviews, third-party video recordings and direct observations. The author's research is focused on uncovering these implications on young poor black men, disregarding whether or not the police practices are effective.

The author compares these police interactions with those that occur within institutions such as prison or jail. Within institutions, interactions between law enforcers and inmates are simply designed to reinforce the notion of who is in charge. The police's targeted surveillance, arguably, enacts a very similar exercise. This is imperative because, when police make their presence known constantly and often times with forcible actions, they establish their authority over community members. In essence, they establish the roles between them. In this unbalanced relationship, they command the dominant role, while the citizens are left with the submissive role. This makes police the only source of power, which they can use at their willing disposal. Due to the community members' subordinate role, they may not believe that they can do anything about it. Adolescents, who lack even more rights, may especially experience these emotions. At this time in their lives, adolescents should be free to experiment with their surroundings, but constant surveillance constricts this ability. As a result, frustration with their unequal relationship, along with this being a particularly vulnerable time in their lives, may cause adolescents to rebel against the relationship. Interestingly, the author then argues that the targeted police surveillance resembles the authoritarian parenting style. This parenting style requires essentially no input from the child, as the parents have complete control. So, in this case, the adolescent is made accountable to the police officer, but the officer maintains no accountability to the adolescent. It is known that this form of parenting often fails in its effectiveness, so it becomes unsurprising that it would be similarly ineffective in this context.

The common police practice of "stop-and-frisk" is, according to the author, perceived as an infringement on these community members' rights, as well as it reinforces the societal roles in place. It allows the police full discretion on when and to whom they decide to implement the practice on. This creates a very arbitrary and discriminatory practice. These overly frequent interactions between the police and adolescents cause a severely negative relationship to form. According to the author, a general mistrust of law enforcement is set in place by these arbitrary practices. That lack of trust turns into a lack of respect. As the author states, "those who trust law enforcement tend to obey the law" (Jones 2014, pp. 35). Adolescents may begin to identify with their submissive role, believing that the police will always target them. This dynamic makes it,

again, easy to deduce that adolescents who lack trust in law enforcement may decide the best course of action is to act against it since they seemingly cannot escape it. This, presumably, is the exact opposite of what police surveillance is trying to accomplish.

According to the author, an additional way that the police targeting is affecting adolescent lives is through their familial and peer relationships. It is clear that the proper forming of adolescents' relationships helps them more easily transition into adulthood. Upon the author's arrival in the neighborhood, a gang injunction was ordered for the neighborhood due to its high crime rates. The injunction listed the names of a large portion of the young men living in the neighborhood. A gang injunction allows police to specifically target the neighborhood, giving permission to constantly survey for potential crimes. Those listed on the injunction are prohibited from fraternizing with each other. As the author suggests, this practically constricts the entire community. As the author proposes, an adolescent's life begins to squander when there are strains on family and peer relationships. They become limited in their options, and therefore their freedoms, which prevent them from engaging in healthy development. The adolescents named on the injunction are deemed gang members, a status that can follow them for the rest of their lives. It is suggested that adolescents may not have the capacity to understand the implications of their actions. They lack a level of maturity required to handle situations with police officers and other forms of authority. Additionally, by labeling them as gang members, this instills a negative self-identity during a point in their lives when establishing a healthy identity is a very important task. These are important considerations in light of what is known about adolescent brain development as well as the extreme importance of developing a healthy self-identity.

The author of this chapter provides another critical adjustment of the reader's focus onto young adolescents and their unique needs. By expanding this research, it may expose the varying state policies, and in effect show which state's policies are the most effective without harming adolescents' healthy development. Unlike the second chapter's authors, there was no suggestion of similar research on girls. However, this could provide necessary insights into the continual discriminatory nature of police patrolling, especially along gender binaries. Additionally, long-term research into the overall effectiveness of targeted police surveillance, which as the author notes is lacking, may enlighten policy makers of its possible ineptness. This chapter was successful in continuing the discussion of unhealthy relationships during adolescence, in this case with law enforcement, and the likelihood that they will lead to negative effects on their development into adulthood. In this, the chapter was exceedingly successful and enlightening.

Chapter 4 introduces Kevin Roy, Lauren Messina, Jocelyn Smith and Damian Water's, "Growing Up as 'Man of the House': Adultification and Transition into Adulthood for Young Men in Economically Disadvantaged Families." Adolescents in disadvantaged communities, as confirmed in previous chapters, deal with a distinctive set of obstacles when emerging into adulthood. The research performed by these authors focuses on the potential effects on the healthy development of adolescent men by becoming the "man of the house" too early. "Man of the house" is a title ascribed to those young men who take responsible roles within their household that adolescents typically would not be given. However, these responsibilities do not gain these children more rights within or outside of the household. This is important to note because this creates the conflicting set of standards that the authors discuss. The adultification of these young men, meaning they are expected to act like adults long before they are physically or mentally mature, creates conflicting realities as these young men attempt to transition into adulthood.

The researchers worked for 18 months in two youth development programs in the Baltimore/Washington, DC, metropolitan area. These two programs, Urban Progress (UP) and Diversity Matters hosted the young men who took part in this study. According to the authors, of these men chosen, 73 % said in their life they had either assumed the role of the man of the house or had dealt with adult-like responsibilities (Roy et al. 2014). After data collection and analysis, the researchers found three common themes. The first theme, entitled "Early Family Transitions Initiate Young Men into Adult Responsibilities," describes when and how these young men obtain these roles. Often, according to the authors, this comes at a time of family transitioning in which the young men noticed the family struggling in one way or more. Either their families directly asked them to help out, or they described it as happening naturally over time. Of those adolescents who decided to take on the responsibilities, the authors suggest that the traditional masculinity ideals engrained could suggest to them that it is not only necessary, but also their rightful responsibility to provide for the family as a man. This is especially true when they are the only man who can possibly provide for the family. The authors state that this typically happens due to an absent father figure. This can mean that the father physically abandoned the family or that they simply have mentally abandoned the family— meaning that they lack this feeling of responsibility to provide for the family, and therefore, do not. As these young men assumed their role as the new man of the house, it often caused a strain on their relationships with their mothers. When mothers were at work, the young men assumed the role of authority, however when she returned home, they reverted back. This could cause a confusing set of standards, insofar as they would be unsure if and when something is expected of them. The second theme, "Contradictory Expectations Place Risks on Men of the House," furthers this idea of confusing expectations. According to the authors, as these young men mature they are often expected to take on more responsibilities. This often led these adolescents to feel overwhelmed. Adolescents may not even have the maturity to deal with adult-like decisions in the first place. This becomes obvious when it was found that many would turn to a life of crime. As adolescents, their workplace options were scarcely limited. This made "hustling" a way to help their family's financial burdens (Roy et al. 2014, p. 66) Obviously, this could often mean severe consequences for the adolescents, even if they are doing it to help their families. The authors also noted that sometimes a new man of the house, adding more confusion to their lives, suddenly replaced these young men. Typically, this surfaced as a new boyfriend or husband of their mother. These older men took on the responsibilities that these young boys were accustomed to dealing with. This could cause confusion on what is then expected of them, if anything. Then, thirdly, a theme emerged that was entitled: "Difficult Transition into Adulthood is a Consequence of Adultification." These young men, after experiencing everything discussed previously in the chapter, are now expected to enter adulthood. These young men spent their adolescent years already stretched thin with adult responsibilities, therefore, one could assume they would be equipped to handle it on their own. However, most of these young men found transitioning their knowledge into actual adulthood very difficult. Possibly, this is due to the fact that they never developed an effective self-identity. As noted in previous chapters, this is a vital aspect of healthy adolescent development. By the constant shifting of their responsibilities and roles within the family, they could never find a clear sense of self.

This chapter uncovers yet another critical issue faced by young disadvantaged men. Although their sample size, like previous chapters' research, is somewhat limited, the research is still compelling. Similarities in these young men's experiences growing up with adult-like responsibilities provide a clear message. That is, the adultification of adolescents, even if in attempts to better the family, detrimentally impairs their healthy development. Adolescents' understanding their roles, as is noted throughout the book, can help them create a healthy self-identity. When environments and relationships make this task difficult, adolescents exhibit more uncertainty as they transition into adulthood. The author's goal was to provide the reader with the proper knowledge to understand why such adultification would result in such confused identities and difficulty emerging into adulthood. Although the authors recommended no further research, it is vital that this type of

research continue to be done if there is going to be any hope for solutions.

The fifth and final chapter, "Fathers' Accounts of Struggle and Growth in Early Adulthood: An Exploratory Study of Disadvantaged Men," focuses on the possible difficulties that adolescents endure entering adulthood as young fathers. These difficulties, according to the authors, can affect them socially, economically and psychologically (Settersten et al. 2014). Again, like the previous chapters, this one highlights an exceptional circumstance an adolescent could face that could affect their healthy development into adulthood. The authors justifiably bring up this topic because it is known adolescents are more likely to engage in risky behaviors. Therefore, discussing the consequences of those actions provides a significant contribution to adolescent research. As it becomes clear that they were not mature enough to abstain from those risky behaviors, it becomes just as obvious that they are not mature enough to properly handle their outcomes. In this case that outcome is early fatherhood. However, that is just the point. Parental responsibilities, as seen in chapter 4, are not meant for adolescents. They are conflicting with the healthy development an adolescent should be going through. Still, these young men in theory do not have a choice in the matter. However, many young men choose to abandon their responsibilities as the father because they seem to clash with their current lives. The research presented in chapter 4 showcases the consequences of that decision. As the authors note, although most consider adulthood as synonymous with independence, this is not the reality. Adulthood is typically the time of getting married and having children. Therefore, the authors suggest a more appropriate term of "interdependence" (Settersten et al. 2014, p. 75). Adolescents' having people in their lives that they can count on is crucial because those individuals are likely to keep them accountable for their actions.

The research conducted for this chapter involves 48 fathers from two communities in Oregon. These fathers were chosen because of their low-income status and their ability to reflect on their experiences as fathers. The fathers were asked, during focus groups, to reflect on their experiences with fatherhood and how it has negatively and positively affected them. Through their research, three themes were identified. The first theme was "Contradictions of the Good Provider and Involved Father." These men reflected on their obligations to the workforce to provide for their families, and how this affected their familial relationships. These fathers worked a considerable amount of hours at low-wage jobs so that they could maintain some economic stability. However, long hours meant less time spent at home developing their relationships with their children. The conflicting interests

experienced by these men highlight one of the obstacles they, potentially unlike middle-class parents, must face. The second theme, "Turning Points in Identity and Life's Meanings," describes these men's experiences with a changing identity as they entered not only adulthood but also fatherhood. Overall, these fathers widely agreed that these changes were positive. The authors of this chapter make clear that there are instances when knowing they are going to be a father causes adolescents to turn their life around and avoid additional risky behaviors. Fatherhood took them down a different, and agreeably better, path. Those adolescents struggling with their sense of self may find fatherhood defining their identity. However, the authors rightfully note that fatherhood should not be seen as a saving grace, as it still brings its own special set of struggles. Then the third theme, "Shifting Investments in Social Relationships," discusses the importance that these men placed on their relationship with their wives. They believed that this was a decisive factor in their ability to be a good father and husband. Due to their workplace demands, these men additionally experienced having limited time to devote to their wives. These men found relying on their wives to be a crucial part in their success in parenting. These three themes discussed by the authors engage the reader in a discussion about the negatives of early parenthood, but also the positives. The authors importantly discuss how this transition into parenthood can be made easier by pursuing higher education, which can result in better jobs, and therefore more allotted time for the family. The authors then leave the reader with an important question to ponder: Is early parenthood causing the negative outcomes seen in this study, or is it other "existing disadvantages" that cause early parenthood? (Setterstern et al. 2014, p. 85). These authors, unlike previous chapters' authors, admit to the shortcomings of their research insofar as it should be reconstructed for larger sample sizes, of more diverse groups using different modes of data collection. The authors' goal in this chapter was not to claim that their research was "representative" of all disadvantaged young men, but rather to open up the discussion of such experiences so that further research could be accomplished (Setterstern et al. 2014, p. 78). By admitting the limitations of their study, the authors maintain the growing importance of research on the development of adolescents, especially those experiencing unique experiences.

In its entirety, this book presents a wide variety of research that offers compelling insights into the lives of young disadvantaged men. Each chapter of this book complemented the next, causing a natural flow for the reader to follow. Additionally, each chapter was written in a way so that not only scholarly readers could understand. A common theme that can be seen throughout the entire book is that adolescence is often considered a time of

increased dependence. They depend on their environment to create a safe place for them to evolve and they equally depend on their relationships with others to support their evolvement into an adult. However, the adolescents featured in this book demonstrate that when adolescents must overcome additional battles, they have a more troubling time transitioning. This book's importance is increased when bearing in mind that the young men featured in the study are considered representative of an even more overlooked group of adolescents, those facing challenges not typically faced by the "average" adolescent. These men are called disadvantaged for a variety of reasons, as seen in the chapters. This means that they are increasingly susceptible to their surroundings and experiences. This could be because of the neighborhood they live in, their prearranged role as a delinquent, their role within their family, and/or when they enter fatherhood. This is not an exhaustive list, but the purpose of this book was to shed light on these specific struggles. The special circumstances experienced by these young men create an important focus for the study of adolescence. The research conducted by the authors of each chapter is significant because it allows for variability. Often, when studying adolescence, researchers look at the typical experiences of adolescent development; and this continues despite the field's seeking to embrace diversity (see Levesque 2007), as even when diverse populations are studied, the topics tend to be narrow and fail to inform policy, practice, and the everyday lives of those most in need (Levesque 2014). This is not to say that adolescents outside of these communities do not face struggles, but it is likely that more mainstream youth have been studied and researchers have come to better understand those struggles. Conducting research on a narrower group of individuals helps to find unique experiences that undermine what readers may have thought they knew about adolescence. The editors of this book rightfully selected this group of studies and researchers to form one collective body of work that will help shed light on the diverse experiences of adolescence.

Conflicts of interest The authors have no conflict of interest.

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