

Public Abstract

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Title:YOU GOTTA MAN UP AND TAKE CARE OF IT: MASCULINITY, RESPONSIBILITY, AND TEEN FATHERHOOD

Drawing on in-depth interviews, I analyze how teen fathers talk about their experiences of teen fatherhood, how they actively construct their identities as “good dads” but also as “good men”. Specifically, I explore the ways in which teen fathers utilize norms of masculinity as resource for making sense of their experiences as teen fathers. Notions of youth, masculinity, and social class, can all offer competing concerns that these men must negotiate if they are to successfully present an identity, a self that is both “good” and acceptable. Hence, for the men in this study, masculinity, social class, and youth serve as powerful resources for making sense of their identities and their responsibilities as teen fathers; but, these same resources can also create additional problems which also require further negotiation. Drawing on stereotypical norms of masculinity and youth, for example, can work to successfully negotiate responsibility while also signifying themselves as men; however, these same discourses can also work to stigmatize them as the wrong kind of men. In short, teen fathers are not only negotiating their identities and responsibilities as young dads, they are also negotiating their identities as men.