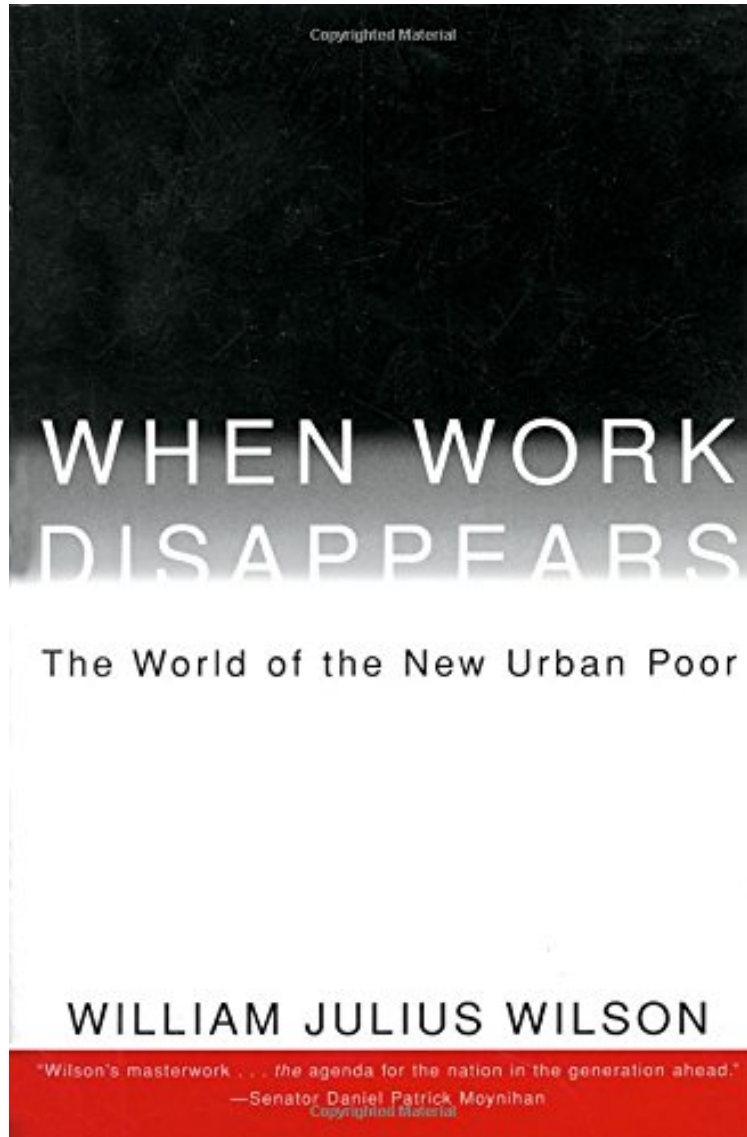


When Work Disappears : The World of the New Urban Poor

William Julius Wilson

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William Julius Wilson : When Work Disappears : The World of the New Urban Poor before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised When Work Disappears : The World of the New Urban Poor:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Cities in the 80s were left unprepared to deal with ...By ANDRE CHERRY Cities in the 80s were left unprepared to deal with the crack-cocaine tsunami, the AIDS epidemic, and the steep rise in homeless populations, largely jobs leaving urban centers, Wilson found. As I read Wilsons thorough

work, I kept thinking about how similar his findings were to what Anne Case and Angus Deaton more recently found in rural America: heroin addiction, deaths of despair, and unemployment or underemployment. Black, brown, or white it doesn't matter. Long term exposure to environments of chronic unemployment is detrimental to individuals, families, and the communities. The primary problem that Wilson found, which continues to be a problem today is that, ... systematic scientific argument is no match for the dominant belief system -- it is the moral fabric of individuals, not the social and economic structure of society, that is taken to be the root of the problem.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Bit dated - but an important read to understand the poor
By Jason Stokes
The urban poor are happy to take welfare, never work, commit crimes, do drugs, etc. Sound familiar? People love to tout this idea of the urban poor, based on anecdotes, popular TV and movies, and some media approaches. However, Wilson describes, quite convincingly, a world of the urban poor who yearn for the "American Dream" like the rest of us, who want to work, contribute to society, and make their lives (and their children's lives) better, but are simply unable to do so. This book can get dry by piling on statistic after statistic, chart after chart, but always seems to bring the reader back in by presenting direct quotes from people, typically from ghetto areas of Chicago, on how their lives are effected by their situations. It puts a human face on the issues of poverty in America - a human face that rarely gets seen. For all of those who have grown up in suburban areas, small towns, or cloistered urban situations, I recommend you read this book and open your eyes to the true world of the urban poor. Yes, there are some bad apples, as in any society - but these people want to improve their lives - and we need to ensure we enact responsible policies and give them the opportunity to do so.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. It is very informative!!!
By Chrissy
It arrived quickly and in good condition. It discusses African Americans in the ghettos of Chicago during the 1970's and 1980's. It looks at every aspect of what their experiences are like, and how they got there. It is a good read with good research, and good interviews. It does repeat some, but, overall it is really informative.

Wilson, one of our foremost authorities on race and poverty, challenges decades of liberal and conservative pieties to look squarely at the devastating effects that joblessness has had on our urban ghettos. Marshaling a vast array of data and the personal stories of hundreds of men and women, Wilson persuasively argues that problems endemic to America's inner cities--from fatherless households to drugs and violent crime--stem directly from the disappearance of blue-collar jobs in the wake of a globalized economy. Wilson's achievement is to portray this crisis as one that affects all Americans, and to propose solutions whose benefits would be felt across our society. At a time when welfare is ending and our country's racial dialectic is more strained than ever, *When Work Disappears* is a sane, courageous, and desperately important work. "Wilson is the keenest liberal analyst of the most perplexing of all American problems...[This book is] more ambitious and more accessible than anything he has done before."--*The New Yorker*

.com An unofficial adviser to President Bill Clinton, Wilson has become a celebrity of sorts. A former University of Chicago professor, Wilson--currently on staff at Harvard--has been profiled in *The New Yorker* and dubbed one of America's most influential people by *Time* magazine. A respected thinker on issues of race and poverty, the author of *The Declining Significance of Race* and *The Truly Disadvantaged* offers his take on welfare and inner-city joblessness in *When Work Disappears*. Racism, Wilson argues, plays increasingly less of a role in urban problems. More significant, he claims, are changes in the global economy and the disappearance of unskilled but decent-paying jobs near cities; according to Wilson, these factors have deprived the urban working class of steady jobs, destroyed inner-city businesses, and caused younger, upwardly mobile residents to flee for the suburbs. From *Publishers Weekly Record* levels of unemployment and disappearing jobs in inner-city neighborhoods are the root cause of poverty and social distress among African Americans, contends Wilson, an eminent University of Chicago sociology professor. A galvanizing blueprint for concerned citizens and policy makers, his scholarly study focuses on Chicago's inner-city poor, using three surveys he conducted between 1987 and 1993. Wilson (*The Truly Disadvantaged*) sees a direct link between growing joblessness and what he calls ghetto-related behavior and attitudes?fatherless children born out of wedlock, drugs, crime, gang violence, hopelessness?but unlike those who blame a "culture of poverty," he emphasizes that structural changes can effect a turnaround. His plan to reverse declining employment and social inequality includes proposals for city-suburban collaboration, private-sector partnerships with public schools, national health insurance, and time limits on welfare for able-bodied recipients combined with guaranteed jobs in a public-works program modeled on the New Deal's Works Progress Administration. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Booklist* Drawing on recent research and three projects sociologist Wilson (now at Harvard after more than 20 years at the University of Chicago) directed, *When Work Disappears* seeks to replace an ideology-driven debate that explains ghetto problems as caused by either structural factors such as race or cultural pathologies. Wilson's "broader vision" recognizes structural, cultural, and social-psychological factors and analyzes "their interaction in determining the experiences and life chances of inner-city residents." Poverty areas, Wilson notes, experience an extreme form of trends that impact most Americans, e.g., increasing economic insecurity and changes in values that weaken the appeal of the traditional family. Surveys of Chicago's working and welfare poor--and area employers--shatter stereotypes but confirm the isolation and limited options of people in poverty areas. Wilson traces historical

U.S. attitudes about poverty, welfare, and race before suggesting policies to "break the cycle of joblessness and improve [students'] preparation for the new [global] labor market." Given the power Wilson attributes to jobs, he pays too little attention to arguments (such as Rifkin's *The End of Work*, 1994) that full-time employment may soon disappear for most Americans, but Wilson's high profile and well-designed research ensure interest. Mary Carroll