A Report of the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission

Council on Gender Parity in Labor and Education

Shifting Focus: Employment Trends for Men Both Nationally and in New Jersey

August 31, 2012

Prepared by
Linda Houser, Ph.D.

With funding from the
New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission
Council on Gender Parity in Labor and Education

Contents

Introduction

The past four years have been an economically tumultuous time, both for the United States as a whole and for the State of New Jersey. The economic recession which officially[1] began in December of 2007, and ended in June of 2009, introduced the country to the term "mancession," an economic period in which unemployment rates for men have rose higher and climbed more precipitously than those for women. Much attention has been paid to the gendered dynamics of unemployment during the recession. Early indicators suggest that, in the lengthy period of recovery to come, divergent outcomes will once again be observable by gender, particularly as it is intertwined with race and ethnicity, education, income, and labor force experience. Knowledge of how men are currently faring, including who is working, in what fields, under what conditions, and for how long, can assist states and locales in crafting policy and program responses geared toward improving individual and family wellbeing.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the national unemployment rate stood at 8.3 percent for July of 2012, marking the 42nd consecutive month of rates at above 8 percent[2] (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2012a). In part because job losses occurred disproportionately in construction and manufacturing sectors, the national unemployment rate for men exceeded that for women by as much as two and a half percentage points at the height of the recession. By January 2012, however, declines in the unemployment rate for men and a leveling off of the rate for women left each group with a rate of 8.3 percent (BLS, 2012b). Since drawing even, the national unemployment rate for women has once again dipped below that for men, at 8.1 percent for women and 8.4 percent for men as of July 2012 (BLS, 2012a). At 9.8 percent in July 2012, New Jersey's unemployment rate continues to exceed the national average (New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development [NJ LWD], 2012a).

In New Jersey, high numbers of unemployment insurance (UI) claims, and lengthy UI spells, have also signaled the state's economic distress. New Jersey reported 427,900 unemployed residents in July 2011, with average unemployment duration of 38.3 weeks. This stands in stark contrast to the July 2007 count of 224,700 unemployed residents, with average unemployment duration of 21.2 weeks. Here, too, we find differences by gender. From July of 2007 to July of 2009 — at the height of the recession — the number of continued unemployment claims in New Jersey, overall, rose by 99 percent. For women, however, the increase was 81 percent, compared to 115 percent for men (NJ LWD, 2011).

---

[1] Month and year designations were reported by the National Bureau of Economic Research on September 20, 2010 (www.nber.org/cycles.html).

[2] Unemployment rates reported here are seasonally adjusted for those age 16 and older. For the age 20 and older group, the seasonally adjusted rate was 7.6 percent (BLS, 2012a).

That a recession should have a disproportionately negative impact on men's employment is not historically unique; in fact, gendered employment trends during the recent recession mirrored those of the most recent five recessions. As Kochhar (2011) points out, in three recessionary periods between 1969 and 1982, women experienced job gains, as the long-term trend toward increased labor force participation by women continued. What is distinct about the current recession is its recovery. In its first two years, the unemployment rate for men fell as anticipated, while the unemployment rate for women stagnated or rose. Men have gained more jobs than women both in traditionally male (e.g., manufacturing) and in traditionally female (e.g., education and health services) occupations (Kochhar, 2011). Although it is important not to understate the continued impact of industry and occupational gender segregation, recovery-era trends do suggest some movement of men into growth sectors such as education and health, both of which have been the traditional purview of women.

Despite the tendency— and indeed, at times, the utility— of comparing and contrasting men's and women's employment trends, the on-the-ground reality is that individual workers are rarely "islands unto themselves." Treating men's and women's employment experiences as bifurcated and even competing realities overlooks critical family-level impacts. Even with widespread discussion of a need for two incomes to "make ends meet," the share of married-couple families with children in which both parents work has fallen over the past four years, from 62.2 percent to 58.5 percent. Moreover, evidence suggests that the drop-off in dual earner families is linked to declines in men's rather than in women's employment. Specifically, while the proportion of married-couple households (with or without children) in which the male is the sole employed member remained nearly the same in 2011 as in 2007 (at 19.9 and 19.8 percent, respectively), the proportion of households in which a woman is the sole employed member went from 6.6 percent in 2007 to 8.3 percent in 2011 (BLS, 2012c; BLS, 2008). Because women earn, on average, less than men, and are less likely to have family-sustaining job benefits such as health insurance and retirement plans, increases in the number of women who are their family's primary breadwinner represent just one of the many challenges facing U.S. families today.

Despite this challenging employment context, and in keeping with a family-level view of employment prospects, this report uses pre- to post-recession data to frame a discussion of opportunities for individual workers, business owners, and policy makers to re-envision career options and trajectories for men in the state of New Jersey. We see indicators of such shifts already at the national level. For example, in education and health services— sectors which women historically dominate— men have been gaining jobs at a faster rate than women (Kochhar, 2011). While not discounting the risk that this trend may pose for women's

employment in these growing job sectors, we need to incorporate this emergent reality into our analyses of labor force prospects.

The purpose of this study is to clarify trends and to suggest challenges and opportunities in men's employment in New Jersey. Our analysis draws from and connects current data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJ LWD), with existing research on national and state employment policy and gender.

We find that gender plays a pivotal role in the way that the economic crisis and its proposed remedies are playing themselves out both in New Jersey and in the country as a whole. Within this process, gender interacts with race, age, education, worker status, and income to affect the general employment and discrete sectoral prospects of individual men. We conclude by offering recommendations for policies and programs informed by how New Jersey men are currently faring and adapting in the workforce.

I. Gendered Employment Trends: U.S. and New Jersey

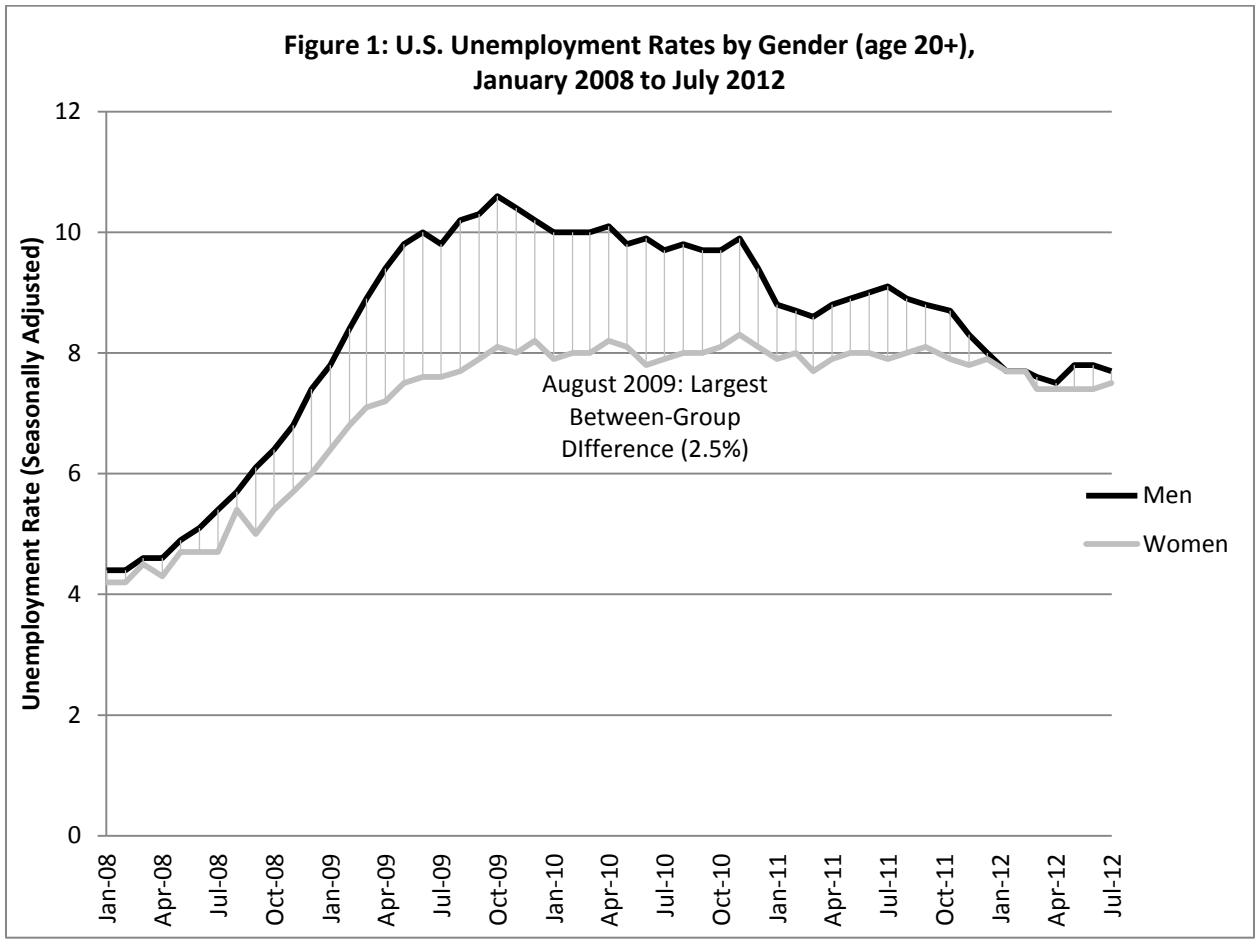
Unemployment Rates

Despite being in an officially post-recessionary period, the U.S. continues to face sustained, high unemployment. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS, 2012a), the July 2012 unemployment rate for adults age 16 and older remained at 8.3 percent, 0.8 percentage points lower than the previous year and 1.2 percentage points lower than in July 2010. Despite what now seems to be a slow but steady decrease in the unemployment rate, this marks the 42nd consecutive month that the U.S. has recorded unemployment rates of greater than 8 percent. Moreover, leading economic indicators suggest that, even as the country records low levels of economic growth, unemployment will remain high, perhaps for several years (Cook, 2012).

Because policies and programs designed to address employment needs typically focus on individuals who are beyond their high school years, we examine, wherever possible, data for those age 20 and above. Age as a factor with particular relevance in this post-recessionary period will be addressed in Section IV of this report.

In what has become one of the most oft-told stories of the "great recession," men's unemployment has outpaced that of women, although recent months have seen an attenuation of this trend. As shown in Figure 1, for adults age 20 and older, the gap between men's and women's unemployment rates reached a high of 2.5 percent in the late summer and early fall of 2009, but has narrowed steadily since to stand now at a close 7.7 percent for men and 7.5 percent for women. It is important to note that this closing of the gap is attributable primarily to

a decline in men's unemployment rate, at the same time as the rate for women has remained relatively flat (BLS, 2012d).



NOTE: COMPILED USING DATA FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, JULY 2012

New Jersey's unemployment rate in July 2012 was higher than the U.S. rate at 9.8 percent, up by 0.3 percentage points from July 2011 and close to the 9.7 percent rate of July 2010 (NJ LWD, 2012a). To examine unemployment trends by gender during the recession, we use unemployment estimates derived from the Current Population Survey (CPS) for the State of New Jersey (2008 to 2011), which are available on a monthly basis by sex, age, race, and Hispanic origin (Figure 2). These data are based on unofficial, unpublished CPS estimates and— particularly given instabilities related to relatively small sample sizes and large margins of error— should be taken as merely suggestive of larger trends (NJ LWD, 2011).

The pattern suggested by Figure 2 bears some similarity to national gender trends, albeit with some important areas of divergence. For example, unemployment rate declines were observed for both men and women in the second quarter of 2010, a pattern generally associated

with increased public sector hiring for the decennial U.S. Census. As is the case nationally, it would appear that New Jersey men are gaining jobs more quickly during the recovery than are New Jersey women, closing the unemployment rate gap that opened up at the start of the recession. Overall, however, Figure 2 suggests that men's and women's unemployment rates in New Jersey track more closely than men's and women's unemployment rates nationally.

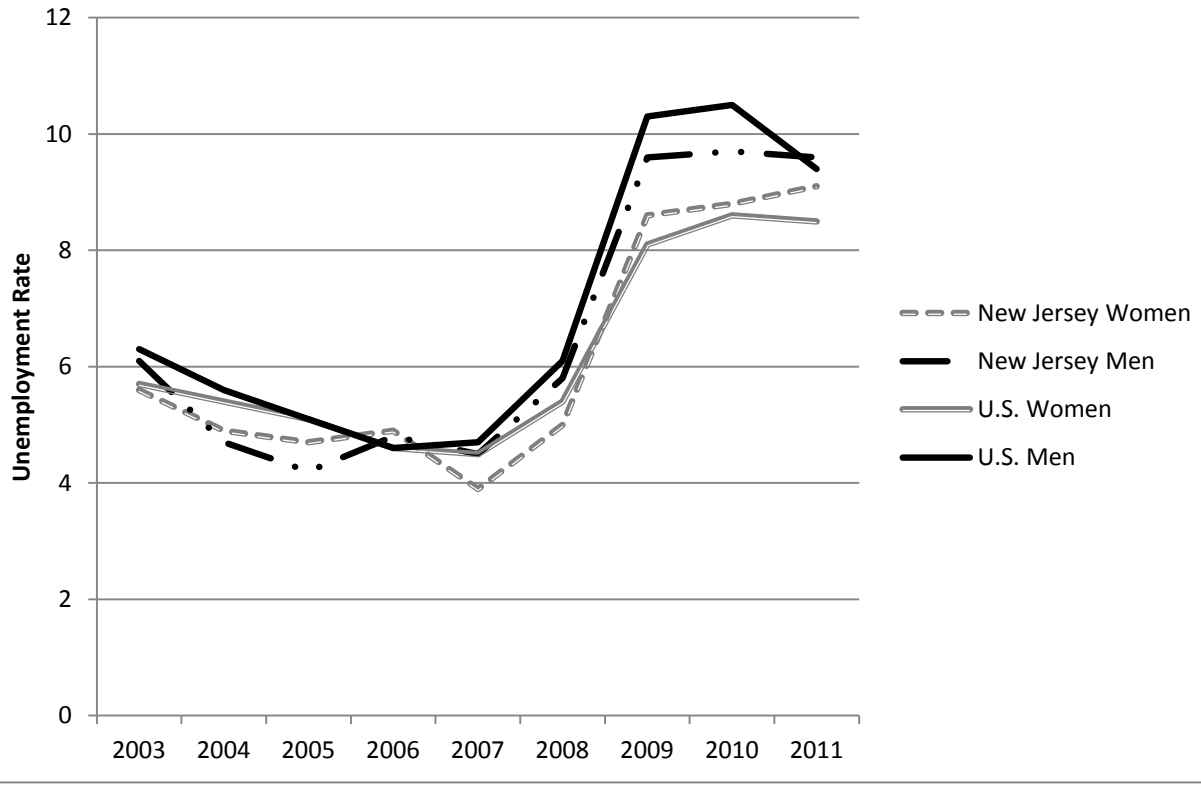
NOTE: COMPILED USING DATA FROM THE CURRENT POPULATION SURVEY, UNOFFICIAL ESTIMATES, JULY 2011

Monthly and annual data from the U.S. Department of Labor Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) program can be used to document longer-term state and regional employment patterns, and to provide context for the unofficial estimates reported above (BLS, 2012e). It is important to note, however, that aggregate data by gender are available only for the age 16 and older group. The inclusion of this set of younger workers, for whom the unemployment rate remains disproportionately high, means that the rates presented for men and women in Figure 3 are higher than those presented in Figure 2 for those ages 20 and older.

Still, a look back to men's and women's unemployment rates in New Jersey beginning in 2003[3] establishes just how closely the two rates track, with men's unemployment rate exceeding the rate for women as early as 2007 but maintaining a fairly consistent differential since then (see Figure 3).

A comparison between national and New Jersey unemployment rates by gender is similarly instructive. As shown in Figure 3, while the gender gap in unemployment rates at the national level reached 2.2 percent in 2009, the largest annual gender unemployment gap in New Jersey was 1 percent (BLS, 2012e). In general, over the recession, women in New Jersey have fared slightly worse than women nationally, while men in New Jersey have fared somewhat better than those nationally.

Figure 3: U.S. and New Jersey Unemployment Rates by Gender (age 16+), 2003 to 2011



NOTE: COMPILED USING DATA FROM THE LOCAL AREA UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS (LAUS) PROGRAM, FEBRUARY 2012

[3] Data reported for 2011 is preliminary.

Employment-to-Population Ratios

For a number of reasons that may have particular relevance in the current economic climate, unemployment rates can be misleading indicators of gender trends in employment. Unemployment rates are calculated using only those who are "in the labor force," a designation which excludes persons in institutions (e.g., nursing homes and prisons), those in the Armed Forces, and those who have not actively sought employment within the previous four weeks. Thus, the unemployment rate misses many important population groups, including "discouraged workers;" homemakers; and the underemployed (i.e., those who are working in jobs with fewer hours, lower pay, and less prestige than they desire or are qualified to attain). For these reasons, the unemployment rate alone tells us little about how women and men are behaving at the margins of the labor force, including the extent to which women are returning to the labor force to supplement partners' job losses or earnings reductions, or the extent to which men are exiting the labor force in the face of declining demand.

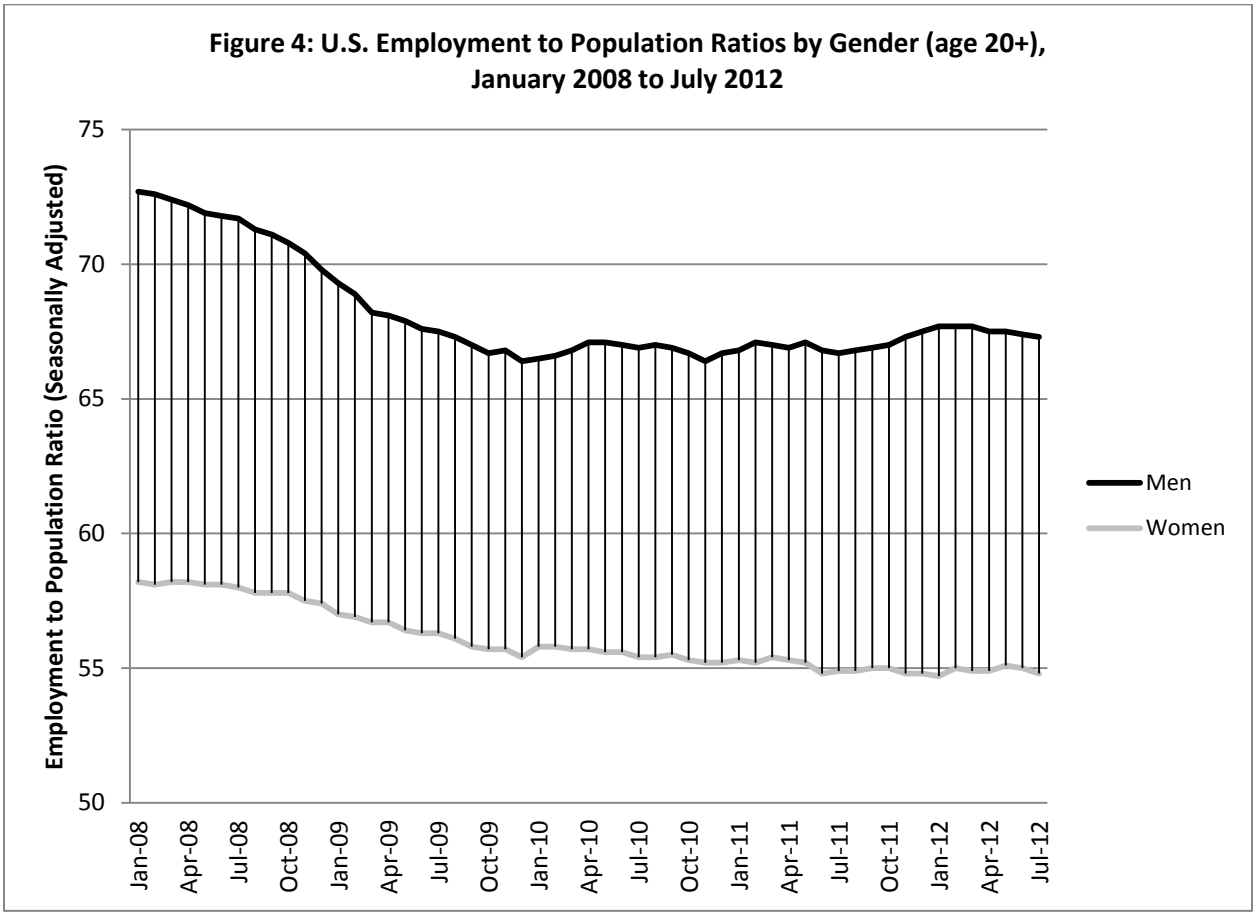
Thus, we place U.S. unemployment trends in the context of the employment-to-population ratio (EPR), a measure of per-person employment based on household data from the Current Population Survey (CPS). If there were no movement into or out of the labor force, then declines in the unemployment rate would be reflected in proportionate increases in the EPR. By contrast, when declining unemployment rates are paired with stagnant or declining EPRs, it is possible that (1) more people have entered the labor force (thereby decreasing the unemployment rate, even as the number of unemployed persons itself remains the same), or (2) unemployed persons have exited the labor force (thereby decreasing the number of unemployed persons, even as no additional people have become employed). In July of 2012, 60.8 percent of the U.S. population aged 20 and older reported being employed,[4] 0.2 percentage points higher than the previous year but also 0.2 percentage points lower than in July of 2010 (BLS, 2012d). This suggests that although the unemployment rate has decreased over this same two-year period, the proportion of non-employed (i.e., either unemployed or not in the labor force) individuals *has remained stagnant*.

Viewed over the long-term, the *stabilization* of employment-to-population ratios is decidedly preferable to a decline, particularly given that the national EPR decreased by 4 to 5 percentage points from the start of the recession to its height. However, the stabilization of the overall rate masks starkly different trends for men and for women. While women's July 2012 EPR stands at 54.8 percent, 0.1 percentage points lower than last year, men's EPR has risen to 67.3 percent, higher by 0.6 percentage points than last year (Figure 4).

[4] The comparable figure for those ages 16 and older was 58.4 percent.

Perhaps more than anything else, Figure 4 demonstrates just how unstable men's employment has been over the past four years. While women certainly saw gains relative to men in their share of the labor force during the recession, narrowing the gap in their respective EPRs to a historically low 10.7 percent in January 2010, it would be difficult to construe this in a celebratory fashion as a step toward gender equality in employment when neither men nor women have fared particularly well in the broader employment context. It is possible that the continued growth in men's employment, while women's employment rates have remained stable, represents a "correction" of sorts: a return to the gendered employment trends in place in pre-recessionary years. Indeed, as shown in Figure 5, the male-female EPR gap in July 2012 was 12.5 percent, closer to January 2008 differential of 14.7 percent (BLS, 2012d). If this "return to the past" were associated with low rates of unemployment, we might assume that both men and women had voluntarily sorted themselves into or out of the labor force and, thus, we might worry less about the gender EPR gap. What we face instead is a clear disconnect between the desire to be employed and the availability of employment, affecting men and women both individually and as members of families.

Figure 4: U.S. Employment to Population Ratios by Gender (age 20+), January 2008 to July 2012



NOTE: COMPILED USING DATA FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, JULY 2012

As with unemployment rates, we turn now to unofficial CPS estimates of New Jersey's employment-to-population ratios (EPR) for men and women age 20 and older during the 2008 to 2011 period. As shown in Figure 5, perhaps the most striking thing about EPR trends in New Jersey relative to those nationally is the higher rates of labor force participation for New Jerseyans, whether men or women. The national EPR for men at the beginning of the recession ─ 72.7 percent ─ is *lower* than the EPR recorded for New Jersey men in the worst quarter of the recession: 74.4 percent in the fourth quarter of 2010. Still, EPR trends for New Jersey are, as a whole, no more promising than they are nationally.

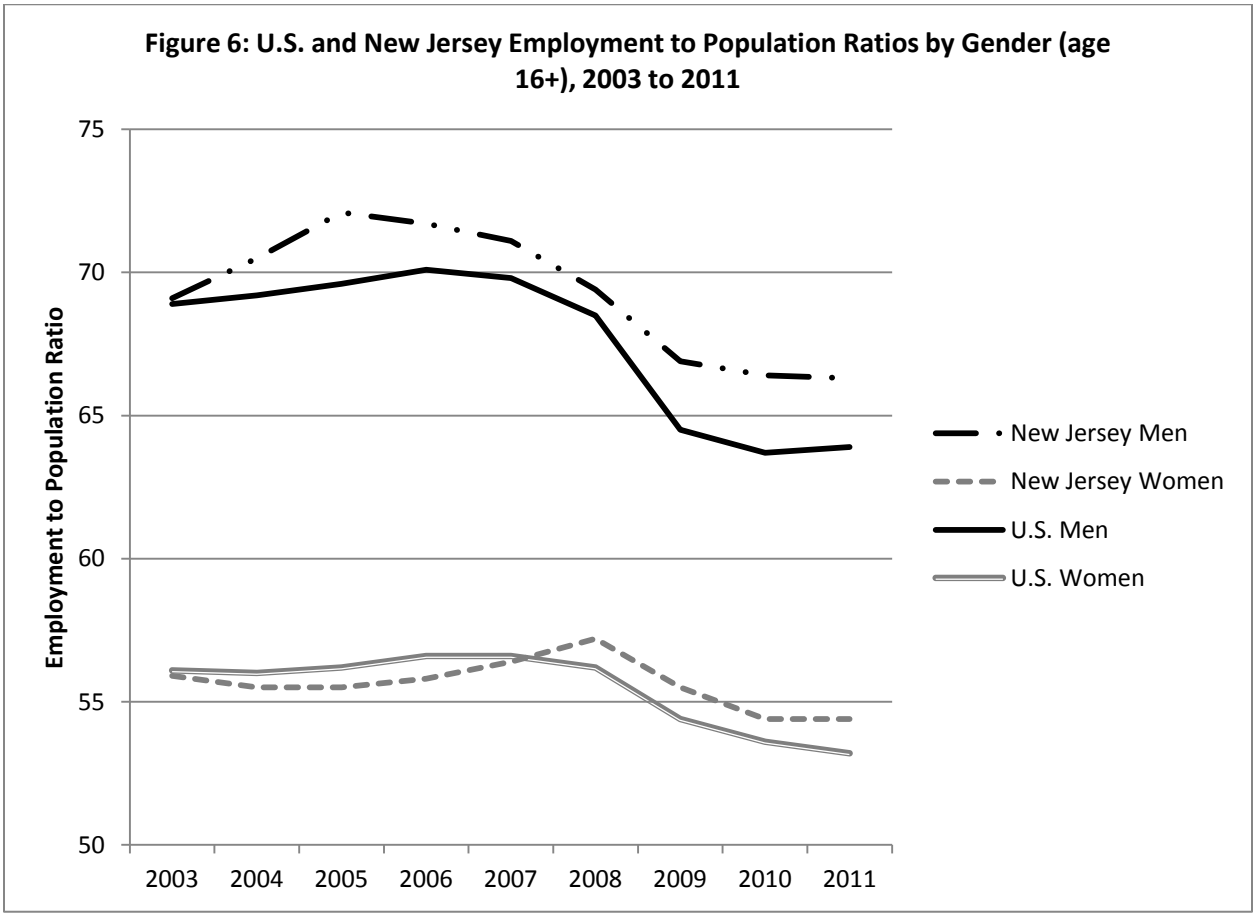
NOTE: COMPILED USING DATA FROM THE CURRENT POPULATION SURVEY, UNOFFICIAL ESTIMATES, JULY 2011

As with the unemployment rate, EPR data can be placed in the context of annual trends for both New Jersey and the United States. Also as with the unemployment rate, annual EPR data by gender are presented for those ages 16 and older.

Over the course of the recession and into the present, the EPR for men in New Jersey has declined, but not as sharply as nationally, and, similar to the national trend, appears now to be

trending slightly upward (Figure 6). As noted above and as supported by Figure 6, New Jersey men, from 2003 to 2011, have had consistently higher representation in the labor force than have men nationally. By contrast, New Jersey women prior to the recession were less likely than women nationally to be in the labor force; however, their position vis-à-vis U.S. women reversed with a sharp uptick in participation in 2008. In fact, the gender gap in labor force participation, which had been higher in New Jersey than nationally for many years and which was as high as 16.6 percent in 2005, has narrowed to between 11 and 12 percent in recent years (BLS, 2012e). This retrospective look lends support to what many have speculated: that, as men lost jobs during the recession, women entered or reentered the labor force.

Figure 6: U.S. and New Jersey Employment to Population Ratios by Gender (age 16+), 2003 to 2011



NOTE: COMPILED USING DATA FROM THE LOCAL AREA UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS (LAUS) PROGRAM, FEBRUARY 2012

Current Population Survey (CPS) data for New Jersey provide additional clues about the movement of individuals into and out of the labor force and, from within the labor force, into and out of jobs. For a single month (June 2011), 14.5 percent of men and 11 percent of women "not in the labor force" reported that they wanted a job. Among those who were available to work but were not currently looking, 49 percent of men, as compared to only 33 percent of

women, cited discouragement over job prospects as their reason for dropping out of the labor force (NJ LWD, 2011).

From pre- to post-recession, unemployment claims have similarly signaled distress and disparity. For a single month, July 2007, the CPS reported 224,700 continuing unemployment claims in New Jersey. Together, these claims had an average duration of 21.2 weeks and a median duration of 8.5 weeks. By contrast, in July 2011, the CPS reported 418,900 unemployed persons, with an average unemployment spell duration of 38.3 weeks and a median duration of 22.3 weeks (NJ LWD, 2011). Here, too, we find differences by gender. From 2007 to 2011, New Jersey's unemployment claims increased by 99 percent: by 81 percent for women and by an astounding 115 percent for men.

As noted earlier, further exploration of unemployment trends suggests that treating men's and women's employment experiences as bifurcated and even competing realities runs the risk of obscuring family-level impacts. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2011), 9.7 million families, or 12.4 percent of all families, included an unemployed person in 2010, the highest rate recorded since the rate was first calculated in 1994. The number of families with an unemployed member has since declined to 9 million, or 11.5 percent (BLS, 2012c). Still, this proportion is far higher than that recorded in 2007: 6.3 percent (BLS, 2008). Moreover, the proportion of families with an unemployed member that also have at least one employed member declined from 71.2 percent in 2007 (BLS, 2008), to 67.2 percent in 2011 (BLS, 2012c).

From 2007 to 2011, a growing proportion of married couple families have reported an employed wife and non-employed husband, while the proportion of married couple families with an employed husband and a non-employed wife has remained fairly stable. The proportion of households in which the "wife only" is employed went from 6.6 percent in 2007, to 8.3 percent in 2011, while the proportion of households in which the "husband only" is employed was 19.9 percent in 2011, little changed from the 19.8 percent recorded in 2007 (BLS, 2008; BLS, 2012c). Moreover, as Boushey (2009) reports, the burden of being the sole wage-earner in a two-adult household is being felt disproportionately by young women and women without high school degrees, groups already vulnerable to low wages.

II. Industry Data

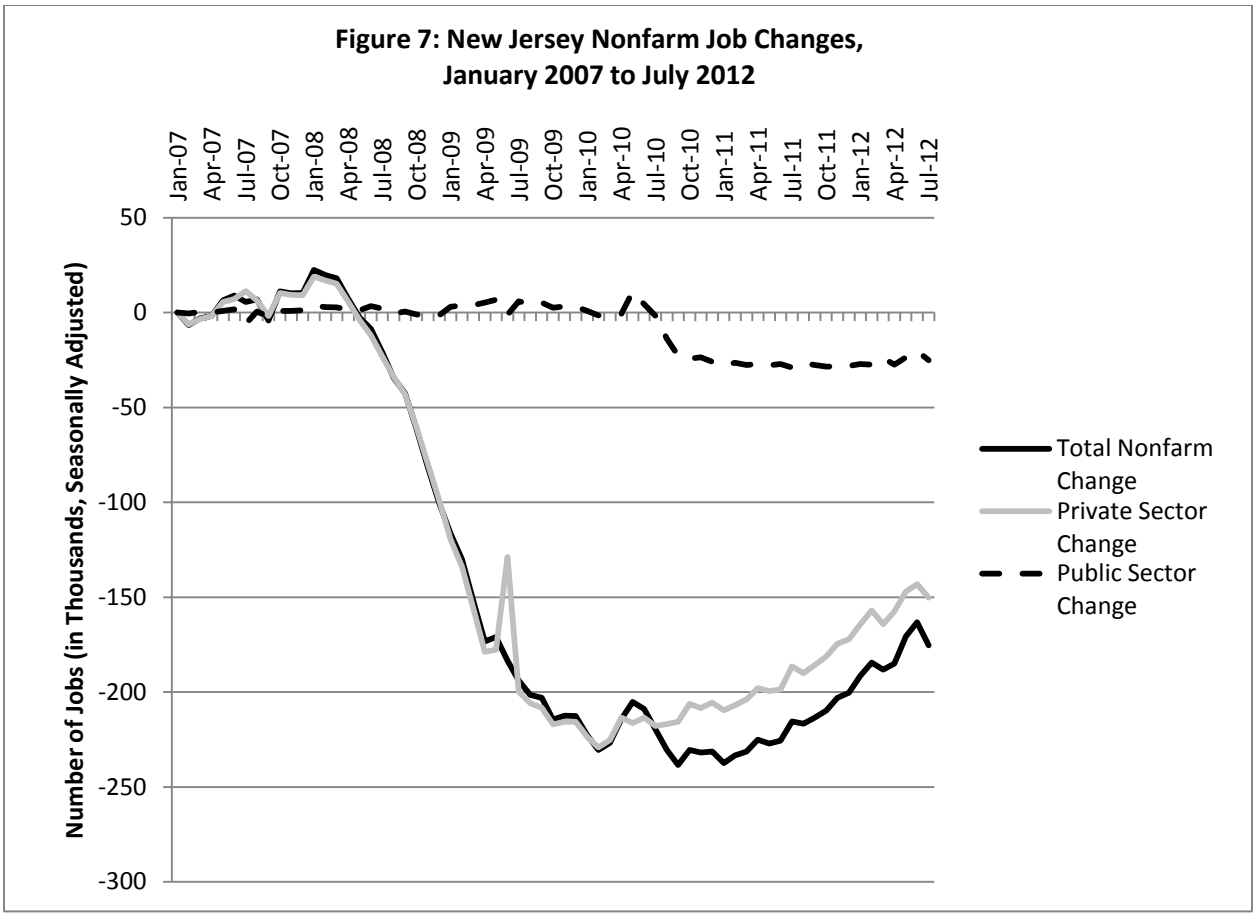
To further understand New Jersey's gendered employment patterns, we must trace the development of key industry sectors, from pre-recession to the present. As has been amply

documented, precipitous declines in male-dominated employment sectors,[5] principally construction and manufacturing, coupled with stable or growing employment in female-dominated sectors, principally education and health, have driven the divergence of men's and women's unemployment numbers, both nationally and in New Jersey. However, perhaps what has most distinguished the State in recent months is a steady decline in its public employment sector, even as the private sector has shown some signs of rebounding. As illustrated in Figure 7, while private sector employment has seen a gradual, albeit shaky,[6] rise over the past eighteen months, public sector employment declined through the summer of 2011 and has leveled off since. If we look back four years and then into the present ─ from January 2007 to July 2012 ─ New Jersey has lost roughly 175,300 jobs, comprised of 150,200 private sector jobs and 25,100 public sector jobs (NJ LWD, 2012b). However, if we look only at the past eighteen months – from January 2011 to July 2012 – the picture is somewhat less gloomy. Over the past eighteen months, New Jersey added 62,100 nonfarm jobs, encompassing an increase of 59,400 private sector jobs and 2,700 public sector jobs.

Over the past four years, New Jersey has lost 4.4 percent of its private sector jobs and 3.9 percent of its public sector jobs. However, in the past eighteen months, New Jersey regained 1.8 percent of the number of private sector jobs with which it began 2011.

There is some evidence that such a public-private sector divergence has gender, race, and socioeconomic ramifications. Indeed, recent studies of compensation for public and private sector employees in the New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania region suggest that while public sector earnings are, on average, no higher than those in the private sector, employees at the lower-end of the wage spectrum ─disproportionately women, persons of color, and low-income workers─ tend to experience both wage and benefit advantages from public sector employment (Gornick & Jacobs, 1998). This may be a key point as we examine employment challenges and trends for men in these income and race categories. Overall, however, we might expect men to be less affected by the public-private divergence than are women.

[5] Traditional/non-traditional occupations are defined by the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 (S.250-6) as those having at least 75 percent of the workforce of one gender.
[6] The dip to below-August 2010 levels observed in January 2011 for both total nonfarm and total private sector employment may be attributable in large part to a series of severe winter storms across the eastern U.S. seaboard.

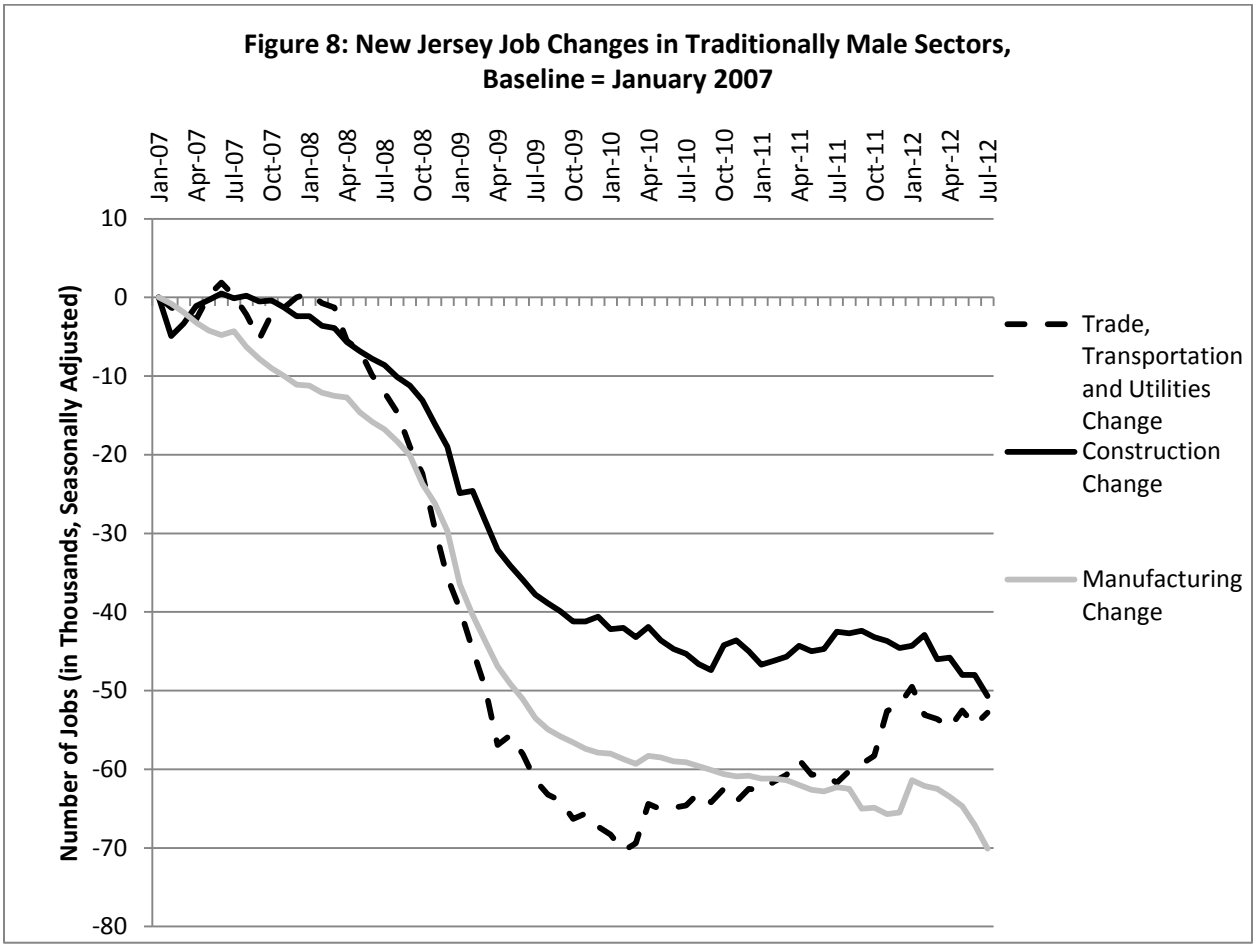


NOTE: COMPILED USING DATA FROM THE NEW JERSEY DEPT. OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BASELINE = JANUARY 2007 (TOTAL NONFARM = 4,074.9; PRIVATE SECTOR = 3,426.8; PUBLIC SECTOR = 648.1)

Job losses by industry in New Jersey are also similar to national trends, though perhaps intensified by several high-profile developments including pharmaceutical industry mergers (Guglielmo, 2009). Of the 62,100 private sector jobs added in New Jersey in the past eighteen months (January 2011 to July 2012), the industry sectors showing the largest growth were health services (up 25,300 jobs); leisure and hospitality (up 17,400 jobs); trade, transportation, and utilities (up 9,900 jobs); professional and business services (up 9,700 jobs); education (up 6,900 jobs), and financial activities (up 400 jobs). The three sectors to record job losses over the past year were manufacturing (down 8,900 jobs), information services (down 8,000 jobs), and construction (down 4,000 jobs) (NJ LWD, 2012b).

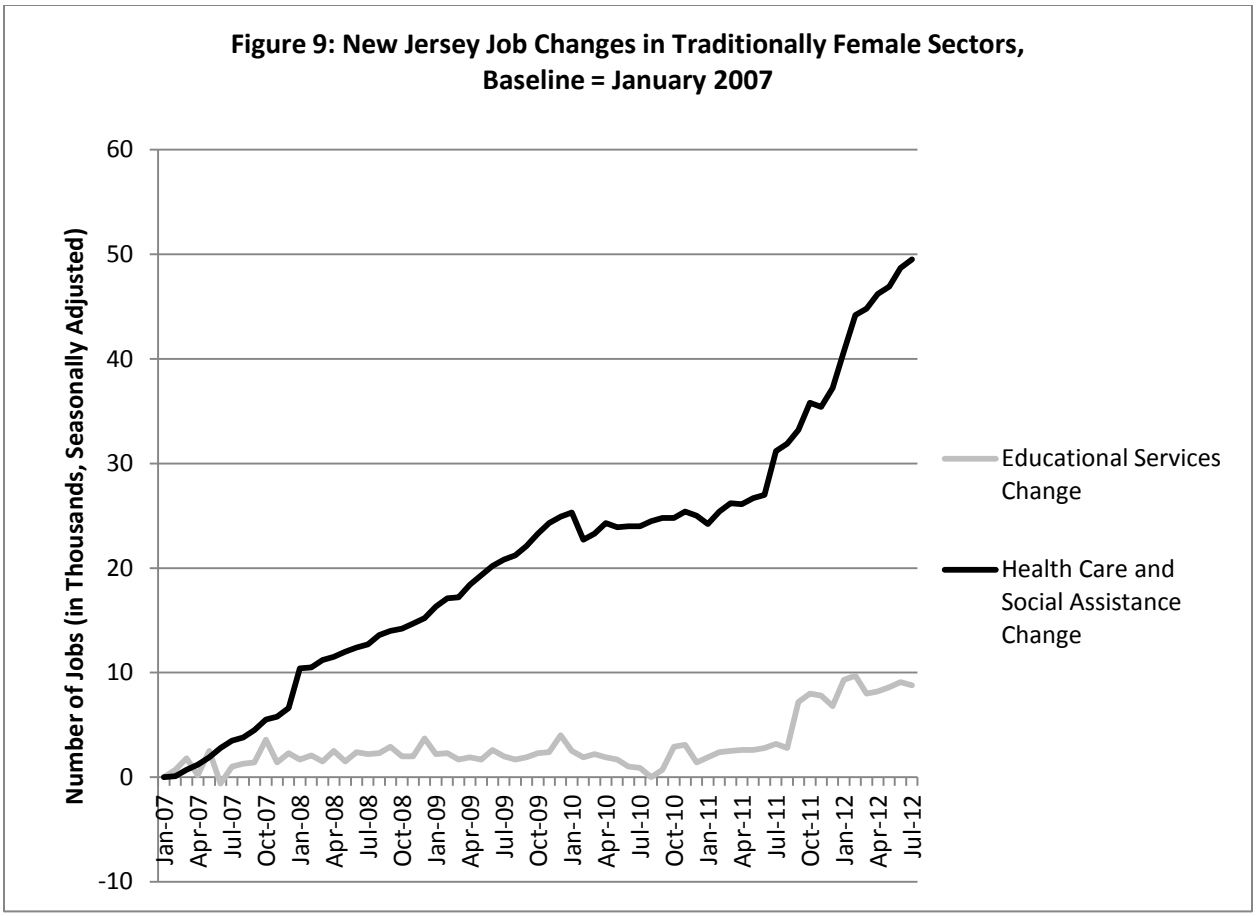
The year 2009 witnessed staggering losses in trade, transportation, and utilities; professional and business services; manufacturing; and construction— industry groups dominated by multiple categories of traditionally male occupations (see Figure 8). The largest sector — trade, transportation, and utilities – also saw the most substantial decline, moving from

875,500 jobs in January 2007 (at baseline) to 805,100 jobs at the lowest point (February 2010), to 822,700 jobs today. As illustrated by Figure 8, only one of the three sectors has demonstrated a marked degree of job growth in the past eighteen months: with employment in transportation, trade, and utilities up by 9,900 jobs. At the same time, any gains in employment achieved in these sectors are at least partially offset by sustained and substantial declines in manufacturing and, to a lesser degree, construction employment.



NOTE: COMPILED USING DATA FROM THE NEW JERSEY DEPT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT (AT BASELINE: TRADE, TRANSPORTATION, AND UTILITIES = 875.5; CONSTRUCTION = 173.5; MANUFACTURING = 316.6)

It is instructive to compare the job trajectory in traditionally male occupations to the trajectory in traditionally female occupations over the same period. As shown in Figure 9, New Jersey has seen noteworthy growth in both educational services and health care and social assistance over the past five years. The number of jobs in health care and social assistance has gone from 487,000 in January 2007, to 536,500 today, an increase of 10.2 percent. While job growth in this sector was fairly stagnant in 2010, the past year saw steep growth.



NOTE: COMPILED USING DATA FROM THE NEW JERSEY DEPT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
BASELINE = JANUARY 2007
(AT BASELINE: EDUCATIONAL SERVICES = 88.2; HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE = 487.0)

Obviously, and perhaps particularly given the recovery data we have viewed thus far, growth in traditionally female employment sectors does not necessarily mean disproportionate growth in women's employment. On a national level during the recession, women and men lost jobs at a similar rate, within employment sectors. By contrast, in the recovery, there have been substantial within-sector differences for men and women. As Kochhar (2011) reports, women lost jobs in manufacturing, retail trade, and finance while men gained them. Men also fared disproportionately well in professional and business services and in education and health services (Kochhar, 2011). More data are needed to determine whether this is the case for New Jersey.

III. Race and Ethnicity

Although industry and occupation factors have undoubtedly contributed to the "mancession," men — even within a single industry or occupation — are not a homogeneous group, and when education, race/ethnicity, and income are factored in, the recessionary landscape may look markedly different. Thus, we turn now to racial and ethnic differences in employment and unemployment from pre-recession into recovery.

As shown in Table 1, while men overall have fared worse in the recession than women, the decline in employment-to-population ratio (EPR) has been most precipitous for men of color, both Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino. Over the five-year period from 2007 to 2011, annual EPRs for Black men fell from 65.5 percent to 56.9 percent, an 8.6 percentage point decline. The decline for Hispanic/Latino men, who historically have led all other race/ethnicity/gender groups in the proportion employed, was similarly sharp at 7.4 percentage points over the five-year period. White men and Asian men experienced declines in employment-to-population ratio of 5.3 percentage points and 4.5 percentage points respectively (BLS, 2012d).

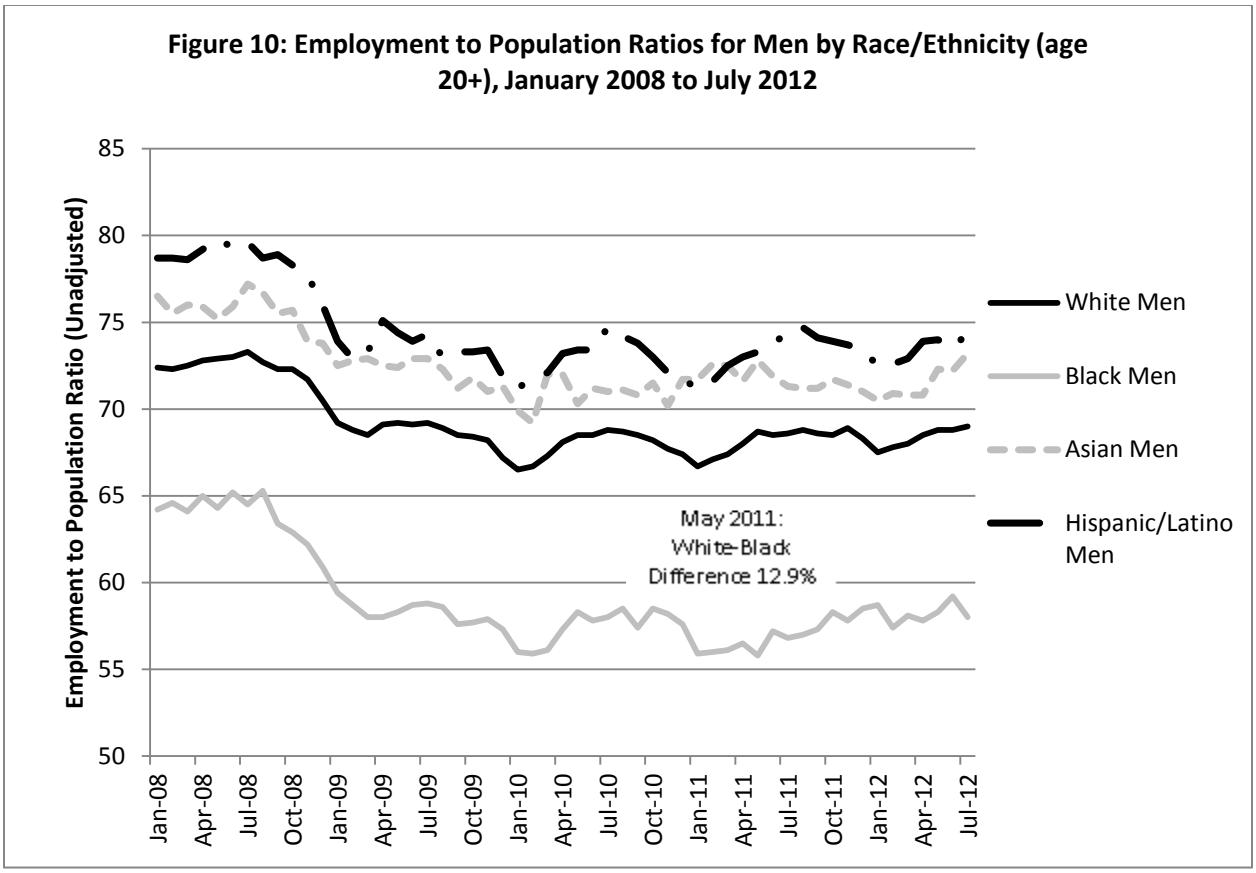
Among women, Black women have fared particularly poorly in the recession. As of the end of 2009, for the first time since the recording of EPRs by race/ethnicity, the annual ratio for Black women fell below that for White women, at 56.1 percent and 56.3 percent respectively. The gap widened even further to 1.3 percentage points in 2011. However, since then, growth in employment for Black women (up 1.6 percentage points since last year) and decline for White women (down 0.7 percentage points since last year) have restored the historic relationship between Black and White women's EPRs, which, as of July 2012, stand at 54.2 percent and 54.0 percent respectively[7] (BLS, 2012d).

[7] Because EPRs for Asian and Hispanic/Latino adults are not available as seasonally adjusted, we opted to report unadjusted rates for Black and White adults to ensure comparability.

Table 1: U.S. Employment-to-population Ratios by Race and Sex, ages 20+ (%)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	July 2012	1-Year Change (2011-10)	4-Year Change (2011-07)
White Men	73.5	72.4	68.7	67.9	68.2	69.0	+0.3	-5.3
White Women	57.9	57.7	56.3	55.6	55.3	54.0	-0.3	-2.6
Black Men	65.5	63.9	58.2	57.5	56.9	58.0	-0.6	-8.6
Black Women	59.8	59.1	56.1	55.1	54.0	54.2	-1.1	-5.8
Hispanic/ Latino Men	80.7	78.6	73.5	72.9	73.3	74.4	+0.4	-7.4
Hispanic/ Latina Women	55.6	54.6	52.9	52.7	52.5	53.1	-0.2	-3.1
Asian Men	76.2	75.6	72.2	70.9	71.7	73.2	+0.8	-4.5
Asian Women	58.8	59.3	56.7	55.0	54.6	56.0	-0.4	-4.2

As the country moves further into this period of recovery, it is important to keep in mind that, not only has the recession had a disproportionate degree of impact on some groups, patterns of economic growth have not been shared by all. As shown on Figure 10, EPR trend lines for each racial/ethnic group have been similar from January 2008 to the present, with steep declines from mid-2008 to early-2010, a slight upward and then downward trend from early 2010 to early 2011, and a rather tenuous leveling off in the past year. The established order of representation in the labor force has remained the same over the entire period, with Hispanic/Latino men having the highest rate of employment per their share of the population, and with Asian men, White men, and Black or African American men following in order thereafter. Because the EPR declined most precipitously overall for Black men, the difference between the EPRs for White and Black men reached an historic high of nearly 13 percent in May of 2011.



NOTE: COMPILED USING DATA FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, JULY 2012

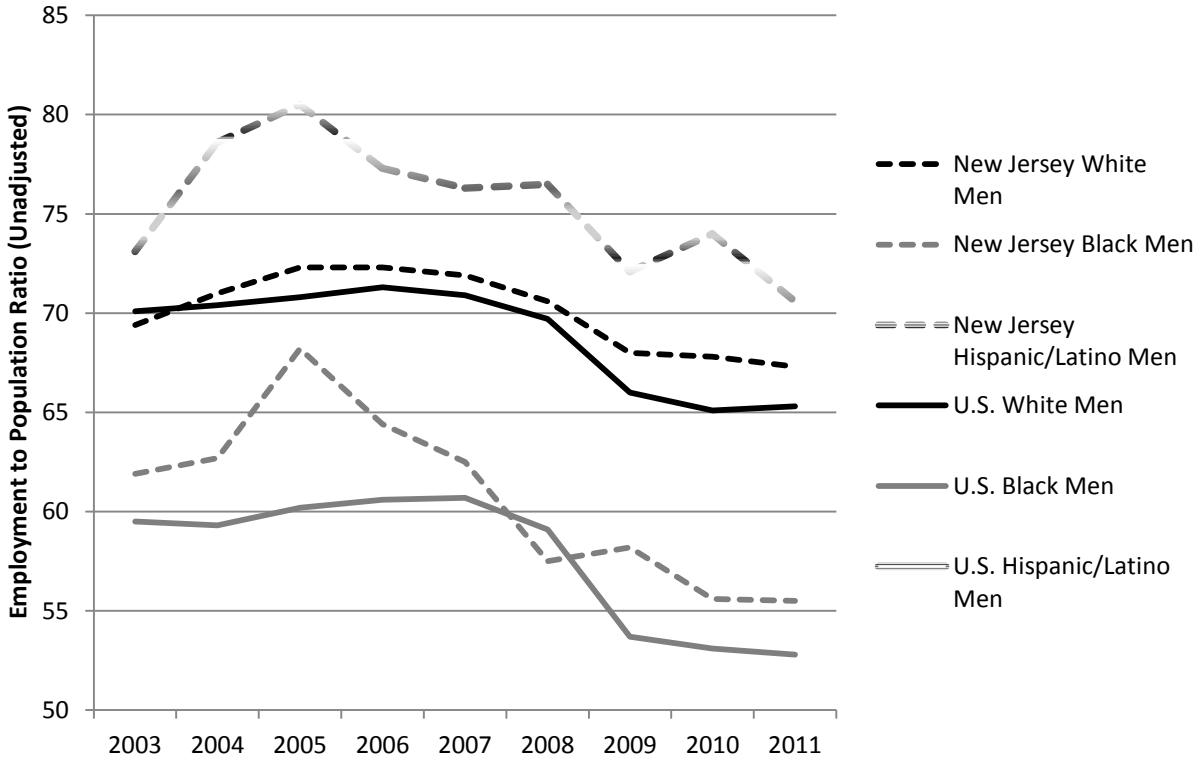
Differences in the overall level of employment by race and ethnicity have family-level impacts. Black and Hispanic families are far more likely than White and Asian families to have an unemployed family member, at 18.9 and 16.3 percent respectively, compared to 10.4 percent for White families and 10.9 percent for Asian families (BLS, 2012c).

As shown in Figure 11, employment-to-population ratios in New Jersey have tended to be higher for all groups of men by race/ethnicity over the 2003 to 2011 period.[8] For both Black or African American men and Hispanic or Latino men, New Jersey witnessed a particularly strong increase in employment in 2005, setting up a dramatic fall over subsequent years. In 2008, the EPR for Black men in New Jersey dropped below the ratio for Black men nationally, though Black men in New Jersey have fared far better than their counterparts across the country since then.

[8] Asian men were excluded from this analysis because 2011 data for this group is unavailable for New Jersey.

Over the past four years, from 2007 to 2011, New Jersey EPRs declined by 4.6 percentage points for White men, 7 percentage points for Black men, and 5.7 percentage points for Hispanic or Latino men (BLS, 2012e). These 4-year rates of decline are similar to, though in each case smaller than, those recorded for the country as a whole (see Table 1 above).

Figure 11: U.S. and New Jersey Employment to Population Ratios by Race/Ethnicity (age 16+), 2003 to 2011



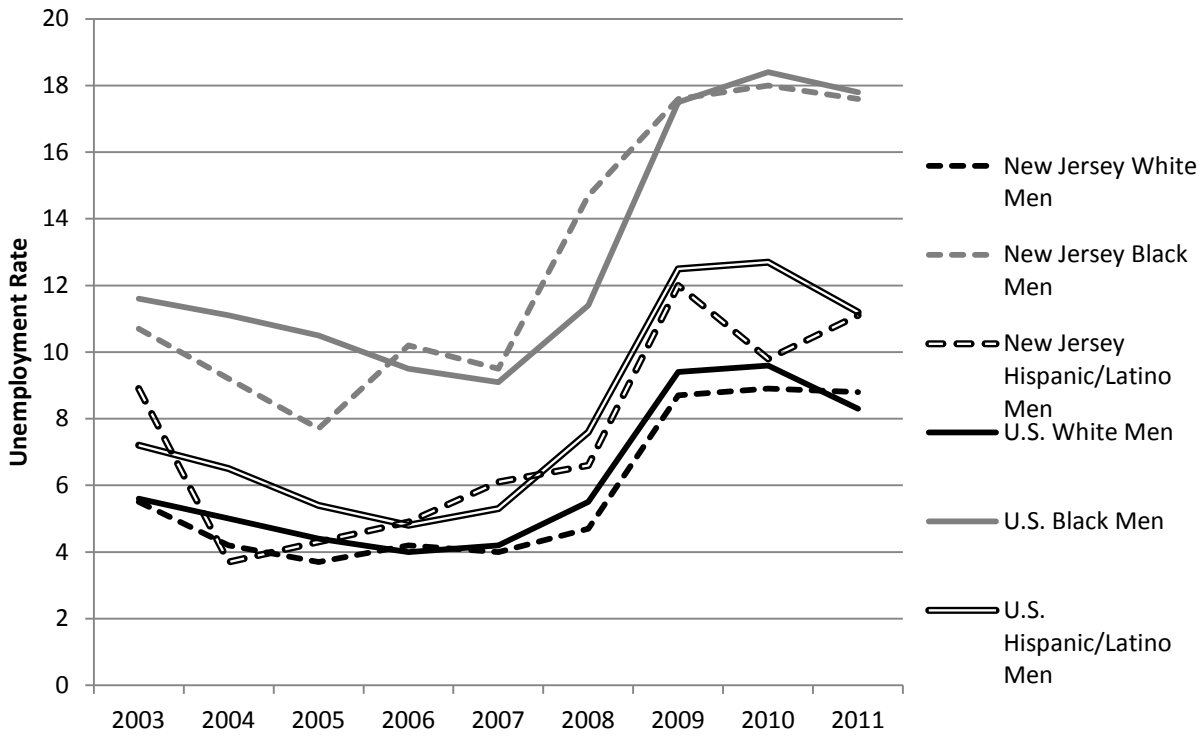
NOTE: COMPILED USING DATA FROM THE LOCAL AREA UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS (LAUS) PROGRAM, FEBRUARY 2012

Not surprisingly, as EPRs have declined, unemployment rates have risen, though the relationship is not a perfect one. For example, as shown by Figure 11, while Hispanic/Latino men have higher rates of workforce participation than White men, they also have higher unemployment rates. While the unemployment rate seems to be trending downward for all groups of U.S. men by race/ethnicity, trends in New Jersey are less clearly favorable.

Over the past four years, 2007 to 2011, the unemployment rate in New Jersey rose by an astounding 8.1 percent for Black men, 5 percent for Hispanic/Latino men, and 4.8 percent for White men. Again we see that while employment problems have plagued men of all race/ethnic groups, they have been more pronounced for men of color, both nationally and in New Jersey.

More than one in every six Black men in the labor force was unemployed in the years 2009, 2010, and 2011; over this same period, the percent of Black men with employment hovered around an alarmingly low 55 percent.

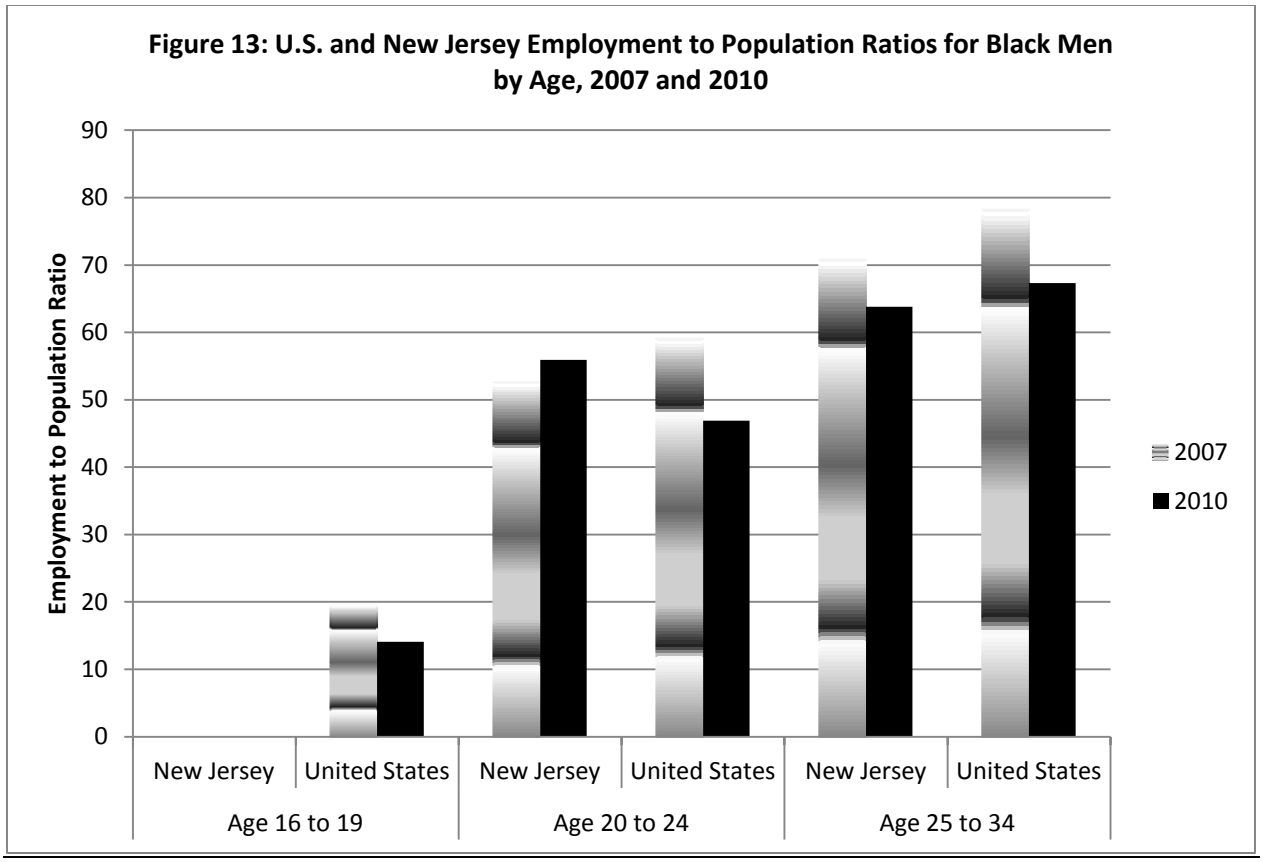
Figure 12: U.S. and New Jersey Unemployment Rates by Race/Ethnicity (age 16+), 2003 to 2011



NOTE: COMPILED USING DATA FROM THE LOCAL AREA UNEMPLOYMENT STATISTICS (LAUS) PROGRAM, FEBRUARY 2012

For young men in particular, difficulties entering the labor force can have negative economic and social consequences well into adulthood. Thus, one of the most daunting challenges presented by this period of sustained high unemployment is the difficulty that young Black men have faced in finding employment, and the concomitant loss of experience and earnings attached to this difficulty. As shown in Figures 13 and 14,[9] EPRs for young Black men were lower in 2010 than in 2007, both nationally and in New Jersey (with the exception of men age 20 to 24 in New Jersey for whom the ratio hovered between 50 and 55 percent).

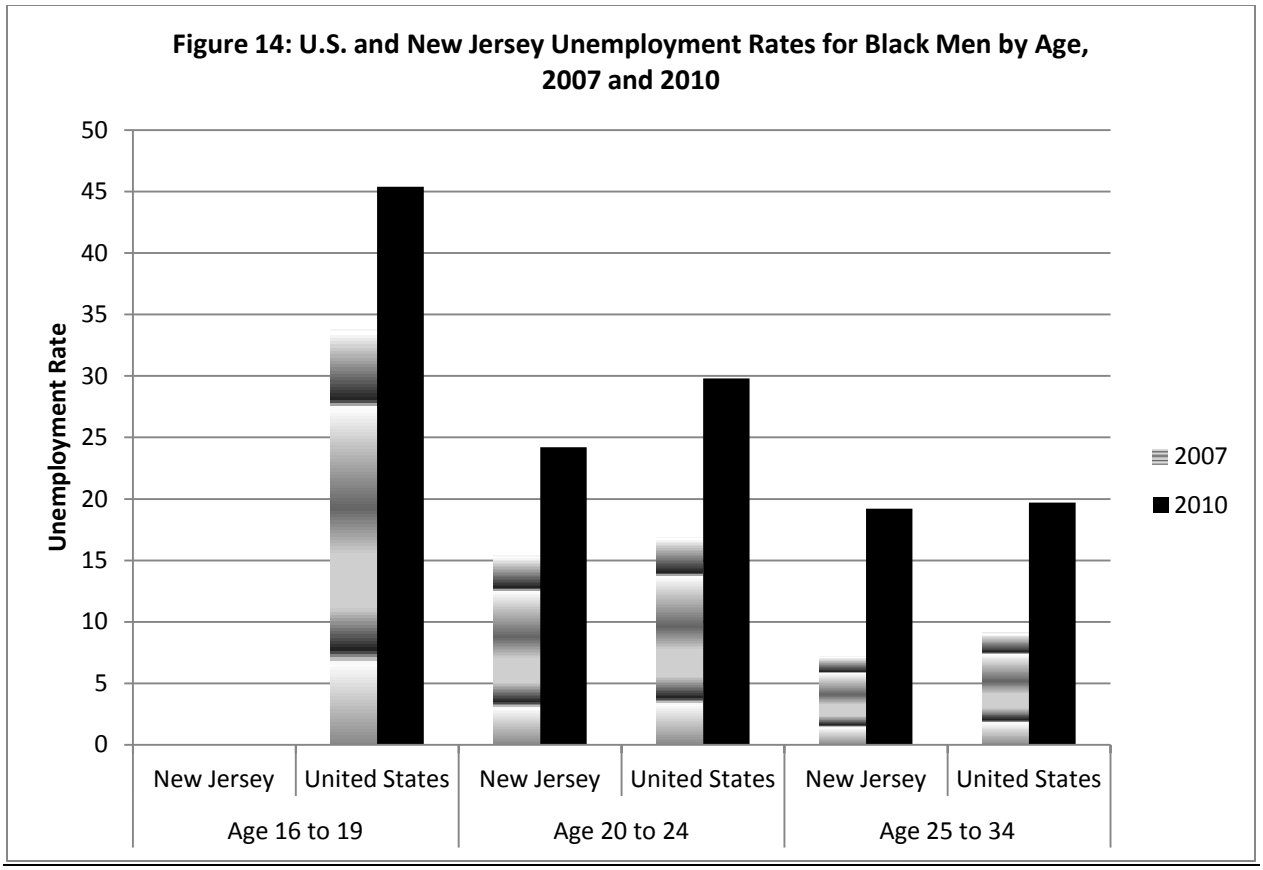
[9] Employment data for men by age and race/ethnicity were unavailable for New Jersey for the year 2011. In addition, 2010 New Jersey data were not available for Black men age 16 to 19 (BLS, 2012e).



Perhaps most strikingly, the unemployment rate for Black men age 25 to 34 – ages at which individuals are expected to be starting families and establishing themselves financially – *more than doubled* from 2007 to 2010 both nationally and in New Jersey (Figure 14). In 2010, *nearly one in every five* young "working age" Black men available for and looking for employment was unemployed.

Almost one in every four Black men age 20 to 24 in New Jersey, and one in every three Black men in the United States, was unemployed in 2010.

As we will see in Section IV, age is an important lens through which to view employment dynamics, not only for Black men but for men in general.



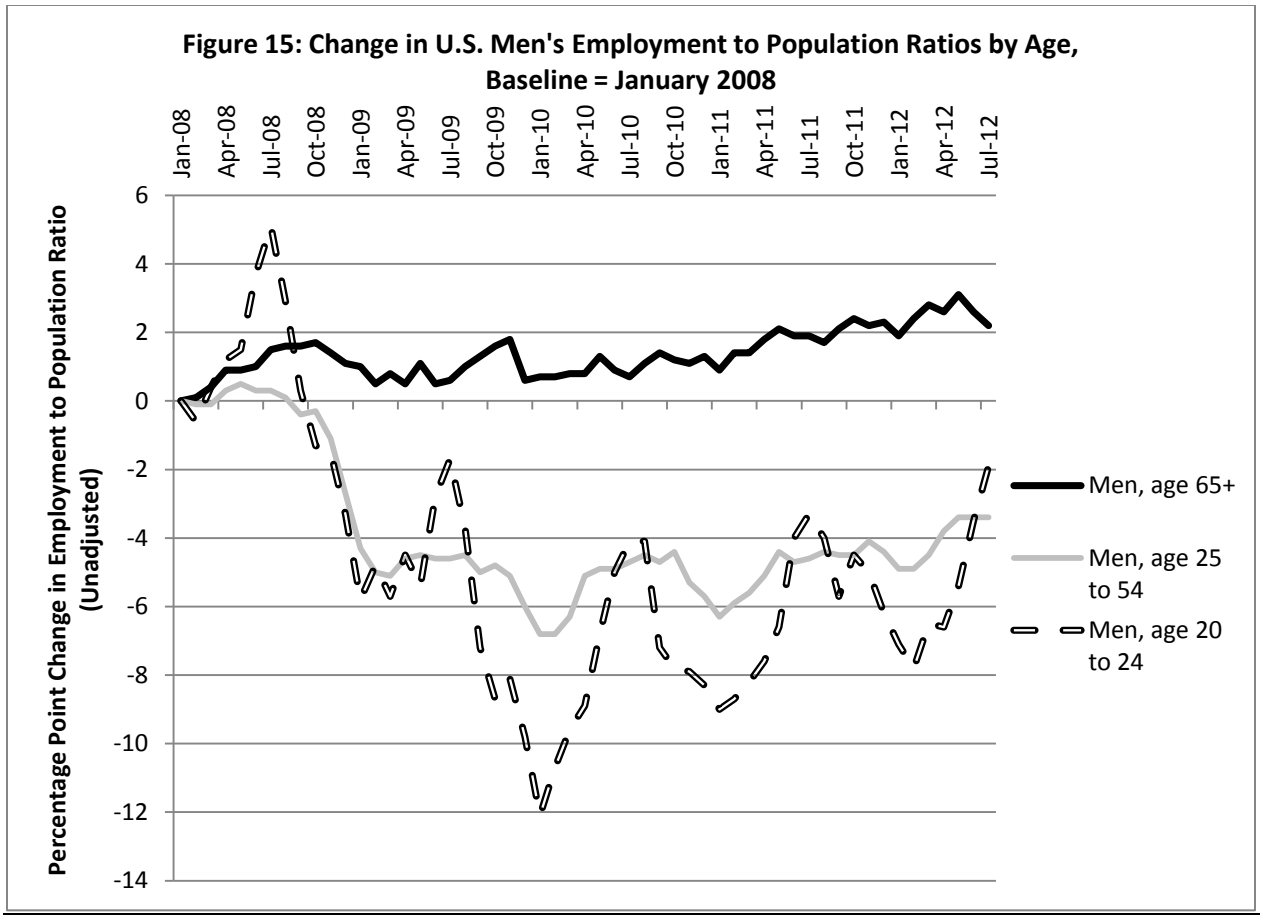
IV. Age

Since the Social Security Act of 1935 made the concept of "retirement" a reality for a broad swath of the U.S. population, age 65 has symbolized the end of labor force participation. Of course, this has never been the reality for many Americans, including those who have freely chosen to continue in their careers, those who have felt compelled to continue for financial reasons, and those whose work histories have not allowed for participation in either Social Security or private retirement savings. Still, there is anecdotal evidence that the proportion of adults age 65 and over in the labor force has increased over the recessionary and post-recessionary period. Such an increase could reflect broader population trends toward longer healthy lifespans for older adults, having nothing to do with the economic environment. However, such an increase might also be explained by the declining value of retirement savings in the wake of widespread stock market losses, by rising health care costs and uncertainty surrounding public benefits, and by the number of younger workers who, struggling to find jobs, are turning to "mom or dad" for help.

Our analysis of data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics finds evidence of many of the aforementioned trends, including a steady increase in employment participation by men age 65 and older, and a sharp recessionary decline in employment participation for men at the beginning of their careers. Figure 15 presents changes in employment-to-population ratios (expressed as percentage point changes from a January 2008 baseline) for men in the United States ─ older men (age 65 and over), "working age" men (age 25 to 54), and young men (age 20 to 24)─ for the past four years: January 2008 to July 2012. We chose to present the data as percentage point changes because these three groups historically have quite different levels of "typical" employment participation, from roughly one in every five men age 65 and over to roughly four of every five men age 25 to 54. For this reason, a figure showing EPRs for each age group tends to obscure the extent to which employment and unemployment trends for these groups differ.

As shown on Figure 15, the EPR trajectory for men age 65 and over has followed a shaky but positive path, beginning at 19.5 percent in January 2008, and moving to 21.7 percent by July 2012: an overall increase of over 2 percentage points (BLS, 2012d). While this is a relatively small increase in employment participation, it is noteworthy that this is the only demographic group we have examined thus far for whom employment participation has actually *increased* over the recession.

Conversely, "working age" men (age 25 to 54) began the period with a healthy EPR of 86.3 percent, which dipped to a low of 79.5 percent in January and February of 2010, rebounding somewhat since then to 82.9 percent as of July 2012. For those ages 20 to 24, the drop in employment has been even more precipitous. In January 2008, 69 percent of U.S. men age 20 to 24 were employed. Employment for this group of men plummeted by over 12 percentage points to 56.9 percent in January 2010 (BLS, 2012d). It is important to note that the volatility evidenced by the trendline for this group can be partly explained by spikes in employment over the summer months when many students take temporary jobs. Thus, comparing annual data for the winter months (January and February) may give us the best read on how this group is faring (with EPRs from 69 percent in January 2008 to 63.2 percent in January 2009 to 56.9 percent in January 2010 to 60 percent in January 2011 to 61.9 percent in January 2012).



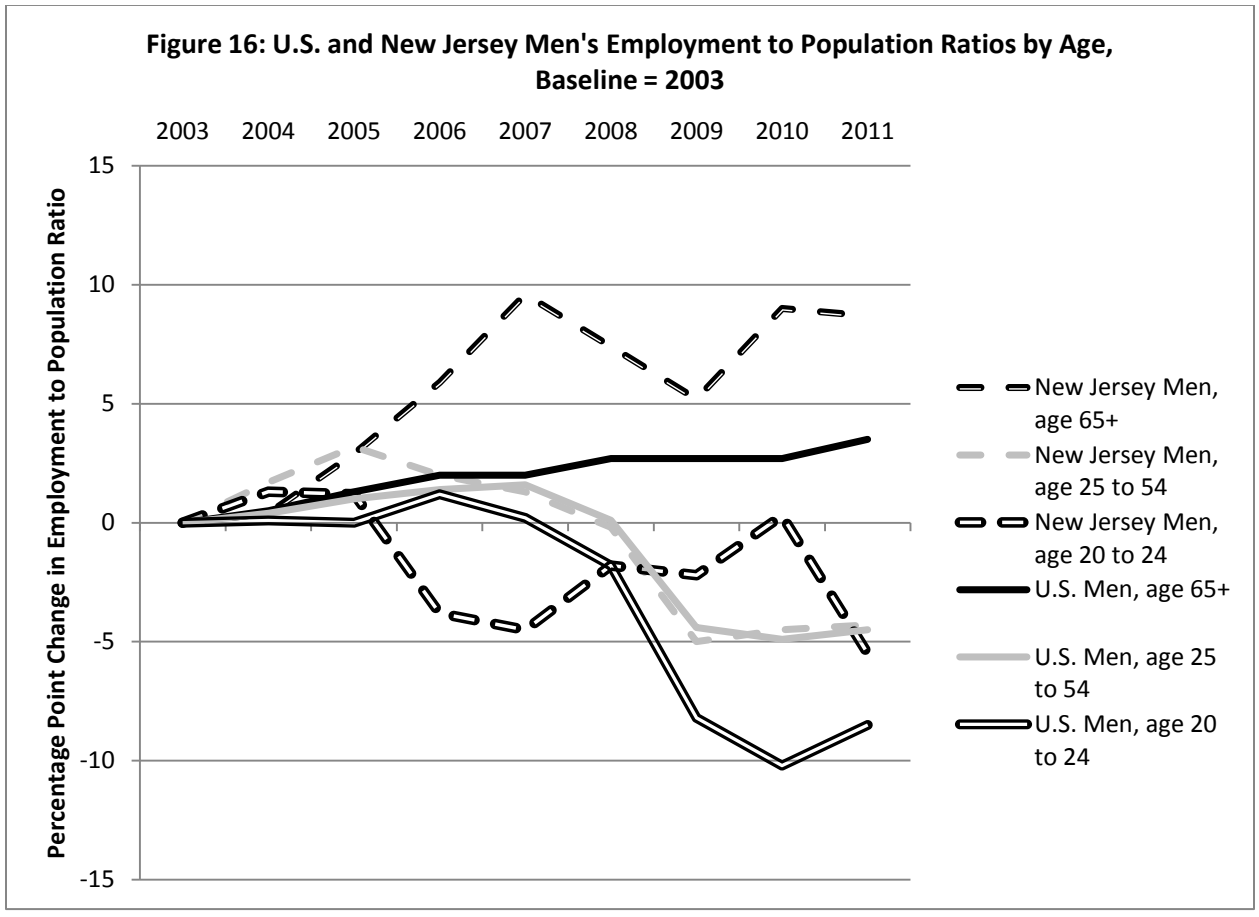
NOTE: COMPILED USING DATA FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, JULY 2012

Figure 16 presents the "longer view" in employment trends for men in the United States and in New Jersey by age group. While the 8-year period from 2003 to 2011 saw a rise in employment for men age 65 and older both in New Jersey and nationally, the increase for older men in New Jersey was clearly more substantial at almost 10 percentage points. However, older New Jersey men also appeared to be more susceptible to recessionary employment declines than their U.S. counterparts, as evidenced by a sharp dip in EPR in 2009. Older men in New Jersey have seen their employment participation rise from 16.4 percent in 2003, to over 25 percent in 2011. Interestingly, older men across the United States began the period under examination with a higher rate of employment than New Jersey men, at 17.8 percent and 16.4 percent respectively in 2003. Since then, however, U.S. older men have fallen behind those in New Jersey, with EPRs of 21.3 percent and 25.1 percent respectively in 2011.

After rising from 2003 to 2005 in New Jersey, and from 2003 to 2007 nationally, EPRs for working age men (age 25 to 54) have declined at a steady pace, with overall declines of roughly 4 percentage points for each group. The EPR for working age men across the United States

started at 85.9 percent in 2003, and dropped to 81.4 percent in 2011. By contrast, the EPR for working age men in New Jersey started higher at 87.6 percent in 2003 and dropped to 83.3 percent in 2011.

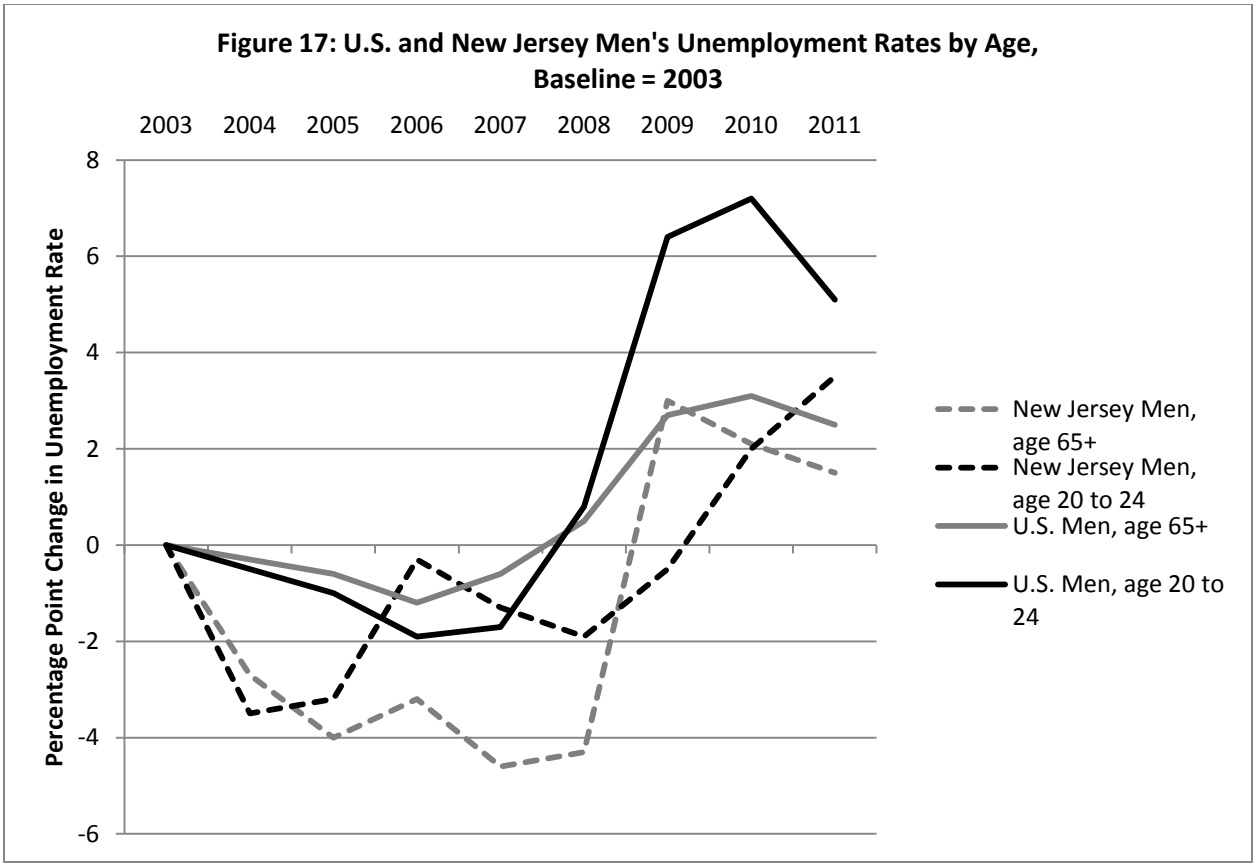
Young men —those ages 20 to 24 — have been the hardest hit of the three age groups under examination, although the trend for young men in New Jersey is particularly difficult to interpret. Young men in the United States began the 2003 to 2011 period with an EPR of 71.5 percent and ended it with an EPR of 63 percent, an overall decline of 8.5 percentage points. By contrast, the decline in employment participation for young men in New Jersey actually predated the recession by several years, and 2010 saw a return to 2003 levels of employment participation for this group. However, this trend may reflect a low level of young male employment participation in New Jersey in 2003, relative to the national EPR for this group. New Jersey men age 20 to 24 had an EPR of 67.6 percent in 2003, and with their 2011 EPR very close to the national number, at 62.1 percent and 63 percent respectively.



NOTE: COMPILED USING DATA FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, MARCH 2012

There may be benign interpretations of the employment-to-population ratio data reported above. Perhaps older adults are working healthier, for longer periods of time, and younger adults are using the opportunity presented to them by the economic downturn to pursue higher education or advanced training (Taylor et al., 2009). Unfortunately, however, unemployment rates —which can be viewed as signs of dissatisfaction with conditions of non-employment — indicate that these dynamics do not give us the whole story.

As shown by Figure 17, unemployment rates generally fell between 2003 and 2006 for all groups of men, older and younger, and in New Jersey and the United States. By 2009, rates were trending upward for all groups, even older men for whom the EPR was rising steadily over this same period. Even rising employment participation for this group of older men was insufficient to quench the demand for jobs. By 2011, the unemployment rate for older men in New Jersey stood at 7.9 percent, up 1.5 percent since 2003; for older men in the United States, it stood at 6.5 percent, up 2.5 percent since 2003. These figures are particularly disconcerting because, while older workers are less likely than their younger counterparts to be unemployed, when they do lose a job, they are less likely to find another job (Jeszeck, 2011).



NOTE: COMPILED USING DATA FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, MARCH 2012

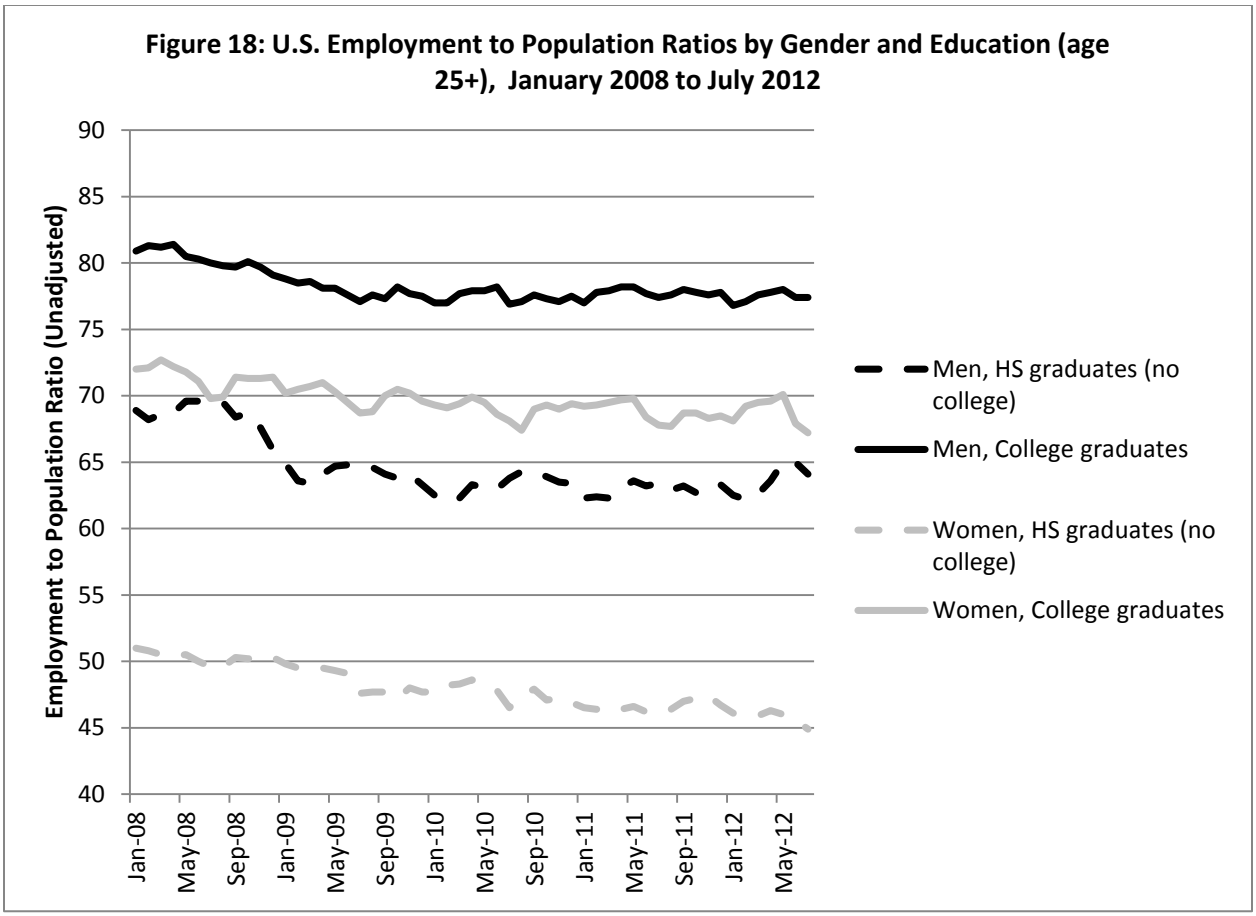
Not surprisingly, the unemployment rate rose the most precipitously for young men across the United States. Clearly, voluntary labor force exists into higher education do not fully explain the employment picture for this group of men. By 2011, their unemployment rate both in New Jersey and nationally stood at 15.7 percent.

V. Education

Along with race, ethnicity, and age, level of education affects the likelihood both of finding a job and of maintaining a job in challenging economic times. On the one hand, employees with higher levels of education may be perceived as too valuable and their skills too specialized to lose. On the other hand, as pressure to cut costs rises, there may be an incentive to replace higher wage earners with lower wage earners.

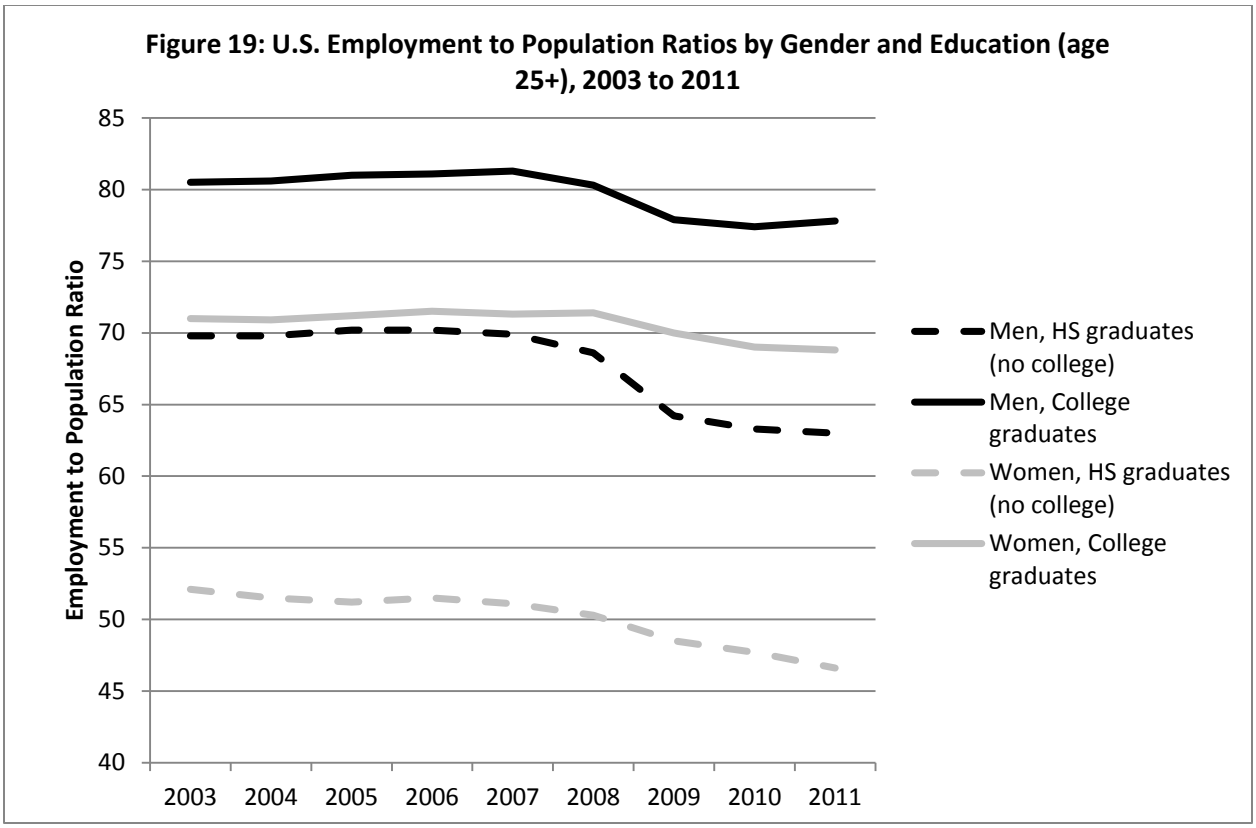
As shown in Figure 18 below, college graduates in the United States, both men and women, have higher employment-to-population ratios than do their counterparts who have graduated from high school. Men with high school degrees experienced the largest employment decline of the four groups examined in Figure 18 below; their EPR reached a low point of 62 percent in February 2010 and remained low through February 2012 (at 62.2 percent). The difference between their 68.9 percent EPR of January 2008 and the 62 percent low of February 2010 is 6.9 percentage points. By contrast, the difference between the January 2008 EPR for men with college degrees (80.9 percent) and their lowest point in January 2012 (76.8 percent) is 4.1 percentage points.

Although the focus of this discussion is men's employment, it is concerning to note that, in July 2012, both women with high school degrees and women with college degrees recorded EPRs that are lower than any one month of the recession. For women with high school degrees, this means an EPR of 44.9 percent, and for women with college degrees, an EPR of 67.2 percent.



NOTE: COMPILED USING DATA FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, JULY 2012

Figure 19, detailing annual EPRs for women and men in the United States by gender from 2003 to 2011, supports the above discussion, including both the disproportionately negative impact of the recession on men and women with high school (but not college) degrees and the disconcerting fact that the only gender/education group for which the EPR trend seems to have at least stabilized is men with college degrees. As previously discussed, the gender gap in EPR narrowed during the recession, falling to 15.7 percentage points for those with high school degrees and 7.9 percentage points for those with college degrees in 2009. As of July 2012, the gender gap has again risen to pre-recession heights, at 19.2 percentage points and 10.2 percentage points respectively.



NOTE: COMPILED USING DATA FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, MARCH 2012

While we do not have monthly data on New Jersey employment by education, we do have annual averages from 2010, showing the employment status of those ages 25 and older by educational attainment. The employment participation rate for New Jersey high school graduates (with no college) in 2010 was 56 percent (compared to 55.3 percent for the United States), with an unemployment rate of 11.4 percent (compared to 10.3 percent for the United States). By contrast, the 2010 employment participation rate for New Jerseyans with a Bachelors degree or higher was 69.4 percent, with an unemployment rate of 3.5 percent (BLS, 2010).

VI. Wages

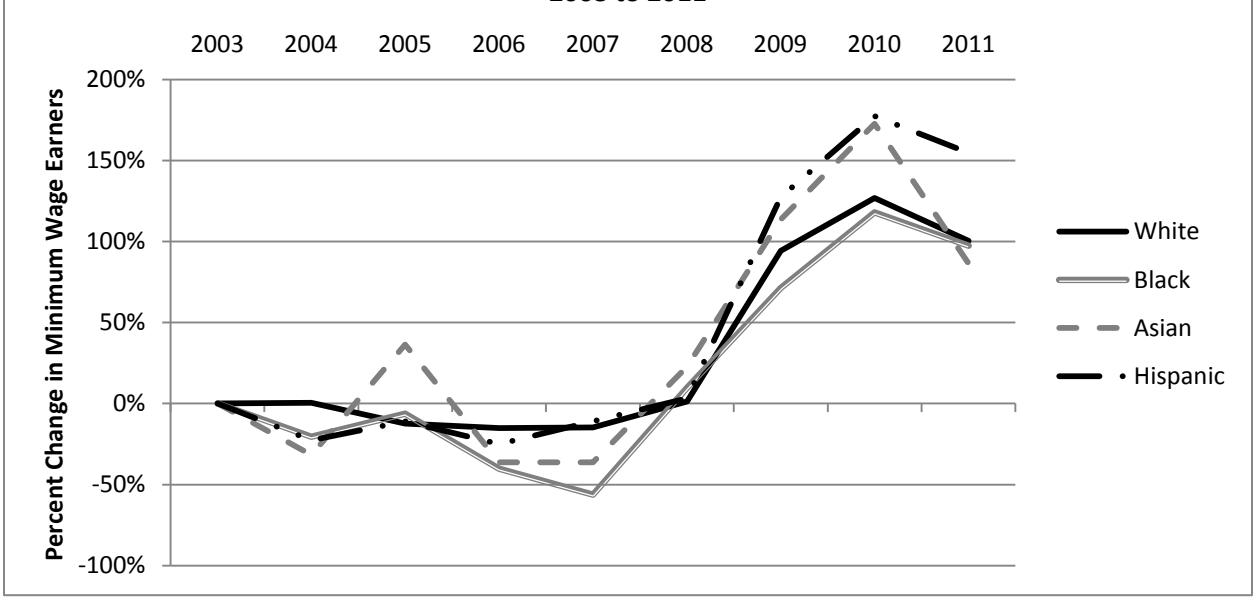
In a market where the supply of workers exceeds the demand, wages generally trend downward. However, even prior to the recent recession, analysts were reporting across-the-board declines in wages. For example, in 2006, planned salary increases fell between 3.5 and 3.7 percent, equal to or lower than projected inflation over the same period (Data Bank Annual, 2005). We find that the downward trend in wages has accelerated over the recession, as indicated by both median weekly earnings for full-time workers and the proportion of working

Americans earning minimum wage or less. This poses problems both now and in the future, because starting salaries have substantial impacts on future earnings and, in turn, lifetime earnings largely determine Social Security benefits and private retirement savings (Bosworth, Burtless, & Steuerle, 2000).

According to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data for 2003 and 2011, median weekly earnings, measured in constant 1982 to 1984 dollars, fell from 2003 to 2011 by $8 for men overall and, to varying degrees, for subgroups of men. Specifically, median weekly earnings declined by $8 for White men, by $11 for Black men, and by $14 for men age 16 to 24 (BLS, 2012d).

As another indicator of wage decline, we examined the proportion of wage and salary workers earning at or below the federal minimum wage, which was $5.15 in 2003 and $7.25 in 2011. For men age 25 and older, this number has risen by over 105 percent from 2003 to 2011. In 2003, the proportion of male minimum wage earners relative to the total number of full-time male workers was 0.6 percent. In 2011, this same proportion stood at 1.3 percent (BLS, 2012d). We calculated the percent increase in minimum wage workers using 2003 as a baseline. As shown by Figure 20, the proportion of White men earning at or below the prevailing federal minimum wage increased by 100 percent (i.e., doubled) between 2003 and 2011; the proportion of Black men increased by 97 percent; Asian men by 86 percent; and Hispanic/Latino men by 155 percent (BLS, 2012d).

Figure 20: Change in the Number of Employed Men Ages 25 and Older Earning At or Below the Prevailing Federal Minimum Wage, by Race/Ethnicity, 2003 to 2011



NOTE: COMPILED USING DATA FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, MARCH 2012

While we do not have equivalent data for New Jersey, we can provide a snapshot of the minimum wage workforce in the state. It is important to note, however, that while the figures for the United States reported above were limited to men ages 25 and older, the data from New Jersey include both men and women, age 16 and older. Still, when we compare New Jersey's 2011 numbers to comparable data for the United State as a whole, New Jersey's figures remain higher. While 5.2 percent of U.S. workers paid hourly rates earn at or below the federal minimum wage, the same is true for 5.5 percent of New Jersey's workers. In 2011, New Jersey had 1,795,000 workers paid hourly rates, with 99,000 paid at or below federal minimum wage. Of these workers, 2.3 percent was paid at minimum wage and 3.2 percent below minimum wage. New Jersey ranks 22nd of all fifty states in this category for the highest proportion of hourly workers paid at or below minimum wage (BLS, 2012f).[10]

VII. Union Membership

Historically, one way to protect workers from wage erosion and to secure higher wages has been through unionization (Braunstein, Shaw, & Dennis, 1994; Spalter-Roth, Hartmann, & Collins, 1994). In 2011, the ratio of median weekly earnings for full-time U.S. wage and salary workers age 16 and older who were members of unions, relative to earnings for comparable non-union workers, was 1.29. In other words, union workers earned 29 percent more than did non-union workers. As shown in Table 2 below, the size of the union advantage is greater today than it was in 2003, for workers overall and for most subgroups of workers by age, race/ethnicity, and gender (BLS, 2012g).

Table 2: Percent Difference in Wages for Union v. Non-Union Workers

	2003	2011
All, 16+	27%	29%
All, 25+	22%	25%
Men, 25+	13%	16%
Women, 25+	26%	30%
White Men, 16+	20%	22%
White Women, 16+	32%	35%
Black Men, 16+	34%	30%

[10] These data are based on Current Population Survey sample estimates and are therefore subject to sampling error though, as a very populous state, New Jersey should be less subject to such error than a smaller state. These data do not indicate whether workers are covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) or by individual State minimum wage laws. Data also do not include tips, overtime pay, or commissions.

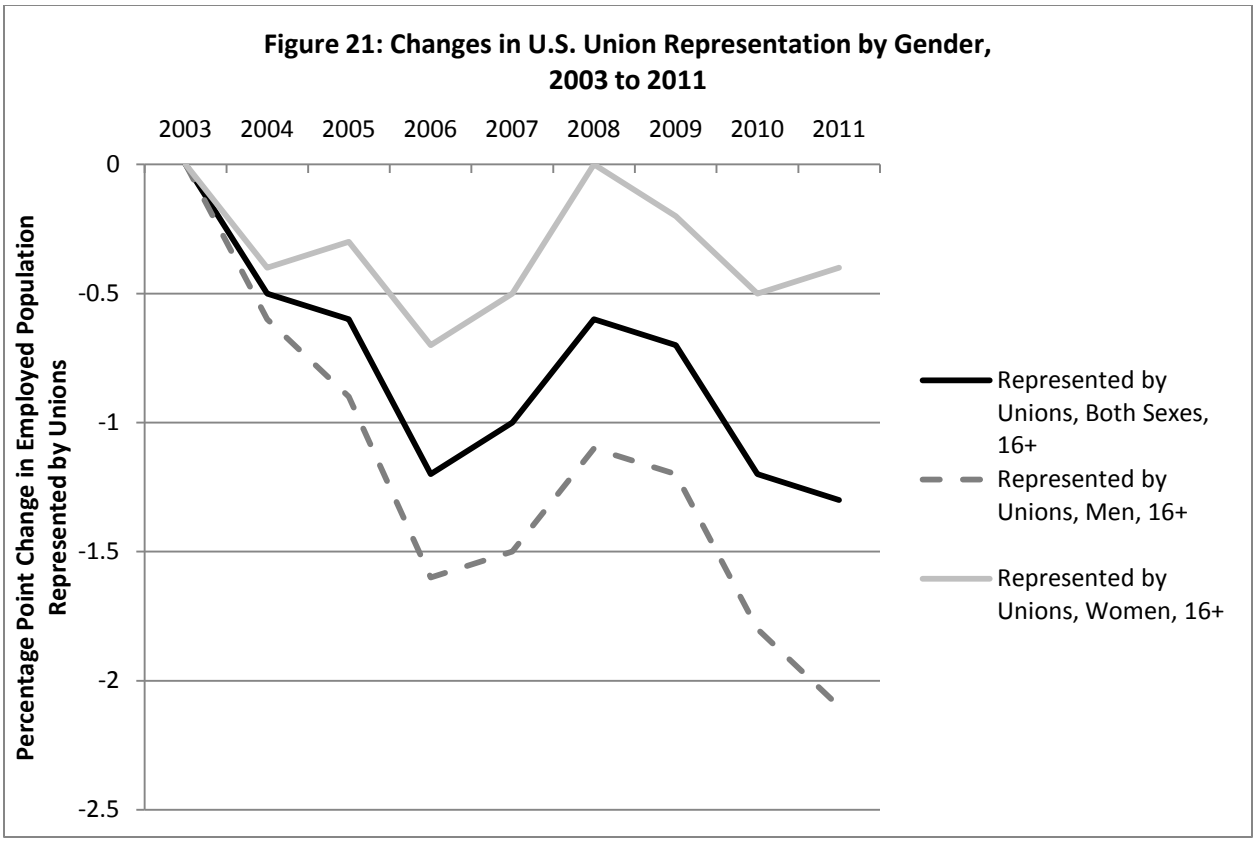
Black Women, 16+	36%	29%
Hispanic/Latino Men, 16+	52%	60%
Hispanic/Latina Women, 16+	49%	48%
Asian Men, 16+	2%	0
Asian Women, 16+	21%	32%

The "union advantage" in wage is generally higher for women than for men, and 2011 was no exception. Among women age 25 and older, those in a union earned 30 percent more than those not in a union (see Table 2; median weekly earnings of $895 v. $688). Among men age 25 and older, those in a union earned 16 percent more than those not in a union (see Table 2; median weekly earnings of $1,000 v. $857).

Another way to view union wage data by gender is to compare the gender gap in pay for union and non-union workers. In this case, we find another "union advantage." Although, on average, men earn more than women in both union and non-union jobs, the earnings difference is far higher in non-union jobs. Specifically, the gender gap in median weekly earnings for adults age 25 and older in 2011 was 25 percent for non-union workers and 12 percent for union workers.

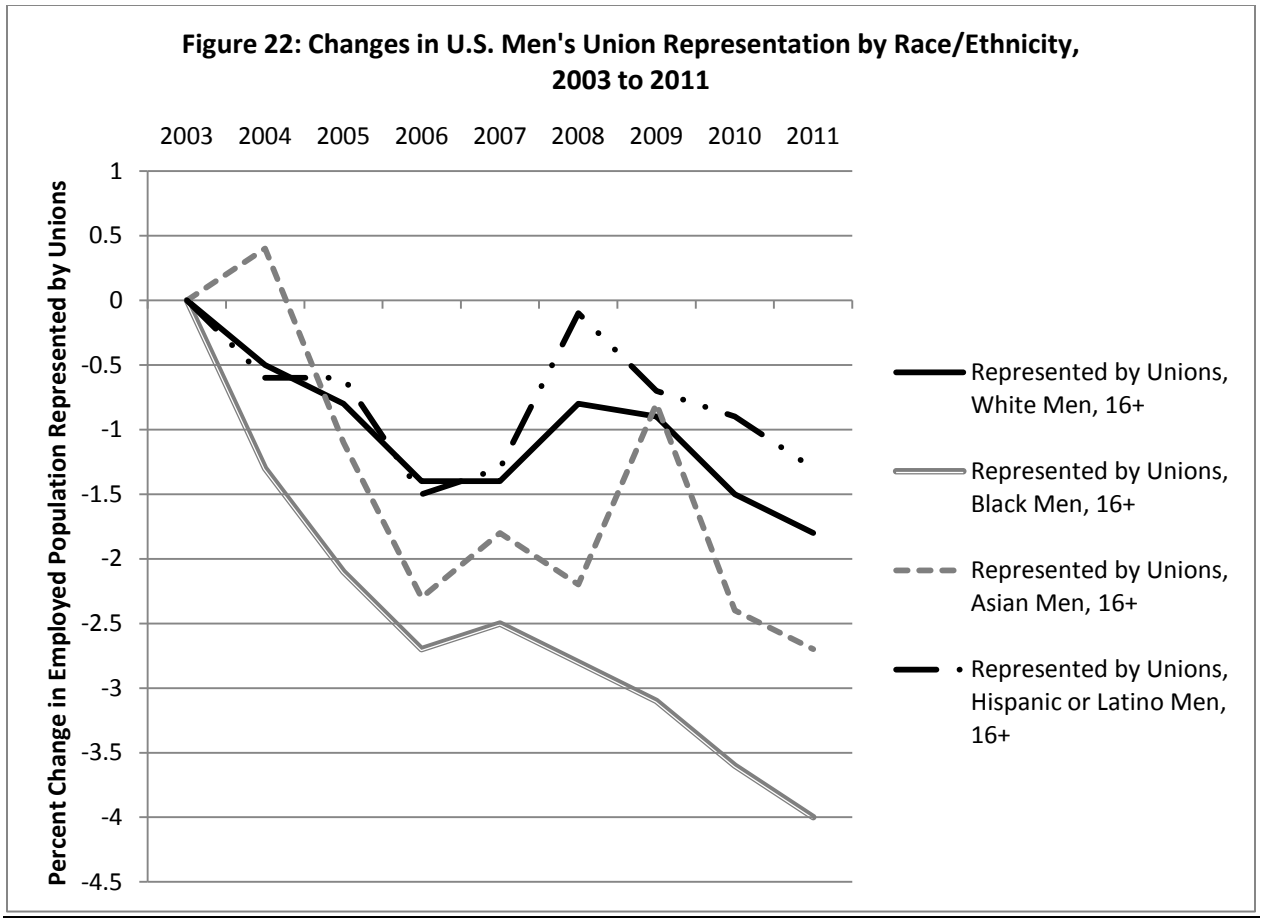
Keeping this wage data in mind, we examined trends in union affiliation for a combined group of workers consisting of both union members and workers who report no union affiliation but whose jobs are covered by a union or an employee association contract.

In the United States, over 16.2 million workers are represented by unions, including 8.7 million men and 7.6 million women. Women's share of union representation has gone from 42 percent in 2000 to 46 percent in 2011. Currently, unions represent 13.5 percent of male and 12.5 percent of female workers (BLS, 2012g). As shown by Figure 21, while the proportion of workers represented by unions has declined for both men and women, the decline has been most precipitous for men at more than 2 percentage points and trending downward.



NOTE: COMPILED USING DATA FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, MARCH 2012

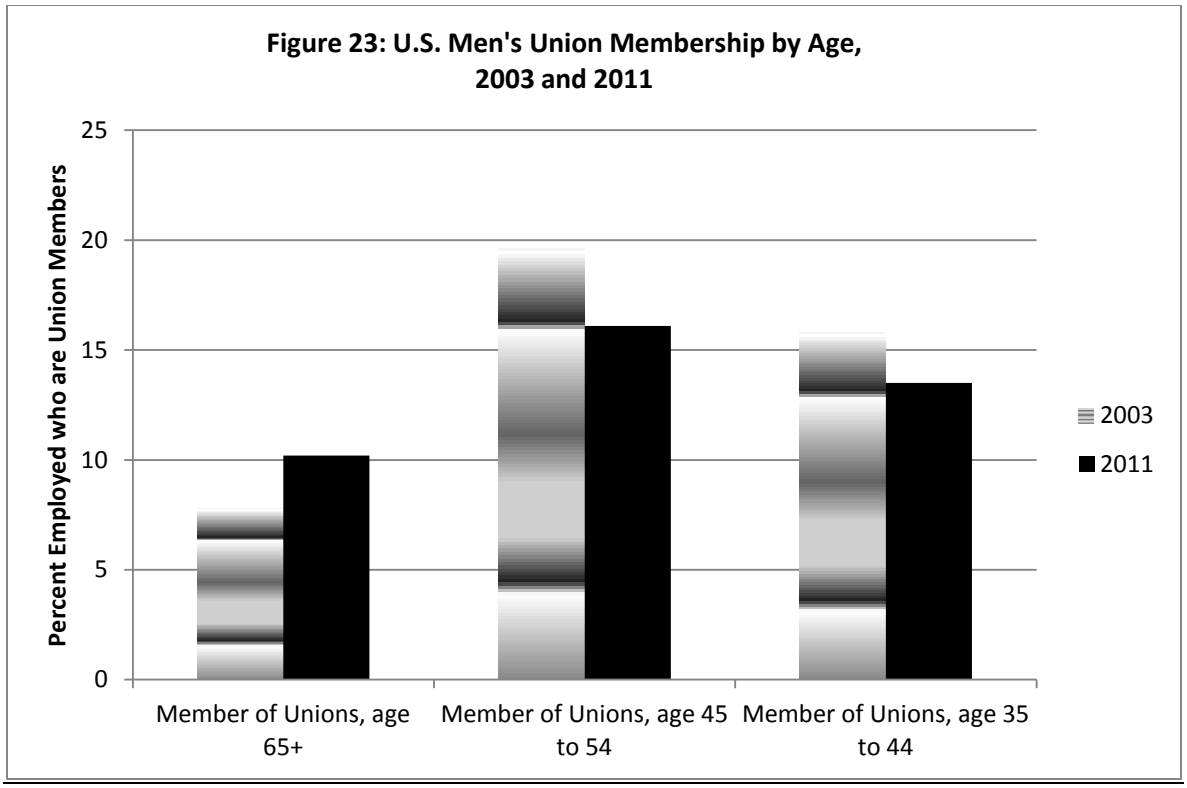
Of the over 8.7 million unionized male workers in the U.S. in 2011, nearly 7.2 million were White, 1 million were Black or African American, 325,000 were Asian, and 1.2 million were Hispanic or Latino. As of 2011, unions represented 13.4 percent of White men in the labor force, 15.8 percent of Black or African American men, 10.1 percent of Asian men, and 10.8 percent of Hispanic or Latino men (BLS, 2012g). Again, we see a decline in union representation for all groups of men from pre- to post-recession, but particularly for Black men (Figure 22).



NOTE: COMPILED USING DATA FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, MARCH 2012

What is perhaps most disconcerting about trends both by gender and by race-ethnicity is that, just prior to the recession, we were seeing an uptick in representation, particularly for some of the most vulnerable categories of workers: women and Hispanic/Latino men. The recession not only erased gains made in the 2006 to 2008 period but further exacerbated declines.

The only age group for which union membership and affiliation are on the rise is the 65 and older group (Figure 23). Importantly, this trend cannot be attributed solely to increasing labor force participation for this group because the proportions shown in Figure 21 below are of the employed population. As of 2011, unions represent 11.4 percent of workers age 65 and older, 17.6 percent of workers age 55 to 64, 17.4 percent of workers age 45 to 54, 14.7 percent of workers age 35 to 44, 11 percent of workers age 25 to 34, and 5.6 percent of workers age 16 to 24 (BLS, 2012g).



NOTE: COMPILED USING DATA FROM THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, MARCH 2012

Historically, New Jersey has had high levels of union membership. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor (2012), it is one of the seven states that together account for over half of the 14.8 million union members in the United States.[11] New Jersey currently ranks sixth among the 48 contiguous states[12] in the total size of its unionized population (0.6 million), but ninth both in the percent of employed residents who are union members and in the percent of employed residents who are represented by unions (BLS, 2012g).

[11] The others are California, New York, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Ohio.

[12] Alaska and Hawaii are excluded from this list. Though both have relatively small populations, they are heavily unionized with 22.1 percent and 21.5 percent of their respective employed populations being union members and 23.7 and 22.5 percent of their respective employed population represented by unions (BLS, 2012g).

VIII. Findings and Recommendations

The ways in which the economic crisis and its aftermath are playing themselves out both in New Jersey and in the country as a whole are impacting men and women differently. Within this process, gender interacts with race and ethnicity, age, education, wage, and union affiliation to affect the general employment and discrete sectoral prospects of individual men and women.

Employment and Unemployment by Gender

We find that, for both New Jersey and the United States, the recessionary gap between men's and women's unemployment rates has narrowed post-recession, led primarily by declines in men's unemployment rate even as the rate for women has remained relatively flat. A closer examination of unemployment rates in the context of employment-to-population ratios (EPRs) tells a similar story: while the proportion of all women employed remained nearly the same from July 2011 to July 2012, the proportion of all men employed rose by 0.6 percentage points in the past year.

Women saw gains relative to men in their share of the labor force during the recession, narrowing the gap in their respective EPRs to a historically low 10.7 percent in January 2010. With the continued, albeit slow, growth in men's employment during the recovery, the gender EPR gap has closed in recent months. The male-female EPR gap in July 2012 was 12.5 percent, closer to the January 2008 differential of 14.7 percent (BLS, 2012d). If this return to past trends was associated with low rates of unemployment, we might assume that both men and women had voluntarily sorted themselves into or out of the labor force. What we face instead is a situation in which the availability of employment has not kept pace with the desire to be employed.

New Jersey's unemployment rate has been consistently higher than the U.S. rate and, as of July 2012, stands at 9.8 percent. However, it is important to note that New Jerseyans historically have had higher rates of labor force participation than the national average. Indeed, the national EPR for men at the beginning of the recession — 72.7 percent — is *lower* than the EPR recorded for New Jersey men in the worst quarter of the recession.

Prior to the recession, New Jersey men were more likely to be in the labor force than were men nationally, while New Jersey women were less likely to be in the labor force than were women nationally. However, the national trend of increasing labor force participation by women during the recession was particularly pronounced in New Jersey, meaning that the gender gap in labor force participation, which had been higher in New Jersey than nationally

for many years and which was as high as 16.6 percent in 2005, has narrowed to between 11 and 12 percent in recent years (BLS, 2012e).

Industry Data

Our analysis of industry trends suggests that male-dominated occupations in New Jersey continue to decline. The year 2009 witnessed substantial job losses in trade, transportation, and utilities; professional and business services; manufacturing; and construction— industry groups with multiple categories of traditionally male occupations. Although employment in trade, transportation, and utilities has seen some growth in the past eighteen months, any gains in employment achieved in this sector are at least partially offset by sustained declines in manufacturing and construction employment. By contrast, New Jersey has experienced noteworthy growth in both educational services and health care and social assistance over the past five years. It remains to be seen whether national trends observed by Kochhar (2011) will hold true for New Jersey: specifically, whether recovery-era growth in men's employment numbers relative to women's will extend into historically female occupations.

Race and Ethnicity

When we look at the interaction between race/ethnicity and gender, we find that the decline in employment participation has been most precipitous for men of color, both Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino. Declining numbers may mean different things, however, for these different groups, as Hispanic/Latino men continue to have the highest rate of employment per their share of the population, relative to Asian men, White men, and Black or African American men. Because the EPR declined most precipitously overall for Black men, the difference between the EPRs for White and Black men reached an historic high of nearly 13 percent in May of 2011. The picture becomes even more grim when we consider family-level impacts: as of 2011, Black and Hispanic families were far more likely than White and Asian families to have an unemployed family member, at 18.9 and 16.3 percent respectively, compared to 10.4 percent for White families and 10.9 percent for Asian families (BLS, 2012c).

New Jersey witnessed a particularly strong increase in Black male employment in 2005, preceding a dramatic fall over subsequent years. In 2008, the EPR for Black men in New Jersey dropped below the ratio for Black men nationally, though Black men in New Jersey have fared far better than their counterparts across the country since then.

Taken together, employment data by race and ethnicity for both New Jersey and the United States tell an alarming story. More than one in every six Black men in the labor force was unemployed in the years 2009, 2010, and 2011; over this same period, the percent of Black men with employment hovered around an alarmingly low 55 percent. Perhaps most strikingly, the

unemployment rate for Black men age 25 to 34 – ages at which individuals are expected to be starting families and establishing themselves financially – *more than doubled* from 2007 to 2010 both nationally and in New Jersey. In 2010, *nearly one in every five* young "working age" Black men available for and looking for employment was unemployed.

Age

Trends for men's employment by age suggest that, over the recession and into the recovery period, older (age 65 plus) workers increased their employment participation, while employment participation for men at the beginning of their careers declined sharply. Indeed, men age 65 and older represent the only demographic group we examined for whom employment participation has actually *increased* over the recession and into the recovery period.

This rise in employment for men age 65 and older was particularly pronounced in New Jersey, where their employment participation rose from 16.4 percent in 2003, to over 25 percent in 2011. However, the fact that their unemployment rate rose along with their employment participation suggests that, in more benign economic times, rates employment participation by older male workers could be even higher.

By contrast to their age 65 and older counterparts, working age men (age 25 to 54) have experienced employment declines of roughly 4 percentage points over the recession. Not surprisingly, the recession has affected young men (age 20 to 24) most substantially. By 2011, their unemployment rate both in New Jersey and nationally stood at 15.7 percent.

Education

Not surprisingly, higher levels of education have offered some protection for both men and women from the reductions in employment participation and increases in unemployment rate felt during the recession and well into the recovery. What is surprising and indeed alarming is that men with high school degrees but no college, and women with high school degrees as well as women with college degrees, are not yet experiencing increases in their employment participation rates.

Wages

Although, even prior to the recent recession, analysts were reporting declines in wages, we find that the downward trend in wages has accelerated in recent years, as indicated by both median weekly earnings for full-time workers and the proportion of working Americans earning minimum wage or less. Five and a half percent of New Jersey's workers paid hourly rates earn at or below the federal minimum wage; New Jersey ranks 22nd of all fifty states in this category in the proportion of its workforce earning at or below minimum wage (BLS, 2012f).

Unions

Because New Jersey is considered a heavily unionized state, as assessed both by the absolute size of its unionized labor force and by the proportion of its workers who are either members of or represented by unions, we took a look at the role of unions in wages, both across the recession and by gender. We find that in 2011 union workers earned 29 percent more than did non-union workers. The size of the "union advantage" in wage is greater today than it was in 2003, for workers overall and for most subgroups of workers by age, race/ethnicity, and gender; moreover, it is higher for women than for men (BLS, 2012g). Union membership also attenuates the gender wage gap. Specifically, the gender gap in median weekly earnings for adults age 25 and older in 2011 was 25 percent for non-union workers and 12 percent for union workers.

Informed by our analysis of pre- to post-recession economic data, we conclude by offering the following recommendations, grouped into two substantive areas:

Data Collection and Research

1. **Build capacity for the collection of education and employment data for New Jersey citizens from preschool through adulthood**: Although, as shown above, education alone does not protect individuals from job loss during a recession, it can be responsive to industry trends, equipping New Jersey's citizens for emerging industry demands. Educational systems also have a role to play in encouraging – or at least not actively discouraging – young men and women in pursuits that are not traditional for their gender. For example, the marked increase in jobs in New Jersey's healthcare and social assistance sector, even as most other sectors experienced declines, suggests opportunities for both men and women.

   Decisions about the public funding of a variety of educational and technical programs should be predicated on both short- and long-term earnings, tenure, and job satisfaction outcomes of New Jersey citizens. Moreover, education and employment data should be connected to basic demographic information, including gender, race/ethnicity, age, and family status. Unless we connect specific primary, postsecondary, and continuing education achievements to employment and economic security outcomes, we will remain in the dark on optimal investments.

   While NJ LWD and New Jersey's Department of Education collect data on the employment and education status of New Jersey residents, the data tend to be reported cross-sectionally, rather than longitudinally. We believe that linking

primary, secondary, and post-secondary education and employment data and linking these data to key demographic indicators will allow policy makers to identify and address system gaps, as well as identify and replicate successful policies and programs.

2. **Supplement data collection with qualitative interviews in key employment sectors**: New Jersey's State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) has launched an important effort to document and clarify employment opportunities and constraints in key sectors, including Transportation, Logistics, and Distribution; Life Sciences; Advanced Manufacturing; Financial Services; Health Care; and Technology and Entrepreneurship. Through this system of *Talent Networks*, the SETC hopes to improve linkages between education and employment sectors.

   Our analysis of employment data above leaves many unanswered questions, some of which call for qualitative, rather than quantitative, responses. The formation of the *Talent Networks* provides an excellent opportunity to hear from individuals with "real time" knowledge of the health of specific employment sectors and occupations within those sectors. We recommend that the *Talent Networks* be used as sites to dig deeper into the demographic challenges identified above (for detailed information about each sector, see http://lwd.dol.state.nj.us/labor/lpa/pub/empecon/empeconomy_index.html).

3. **Collect wage and benefits data on newly created private sector jobs**: As noted in the report, job growth in New Jersey's private sector has more than made up for declines in the public sector. However, we know very little about the quality of these new jobs. Gauging the economic security of New Jersey's population as a whole requires monitoring not only the number of jobs being added but also the quality of jobs being added.

Programs and Policies at the State and National Level

1. **Target intervention to unemployed and underemployed male youth**: Employment and unemployment data for young (age 20 to 24) workers, particularly young workers of color, paints an alarming picture. Overall, this group was particularly hard hit by the recession, with the proportion of the population in the workforce falling by over 12 percentage points from pre-recession to the height of the recession, and by over 7 percentage points between January 2010 and January 2012. Moreover,

at the same time as job prospects are scarce, the prohibitively high cost of a college education coupled with reductions in state and federal funds to offset these costs, makes the postsecondary educational path considerably more difficult to follow.

Given that college graduates still have far higher workforce participation than their peers, we recommend sustained or increased support for higher education. Particularly in light of the immediate economic needs of young wage earners and the growing costs of traditional four-year college degrees, we further recommend support for two-year degree and certificate programs. Expanding enrollment in such programs may depend upon communicating evidence of their effectiveness; the public sector has an important role to play in increasing public awareness of the full array of options for postsecondary educational attainment.

Because industry growth sectors include service-oriented, hands-on occupations, especially in the health and human services fields, public and private financial investments in targeted training programs, internships, and apprenticeships are important to ensuring that younger workers are prepared for emerging employment realities.

2. **Expand worker protections**: Our analysis finds that not only are New Jersey's workers continuing to struggle to find jobs, but those jobs they do find are more likely than before to pay at or below minimum wage. We also find that married-couple families in which the sole breadwinner is a woman are on the rise, a trend which could increase family-level vulnerability to the extent that women continue to earn less, on average, than men. Men and women are, in a very real sense, in this changing economy together, and the families they support need programs and policies attentive to complex employment realities.

   Women living in states like New Jersey that have Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) or Family Leave Insurance (FLI) policies have been shown in a recent study to be less likely to receive public assistance or food stamp income following the birth of a child. Moreover, women in states with TDI or FLI programs are twice as likely to take paid leave following the birth of a child than are women in other states. The effect is even larger for low-income women, those who are least likely to have access to paid leave through an employer (Houser & Vartanian, 2012). Although they currently stand little chance of passing, proposed federal-level public policies such as the Healthy Families Act (H.R.1876; S.984) and the Paycheck Fairness Act (S.3220) warrant attention and consideration for their potential to address the needs of the 21st century U.S. workplace.

Works Cited

Bosworth, B., Burtless, G., & Steuerle, E. (2000). Lifetime Earnings Patterns, the Distribution of Future Social Security Benefits, and the Impact of Pension Reform. *Social Security Bulletin,* 63(4).

Boushey, H. (2009, July 20). Women Breadwinners, Men Unemployed. Center for American Progress. http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/economy/news/2009/07/20/6314/women-breadwinners-men-unemployed/

Braunstein, J., Shaw, L., & Dennis, R. (1994). What do unions do for women? *Federal Publications*, Paper 439.

Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012a, August 3). The Employment Situation —July 2012. United States Department of Labor, 12-1531, http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empsit.pdf

Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012b, March 9). The Employment Situation —February 2012. United States Department of Labor, 12-0402, http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0.htm

Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012c, April 26). Employment Characteristics of Families —2011. United States Department of Labor, 12-0771, http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/famee.pdf

Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012d, August 31). Databases, Tables, and Calculators by Subject. Data retrieved August 31, 2012.

Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012e, February 24). Labor Local Area Unemployment Statistics Searchable Database. http://www.bls.gov/lau/

Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012f, March 2). Characteristics of Minimum Wage Workers: 2011. http://www.bls.gov/cps/minwage2011tbls.htm#2

Bureau of Labor Statistics (2012g, January 27). Economic News Release: Median Weekly Earnings of Full-Time Wage and Salary Workers by Union Affiliation and Selected Characteristics. United States Department of Labor, http://www.bls.gov/news.release/union2.t02.htm

Bureau of Labor Statistics (2011, March 28). Employment Characteristics of Families ─2010. United States Department of Labor, 11-0396, http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/famee_03242011.pdf

Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010). Geographic Profile: Estimates for States. Bulletin 2768. http://www.bls.gov/opub/gp/pdf/gp10_15.pdf

Bureau of Labor Statistics (2008, May 30). Employment Characteristics of Families in 2007. United States Department of Labor, 08-0731, http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/famee_05302008.pdf

Cook, David. (2012, January 12). US Chamber Sees Limp Economy, High Unemployment Rate in Election Year. *The Christian Science Monitor*. http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Politics/2012/0112/US-Chamber-sees-limp-economy-high-unemployment-rate-in-election-year

Data Bank Annual 2005. (2005). Real Wage Declines Across the Board. *Workforce Management, 84*(14), 56-66.

Gornick, J.C. & Jacobs, J.A. (1998). Gender, the Welfare State, and Public Employment: A Comparative Study of Seven Industrialized Countries. *American Sociological Review*, 63(5), 688-710.

Guglielmo, W.J. (2009, August 11). The Future of Pharma. *New Jersey Monthly*. http://njmonthly.com/articles/lifestyle/the-future-of-pharma.html

Houser, L., & Vartanian, T.P. (2012). Policy Matters: Public Policy, Paid Leave for New Parents, and Economic Security for U.S. Workers. Center for Women and Work, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.

Jeszeck, C.A. (2011, October). Income Security: Older Adults and the 2007-2009 Recession. United States Government Accountability Office (GAO-12-76). http://www.gao.gov/assets/590/585789.pdf

Kochhar, Rakesh. (2011, July 6). Two Years of Economic Recovery: Women Lose Jobs, Men Find Them. PEW Research Center. http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2011/07/06/two-years-of-economic-recovery-women-lose-jobs-men-find-them/

National Bureau of Economic Research. (2010, September 20). U.S. Business Cycle Expansions and Contractions. Retrieved March 24, 2012, at www.nber.org/cycles.html

New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development [NJ LWD]. (2012a, August 16). Preliminary Numbers Show Employment Shift in July While Long-Term Trend Remains Positive. Retrieved August 31, 2012, at http://lwd.dol.state.nj.us/labor/lwdhome/press/2012/20120816_unemployment_release.html

New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development [NJ LWD]. (2012b, August 16). Seasonally Adjusted Statewide Nonagricultural Wage and Salary Employment. Retrieved August 31, 2012, at http://lwd.dol.state.nj.us/labor/lpa/LMI_index.html

New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development [NJ LWD]. (2011, September). Compilation of Internal data.

Spalter-Roth, R., Hartmann, H., & Collins, N. (1994). What do unions do for women? In S. Friedman, R.W. Hurd, R.A. Oswald, & R.L. Seeber (Eds.), *Restoring the Promise of American Labor Law.* Ithaca, NY: ILR Press, 193-206.

Taylor, P., Kochhar, R., Morin, R., Wang, W., Dockterman, D., & Medina, J. (2009, September 3). Recession Turns a Graying Office Grayer. PEW Research Center. http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2010/10/americas-changing-workforce.pdf