Children and Youth Neighborhood Contexts Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn

- **Affluence** + associated with
  - Children’s verbal ability
  - IQ
  - School achievement

- **Low income** + associated with
  - Mental health problems.
  - Health programs
Cutrona--Neighborhoods

- Depression linked to neighborhoods
- **Blaming the victim**
- Why is it important to understand neighborhoods in development and depression
  - People blame themselves
  - Others blame the victim
  - More efficient to address the threats
Theory

Daily Stress

Vulnerability to negative events

Disrupted Social ties
Community Psychology

- The most efficient way to improve mental health in impoverished neighborhoods is to improve the quality of neighborhoods.
■ SES- health gradient

■ WHY
  ■ As one moves down gradient, more stress, takes physiological toll on the body
  ■ Negative emotional states-linked to illness
  ■ Personality traits mistrust, pessimism,
  ■ Less likely to engage in health behaviors
Exercise

In considering this question, imagine that if you joined this nation, you would be randomly assigned to a place in the distribution, so you could end up anywhere in this distribution, from the very richest to the very poorest.”

ACTUAL: For your estimates of the actual distribution, indicate what percent of wealth you think is owned by each of the five quintiles in the United States, in order starting with the top 20% and ending with the bottom 20%.

IDEAL: what percent of wealth do you think each of the quintiles ideally should hold, again starting with the top 20% and ending with the bottom 20%.

*assign 20% of the wealth to each quintile if they thought that each quintile should have the same level of wealth, or to assign 100% of the wealth to one quintile if they thought that one quintile should hold all of the wealth.
Respondents vastly underestimated the actual level of wealth inequality in the United States, believing that the wealthiest quintile held about 59% of the wealth when the actual number is closer to 84%.

More interesting, respondents constructed ideal wealth distributions that were far more equitable than even their erroneously low estimates of the actual distribution, reporting a desire for the top quintile to own just 32% of the wealth.

These desires for more equal distributions of wealth took the form of moving money from the top quintile to the bottom three quintiles, while leaving the second quintile unchanged, evincing a greater concern for the less fortunate than the more fortunate
Fig. 3. The actual United States wealth distribution plotted against the estimated and ideal distributions of respondents of different income levels, political affiliations, and genders. Because of their small percentage share of total wealth, both the “4th 20%” value (0.2%) and the “Bottom 20%” value (0.1%) are not visible in the “Actual” distribution.
Bifurcation of economy

- Wage gains for most college-educated workers have been unimpressive (and nonexistent since 2000)
- even the well-educated can no longer count on getting jobs with good benefits.
- workers with a college degree but no further degrees are less likely to get workplace health coverage than workers with only a high school degree were in 1979.
New Congressional Budget Office report

- The budget office report tells us that essentially all of the upward redistribution of income away from the bottom 80 percent has gone to the highest-income 1 percent of Americans.

- If anything, the protesters are setting the cutoff too low.

- Almost two-thirds of the rising share of the top percentile in income actually went to the top 0.1 percent — the richest thousandth of Americans, who saw their real incomes rise more than 400 percent over the period from 1979 to 2005.
Why does this growing concentration of income and wealth in a few hands matter?

- rising inequality has meant a nation in which most families don’t share fully in economic growth.

- Arguments for higher taxes on high incomes should be part of any long-run budget deal becomes a lot more compelling.

- extreme concentration of income is incompatible with real democracy.
  - Can anyone seriously deny that our political system is being warped by the influence of big money, and that the warping is getting worse as the wealth of a few grows ever larger?
Summary Figure 1.
Growth in Real After-Tax Income from 1979 to 2007

(Percent)

Income Group

Source: Congressional Budget Office.
Note: For information on income definitions, the ranking of households, the allocation of taxes, and the construction of inequality indexes, see "Notes and Definitions" at the beginning of this study.
Summary Figure 2.

Shares of Market Income, 1979 and 2007

(Percent)

Source: Congressional Budget Office.

Note: For information on income definitions, the ranking of households, the allocation of taxes, and the construction of inequality indexes, see "Notes and Definitions" at the beginning of this study.
## Income Category Minimums, 1979 to 2007

(2007 dollars)

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<th>Year</th>
<th>Lowest Quintile</th>
<th>Second Quintile</th>
<th>Middle Quintile</th>
<th>Fourth Quintile</th>
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<th>91st-95th Percentiles</th>
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Source: Congressional Budget Office.

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Occupy Movement

In 1928, the top 1% earned 23.94% of the nation's income.

From 1936 to 1945, the top marginal individual income tax rate rose to a historical high of 94% from 79%.

During Ronald Reagan's presidency (1981-89), the top marginal individual income tax rate fell to 28% from 70%.

The top 1% earned 23.5% of the nation's income in 2007.

Percentage of total income earned by the nation's top 1% (includes capital gains).

The Great Depression

Subprime mortgage crisis sets off recession.
The ongoing economic crisis has negatively affected the livelihoods of millions of Americans.

As of September 2009, unemployment has spiked dramatically to 9.8%, having doubled since the beginning of the recession in December 2007.

The national poverty rate is the highest it has been for the last 11 years, growing to 13.2% in 2008 from 12.5% in 2007.

Poverty rates for 2009 are not yet available, but will likely mimic this year’s dramatic growth in unemployment.

While non-Hispanic Whites still constitute the largest single group of Americans living in poverty, ethnic minority groups are overrepresented (24.7% African American, 24.3% American Indian and Alaskan Native, 23.2% Hispanic, and 11.8% Asian and Pacific Islander compared with 8.6% non-Hispanic White).

These disparities are associated with the historical marginalization of ethnic minority groups and entrenched barriers to good education and jobs.
Where is child poverty concentrated?

- The child poverty rate has gone up from 18% in 2007 to 19% in 2008 continuing the upward trend in child poverty rates dating back to 2000 (16.2%).

- Racial and ethnic disparities in poverty rates persist, particularly among children. In 2007, African American and Hispanic children were twice as likely to live in poverty as non-Hispanic White and Asian children.


- Children with single mothers were more than five times as likely to live in poverty as children living with married parents (42.9% vs. 8.5%).

- Single-mother headed households are also more prevalent among African American and Hispanic families contributing to ethnic disparities in poverty.
What are the effects of child poverty?

- Psychological research has demonstrated that living in poverty has a wide range of negative effects on the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our nation’s children.

- Poverty impacts children within their various contexts at home, in school, and in their neighborhoods and communities.

- Poverty is linked with negative conditions such as substandard housing, homelessness, inadequate nutrition and food insecurity, inadequate child care, lack of access to health care, unsafe neighborhoods, and underresourced schools which adversely impact our nation’s children.

- Poorer children and teens are also at greater risk for several negative outcomes such as poor academic achievement, school dropout, abuse and neglect, behavioral and socioemotional problems, physical health problems, and developmental delays.

- These effects are compounded by the barriers children and their families encounter when trying to access physical and mental health care.

- Economists estimate that child poverty costs the U.S. $500 billion a year in lost productivity in the work force and spending on health care and the criminal justice system.
Poverty and academic achievement

- Poverty has a particularly adverse effect on the academic outcomes of children, especially during early childhood.

- Chronic stress associated with living in poverty has been shown to adversely affect children’s concentration and memory which may impact their ability to learn.

- School drop out rates are significantly higher for teens residing in poorer communities. In 2007, the dropout rate of students living in low-income families was about 10 times greater than the rate of their peers from high-income families (8.8% vs. 0.9%).

- The academic achievement gap for poorer youth is particularly pronounced for low-income African American and Hispanic children compared with their more affluent White peers.

- Underresourced schools in poorer communities struggle to meet the learning needs of their students and aid them in fulfilling their potential.

- Inadequate education contributes to the cycle of poverty by making it more difficult for low-income children to lift themselves and future generations out of poverty.
Poverty and psychosocial outcomes

- Children living in poverty are at greater risk of behavioral and emotional problems.

- Some behavioral problems may include impulsiveness, difficulty getting along with peers, aggression, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and conduct disorder.

- Some emotional problems may include feelings of anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem.

- Poverty and economic hardship is particularly difficult for parents who may experience chronic stress, depression, marital distress and exhibit harsher parenting behaviors. These are all linked to poor social and emotional outcomes for children.

- Unsafe neighborhoods may expose low-income children to violence which can cause a number of psychosocial difficulties. Violence exposure can also predict future violent behavior in youth which places them at greater risk of injury and mortality and entry into the juvenile justice system.
Poverty and physical health

- Children and teens living in poorer communities are at increased risk for a wide range of physical health problems:
  - Low birth weight
  - Poor nutrition which is manifested in the following ways:
    - Inadequate food which can lead to food insecurity/hunger
    - Lack of access to healthy foods and areas for play or sports, lead to childhood overweight or obesity
  - Chronic conditions such as asthma, anemia, and pneumonia
  - Risky behaviors such as smoking or engaging in early sexual activity
  - Exposure to environmental contaminants, e.g., lead paint and toxic waste dumps
  - Exposure to violence in their communities which can lead to trauma, injury, disability, and mortality