

FURTHER READINGS AND RESOURCES ON POVERTY

Listed below are additional readings and resources to help you explore in greater detail the subject matter of each topic.

LONG TERM RISK OF POVERTY

Books and Articles:

Rank, Mark Robert. 2004. *One Nation, Underprivileged: Why American Poverty Affects Us All*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Examines the characteristics and nature of American poverty, why poverty is a concern for all Americans, and how to create a fundamental change in America in order to address and reduce poverty. Lifetime risk of poverty and welfare use is analyzed in detail.

Rank, Mark R. and Thomas A. Hirschl. 2015. "The Likelihood of Experiencing Relative Poverty Across the Life Course." *PLOS ONE* 10: e01333513.

Analysis of the life time risk of experiencing relative poverty during adulthood.

Ratliffe, Caroline. 2015. "Child Poverty and Adult Success." *Low-Income Working Families Brief*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.

Brief overview of the dynamics of child poverty and its effects upon life outcomes.

Websites:

Rank, Mark Robert. 2023. "Confronting Poverty: Tools for Understanding Economic Hardship and Risk" website. <https://confrontingpoverty.org/>

Website that allows individuals to assess their future risk of poverty through a poverty risk calculator. Also contains information and links to various topics regarding poverty.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2023. <https://www.census.gov/topics/income-poverty/poverty.html>

U.S. Census Bureau website that measures and estimates the extent of poverty in the United States.

Media:

Rank, Mark. 2020. “A Radically New Understanding of American Poverty and Inequality.”

Ted style talk discussing the logic behind the life course research on poverty.

POVERTY AND RESIDENCE**Books and Articles:**

Duncan, Cynthia M. 2014. *Worlds Apart: Poverty and Politics in Rural America*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Examines rural poverty in New England, Appalachia, and the Mississippi Delta through in-depth interviews conducted with poor families.

Edin, Kathryn J., H. Luke Shaefer, and Timothy J. Nelson. 2023. *The Injustice of Place: Uncovering the Legacy of Poverty in America*. New York: Mariner Books.

Explores poverty in Appalachia, the Cotton and Tobacco Belts of the Deep South, and South Texas.

Jargowsky, Paul A. 2015. “Concentration of Poverty in the New Millennium: Changes in Prevalence, Composition, and Location of High Poverty Neighborhoods.” A Report by The Century Foundation and Rutgers Center for Urban Research and Education.

Analysis and overview of the trends and prevalence of high poverty neighborhoods using 20 years of Census data. Shows that the majority of individuals in poverty do not live in high poverty neighborhoods.

Lichter, Daniel T. and Kai A. Schafft. 2016. “People and Places Left Behind: Rural Poverty in the New Century.” In *The Oxford Handbook of the Social Science of Poverty*, David Brady and Linda M. Burton (eds.), pp. 317-340. New York: Oxford University Press.

Reviews the key features of contemporary rural poverty, both in the United States and globally.

Kneebone, Elizabeth and Alan Berube. 2013. *Confronting Suburban Poverty in America*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

Authors examine the rising prevalence of poverty in suburban areas of the United States. Demonstrates that more poor Americans now live in the suburbs than in the city.

Pattillo, Mary and John N. Robinson. 2016. "Poor Neighborhoods in the Metropolis." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Social Science of Poverty*, David Brady and Linda M. Burton (eds.), pp. 341-368. New York: Oxford University Press.

Argues for broadening the scope of neighborhood poverty studies from central cities to entire metropolitan regions.

Wilson, William Julius. 2016. "Urban Poverty, Race, and Space." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Social Science of Poverty*, David Brady and Linda M. Burton (eds.), pp. 394-413. New York: Oxford University Press.

Reviews the political, economic, and cultural forces that have led to high concentrated poverty in black inner cities.

Website:

Washington Post Residential Mapping Program. 2018.
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2018/national/segregation-us-cities/>

Interactive program from the Washington Post for mapping residential segregation across the United States.

Media:

MSNBC. 2017. "Geography of Poverty: A Journey through Forgotten America."

A multimedia look at the experience of poverty across different regions of the United States.

POVERTY SPELL DYNAMICS

Books and Articles:

Cellini, Stephanie Riegg, Signe-Mary McKernan, and Caroline Ratcliffe. 2008. "The Dynamics of Poverty in the United States: A Review of Data, Methods and Findings." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 27:577-605.

Review of the empirical literature with respect to the likelihood of individuals experiencing poverty, the length of poverty spells, and the events associated with entering and exiting from poverty.

Irving, Shelley K., and Tracy A. Loveless. 2015. "Dynamics of Economic Well-Being: Participation in Government Programs, 2009–2012: Who Gets Assistance?" U.S. Census Bureau. (<https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2015/demo/p70-141.pdf>).

Complementing the poverty spell research, this analysis examines welfare spells in the major means-tested programs in the U.S.

Rank, Mark R. 2020. "Alleviating Poverty." In *Towards a Livable Life: A 21st Century Agenda for Social Work*, Mark Robert Rank (ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

Explores the dynamics and patterns of poverty.

Sandoval, Daniel A. Mark R. Rank, and Thomas A. Hirschl. 2009. "The Increasing Risk of Poverty across the American Life Course." *Demography* 46: 717-737.

Uses a life course analysis to show that the long-term risk of poverty has been rising from the 1970's onward.

Media:

On the Media. 2017. "Busted: America's Poverty Myths."

On the Media and WNYC audio series on the myths and realities of American poverty.

POVERTY AND RACE

Books and Articles:

Gilens, Martin. 1999. *Why Americans Hate Welfare: Race, Media, and the Politics of Antipoverty Policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Argues that Americans' negative views about welfare are largely shaped by media representations of welfare recipients as black and undeserving.

Gillon, Steven M. 2018. *Separate and Unequal: The Kerner Commission and the Unraveling of American Liberalism*. New York: Basic Books.

Historical analysis of the politics behind the writing of the Kerner Commission report, and its powerful conclusion that “Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black and one white – separate and unequal.”

Hochschild, Arlie Russell. 2016. *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*. New York: The New Press.

Provides an understanding into the mindset of conservative working class residents of the Louisiana bayou country. Insightful analysis through interviews and participant observation.

Kornbluh, Felicia, and Gwendolyn Mink. 2019. *Ensuring Poverty: Welfare Reform in Feminist Perspective*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

This book approaches poverty and welfare policies through a feminist lens, offering insight into why female-headed households with children experience high rates of poverty. Importantly, the authors highlight efforts by social justice feminists to reduce poverty and promote equality for mothers, particularly mothers of color.

Van Doorn, Bas W. 2015. “Pre- and Post-Welfare Reform Media Portrayals of Poverty in the United States: The Continuing Importance of Race and Ethnicity.” *Politics & Policy* 43: 142-162.

Analyzes racial and ethnic patterns in media coverage of poverty in the United States, specifically focusing on African Americans and Hispanics.

Wetts, Rachel, and Robb Willer. 2018. “Privilege on the Precipice: Perceived Racial Status Threats Lead White Americans to Oppose Welfare.” *Social Forces* 97: 793-822.

Focuses on the role of perceived threats to racial standing in shaping whites’ views of welfare policy.

Website:

General Social Survey Data Explorer. 2023. <https://gssdataexplorer.norc.org/>

Allows for the graphing by various demographic characteristics a range of attitudinal questions over the past five decades. In particular, one can plot attitudinal data on whether federal spending on poverty and welfare programs is too high or too low, along with whether more should be spent addressing issues related to race.

POVERTY AND WORK

Books and Articles:

Brand, Jennie E. 2015. "The Far-Reaching Impact of Job Loss and Unemployment." *Annual Review of Sociology* 41: 359-375.

Details the various negative consequences upon individuals and families resulting from job loss and unemployment.

Eppard, Lawrence M., Mark Robert Rank and Heather E. Bullock. 2020. *Rugged Individualism and the Misunderstanding of American Inequality*. Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press.

Using various sources of data, this book looks at how the ideology of rugged individualism shapes the way that inequality is understood within the American context.

Goldstein, Amy. 2017. *Janesville: An American Story*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Powerful case study into what happens to workers when the main industry in a town closes its factory doors.

Kalleberg, Arne L. 2011. *Good Jobs, Bad Jobs: The Rise of Polarized and Precarious Employment Systems in the United States, 1970s to 2000s*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Discusses the changing nature of the labor market, including the rise of low-paying jobs.

Mishel, Lawrence, Josh Bivens, Elise Gould, and Heidi Shierholz. 2012. *The State of Working America*. 12th ed. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

This book is an essential resource for data on jobs, wages, income and wealth inequality, poverty, and intergenerational mobility in the U.S. Survey results of low-wage workers in the U.S. Demonstrates that the working poor have a strong work ethic and believe that hard work is rewarded.

Shieler, David K. 2004. *The Working Poor: Invisible in America*. New York: Knopf.

Journalistic accounting into the lives and problems of approximately 20 low-income workers from around the country. Based upon these interviews, Shieler argues that poverty is a complex combination of structural problems and individual bad choices.

Website:

Bureau of Labor Statistics homepage. 2023. <https://www.bls.gov/>

Allows one to explore the latest data on employment, underemployment, and unemployment. Also contains a variety of useful data tools.

Media:

Weisberg, Roger. 2005. "Waging a Living: Working Overtime in Pursuit of the Elusive American Dream." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OXHzJVY1nOU>

Point of View documentary film that explore the working lives of four different individuals. Poignantly reveals the struggles and fortitude of those trying to survive and work themselves out of poverty.

Oxfam America. 2014. "Hard Work, Hard Lives: Survey Exposes Harsh Reality Faced by Low-Wage Workers in the US." <https://www.oxfamamerica.org/static/media/files/low-wage-worker-report-oxfam-america.pdf>

Report based on a national survey that found "America's working poor have a strong work ethic, put in long hours, and believe that hard work can pay off."

STRUCTURAL CAUSES OF POVERTY

Books and Articles:

Brady, David. 2019. "Theories and the Causes of Poverty." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 45: 155-175.

Concise review of various perspectives that have been used to understand poverty, including behavioral, structural, and political theories.

Desmond, Matthew. 2023. *Poverty, by America*. New York: Crown.

Argues that American poverty exists because it benefits the affluent. An example of a functional argument that has been utilized in sociology over the decades.

Rank, Mark Robert. 2023. *The Poverty Paradox: Understanding Economic Hardship Amid American Prosperity: A Structural Vulnerability Approach*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Develops an approach for understanding poverty known as structural vulnerability.

Rank, Mark R. 2011. "Rethinking American Poverty." *Contexts* 10: 16-21.

Accessible short article presenting the musical chairs analogy as a tool for understanding poverty.

Wright, Eric Olin. 1994. "A Class Analysis of Poverty." In *Interrogating Inequality: Essays on Class Analysis, Socialism and Marxism*, Eric Olin Wright, pp. 32-50. London: Verso.

Argues for the importance of a class analysis in understanding poverty, that is, there are specific groups of privilege that have a strong material interest in maintaining poverty.

Websites:

Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality. 2021. <https://inequality.stanford.edu/>

Website that provides many resources dealing with the causes of poverty and inequality.

Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin. 2021. <https://www.irp.wisc.edu/>

Website that contains a variety of research focusing on poverty and inequality.

POVERTY AND DECISION-MAKING

Books and Articles:

Brady, David, Ryan M. Finnegan, and Sabine Hübgen. 2017. “Rethinking the Risks of Poverty: A Framework for Analyzing Prevalences and Penalties.” *American Journal of Sociology* 123: 740-786.

In this article, the authors analyze the prevalence of single motherhood, young headship, unemployment, and low educational attainment across wealthy countries. They confirm that the U.S. is actually below-average on these characteristics compared to other wealthy countries, supporting the notion that they are a poor explanation for high poverty in the U.S.—rather, it is the way countries penalize these characteristics that really matters for poverty.

Edin, Kathryn, Maria J. Kefalas, and Joanna Reed. 2004. “A Peek inside the Black Box: What Marriage Means for Poor Unmarried Parents.” *Journal of Marriage and Family* 66: 1007-1014.

Provides a very important qualitative exploration of the choices available to poor American parents, and the crucial ways in which their precarity impacts their decisions about marriage.

Maldonado, Laurie C., and Rense Nieuwenhuis. 2015. “Single-Parent Family Poverty in 24 OECD Countries: A Focus on Market and Redistribution Strategies.” (<https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/w9htc/>).

An excellent analysis of pre- and post-tax/transfer single-parent poverty rates among wealthy countries. It demonstrates that while pre-tax/transfer poverty may be somewhat unavoidable, even in wealthy countries, post-tax/transfer poverty can be quite low if governments commit themselves to achieving this through effective policy.

Schilback, Frank, Heather Schofield, and Dendhil Mullainathan. 2016. “The Psychological Lives of the Poor.” *American Economic Review* 106: 435-440.

Discusses the idea of poverty limiting an individual’s ability to use what the authors refer to as bandwidth. The result is impaired decision-making.

Western, Bruce, and Becky Petit. 2010. "Incarceration & Social Inequality." *Daedalus* 139: 8-19.

The authors provide an excellent explanation of the connection between race, education, and incarceration rates in the U.S., including the way that this relationship has changed over time.

Media:

The Line. 2012. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zZxjb4gB93A>

Documentary film that explores the human dimensions of poverty, including the fact that decision making is much more constrained and difficult for those in poverty.

HISTORICAL PATTERNS OF PREVENTING POVERTY

Books and Articles:

Alesina, Alberto and Edward L. Glaeser. 2004. *Fighting Poverty in the US and Europe: A World of Difference*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Comparison of the differing approaches taken in the United States and Europe to addressing poverty. Details why such differences exist, and what the consequences are.

Bailey, Martha J. and Sheldon Danziger (eds.). 2013. *Legacies of the War on Poverty*. New York: Russell Sage Publications.

Edited book providing a detailed examination of both the successes and failures of the War on Poverty.

Haveman, Robert, Rebecca Blank, Timothy Smeeding, and G. Wallace. 2015. "The War on Poverty: Measurement, Trends, and Policy." *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 34: 593-638.

Examines the impact of antipoverty programs over a 50 year period. Demonstrates that such programs have reduced poverty, particularly for the elderly, disabled, and Blacks.

O'Connor, Alice. 2001. *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Argues that poverty research over the past 100 years in the United States has shifted from an understanding of the structural causes of poverty to an over emphasis upon individual behavior and personal characteristics as the reasons for poverty.

U.S. Census Bureau. 2019. "The Supplemental Poverty Measure: 2018." P60-268. Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Provides an analysis of how much poverty is reduced as a result of various government programs such as Social Security or the Earned Income Tax Credit.

Media:

Yes! Solutions Journalism. 2014. "Poverty is Not Inevitable: What We Can Do Now to Turn Things Around."

Article discussing many ways in which to reduce poverty.

CONDITIONS OF POVERTY

Books and Articles:

Brady, David. 2009. *Rich Democracies, Poor People: How Politics Explain Poverty*. New York: Oxford University Press.

The author demonstrates that the extent of poverty across countries is largely the result of variations in social policies and programs. Countries with lower rates of poverty do so through a more proactive social welfare state.

Desmond, Matthew. 2016. *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*. New York: Penguin Random House.

Pulitzer Prize winning book that follows eight families in Milwaukee struggling to survive in poverty and maintain their homes.

Duina, Francesco. 2018. *Broke and Patriotic: Why Poor Americans Love Their Country*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Explores the puzzle of why those in poverty display high levels of patriotism. In-depth interviews reveal that those in poverty reflect mainstream values.

Kenworthy, Lane. 2020. *Social Democratic Capitalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Examines the impact of the social welfare state upon a variety of outcome measures including poverty and inequality.

Morduch, Jonathan and Rachel Schneider. 2017. *The Financial Diaries: How American Families Cope in a World of Uncertainty*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Innovative study that follows 235 low- and middle-income families through their financial diaries over the course of a year.

Website:

Glasmeyer, Amy K. "MIT Living Wage Calculator" website. 2021. <http://livingwage.mit.edu/>

Groundbreaking website that allows users to estimate how much income is needed in order to achieve a living wage across all regions of the United States. Analysis can be broken down to the state, county, and metropolitan level.

Media:

BBC. 2012. *Poor America*. Panorama Documentary.

Short documentary produced by the BBC looking at the dire circumstance of poverty in America.

ECONOMIC COST OF POVERTY

Books and Articles:

Evans, Gary W. 2004. "The Environment of Childhood Poverty." *American Psychologist* 59: 77-92.

A thorough and succinct review of the various environmental inequities experienced by children in poverty. These include family unrest, air and water pollution, neighborhood violence, and inadequate schools.

Giannarelli, Linda, Kye Lippold, Sarah Minton and Laura Wheaton. 2015. "Reducing Child Poverty in the US: Costs and Impacts of Policies Proposed by the Children's Defense Fund." Urban Institute Research Report, January 2015.

Analyzes the cost of reducing childhood poverty through various social policies proposed by the Children's Defense Fund. Concludes that childhood poverty could be reduced by approximately 60 percent at an overall federal cost of 77 billion dollars.

Holzer, Harry J., Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach, Greg J. Duncan and Jens Ludwig. 2008. "The Economic Costs of Childhood Poverty in the United States." *Journal of Children and Poverty* 14: 41-61.

The authors estimate that the overall annual cost of childhood poverty in the United States is approximately 500 billion dollars, or nearly 4 percent of GDP. This is the result of poverty resulting in reduced worker productivity, greater health care expenditures, and higher rates of crime.

Madrick, Jeff. 2020. *Invisible Americans: The Tragic Cost of Child Poverty*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Examines the various costs of childhood poverty. Argues for a universal cash allowance as an effective way of reducing poverty.

McLaughlin, Michael and Mark R. Rank. 2018. "Estimating the Economic Cost of Childhood Poverty in the United States." *Social Work Research* 42: 73-82.

Calculates the overall economic cost of childhood poverty in the United States. Various costs are calculated including lower economic productivity, criminal justice costs, and increased health care expenditures.

Media:

Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick? California Newsreel. 2008.

Seven part series that explores the negative health impacts of inequality and poverty upon individuals, families, and communities.

POVERTY AS INJUSTICE

Books and Articles:

Desmond, Matthew and Bruce Western. 2018. "Poverty in America: New Directions and Debates," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 44: 305-318.

Reviews the field of poverty studies, with a section discussing the relationship between poverty and justice.

Gans, Herbert J. 1995. *The War Against the Poor: The Underclass and Antipoverty Policy*. New York: Basic Books.

Explores the various reasons behind why the myth of the undeserving poor persists.

Heclo, Hugh H. 1997. "Values Underpinning Poverty Programs for Children." 1997. *The Future of Children* 7:141-148.

Examines the public attitudes toward children, poverty, and government. Argues that Americans believe helping children in economic need is a top policy priority, but that there is also a strong emphasis placed on the importance of parents fulfilling their responsibility to their children through hard work and effort.

Katz, Michael B. 2013. *The Undeserving Poor: America's Enduring Confrontation with Poverty*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Ground breaking book exploring the dynamic of the undeserving versus the deserving poor across American history.

National Conference of Catholic Bishops. 1986. *Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy*. Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference.

Official statement by the Catholic Church regarding the moral imperative to address issues of poverty and economic justice. Combines social science research with theological understandings.

Rank, Mark R. 2014. "Why Poverty and Inequality Undermine Justice in America." In *Routledge International Handbook of Social Justice*, Michael Reisch (ed.), pp. 436-447. New York: Routledge Press.

Analysis of how justice is defined in American society, and why poverty and inequality undermine this conception of justice.

Sunstein, Cass R. 2004. *The Second Bill of Rights: FDR's Unfinished Revolution and Why We Need It More Than Ever*. New York: Basic Books.

Examines and analyzes President Roosevelt's introduction of a second bill of rights in his State of the Union address in 1944. Introduced the idea that freedom from want should be considered a basic human right. Although the second bill of rights was never instituted in the United States, it had a major influence on the development of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, finalized in 1948.

Media:

Frontline. 2017. *Poor Kids*.

Documentary film examining hunger among America's children. In-depth exploration of the struggles of several children in poverty.

Dan Ariely TED Talk. 2015.

Psychologist Dan Ariely provides insights into the psychological perceptions of inequality.

THE LIMITED WELFARE STATE

Books and Articles:

Edin, Kathryn J., and H. Luke Shaefer. 2016. *\$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America*. New York, NY: First Mariner Books.

This award winning book powerfully documents the growing number of U.S. families who live on less than \$2.00 a day in four sites across the United States: Chicago, Illinois; Cleveland, Ohio, Johnson City, Tennessee; and rural towns in the Mississippi Delta. Weaving together interviews with poor families and larger demographic trends (e.g., wage erosion, weak safety net programs), the authors powerfully show how low-income individuals and families struggle to make ends meet.

Howard, Christopher. 1999. *The Hidden Welfare State: Tax Expenditures and Social Policy in the United States*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Classic analysis of the range of tax expenditures and benefits that largely aid the middle and upper classes.

Mettler, Suzanne. 2018. *The Government-Citizen Disconnect*. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

This book examines Americans' complex relationship with the federal government. Although many U.S. residents benefit from social programs, there is also deep suspicion of and dislike for the federal government. In this compelling book, Mettler explores the consequences of these paradoxical beliefs.

Prasad, Monica. 2018. *Starving the Beast: Ronald Reagan and the Tax Cut Revolution*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Provides a historical analysis behind the conservative emphasis upon tax cuts and a minimal welfare state.

Soss, Joe, Richard C. Fording, and Sanford F. Schram. 2011. *Disciplining the Poor: Neoliberal Paternalism and the Persistent Power of Race*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago.

This insightful book examines the functions of anti-poverty programs, arguing that "poverty governance" is about controlling and disciplining people experiencing poverty rather than ending poverty, per se. Throughout their analysis, they consider the impact of race on U.S. welfare policies.

Website:

OECD Data website. 2021. <https://data.oecd.org/inequality/poverty-gap.htm>.

Extremely valuable interactive website that allows users to examine how approximately 37 OECD countries differ with respect to various measures of poverty and inequality.

Media:

The Economist. 2019. "Why Is There Still Poverty in America?"

Short video that explores poverty in the U.S. and the lack of a strong safety net.

LIVING ON WELFARE

Books and Articles:

DeParle, Jason. 2004. *American Dream: Three Women, Ten Kids, and a Nation's Drive to End Welfare*. New York: Viking.

Journalistic accounting of three women, their family history, and their encounters with the welfare system and the changes resulting from the 1996 passage of welfare reform.

Hays, Sharon. 2003. *Flat Broke with Children: Women in the Age of Welfare Reform*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Qualitative analysis that examines how welfare recipients have fared following the passage of welfare reform changes in 1996.

Levin, Josh. 2019. *The Queen: The Forgotten Life Behind an American Myth*. New York: Little, Brown and Company.

Explores the real life of Linda Taylor who came to represent the epitome of the stereotypical welfare queen.

Mofitt, Robert A. 2015. "The Deserving Poor, the Family, and the US Welfare System." *Demography* 52: 729-749,

Examines what has happened since the 1960s to welfare spending. Argues that it has shifted from single parent families with children to the elderly and those with disabilities.

Rank, Mark Robert. 1994. *Living on the Edge: The Realities of Welfare in America*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Quantitative and qualitative analysis of various aspects of living on welfare. Argues that welfare recipients largely reflect mainstream American attitudes and values, and that recipients are often receiving welfare on a short term basis as a result of job loss, family disruption, or medical problems.

Media:

DW Documentary. 2019. "How Poor People Survive in the USA."

German public broadcast documentary on the struggles of trying to survive in poverty in the United States. Illustrates how difficult it is to get by on the safety net.

REDUCING POVERTY THROUGH EFFECTIVE SOCIAL PROGRAMS

Books and Articles:

Abramsky, Sasha. 2013. *The American Way of Poverty: How the Other Half Still Lives*. New York: Nation Books.

Intended as a 50 year follow-up to Michael Harrington's classic book, *The Other America*. Looks at contemporary poverty from the perspective of injustice rather than individual blame. Second half of book provides a range of policy strategies that can reduce poverty.

Eppard, Lawrence M., Noam Chomsky, Mark Robert Rank, and David Brady. 2017. "On Culture, Politics, and Poverty." *Contexts* 16: 8-11.

In this article, readers are treated to an engaging conversation between prominent social thinkers about the political and cultural forces responsible for the significant variation in economic deprivation across wealthy countries.

Kenworthy, Lane. 2014. *Social Democratic America*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Argues for a much more robust safety net and social programs than is currently found in the United States. Uses comparative data to make the case that such policies can be effective in reducing poverty.

Lein, Laura, Sandra K. Danziger, H. Luke Shaefer, and Amanda Tillotson. 2016. "Social Policy, Transfers, Programs, and Assistance." In *The Oxford Handbook of the Social Science of Poverty*, David Brady and Linda M. Burton (eds.), pp. 733-750. New York: Oxford University Press.

Reviews the key features of cash transfer programs, public provision on child and medical care, and public housing programs.

Website:

Luxembourg Income Study Homepage. 2023. <https://www.lisdatacenter.org/>

Contains a variety of working papers addressing the impact that government programs have in reducing poverty across a wide range of OECD countries.

EXTENT OF UPWARD MOBILITY

Books and Articles:

Chetty, Raj, David Grusky, Maximillian Hell, Nathaniel Hendren, Robert Manduca and Jimmy Narang. 2017. “The Fading American Dream: Trends in Absolute Income Mobility Since 1940.” *Science* 356: 398-406.

Groundbreaking article that empirically demonstrates with big data the difficulties of more recent birth cohorts to attain an income greater than their parents.

Connoly, Marie, Miles Corak and Catherine Haeck. 2019. “Intergenerational Mobility Between and Within Canada and the United States.” National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper Series, Working Paper 25735.

Compares Canada with the United States in terms of the amount and patterns of intergenerational income mobility.

DiPrete, Thomas A. 2020. “The Impact of Inequality on Intergenerational Mobility.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 46: 1-29.

Examines the impact that economic inequality has upon both relative and absolute intergenerational mobility.

Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis and the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System. 2017. *Economic Mobility: Research and Ideas on Strengthening Families, Communities, and the Economy*. St. Louis: Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.

Edited book exploring various aspects of inequality and economic mobility in the United States. Includes chapters on income, wealth, and educational mobility.

Rank, Mark R. 2020. "Reducing Cumulative Inequality." In *Toward a Livable Life: A 21st Century Agenda for Social Work*, Mark Robert Rank (ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

Details the process of cumulative advantage and disadvantage across the life course. Author argues that this process undermines the core American value of equality of opportunity.

Rank, Mark Robert, Thomas A. Hirschl and Kirk A. Foster. 2014. *Chasing the American Dream: Understanding What Shapes Our Fortunes*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Looks at what is meant by the American Dream, the pathways taken to achieve it, the barriers that lie in the way, and what can be done to reshape American society such that everyone is able to live a fulfilling life.

Reeves, Richard V. 2017. *Dream Hoarders: How the American Upper Middle Class is Leaving Everyone Else in the Dust, Why that is a Problem, and What to do About It*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

Argues that the top 20 percent of the income distribution has seen virtually all of the economic gains over the past 30 years, and that as a result, America has become much more stratified by class.

Website:

Opportunity Atlas website. 2021. <https://www.opportunityatlas.org/>

Interactive website that allows users to examine how much intergenerational economic mobility exists at the Census tract level. Looks at the impact of parents' socioeconomic status, the neighborhood one was raised in, race, and gender upon children's earnings as adults.

LACK OF EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

Books and Articles:

Bullock, Heather. 2013. *Women and Poverty: Psychology, Public Policy, and Social Justice*. Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell.

Bullock's interdisciplinary analysis explores the social and structural factors that contribute to and legitimize inequalities, with a specific focus on women's poverty, as well as possible policy solutions.

Domina, Thurston, Andrew Penner, and Emily Penner. 2017. "Categorical Inequality: Schools as Sorting Machines." *Annual Review of Sociology* 43: 311-330.

Reviews the research demonstrating that schools sort students into unequal categories, which then result in later life inequalities.

McNamee, Stephen J. 2018. *The Meritocracy Myth*. 4th ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Provides an excellent overview of the problems with meritocratic beliefs. McNamee explores the equally-important non-merit factors that help to transmit social inequality across generations, including parental resources (economic, cultural, and social), education, racism and sexism, and just plain luck, among others.

Putnam, Robert D. 2015. *Our Kids: The American Dream in Crisis*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Putnam explores the growing opportunity gap between American children from different social class backgrounds in our age of inequality, and the impact that this is having on the declining availability of the American Dream.

Smiley, Tavis, and Cornel West. 2012. *The Rich and the Rest of Us: A Poverty Manifesto*. New York: SmileyBooks.

Smiley and West argue that the time has come to address the civil rights struggle of this century—growing inequality and dwindling opportunity in the U.S. The authors argue that anything less than an approach which focuses on systemic causes and solutions will be inadequate.

Stiglitz, Joseph E. 2015. *The Great Divide: Unequal Societies and What We Can Do About Them*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

In this book, Stiglitz explains that we do not need to be defeatist in the face of growing inequality and declining opportunity. Better policies can indeed restore the American Dream for millions and produce a healthier economy, more egalitarian society, and fairer democracy.

Websites:

Income Calculator. 2018. <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/09/06/are-you-in-the-american-middle-class/>

This calculator allows users to identify which income tier they are in, compared to both the people in their own metropolitan area, as well as to the entire U.S. population. Additionally, it allows users to compare themselves to people who are similar to them in terms of age, education, marital status, and race/ethnicity.

Life Expectancy Map. 2018. <https://qz.com/1462111/map-what-story-does-your-neighborhoods-life-expectancy-tell/>

This interactive map from Quartz, utilizing Center for Disease Control (CDC) data, allows users to explore the manner in which life expectancy varies from neighborhood to neighborhood in the U.S. Additionally, users can compare a particular neighborhood's life expectancy to that of the county, state, and country.

EPA's Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool. 2023. <https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/>

This interactive tool from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) allows users to identify the degree of exposure to environmental burdens experienced by Americans living in different areas of the country. Additionally, this tool allows users to map demographic characteristics side-by-side with these burdens, clearly illustrating which social groups face the highest and lowest risks.

ECONOMIC INEQUALITY

Books and Articles:

Case, Anne and Angus Deaton. 2020. *Deaths of Despair and the Future of Capitalism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Looks at the relationship between the rise of deaths of despair over the past 20 years (suicide, drug overdose, and alcoholism) and the collapse of economic opportunities in the United States.

Chetty, Raj, Nathaniel Hendren, Patrick Kline, and Emmanuel Saez. 2014. “Where is the Land of Opportunity? The Geography of Intergenerational Mobility in the United States,” NBER Working Paper No. 19843. <https://www.nber.org/papers/w19843>.

Using administrative records of more than 40 million children and their parents, the authors were able to identify the crucial role that segregation, inequality, low school quality, low social capital, and family instability play in constraining upward mobility in many areas of the U.S. This is perhaps one of the most important studies of social inequality conducted in recent decades.

Corak, Miles. 2016. “Inequality from Generation to Generation: The United States in Comparison.” IZA Discussion Paper No. 9929. <http://ftp.iza.org/dp9929.pdf>.

In this paper, Corak compares intergenerational mobility in the U.S. to other wealthy countries, with a particular focus on Canada. Corak’s “Great Gatsby Curve” is included in this paper.

Daly, Martin. 2016. *Killing the Competition: Economic Inequality and Homicide*. (New York: Routledge).

This book explores the best predictor of homicide rates: income inequality. It also explores the likely cause of this relationship: the fact that growing inequality increases competitive interactions between men.

Wilkinson, Richard, and Kate Pickett. 2010. *The Spirit Level: Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger*. New York: Bloomsbury Press.

Wilkinson and Pickett demonstrate how a wide variety of social phenomena—including child well-being, imprisonment, mental health, obesity, social mobility, teenage birth rates, and trust—are strongly correlated with income inequality across countries. The book also goes beyond identifying the problems with income inequality, offering ways to promote more equal societies as well.

Website:

World Inequality Database. 2021. <https://wid.world/country/usa/>

This website is an invaluable tool allowing users to examine the changes over time in income and wealth inequality across a number of countries, as well as to compare inequality between countries.

Media:

Robert Reich. 2013. *Inequality for All*.

Documentary exploring the growing inequality in the U.S. and the negative impacts on the American economy, workforce, population, and democracy. Economist Robert Reich leads the way throughout, making the complex information assessable through his personable approach, humor, easy-to-understand explanations, and real-world examples.

Richard Wilkinson. 2011. “How Economic Inequality Harms Societies.” TED talk.

TED talk by epidemiologist Richard Wilkinson presenting data on how economic inequality detrimentally impacts societies.

WHY POVERTY PERSISTS

Piven, Frances Fox, and Lorraine C. Minnite. 2016. “Poor People’s Politics.” In *The Oxford Handbook of the Social Science of Poverty*, David Brady and Linda M. Burton (eds.), pp. 751-773. New York: Oxford University Press.

Discusses the role of political action by those in poverty to influence public policy.

Gans, Herbert. 2012. “The Benefits of Poverty.” *Challenge* 55:114-125.

Argues poverty exists because it serves a number of intended and unintended benefits for society as a whole, and particularly for those in the upper classes.

Mitchell, Lawrence E. 1998. *Stacked Deck: A Story of Selfishness in America*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Explores how individualism and selfishness results in the status quo of high poverty and inequality being maintained.

O’Conner, Alice. 2016. “Poverty Knowledge and the History of Poverty Research.” *The Oxford Handbook of the Social Science of Poverty*. Edited by David Brady and Linda M. Burton. New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 169-192.

Presents the case that poverty research in recent times has reinforced the overall mainstream ideology in America. The result has been a noticeable lack of challenge and confrontation to the status quo of widespread poverty.

Website:

Poverty Next Door. 2021. <https://blogs.msn.com/povertynextdoor/>
Project developed by Microsoft News and Spotlight on Poverty and Opportunity to confront the stereotypes and misconceptions surrounding who experiences poverty in the United States.

SOCIAL POLICY SOLUTIONS

Cancian, Maria and Daniel R. Meyer. 2018. “Reforming Policy for Single-Parent Families to Reduce Child Poverty.” *Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* 4: 91-112.

Argues for the importance of child support as a key strategy in reducing poverty among single-parent families. Proposes a revamping of the child support system, including a public guarantee of a minimum amount of support per child.

William A. Darity and A. Kirsten Mullen. 2020. *From Here to Equality: Reparations for Black Americans in the Twenty-First Century*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Focuses on the importance of economic reparations for U.S. descendants of slavery. Given the historical patterns of slavery, discrimination, and inequality, such a policy is essential for beginning to build the assets of Black Americans.

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2019. *A Roadmap to Reducing Child Poverty*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.

Looks at the linkages between child poverty and child well-being, demonstrating the significant negative effects. Develops a set of policy and program recommendations to cut child poverty in half within 10 years.

Rank, Mark Robert. 2020. *Toward a Livable Life: A 21st Century Agenda for Social Work*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Edited book that looks at a variety of challenges facing society in the future and details a range of solutions to these problems.

Rank, Mark Robert. 2021. *Confronting Poverty: Understanding Economic Hardship in the United States*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Explores the patterns, dynamics, and consequences of poverty, and details a variety of anti-poverty programs.

Schaefer, H. Luke, Sophie Collyer, Greg Duncan, Kathryn Edin, Irwin Garfinkel, David Harris, Timothy M. Smeeding, Jane Waldfogel, Christopher Wimer, Hirokazu Yoshikawa. 2018. "A Universal Child Allowance: A Plan to Reduce Poverty and Income Instability among Children in the United States." *The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* 4: 22-42.

Estimates that the introduction of a universal child allowance could reduce childhood poverty in the United States by approximately 40 percent.

Media:

Johnson, Sebastian. 2017. "The Case for Basic Income."

TEDx Talk on the idea behind a guaranteed income by Sebastian Johnson.