My list of ten top scholars in the fields related to childhood poverty, inequality, child development, and mental health:

E. Jane Costello of Duke University

Jeanne Brooks-Gunn of Columbia University

Timothy Smeeding of the University of Wisconsin at Madison

Frank F. Furstenberg of the University of Pennsylvania

Elijah Anderson of Yale University

Greg J. Duncan of the University of California at Irvine

Stephen Raudenbush of the University of Chicago

Robert J. Sampson of Harvard University

Felton Earls of Harvard University

Marc A. Zimmerman of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor

We are all part of larger social environments and social groups: families, neighborhoods, university campuses, cities, provinces, nations, and cultures. These social groups and environments influence us. We in turn influence these environments and groups.

In what ways are you being influenced by your neighborhood, your university campus?

In what ways are you influencing your neighborhood, your university campus?

In the United States, neighborhoods and communities are segregated by incomes and ethnicity. Inequality and differences between neighborhoods can be very significant. China was a very egalitarian society, but now income inequality in China is very significant. Is China also having neighborhood and community segregation, so that the Chinese with the most money live apart from the Chinese with the least money? **How are China and the United States different in the way neighborhoods show the inequality in the society?**

In America there is significant research on how neighborhoods influence young people. There is also significant research on how poverty influences young people. There is far less research on how people can improve their neighborhoods or end poverty. It is easier to study how things are. It is more difficult to study how we can change things or improve them. Do you agree? If so, **why is it more difficult to study how to change social environments?**

Does research on neighborhood and youth from America have any value for Chinese people who want to improve Chinese social life? What can the Chinese usefully learn from American research?

Neighborhood Influences on Positive Youth Development

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身心發育之四十項資產

Search 學院確認以下是幫助年輕人發展健康身心，愛護他人和承擔責任的建基石。

	類別	資產名稱及定義
外在資產	支援 系統	1. 家庭支援 – 家庭生活給與年輕人高層次的愛和支持。 2. 正向家庭溝通 – 年輕人與父母有正向的溝通，能主動向父母徵求意見和接受忠告。 3. 與其他長者建立良好關係 – 年輕人可從三位或以上的長者(非父母)獲得支援。 4. 關愛的鄰社 – 年輕人體驗到鄰居的關懷。 5. 友愛的學習環境 – 學校提供鼓勵及關愛的環境。 6. 父母參與學校事務 – 父母積極幫助年輕人成功地投入學校生活。
	被授權	7. 社區重視年輕人 – 年輕人覺察到社會人仕是重視他們的。 8. 以年輕人為資源 – 年輕人在社區裡被委以重任。 9. 服務他人 – 年輕人每星期參與社區服務一小時或以上。 10. 安全感 – 年輕人在家庭，學校和鄰社裡都感到安全。
	規範及 期望	11. 家庭規範 – 父母與年輕人定立清晰的規則及違規的後果，並監察其行蹤。 12. 學校規範 – 學校清楚地列出學生要遵守的規章和違規後果。 13. 鄰社規範 – 鄰居有責任監察年輕人在社區內的所作所為。 14. 成年人作模範 – 父母及其他成年人能以身作則、讓年輕人倣效正向和負責任的行為。 15. 良好的朋輩影響 – 年輕人的好朋友效法負責任的行為。 16. 高期望 – 父母和教師鼓勵年輕人凡事要盡己所能去做到好。
	善用 時間	17. 創意活動 – 年輕人每星期至少花三小時在音樂，戲劇，或其他藝術等活動。 18. 青年活動 – 年輕人每星期至少花三小時去參加體育，會社，學校或社區的群體活動。 19. 宗教社團 – 年輕人每星期至少花一小時參加宗教團體活動。 20. 家居時間 – 年輕人每星期與朋友外出 '遊蕩' 應少於兩晚。
內在資產	委身 學習	21. 求進取 – 年輕人力求學業有良好表現。 22. 積極投入學校 – 年輕人學習認真。 23. 家庭作業 – 年輕人於上課日每天至少用一小時做作業。 24. 學校的凝聚力 – 年輕人關心自己的學校。 25. 閱讀嗜好 – 年輕人每星期至少花三小時以閱讀為樂。
	正向的 價值觀	26. 愛護他人 – 年輕人以助人為本。 27. 平等和社會公義 – 年輕人以提倡平等，減少飢餓與貧困為己任。 28. 誠信 – 年輕人能持守個人的信念並在生活中表明出來。 29. 忠誠 – 年輕人 '即使在困難的情況下仍選擇說實話' 。 30. 責任感 – 年輕人接受及承擔個人的責任。 31. 節制 – 年輕人持守不酗酒，不濫用藥物及不濫交的信念。
	社交 功能	32. 計劃及決策能力 – 年輕人懂得如何預早計劃及作出明智抉擇。 33. 人際功能 – 年輕人具備同理心，靈敏度和交友的技巧。 34. 文化功能 – 年輕人對不同文化、種族和道德背景的人士有所認識，並能和他們安然共處。 35. 對抗力 – 年輕人能對抗負面朋輩壓力和應付危險的處境。 36. 和平化解紛爭 – 年輕人尋求非暴力的方法去化解紛爭。
	自我 肯定	37. 個人力量 – 年輕人感到自己有能力去控制 '發生在自己身上的事情' 。 38. 自尊 – 年輕人擁有高度的自尊。 39. 人生目標 – 年輕人意識到 '我的生命是有意義的' 。 40. 積極個人前途展望 – 年輕人對個人前途抱著樂觀的態度。

The American Social Welfare System
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Social Welfare System
Some aspects of it.
Poverty (reduce or eliminate it)
Employment (Create full employment. Support the unemployed)
Child Protection
Aging Services
Anti-Discrimination Work
Anti-Hunger Work (Food Security)
Crime Prevention / Offender Rehabilitation
Mental Health Services
Education (especially access to education for all)
Individual and family therapy / counseling
Disability Services
Health Care Services (especially access to services and quality of care issues)
Housing (eliminate homelessness and reduce housing insecurity)
Disaster Relief

In America, the largest social welfare policies are:

Social Security Old Age Pensions and Survivor Benefits:
54 million people receive (about 17.4% of all Americans)
Cost 4.47 trillion RMB (about 20% of Federal Government spending; 4.8% of GDP)

Medicare (health insurance for persons aged 65 and older):
39 million people receive (about 12.6% of all Americans)
Cost 2.8 trillion RMB (about 12.5% of Federal Government spending; 3% of GDP)

Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (health insurance for poor persons with children, poor children, and disabled persons):
60 million people receive (about 19% of all Americans)
Federal cost 1.8 trillion RMB (about 8% of Federal Government spending; 2% of GDP)
States share cost, and state spending on Medicaid and CHIP is about 1.4 trillion RMB

Food security policies, including the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP, or "Food Stamps"); School Lunches and Breakfasts; and the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program. (free meals, reduced price meals, money to use only for food):
50 million people receive (about 16% of all Americans)
Cost 595 billion RMB (about 2.7% of Federal Government spending; 0.6% of GDP)

Unemployment security policies, including Unemployment Insurance:
9.3 million people receive (about 3% of all Americans; about 6% of the labor force)
Cost 635 billion RMB (cost split between states and federal government); 0.7% of GDP)

The American economy is big. the GDP is about 93 trillion RMB.
The American Federal Government spends about 22 trillion RMB each year.
The Chinese economy is also big. The GDP in China is perhaps as high as 34 trillion RMB.

Poverty in America.   Causes.
Physical and mental health.
Disabilities and chronic health problems.
Loss of a job.
Divorce or separation.
Low skill levels and low education levels.
Distance from employment. Lack of access to jobs. Transportation problems.
Low ability or ambition.
Growing up in a poor family and a poor neighborhood.
Being exposed to violence, child abuse, neglect, drug addictions, and criminal behaviors.

Poverty in America.   Suggested Solutions.

Liberal and Radical suggestions:
Public pensions for persons who are unable to work. Disability pensions.
Public provision of good health care. Income support for persons with health problems.
Job training. Employment security services.
Public employment. Government jobs.
Government subsidies to encourage private industry to create more jobs.
Relationship training. Family therapy. Policies to encourage marriage.
Adult education. Better education system.
Counseling to help people with addictions or mental health problems.
Better public transportation. Assistance to move people to areas of high employment.
Income support for low-income workers.
Higher minimum wages.

Conservative and Libertarian suggestions:
Reduce welfare so that people will be forced to take jobs.
Reduce taxes and government spending so that capitalists will thrive and create more jobs.
Eliminate minimum wages so employers will hire more low-skilled workers.
Cut welfare so that people will be independent and rely on their own work to flourish.
Cut public programs so that private charities, religions, and civil society can take care of poverty.
Reduce regulations and rules so that private corporations and businesses will grow and flourish.
Allow free trade so that businesses will be competitive and efficient, and cheap goods will be imported, making cost-of-living expenses lower for everyone.

We can reduce poverty in two basic ways. All governments try to use both methods:

1. Create wealth so that there is less poverty.
2. Take some wealth from the wealthy and middle class, and redistribute it to the poor and working class.

In America, most people experience poverty in their lives.
Usually they experience poverty when they are children or when they are young adults.
Usually they are only poor for a few years, and then they aren't poor again.
Welfare helps people during a stage in their life when they are poor, but usually this is temporary help. The people rise out of poverty, and don't need much help any more.

A few people become poor and stay poor for most of their lives.
These people usually have health problems, disabilities, addictions, or mental health problems.
While their numbers are a small percentage of the population, some of these people need very costly help.

What American social welfare policies are very different from the Chinese systems for fighting poverty?

What do you hope Chinese social welfare policies might accomplish in the next ten years?