

# **Material Deprivation in Modern America: Looking Beyond the “Poverty Rate”**

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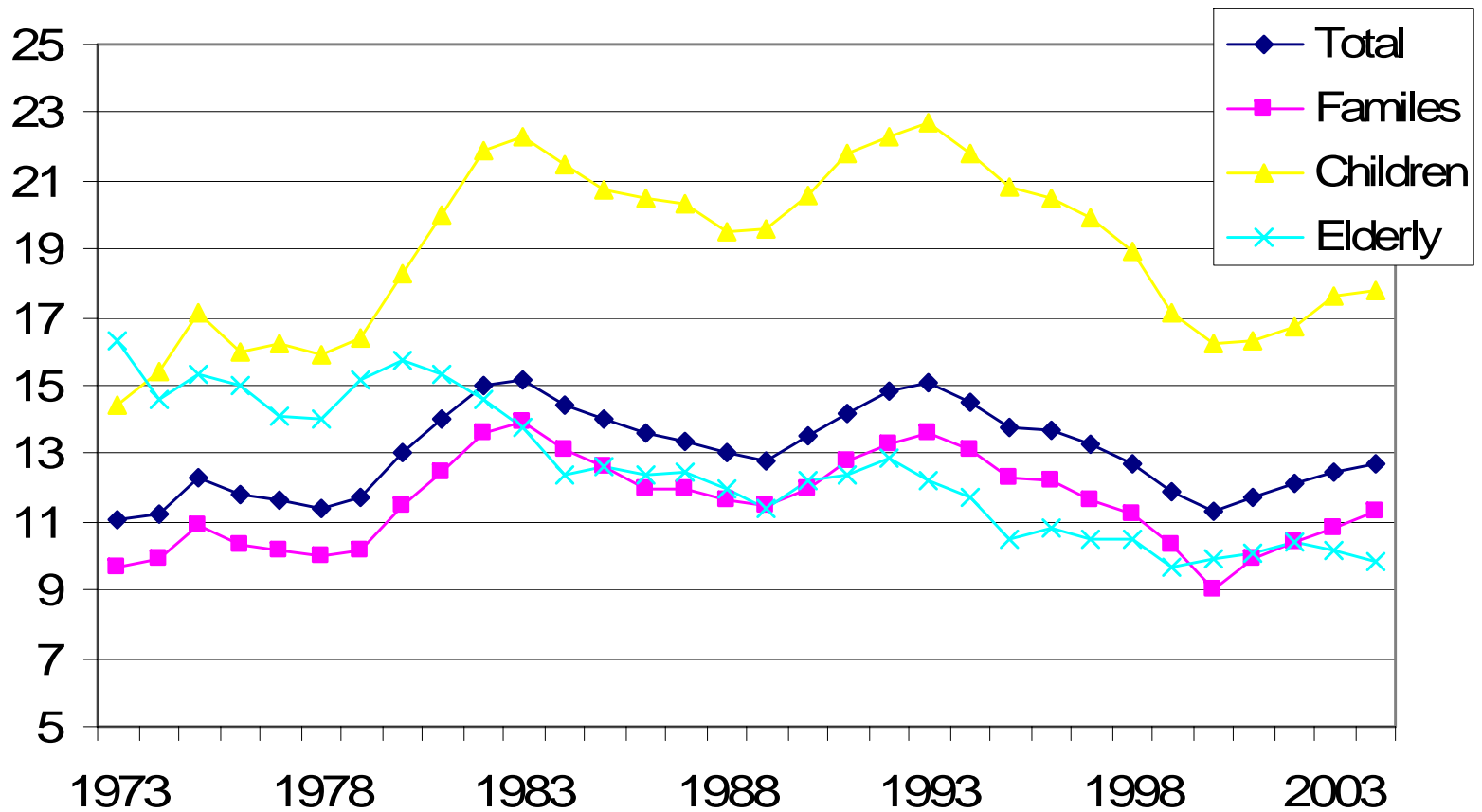
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Figure 1  
No Progress for Three Decades?  
U.S. Poverty Rate, 1973-2004



Source: U. S. Census Bureau Historical Poverty Tables, available online at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/poverty/histpov/hstpov2.html>. Accessed 10/18/05

# Table 1

## Poverty Rate and Other Possible Indicators of Progress against Poverty: 1973 vs. 2001

	Poverty Rate	Unemployment Rate (percent)	Per Capita Income (2002 \$)	Percent of people over age 25 with a high school degree	Total non-medical means-tested govt spending (mil 2002 \$)
1973	11.1	4.9	14,291	59.8	109,008
2001	11.7	4.7	22,970	84.1	230,595

**Sources: U.S. Census Bureau Historical Poverty Tables, Table 2.**

Available online at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/poverty/histpov/hstpov2.html> accessed 2/25/05.

**U.S. Census Bureau Historical Income Tables, Table P-1.**

Available online at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/income/histinc/incperdet.html> accessed 2/15/05.

**House Ways and Means Committee Prints: 108-6, 2004 Green Book, Appendix F and K.**

Available online at <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/wmprints/green/2004.html> accessed 2/15/05.

U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2003*. Mini Historical Statistics Table HS-22.

Available online at <http://www.census.gov/statab/hist/HS-22.pdf>, accessed 2/15/05

**Table 2**  
**Consumer Expenditure Patterns for Low Income Americans:**  
**1960/61-2002**

	<b>1960/61 (Families, Lowest Quartile)</b>	<b>1972-73 (Families, Lowest Quintile)</b>	<b>2002 (Consumer Units, Lowest Quintile)</b>
<b>Persons per unit</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.7</b>
<b>Reported Annual Current Consumption Expenditures (constant 2002 \$)</b>	<b>10,756</b>	<b>12,166</b>	<b>19,061</b>
<b>Reported Annual Pretax Income (constant 2002 \$)</b>	<b>9,613</b>	<b>8,719</b>	<b>8,316</b>
<b>Reported Consumption as a percent of reported income</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>229</b>

Note: Earlier surveys deflated by CPI-U-RS index, mean value of reported years used for 1960/61 and 1972/73.

Sources: *Handbook of Labor Statistics 1975*, loc. cit., Table 137; *Consumer Expenditures Survey: Interview Survey 1972-73*, BLS Bulletin 1997 (1978), Volume I, Table 10; "Consumer Expenditures in 2002," loc. cit.

**Table 3**  
**Selected Housing Characteristics:**  
**Poor and Other Households, USA: 1970-2001**

	<b>Non-Poor HHs 1970</b>	<b>Poor HHs 1970</b>	<b>All HHs 1980</b>	<b>Poor HHs 1980</b>	<b>Poor HHs 1990</b>	<b>Poor HHs 2001</b>
<b>Households with 1.00 + persons per room (percent)</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>26.9</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>6.0</b>
<b>Lacking some plumbing facilities (percent)</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>2.6</b>
<b>Home not heated (percent)</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>2.2</b>
<b>Mean heated square feet of home</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>1499</b>	<b>1095</b>	<b>1105</b>	<b>1227</b>
<b>Average square feet heated per household member</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>534</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>472</b>

Note: n/a = not available; "poor" = below official poverty threshold

Sources: Derived from *Census of Population 1970: Subject Reports, Low-Income Population Final Report PC (2)-91: Low-Income Population*, (Bureau of the Census, 1973), Table 36; *1980 Census of Housing: Volume 1: Characteristics of Housing Units HC 80-1a* (Bureau of the Census, 1983), Table 1. *Residential Energy Consumption Survey : Housing Characteristics: 1980 Edition* (Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration, 1982, Tables 9, 26; 1990 Edition (DOE, 1992), Tables 15; 2001 edition (DOE 2003) Table CEI-5.1a, CEI 5.2a, CE1-5.1u, CE1-5.2u, CE 2.3c; available electronically at <http://www.eia.doe.gov/emeu/recs/contents.html> ; *American Housing Survey of the United States* (Bureau of the Census), 2001 edition (2003), Tables 2-3, 2-4.

**Table 4**  
**Motor Vehicle Patterns for Low Income Americans,**  
**1972/73-2003 (percent)**

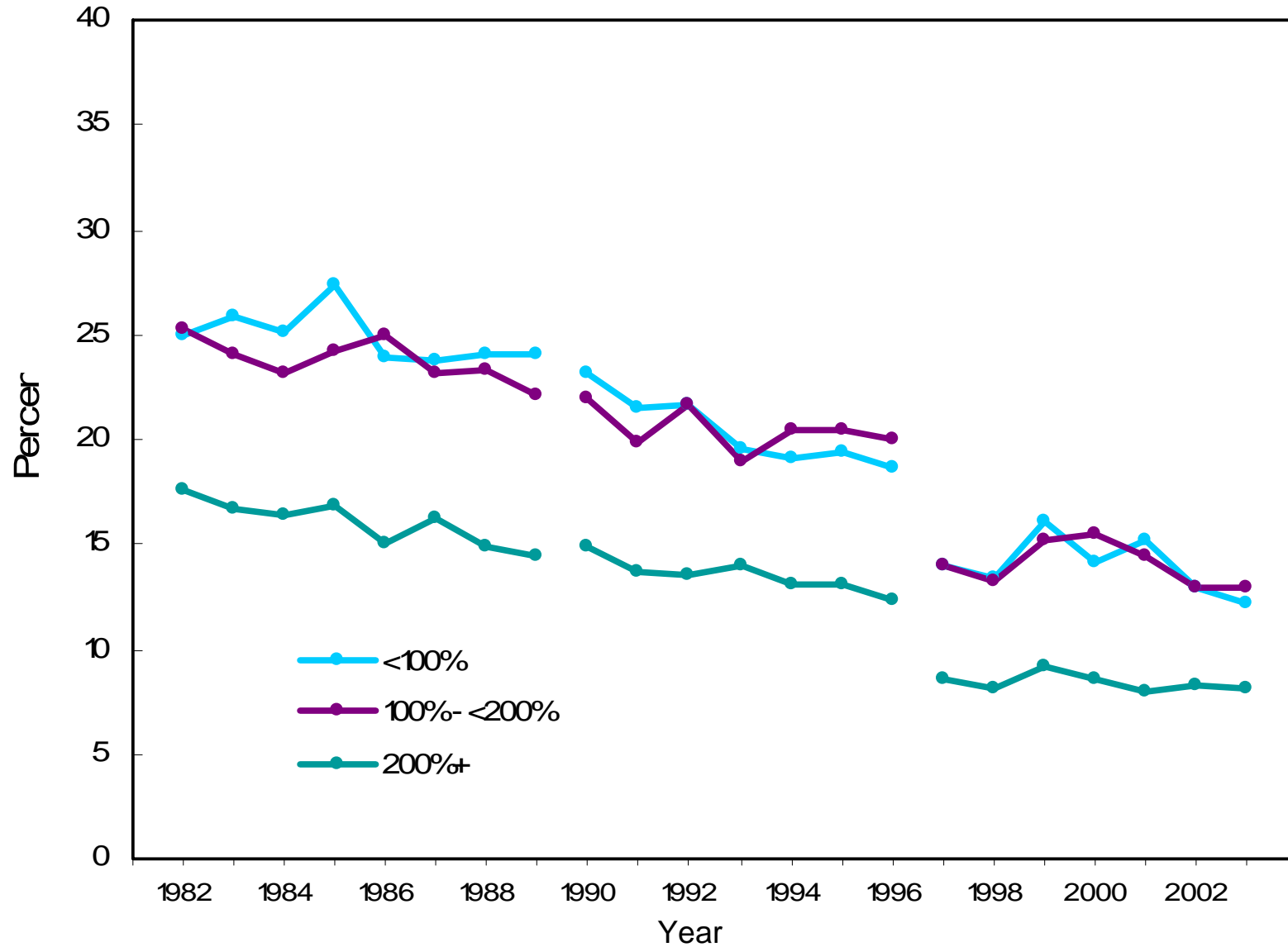
	1972/73 (lowest income quintile, families)	1985 (Poverty Households)	1989 (Poverty Households)	2003 (Poverty Households)
No Car	57.0	44.1	41.9	37.9
No Vehicle	n/a	39.8	36.8	26.6
One Car	n/a	45.0	46.9	48.0
2+ Cars	n/a	11.0	11.2	14.0

Memorandum item: Share of U.S. families owning one or more cars in 1960: 77%; share owning two or more cars: 15%

Note: n/a = not available

Sources: "Consumer Expenditure Survey 1972/73, *loc. cit.*, Volume I, Table 10; *American Housing Survey for the United States (Bureau of the Census)*: 1985 edition (1988), Table 2-7; 1989 edition (1991), Table 2-7; 2003 edition (2004) Table 2-7. *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970 (Bureau of the Census 1975)*, Vol. II, p. 717.

**Figure 2**  
**Percent of children under 18 years without a reported health care visit in the past year, by percent of poverty threshold**



Data Source: *National Health Interview Survey*