

#2 How we're priming some kids for college-and others for prison by Alice Goffman

Goffman talks about the neighborhoods some kids grow up in and the treatment they receive compared to others kids who grow up in higher class neighborhoods. This relates to the American Dream and how we're setting up the youth of America for their future, whether it is good or bad. Goffman spent time in a lower class neighborhood, where she counted a police encounter occurring every day with 5 exceptions for one year. In order to improve the American Dream and give hope to many families there must be a change in the treatment of these families. Most are living in poverty, unable to pay for many necessities, and the children growing up in these environments are being taught the wrong things, playing games of policemen being brutal to citizens, asking to do cavity searches, and searching for drugs. Even outside of the games, the kids are under serious pressure. As Goffman put it, "We're asking these kids to walk the thinnest possible line. To basically never do anything wrong."

In order to fix this issue, people need to focus on the treatment these kids are put under. Rather than punishment, criminal justice systems should put more attention to recovery and prevention. If we can focus on students and their abilities in the classrooms, and spend their resources on that, teenagers will become more successful. When we do that, the American Dream will be more accessible to these people. Children in these environments will grow up feeling less scared and pressured to do bad, they will succeed further in school because more opportunities will be open to them. If we want a better future for the kids in America, and a better future for America itself, we must focus on these problems. This way, people will grow up living their American dream of living without fear.