Briefs

HEALTH

Distressed Neighborhoods

CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN THE CITY

BY

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FCE

INTRODUCTION

In a recent KIDS COUNT report, published by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Population Reference Bureau, the Dallas-Fort Worth area ranked 66th out of 100 metropolitan areas in the percentage of children living in severely distressed neighborhoods. The purpose of this brief is to describe local conditions and the precarious situation of children and youth in the city.

METHOD

The method used in this analysis is comparable to that used in the KIDS COUNT report for ease of comparison.[1] Data from the 2000 U.S. Census were used to calculate rates of characteristics of distressed neighborhoods in census tracts in Dallas. Further calculations were made to determine the number and characteristics of the children growing up in these neighborhoods.

As shown by O'Hare and Mather[1], poverty rates alone are not a sufficient measure of neighborhood quality. Several neighborhood characteristics have been shown to correlate with child welfare and success.[2] The additional measures used to assess neighborhood quality were large numbers of families headed by a single female, high-school dropout rates, and a high proportion of unemployed males. The cut-off rates used in this paper were the same as those used in the KIDS COUNT paper[1] and were derived from the mean of all census tracts measured, plus one standard deviation, for data from 1990. The cut-off rate thus differs for each characteristic. A severely distressed neighborhood is defined as having rates of three or more of the four characteristics over the cut-off rate.

Maps were generated showing the distribution of rates across census tracts for each of the four characteristics. Census tracts depicted in green had rates below the cut-off, while all others had rates above the cut-off. A fifth map was generated showing the number of characteristics with rates above the cut-off experienced by each census tract.

In this map, red and orange census tracts represent severely distressed neighborhoods. Yellow tracts are described as being at risk; these tracts had two characteristics above the cut-off and were likely to have a third very close to the cut-off. All maps were generated by Sandi Cleveland, MPH.

RESULTS

Distressed Neighborhood Characteristics

Table 1 displays data regarding the rates of the four characteristics of distressed neighborhoods for the city of Dallas. A total of 90,632 Dallas children live in distressed neighborhoods; 25,042 of those live in severely distressed neighborhoods. While the percentage of children living in severely distressed neighborhoods in Dallas was slightly below the national average reported by KIDS COUNT[1], all but one of the individual characteristics were higher. Of particular concern was the very high percentage of Dallas children (42%) living in neighborhoods with a high school dropout rate above 23%. In contrast, the percentage of children living in neighborhoods with high rates of male unemployment was almost 10% below the national average. The KIDS COUNT report did not contain data regarding children in neighborhoods having less than three characteristics with rates above the cut-off.

Table 2 provides data on the 28 of 328 Dallas census tracts that could be classified as severely distressed. From these data, five census tracts could be identified that contained particularly high concentrations of children. Over 35% of children in severely distressed neighborhoods resided in

these five census tracts.

There were an additional 49 census tracts that would not be considered severely distressed, but that may have had sufficient rates of the characteristics for concern. These census tracts had rates of two characteristics above the cut-off and rates of other characteristics close to the cut-off. None of these "at risk" census tracts had above a 5% concentration of all children in "at risk" neighborhoods (not shown). These census tracts did, however, contain an additional 66,510 children.

Geographic Distribution of Severely Distressed Neighborhoods

Maps of census tract rates for the four characteristics were generated in order to visualize the geographic distribution of areas of concern. The maps are located at the end of this paper. Census tracts in green had rates below the cut-off, while all others had rates above.

The southern sector of the city had the largest concentration of census tracts with rates above the cut-off for poverty (Map 1), female-headed households (Map 2), and unemployed males (Map 4). There was a secondary concentration of poverty rates in the western part of the city (Map 1). The distribution of female-headed households was more diffuse across the city than the other two characteristics. The profile of high-school dropouts was quite different than that of the other three characteristics. Map 3 shows that a large portion of the city experienced dropout rates above the 23% cut-off value.

Map 5 depicts the number of characteristics of each census tract that are above the cut-off rate for each characteristic. Severely distressed neighborhoods were concentrated in the southern sector of the city. There was also a secondary concentration in the west. Neighborhoods at risk were scattered across the city but, combined with severely distressed neighborhoods, comprised a large block of census tracts in the southern sector.

Severely Distressed Neighborhoods and Race

There was an unequal distribution of racial and ethnic populations in severely distressed neighborhoods. As shown in Table 3, in 24 of 28 severely distressed neighborhoods, black individuals

	NUMBER OF CHILDREN	PERCENT OF CHILDREN	DIFFERENCE FROM NAT'L AVG
Population under age 18	391,760		391,760
Poverty rate in neighborhood is 27.4% or more	58,635	14.97	3.87
Percentage of families with related children headed by females is 31.1% or more	72,141	18.41	3.71
Percentage of high-school dropouts (ages 16-19) is 23% or more	185,720	47.41	37.31
Percentage of males aged 16-64 detached from the labor force is 34% or more	31,721	8.10	-9.7
Living in severely distressed neighborhoods (3 or 4 characteristics)	25,042	6.39	-1.7
Living in neighborhoods at risk (2 characteristics)	65,590	16.74	ND
Living in distressed neighborhoods (2-4 characteristics)	90,632	23.13	ND

TABLE 1 Number and Percent of Children Living in Census Tracts with Characteristics of Distressed Neighborhoods, 2000.

Source Calculated from 2000 U.S. Census data. National average from KIDS COUNT report[1]. ND=no data

CENSUS TRACT	POPULATION UNDER 18	PERCENT OF CHILDREN IN DISTRESSED NEIGHBORHOODS
16	499	1.99
27.01	1512	6.04
27.02	452	1.80
29	248	0.99
34	358	1.43
35	410	1.64
37	872	3.48
38	723	2.89
39.01	481	1.92
39.02	563	2.25
40	348	1.39
41	480	1.92
49	1157	4.62
86.04	880	3.51
87.01	1430	5.71
87.04	961	3.84
88.02	1645	6.57
89	731	2.92
93.04	2117	8.45
100	456	1.82
100.01	1152	4.60
102	1162	4.64
104	710	2.84
106.02	1171	4.68
114.02	150	0.60
115	2156	8.61
167.03	1074	4.29
169.01	1144	4.57
TOTAL	25042	

comprised more than 60% of the children living in such neighborhoods. In all but 12 census tracts, Hispanic children comprised more than 20% of the children living in distressed neighborhoods. Black and Hispanic children made up over 90% of children in distressed neighborhoods. In only two census tracts did white children comprise more than 10% of the population under 18 years of age.

Overall, a black child has a much higher chance of living in a severely distressed neighborhood than either a Hispanic or white child. Figure 1 shows that 20% of all black children in Dallas lived in severely distressed neighborhoods, more than 6 times the rate of Hispanic children, and over 20 times the rate of white children.

Severely Distressed Neighborhoods and Poverty

Living in a severely distressed neighborhoods was often compounded by impoverishment. Of the 79,045 Dallas children living in poverty, 15.3% of them resided in a severely distressed neighborhood. This rate is lower than the national average of 22.5%. However, the poverty rate of the 25,042 children living in severely distressed neighborhoods in Dallas was 51.5%. This rate is higher than the national rate of 46%.

The concentration of poverty in severely distressed neighborhoods was not evenly distributed among racial and ethnic populations. Black children comprise the bulk of children in severely distressed neighborhoods. Moreover, a large portion of poor black children live in these neighborhoods. More than one third of poor black children live in the 28 severely distressed neighborhoods of Dallas (Figure 2). In contrast, less than 5%

TABLE 2 Percent of Children Residing in Severely Distressed Neighborhoods in each Sensus Tract Classified as Severely Distressed, 2000.

Source Calculated from 2000 U.S. Census data.

CENSUS TRACT	POPULATION UNDER 18	CHILDREN LIVING IN DISTRESSED NEIGHBORHOODS					
		BLACK	%	HISPANIC	%	WHITE	%
16	499	355	71.1	104	20.8	30	6.0
27.01	1512	1433	94.8	74	4.9	4	0.3
27.02	452	420	92.9	23	5.1	2	0.4
29	248	229	92.3	18	7.3	6	2.4
34	358	281	78.5	66	18.4	9	2.5
35	410	379	92.4	9	2.2	9	2.2
37	872	827	94.8	37	4.2	4	0.5
38	723	703	97.2	19	2.6	3	0.4
39.01	481	441	91.7	37	7.7	3	0.6
39.02	563	450	79.9	109	19.4	9	1.6
40	348	284	81.6	54	15.5	9	2.6
41	480	327	68.1	151	31.5	0	0.0
49	1157	824	71.2	320	27.7	5	0.4
86.04	880	683	77.6	181	20.6	12	1.4
87.01	1430	1328	92.9	95	6.6	2	0.1
87.04	961	880	91.6	73	7.6	9	0.9
88.02	1645	1468	89.2	163	9.9	1	0.1
89	731	549	75.1	168	23.0	7	1.0
93.04	2117	1541	72.8	537	25.4	35	1.7
100	456	212	46.5	136	29.8	91	20.0
100.01	1152	540	46.9	604	52.4	13	1.1
102	1162	890	76.6	244	21.0	7	0.6
104	710	466	65.6	185	26.1	47	6.6
106.02	1171	190	16.2	874	74.6	27	2.3
114.02	150	122	81.3	27	18.0	0	0.0
115	2156	1605	74.4	589	27.3	11	0.5
167.03	1074	306	28.5	502	46.7	249	23.2
169.01	1144	1101	96.2	29	2.5	6	0.5
TOTAL	25042	18834	75.2	5428	21.7	610	2.4

of poor Hispanic and white children live in distressed neighborhoods. The concentration of poverty in distressed neighborhoods of Dallas was not as great as the national average, where 44.7% of impoverished black children and 22.9% of impoverished Hispanic children live in such conditions.

FIGURE 1 Percent of Children Living in Severely Distreesed Neighborhoods by Race/Ethnicity.
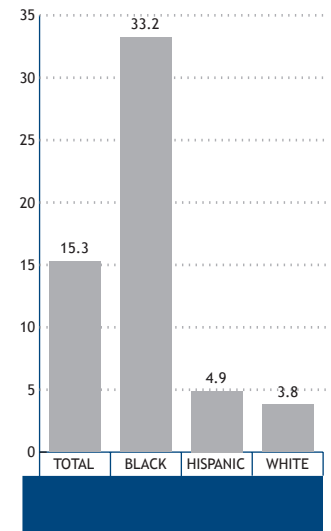
SOURCE Calculated using data from the 2000 U.S. Census. Does not inlcude individuals of multiple races

TABLE 3 Distribution of Children in Severely Distressed Neighborhoods by Race/Ethnicity, 2000.

SOURCE Calculated from 2000 U.S. Census data. White does not include Hispanic and individuals of multiple races not included.

CONCLUSIONS

These data demonstrate that a large portion of Dallas youth live in neighborhood conditions that put their futures in jeopardy. Children in severely distressed neighborhoods lack resources and role models during the critical formative years. These children are at risk for many negative conditions including violence, substance abuse, poor educational attainment, and slow transition to the work force.[3] These risks can be demonstrated by the high rates of sixteen to nineteen year olds who dropped out of high-school described in this study.

The concentration of poor black children in severely distressed neighborhoods is of considerable concern. This situation reflects a lack of integration into the larger society and implies that barriers to educational, political, and economic parity exist in Dallas. The existence of these barriers is emphasized by the geographic concentration of neighborhood distress characteristics in the southern sector of the city. Considerable effort to develop the economic, educational, and political strength of this area will be required to diminish the negative effects of living in distressed neighborhoods.

REFERENCES

1. William O'Hare and Mark Mather, (2003) "The Growing Number of Kids in Severely Distressed Neighborhoods: Evidence from the 2000 Census." A KIDS COUNT/PRB report. Annie E. Casey Foundation and Population Reference Bureau. Accessed online at www.kidscount.org on May 3, 2004.

2. Mincy, R.B., Sawhill, I.V., Wolf, D.A. (1990) The Underclass Definition and Measurement. *Science* 248, 450-453.

3. Susan E. Meyer and Christopher Jencks (1989) Growing Up in Poor Neighborhoods: How Much Does it Matter?" *Science* 243, 1441-1445

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Analyze Dallas welcomes comments and advice of data and report users. If you have suggestions or comments, please write:

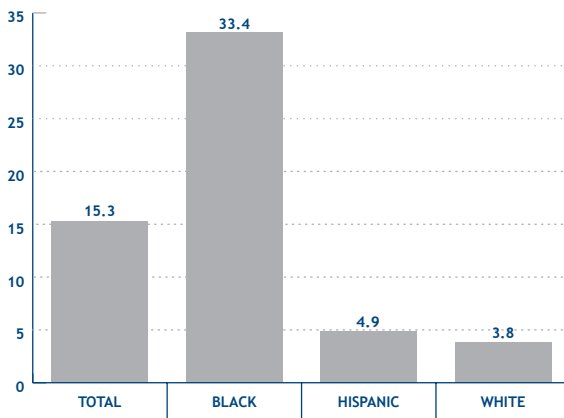Marcus Martin, PhD

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or send email to: mmartin@fce-dallas.org

FIGURE 2: Percent of Poor Children Living in Severely Distressed Neighborhoods by Race/Ethnicity, 2000
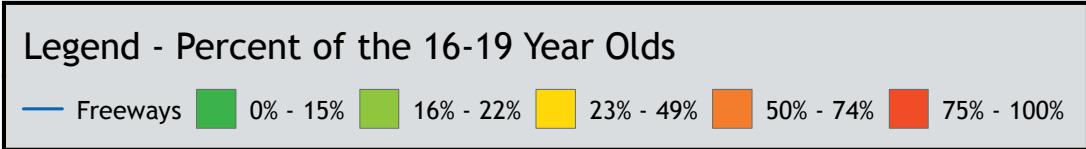

Source Calculated from data from the 2000 U.S. Census. Does not include individuals of mulitple races.

MAPS

Map 1 illustrates the distribution of poverty in Dallas. In this study the cut-off value for poverty is 26.01% of the population living in poverty. Census tracts in yellow, orange, and red have rates above the cut-off value. Clearly, the southern sector of the city has a large concentration of tracts exceeding the cut-off rate for poverty.

Map 1: Percent of Population in Poverty by Dallas Census Tracts, 2000

Legend - Percent of the Population in Poverty

— Freeway | 0%-16% | 16.01%-26% | 26.01%-49% | 49.01%-74% | 74.01%-100%

MAPS

Map 2 identifies census tracts where 35% or more of families are headed by a female, the cut-off value for this characteristic of distressed neighborhoods. These identified tracts are represented in yellow, orange, and red. Again, the southern sector of the city has the largest concentration of tracts exceeding the cut-off value for female heads of households.

Map 2: Percent of Families with Related Children Headed by a Female by Dallas Census Tracts, 2000

Legend - Percent of Families Headed by a Female

— Freeways | 0% - 15% | 16% - 36% | 37% - 49% | 50% - 74% | 75% - 100%

MAPS

A third characteristic used to identify distressed neighborhoods is the high-school dropout rate of sixteen to nineteen year olds. Map 3 demonstrates that a large portion of the city experienced dropout rates above the 23% cut-off value.
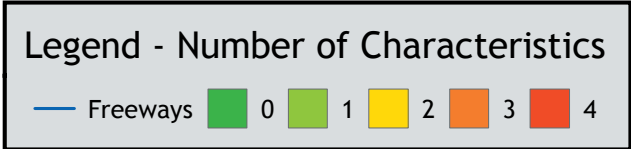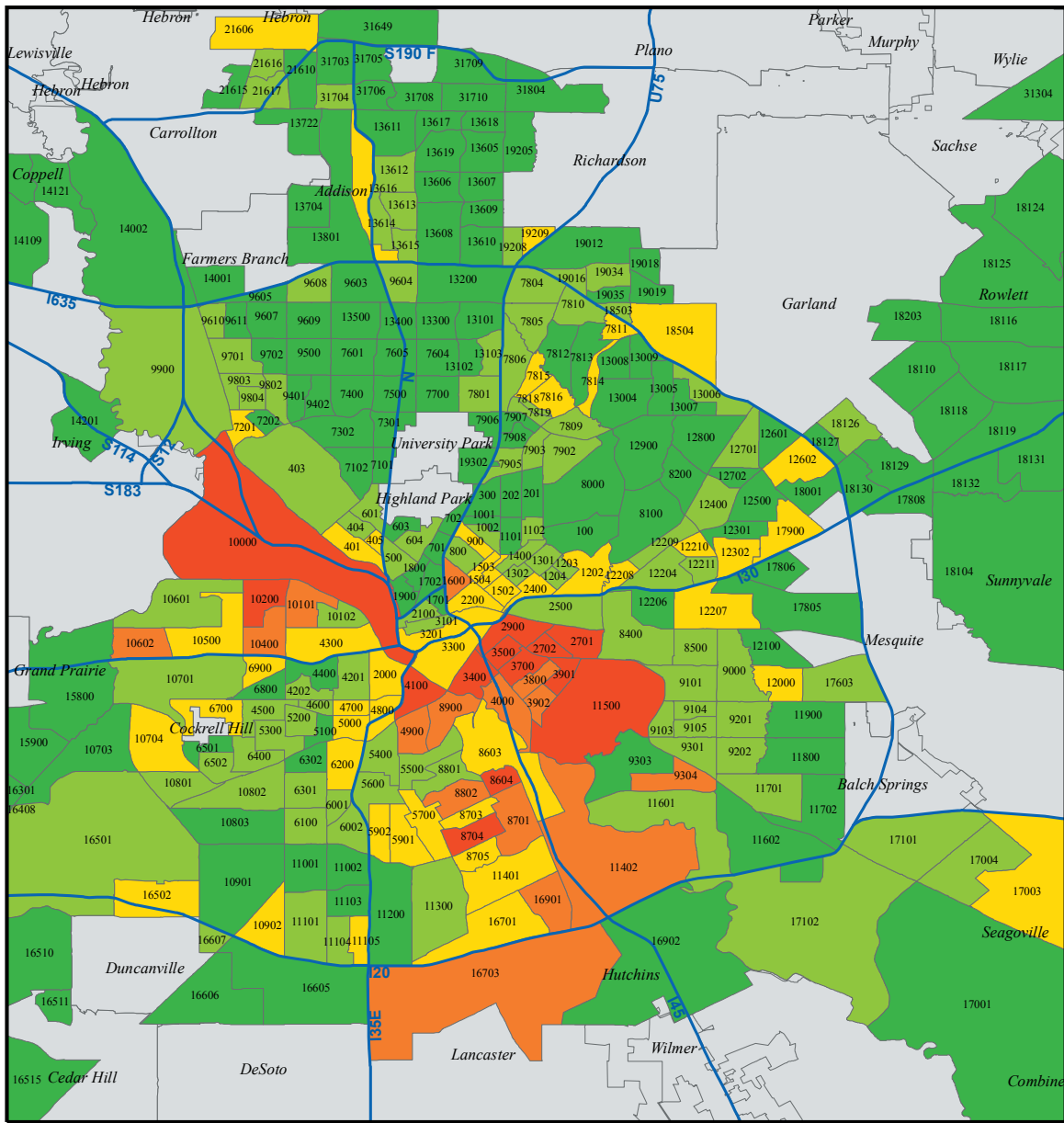
Map 3: Percent of Individuals Aged 16-19 who are High School Dropouts by Dallas Census Tracts, 2000

Legend - Percent of the 16-19 Year Olds

— Freeways   0% - 15%   16% - 22%   23% - 49%   50% - 74%   75% - 100%

MAPS

The fourth characteristic used in this study is the percentage of unemployed males of working age. The cut-off for this characteristic is 34% of males aged 16 to 64. Like other characteristics of distressed neighborhoods, tracts exceeding the cut-off percentage are concentrated in the southern sector of the city.

Map 4: Percent of Males Aged 16-64 Detached from the Labor Force by Dallas Census Tracts, 2000

Legend - Percent of Males Aged 16-64

— Freeways | 0% - 15% | 16% - 33% | 34% - 49% | 50% - 74% | 75% - 100%

MAPS

Map 5 depicts the number of characteristics of each census tract that are above the cut-off rates. Severely distressed neighborhoods are concentrated in the southern sector of the city. Neighborhoods at risk are scattered across the city but, combined with severely distressed neighborhoods, comprised a large block of tracts in the southern sector.

Map 5: Number of Distress Characteristics by Dallas Census Tracts, 2000

Legend - Number of Characteristics

— Freeways � 0 ▮ 1 ▮ 2 ▮ 3 ▮ 4

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Analyze Dallas seeks to democratize information by making it widely available to all citizens and making it understandable to non-researchers and non-statisticians.

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FCE, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, was founded in 1995 by J. McDonald "Don" Williams, Chairman Emeritus of the Trammell Crow Company. FCE is a catalyst for the revitalization of low-income neighborhoods in Dallas through the empowerment of individuals, community- and faith-based organizations and entire communities. FCE seeks to build bridges of opportunity, and to foster relationships where investments of money, time, people, and resources should be made.

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