



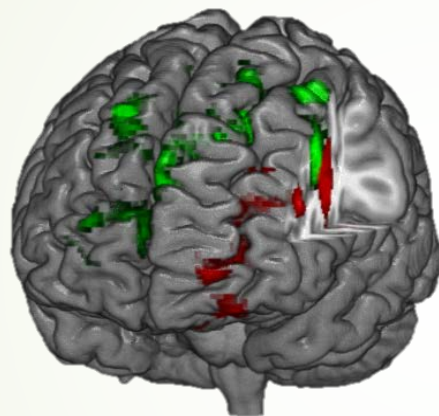
Inequality as Nuanced Processes: Exclusion, Trauma, and Social Capital

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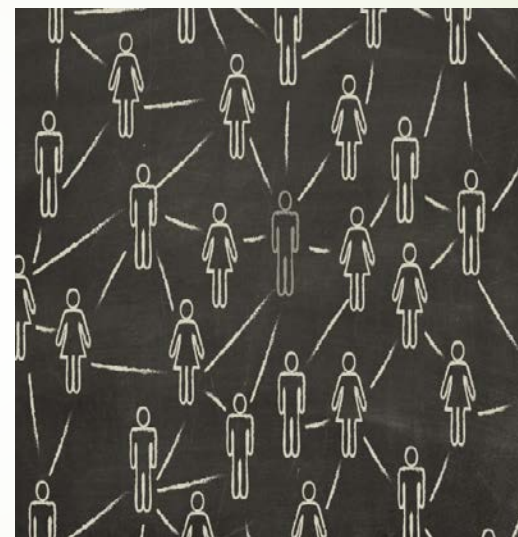
Goal - - to link brain responses related to trauma (often a consequence of inequality) to one's capacity to develop social capital and enhance upward mobility



**Low-Income Families
Inequality-Induced Trauma
Katsnelson (2015)**



**Self-discrepancy,
Emotion Regulation,
Brain Response Patterns
Higgins (1987)**



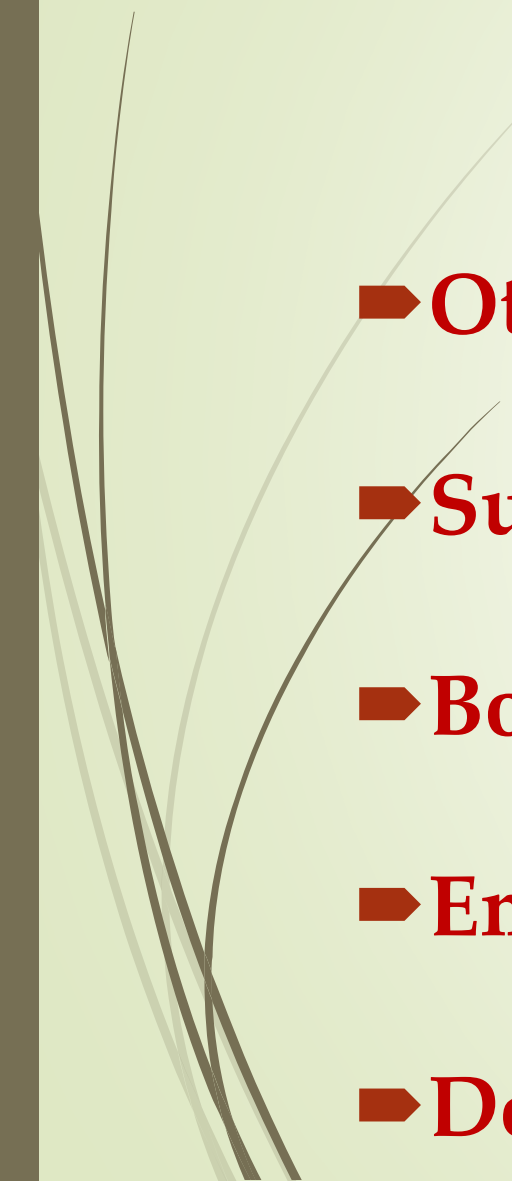
**Social Capital and
the Reproduction
Of Poverty
Burton and Welsh
(2016)**



**Socio-economic
Mobility**

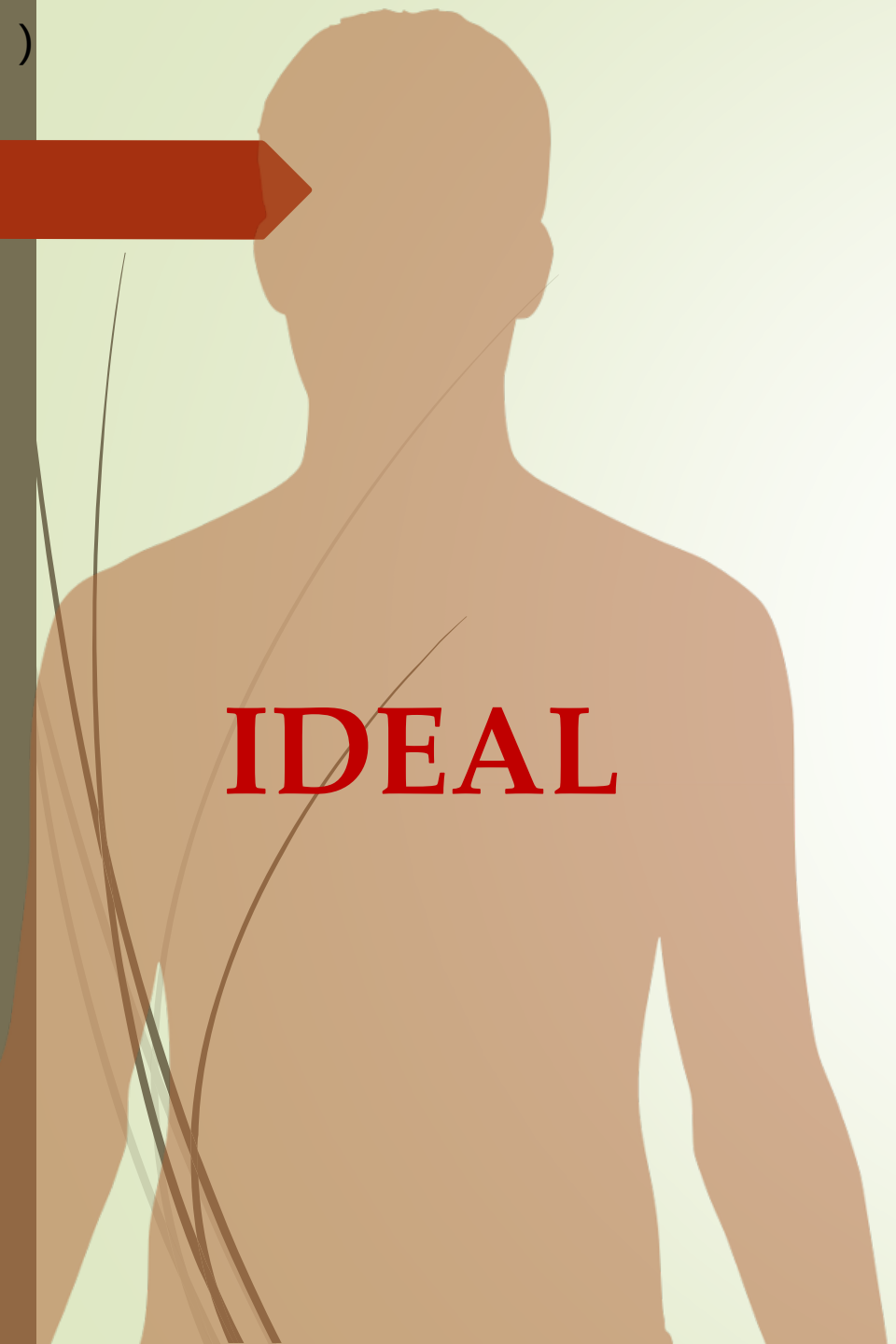


Generic Processes in the Reproduction of Inequality and Exclusion: Implications for Creating Social Capital

- ➡ **Othering: Oppressive, Implicit, Defensive**
 - ➡ **Subordinate Adaptation**
 - ➡ **Boundary Maintenance**
 - ➡ **Emotion Management**
 - ➡ **Dehumanization**
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Trauma, Persistent Poverty, and Inequality

- As a result of trauma (of which two sources include persistent poverty and other inequality experiences), four internal resources get knocked out of whack in families and individuals: (1) security from being with and connection to others; (2) ability to own feelings; (3) intellectual creativity; and (4) verbal fluency
- Derivatives: loneliness; numbness; ambiguous loss; brittleness; and silence

A silhouette of a person's head and shoulders in a light brown color. A thick red arrow points from the left edge of the frame towards the person's head. The word "IDEAL" is written in a bold, red, serif font across the person's back.

IDEAL

What kind of person would you ideally like to be?" Hopes, aspirations, achievements. Associated through socialization with reward, positive outcomes and making good things happen.



What kind of person do you
believe you ought to be?”

Responsibilities, obligations,
“should.” Associated with threat,
negative outcomes and keeping
bad things from happening.



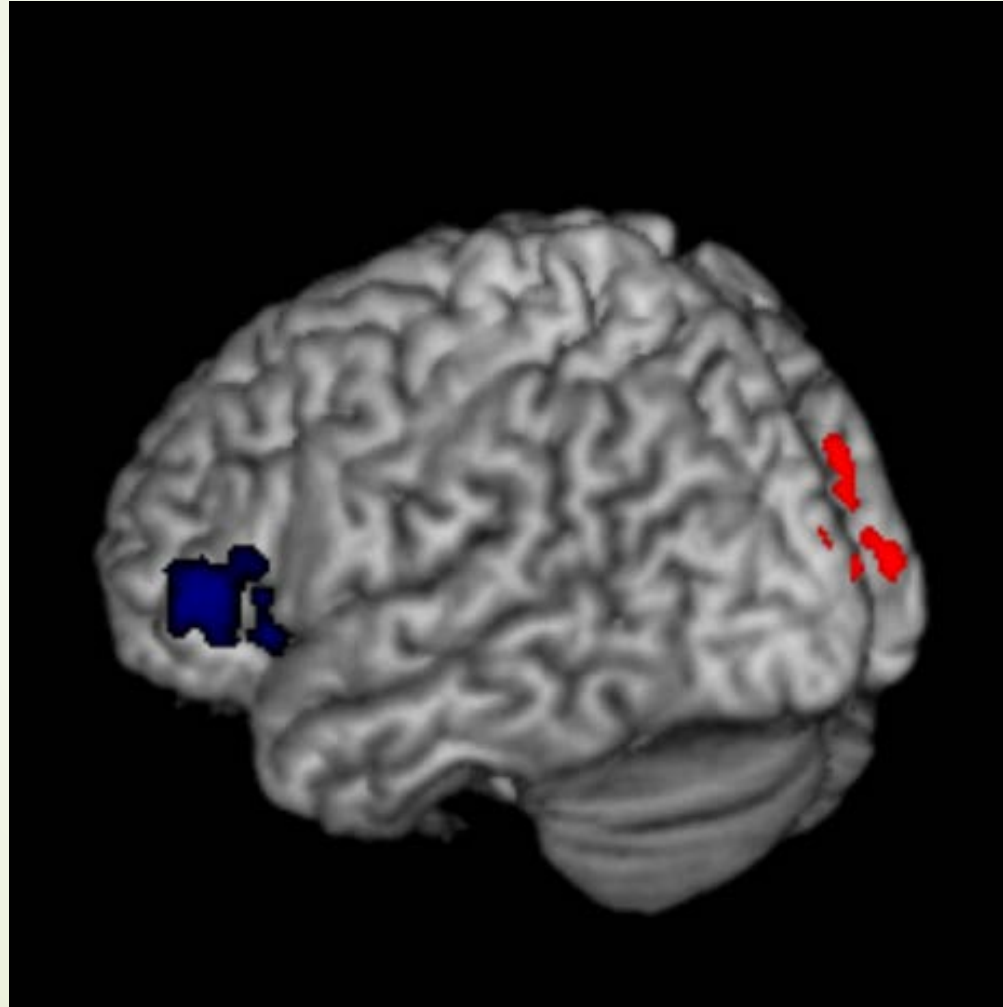
OUGHT

Results

- Looking at contrast between the two groups concerning areas of brain activation relative to reward and threat cues and ideal and ought selves
- T-test; unit of analysis is voxels (1,000s of data points); looking at clusters of activation points; results were significant at the $<.001$ level.
- PRIMARY TAKE-AWAY POINT: If the brain is “lighting” up in areas other than they should be, it tells us something about how respondents are processing information - - and, in the long run we want to know how that acquaints with behaviors that help or hurt them in securing social capital

Mothers/Personalized Reward Brain Responses to Personalized Reward Cues (Ideals): FLP vs. Control Moms

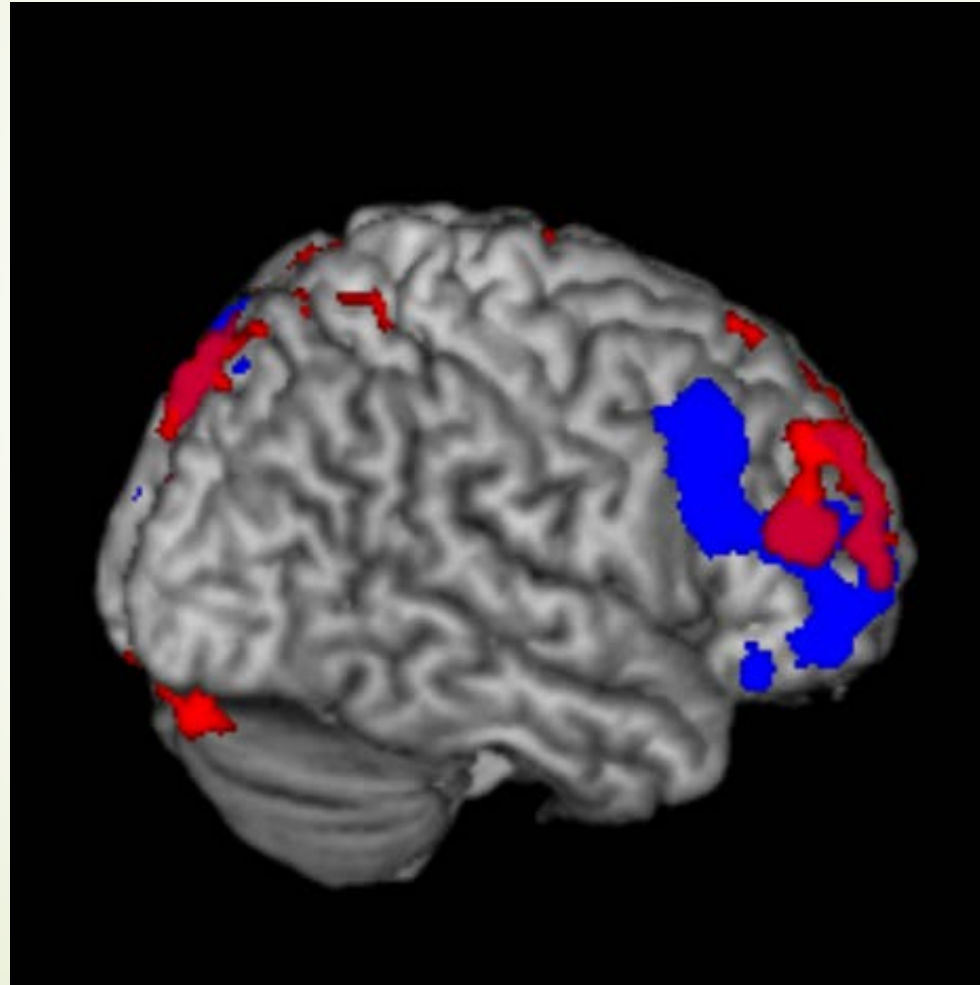
Control moms:
left prefrontal
cortex
(reward
pursuit,
positive affect)



FLP moms:
medial temporal
and occipital
cortex (*self-
evaluation,
morality, self-
criticism*)

Mothers/Personalized Reward Case: *Sherry* Brain Responses to Personalized Threat Cues (Oughts): FLP vs. Control Moms

Control moms:
right prefrontal
cortex
(*vigilance*) →

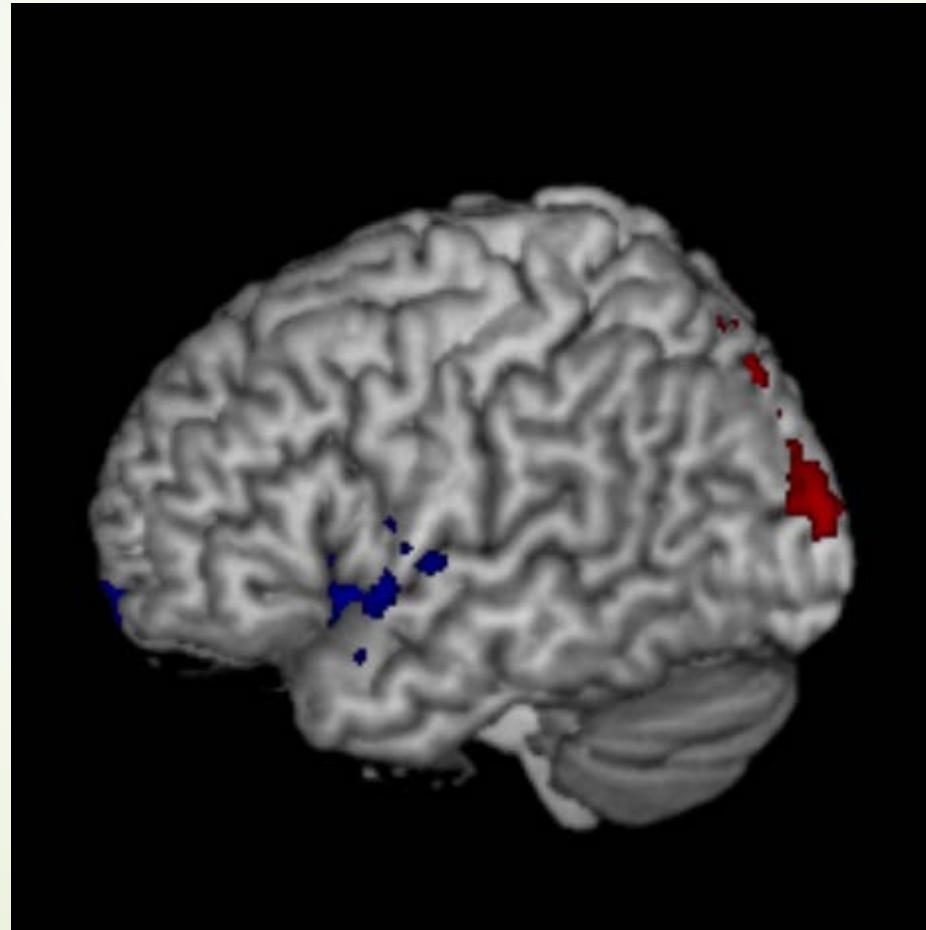


FLP moms: right
prefrontal cortex
medial (*vigilance*)
prefrontal cortex
(*error checking*) and
medial occipital
cortex (*conscience*)

Mothers/Personalized Reward Cues: FLP vs. Control

Brain Responses to Personalized Reward Cues (ideals): FLP vs. Control kids

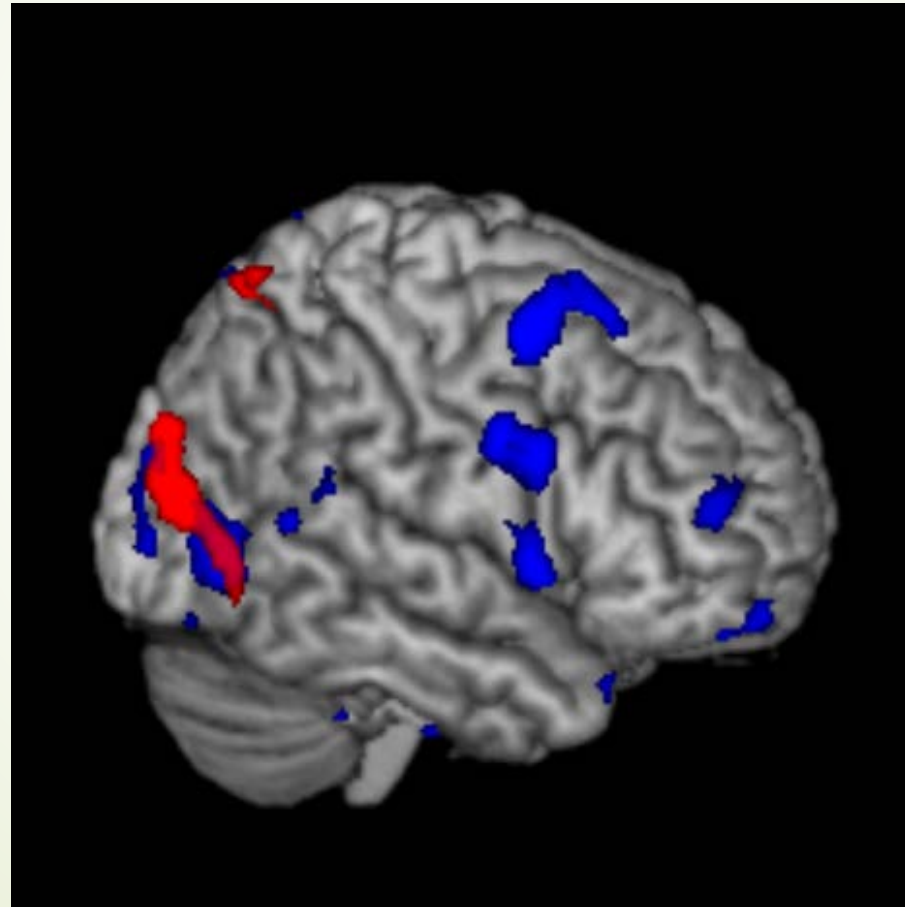
Control kids:
left prefrontal
cortex
(reward
pursuit,
positive affect)



FLP kids: medial
temporal and
occipital cortex
(*self-evaluation,
conscience*)

Brain Responses to Personalized Threat Cues (oughts): FLP vs. Control Kids

Control kids:
right prefrontal
cortex
(*vigilance*),
right temporal
cortex (*self-
evaluation,
conscience*)



FLP kids: only
right temporal
cortex (*self-
evaluation,
conscience*)

Discussion and Implications: Part 1

- The fMRI task measures brain responses associated with socialization experiences (rather than genes/temperament). These are not inborn or “hard-wired” individual differences . . . meaning behavioral interventions are possible
- The mothers and children in the control sample showed typical brain responses to personalized cues for *making good things happen vs. keeping bad things from happening* . . . meaning the potential for engaging in relational behaviors that will generate social capital is more “promising” for this subsample

Discussion and Implications: Part 2

- The FLP mothers responded to the reward (“ideal”) cues as if they were signals to be self-critical and to invoke moral principles (Jesus factor), and to the threat (“ought”) cues as if they invoked moral principles . . . meaning the potential for engaging in relational behaviors that will generate social capital is *less* “promising” for this subsample
- The FLP children had atypical patterns of responses to both reward and threat cues that were similar to their mothers . . . meaning the children are following in their mothers’ footsteps



Overall Bottom Line

- We are looking at different ways to think about and assess inequality-related processes at relational, individual, and “neurological” levels
 - The goal is to find entry points for interventions that reduce inequalities by facilitating individuals’ and families’ opportunities for building social capital.
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