Mental Health And Austerity

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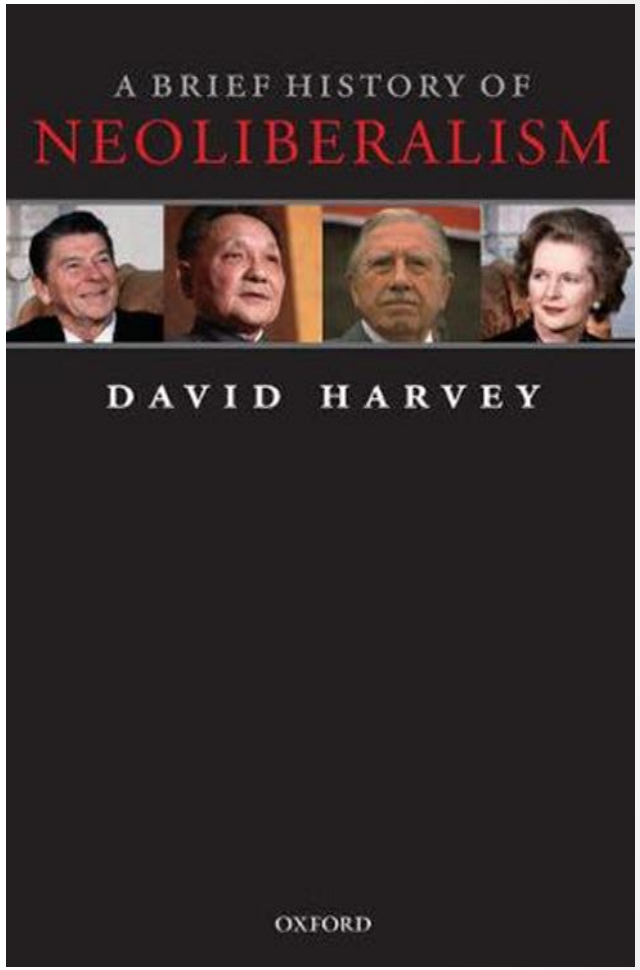
Thank you for the invitation

Session outline

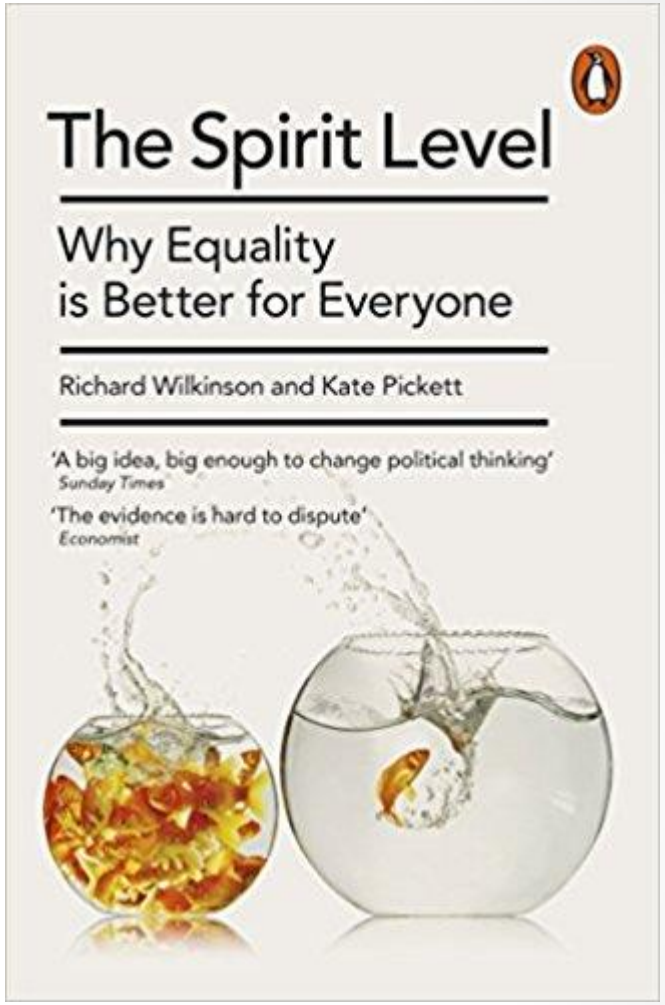
- Neoliberalism
- Inequality
- Austerity
- Impact on Mental health issues

- Since the mid-1970s, neo-liberal ideas have dominated economic policy
- Neo-liberalism seeks to apply *the discipline of the market* to as broad an area of life as possible.
- Deregulation
- Privatisation
- Reduction in direct taxation (income tax)
- “Trickle down” economics
- Small state



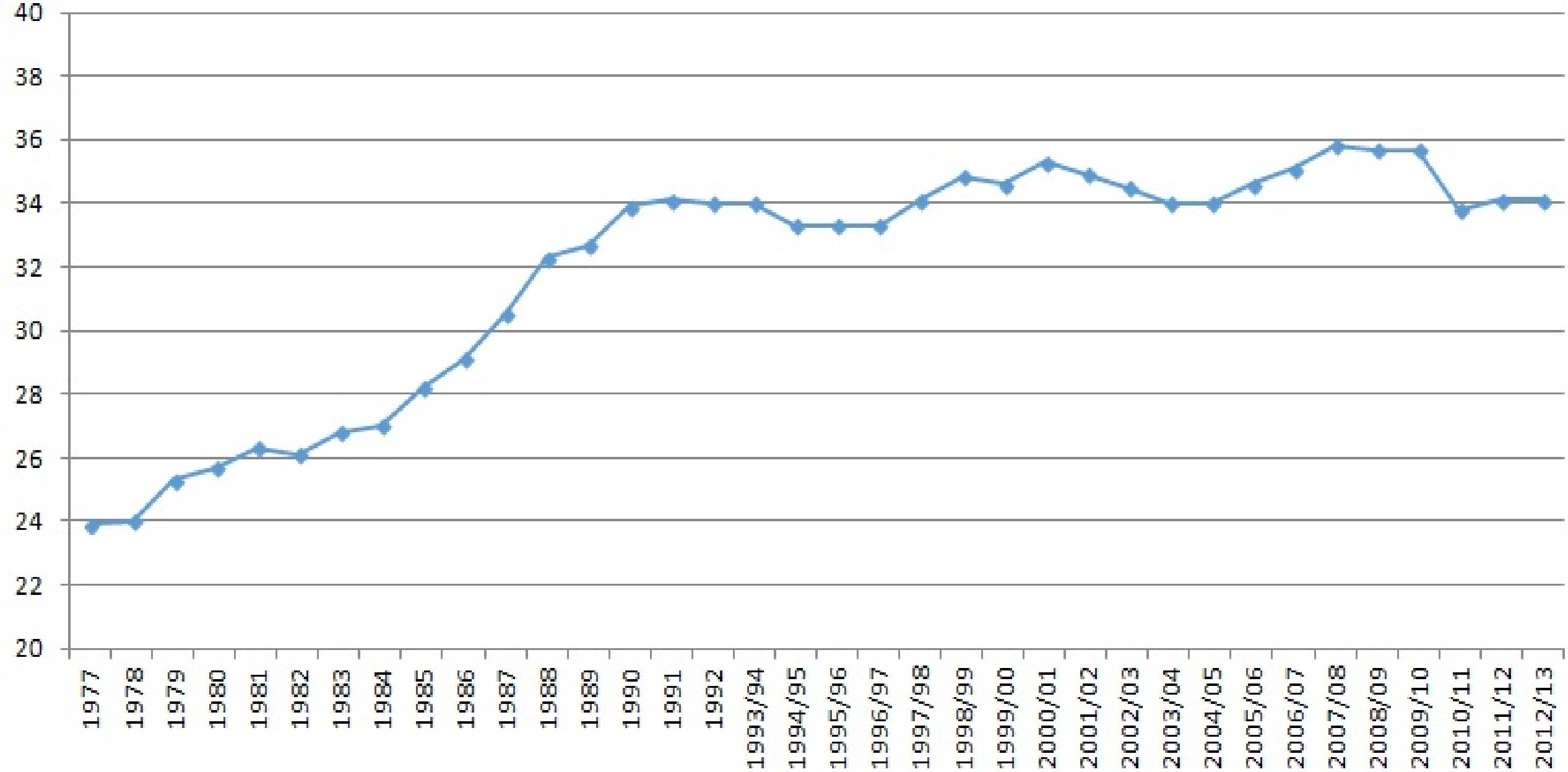
- Hall – importance of culture.
- Giroux (2011) shrink the realm of democratic politics as the market pushes these values to the margin.
- Bauman (2008) world of “hyper-individualism” where a sense of community or obligation to disappear.

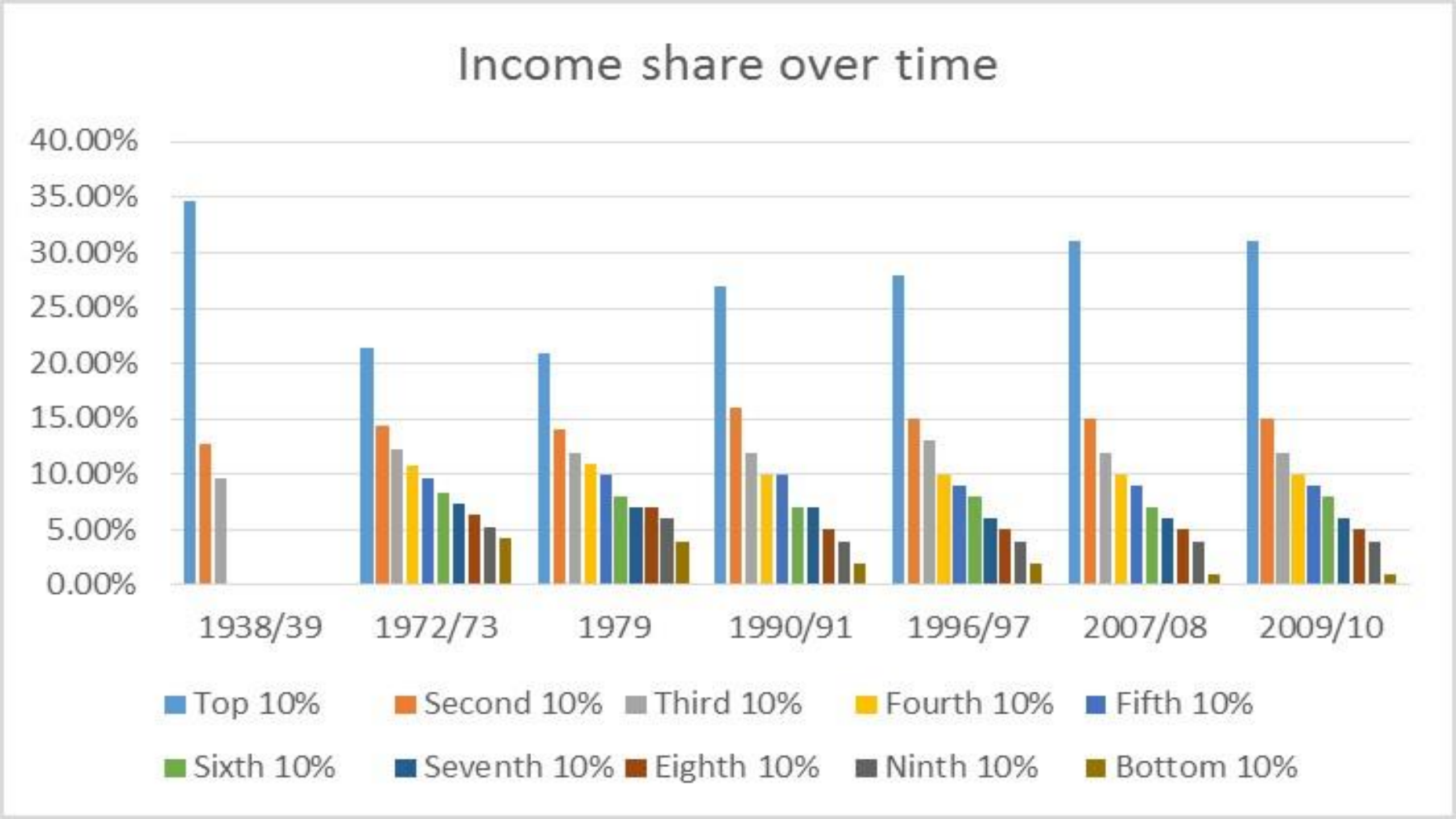
- **Spirit Level - measures of impact**
- *physical health (life expectancy)*
- *mental health/illness*
- *drug and alcohol addiction*
- *children's education performance*
- *imprisonment rates*
- *obesity*
- *social mobility*
- *level of trust*
- *homicides*
- *teenage birth rate*
- *infant mortality.*



- *"The **social determinants of health** are the **conditions** in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. These circumstances are shaped by the **distribution of money, power and resources** at **global, national and local** levels."*
- http://www.who.int/social_determinants/en

Gini Coefficent 1977-2012/13




Income share over time
40.00%
35.00%
30.00%
25.00%
20.00%
15.00%
10.00%
5.00%
0.00%
1938/39
1972/73
1979
1990/91
1996/97
2007/08
2009/10
Top 10%
Second 10%
Third 10%
Fourth 10%
Fifth 10%
Sixth 10%
Seventh 10%
Eighth 10%
Ninth 10%
Bottom 10%

- http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-18917932
- This Tube map, 'Lives on the Line', shows the variation in life expectancy in local areas across London.
- The article includes a quote from Professor Sir Michael Marmot,who said the map "***captures how stark the health equalities are in a very small geographical area***".
- "***If you want to see a difference in life expectancy between countries of 11 years, you can fly from London to Guatemala,***" he said.
- "But if you are worried about your carbon footprint, you could just catch the Tube east.
- "***The difference between Hackney and the West End is the same as the difference between England and Guatemala in terms of life expectancy.***"

Marmot Review(2010)

- *People living in the **poorest** neighbourhoods will, on average, die **seven** years earlier than people living in the richest neighbourhoods (Marmot, 2010).*
- *These health inequalities are not just limited to life expectancy but also infant mortality, mental health, physical health and so on*

Austerity

- Coalition required because of a “national emergency”
- Public finances in a mess because of Labour mismanagement
- Welfare requires reform
- Benefit cap
- Bedroom tax
- Tuition fees to 9k
- Abolition of Ed. Maintenance Allowance
- Public sector – cuts to LAs
- Reduction in Police numbers

The impact of austerity

- The coalition introduced a range of austerity measures that in total amounted to the biggest cuts in state spending since the Second World War (Crawford, 2010).
- The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) (2012)has calculated that there will be over 900,000 public sector jobs lost in the period 2011–18.
- The IFS found that the effect of the tax and benefit changes will increase absolute and relative poverty

Work Capability Assessments linked with increase in suicides

- Discrimination against people with mh problems – means that finding employment is more difficult
- WCA introduced 2008
- WCA system managed by ATOS then Maximus
- There are three possible outcomes that the person is
- *Fit for work;*
- *Unfit for work but fit for pre-employment training; or*
- *Fit for neither work nor training.*

Barr B, Taylor- Robinson D, Stuckler D et al. (2015) “First do no harm” are disability assessments associated with adverse trends in mental health? A longitudinal study.

- This longitudinal study is based on survey and population data from 149 upper tier local authorities in England
- Covered 2004-13
- Interaction between poverty and mental health.
- Some of the most deprived areas with higher rates of disability benefits claims are in the former industrial heartlands.

Measures of the impact of WCAs

- Researchers used 3 key measures
- Suicides
- Antidepressant prescriptions
- Self-reported mental health problems

Findings

- Across England as a whole, the WCA was associated with:

- 590 suicides
- 725,000 additional prescriptions for antidepressants
- 279,000 additional cases of self-reported mental health problems
- The authors put these figures into context as follows; they represent:

- *5% of the total number of suicides*
- *5% of the total number of antidepressant prescriptions*
- *11% of self-reported mental health problems*

Conclusion

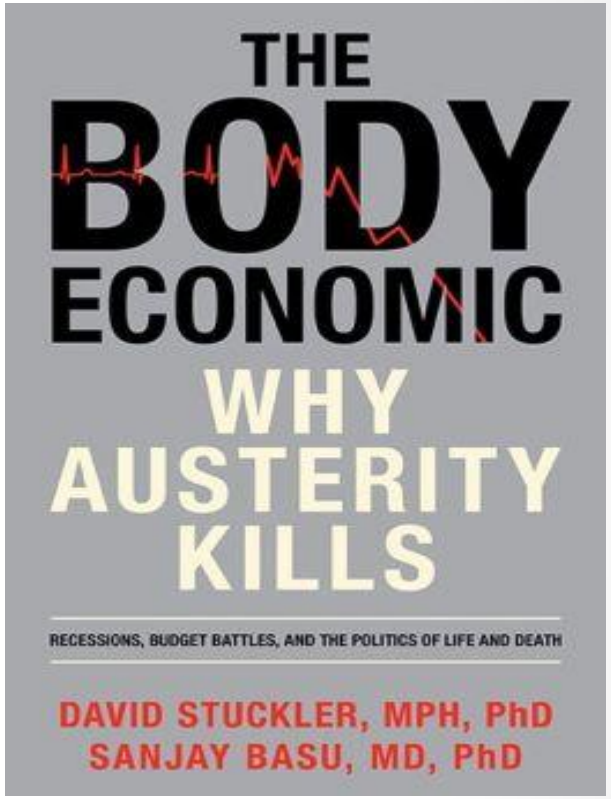
- *As more disadvantaged socioeconomic groups are more likely to be in the receipt of disability benefits, and thus to be assessed, the reassessment policy was associated with a greater increase in these adverse mental health outcomes in more deprived areas*

Greek Austerity

- http://thebodyeconomic.com/
- Impact of recession post 2008
- Reduction in public/welfare spending
- Need increases/ services decrease
- Greece cuts its health service budget by **40%**
- *More than **600** Greek citizens killed themselves in 2012. Before the Great Recession, Greece had the lowest suicide rate in Europe. Now that rate has doubled. And Greece isn't alone. Suicides in the other European Union countries had been dropping consistently for over twenty years until the Great Recession*

The Body Economic

- *The data we've gathered lead irrevocably to this conclusion: societies that stayed healthy during recessions almost always had the strongest safety net, the strongest social protection.*
- *http://www.theguardian.com/society/2013/may/15/recessions-hurt-but-austerity-kills*



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