



MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning Course # 11.469
BU Metropolitan Studies Program Course # MET SO 502 Urban Sociology

Urban Sociology Study Guide for Week 12
Social Origins of Violence

1. **Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls** hypothesize that collective efficacy is linked to reduced violence. How do the researchers measure collective efficacy? How are the concepts of collective efficacy, social capital, and community related? What is not explained about the social origins of violence in this study?
2. Through his post-Katrina study of ex-prisoner relocation, **Kirk** finds that moving away from one's former geographic area lowers a parolee's likelihood of re-incarceration. What contribution is this study making to the neighborhood effects literature? What implications does this study have for the "invest in place" versus "invest in people" policy approach to concentrated poverty?
3. How does **Gould** conceive of collective violence? How does his understanding of the processes that contribute to collective violence build on **Tilly's** ideas about boundaries and ties? How might it relate to the upcoming readings on collective action more broadly?
4. What does **Collins's** micro-sociological theory of violence help us understand about conflict situations? How does his approach to studying violence differ from **Sampson et al.**? How does the analysis that **Collins** presents relate to **Gould's** perspective?
5. **Goffman's** piece is based on her ethnography *On the Run*, published in 2014, which received an unprecedented amount of attention both within sociology as well as among mainstream audiences. The book has inspired a debate about a number of ethical and methodological issues including her positionality as a white woman in a black neighborhood, her involvement in attempted murder as an accomplice, as well as the verifiability of her data. The reader includes a *NYTimes* article explaining these controversies (though not required). Do you think **Goffman's** findings support or contradict the neighborhood effects literature? Do her ethnographic methods help reveal the micro-level mechanisms that **Collins** discusses?

6. **The Morris Justice Project** brings another perspective to the issue of violence, crime, and policing in low-income, minority neighborhoods. How does the study's collaborative process of inquiry change dominant public discourses about violence, crime, and policing?

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