



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 6: Urban Political Economy
Cities, Industrialization, and Deindustrialization

The central concern of political economy is how economic and political power relate to each other and also to spatial and social form. This is a complex set of links, and not surprisingly, multiple traditions -- several rooted in Marxism -- have emerged to explain these links and debate their implications.

1. **Katznelson** aims to explain what is distinctive about class in America, and frames his argument in terms of contrasting patterns of political development in the capitalist system.
2. **Wilson**, writing in a tradition that traces back to DuBois but draws on social organization, inter-group relations, and other theories, makes a case for the social effects of spatially concentrated joblessness. How does he make this case, and how persuasive is it, from your perspective? What might Wilson miss in his analyses?
3. **Dawson** also tackles the complicated relationship between race and class to understand political attitudes. Most political scientists and economists believe that class differences lead to different political behaviors and beliefs, but Dawson demonstrates that race proves to be more important. What is the relationship between **Katznelson's** argument and **Dawson's** findings?
4. **Alice O'Connor** is making a strong argument about how mainstream political economic ideologies mold social policy research agendas. How do you think the other authors that we read today – Katznelson, Dawson, and Wilson – would respond to O'Connor? How can we be more aware of the ideologies that frame our research?

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