

***Criminological Theory (Graduate)***  
***Criminal Justice 8106 (formerly 406)***  
***Fall 2008***  
**Second In-Class Exam**

Date: Monday, December 15, 2008  
Time: 2.5 hrs (5:00 – 7:30)  
Location: Gladfelter Hall, 5th Floor

Relevant books:

Laub & Sampson Venkatesh St. Jean Taylor Martinez Garland Messner & Rosenfeld
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**Instructions:**

- There is one big question, and one small question.
- **The big and small questions are paired in two different options. If you answer the big question from A you also must answer the corresponding small question from A. If you answer the big question from B you must answer the corresponding small question from B.**
- The big question counts 70% and the small question counts 30%. *Allocate your effort accordingly.*

Other requirements:

- Answers must be typed, double-spaced, with one-inch margins. Please use 12-point font.
  - Label each answer with the corresponding question number.
  - Use page numbers.
  - Put your name on a front page with no other information; start your answer on second page.
  - This is a closed book, no notes, no web surfing examination. Please do not use the Internet or any other references (on computer or otherwise) from the beginning of the examination period until you turn in your work. You will be given one disk with which to work; there should be no other disks or memory sticks in your computer. Please save your work often. Save a backup on the hard drive if you can.
  - Please use specific examples to illustrate your answers, and refer to specific **authors, theories** and **research results** wherever possible.
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## **OPTION A**

### **BIG QUESTION (70%)**

When one thinks about explaining community level violent crime rates, one can approach the question in one of two ways: one can look for factors that make for enduring differences over time between different types of communities, or one can look for factors that explain changing violent crime rates over time in one community. (You may for the purposes of this answer treat homicide rates and reported violent crime rates as equivalent.)

Using the models developed in the following four volumes – Martinez, Taylor, St. Jean and Venkatesh – describe how **two** of them can help us understand enduring differences and **the other two** can help us understand changes. (80%) (HINT: note the careful choice of language: “help us understand.” This means even if it was not what the author intended.) Be sure **for each theory**: you clearly state which approach it is relevant to; describe the size of community addressed by each theory; describe the time frame within which changes occur; be clear about the most crucial concepts and causal dynamics; and summarize the nature and strength of the most important supporting empirical evidence.

For one of these perspectives describe one implication for preventing violent crime that you think is worthwhile. Say why you think it is worthwhile and why you think it will work. (20%)

### **SMALL QUESTION (30%)**

- i) Garland and Messner & Rosenfeld (M&R) both agree that the US has an extraordinarily high violent crime rate relative to other developed countries. (Garland also says the UK has an extraordinarily high crime rate, but let’s put that aside for now.) If we accept their premise (ignoring for now criticisms from Savelsberg, Chamlin & Cochran), we see that the two books have a remarkably different view on **time** – one says the US has always been a certain way, thus the high crime, the other says the US recently became this way, thus the recent high crime. Explain for each model whether it sees high violent crime in the US as enduring or recent, and why (2/3).
- ii) Tell us which view you favor, and why, referring both to argument and evidence (1/3).

## **OPTION B**

### **BIG QUESTION (70%)**

Drawing **equally** on the volumes of St. Jean, Martinez, and Messner and Rosenfeld (M&R), respond to the following: Much criminological theorizing about local differences in violent crime rates or violent offending rates takes the form of a mediating model: certain structural factors lead to or are associated with certain intervening processes, which then lead to crime or offending outcomes. (Note: for M&R simplify their model so that structure → culture.)

- i) For each of these three models describe how this model works – what elements of structure are key, what are the most relevant mediating dynamics, and what are the processes connecting structure to mediating concept(s), and mediating concept(s) to a crime outcome. (HINT: just get key main ideas – you have 3 models to work through.) (60%)
- ii) For each, mention one piece of supporting empirical evidence. (10%)
- iii) One of these theories is about differences between streetblocks, one about differences between communities, and one about differences between nations. At which level are the theoretical processes connecting mediating concepts to violent crime the clearest, and why? (30%)

### **SMALL QUESTION (30%)**

- i) Can the life course of a current-day, urban gang leader be described using life course criminology? Using life course criminology as described in Laub & Sampson, and specific concepts from their framework, explain JT’s – the leader of the Black Kings described by Venkatesh – criminal career. Stated differently, how would their framework apply to (help explain) JT’s past, present, and future? (2/3)
- ii) Which factors relevant to JT’s criminal career course does Laub & Sampson’s framework miss, and why are those important? (1/3) (Do not make a big list – no more than 2 or 3)