

Elijah Anderson's book *Code Of The Street* covers the social structures of inner city Philadelphia and the effects it has on its residence as well as why such structures exist. Anderson's work seeks to not only describe the social structures of the inner city, but also understand why they are the way that they are. Through different research methods, Anderson is able to cover the experiences of different residents and parts of the inner city and form a concrete analysis through the data he collects. Without the research that went into the book, none of his arguments would have any merit.

Anderson's book uses multiple research methods to help showcase his argument of the need for respect to those in lower income families. He emphasizes the struggles that people in the inner city go through and how children from a young age are conditioned to act a certain way from being raised by and/or heavily influenced by street life. The research methods that Anderson uses are referred to as ethnographic field research, where he conducts one on one interviews with people he finds living in these areas, as well as observing the area and its inhabitants to see how they live and interact with each other and their surroundings. Through using these research methods, Anderson is able to gather raw unfiltered data directly without having to worry about anything skewing or misinterpreting the information that he gathers. These direct methods also help the reader have a more direct relationship with those living in the inner city by hearing about their lives and experiences. This helps to further Anderson's claim for those living here deserving and needing respect from others as well as showing the importance of change to jobs and improvements to the quality of life in the inner city. I believe that Anderson's approach of field research is a good way to gather information about this topic because this way he is able to get information on the lives of these people directly and both hear and see for himself the struggles that they face. I think using research that is found online and/or in books would not be as effective to him and his writing in *Code Of The Street* because it wouldn't have allowed him to have unique interactions and hear the different experiences from those living in the inner city directly.

The main arguments of Anderson's work are documented throughout each chapter. Every chapter in the Anderson work has a theme that covers a different aspect of life in the inner city. The first chapter, Decent and Street Families, covers the different types of families you will see in the inner city, showcasing the two polar opposites in terms of families in these communities. The decent families Anderson writes about refers to families that steer clear of illegal actions such as dealing drugs and gang activity. These families make a point to teach their children that this way of life is wrong and encourages them to strive for more honest work and actual jobs rather than illegal

work. Decent families also emphasize making a good life for themselves through working hard and saving money as well as aligning themselves more closely with outside institutions such as churches and schools. Decent families also uphold the idea of having a man of the house, typically the father of the household. The man of the house is seen as the protector and provider while his wife is viewed as a partner and their children as their subjects. The parents of decent families tend to be more strict and put a great amount of emphasis on following the rules and encouraging their children to follow a straight path in life. Street families on the other hand are like the polar opposite to decent families, in these families, embracing street life is encouraged in children. Street families show little care for others and often struggle to meet the demands of parenthood despite having love for their children. While many street families try to have a similar structure to decent families, they often fail due to finances being limited because of the low paying jobs in their areas. Those who are a part of street families also tend to have more self destructive behaviors such as drugs and alcohol, women in these communities also sometimes have relationships with men who abuse them and keep them near with substances. Decent families as well as others outside of these communities often view street families as bad people or low lives, not knowing of the circumstances that led to or condition them into living like this.

Chapter 2, (Campaigning for Respect) of *Code Of The Street* shows the value that respect has on those living in the inner city. Respect is almost like a currency, as it is essential to living in these areas. So much value is placed on respect in these communities due to the lack of other forms of currency due to the lack of other reliable forms of capital. The more isolated parts of the inner city follow a sort of people's law, often viewed as "a perversion of the Golden Rule, whose by-product in this case is respect and whose caveat is vengeance, or payback," (Anderson, 61). Respect in these areas is crucial to staying out of harm's way, as those who are more respected and feared are often not or much less likely to be messed with by others who may want to mug and/or harm people. A person's physical appearance can also affect how much respect they are given, as those with more "juice" are viewed as more respectable. Juice refers to the material possessions that one has, such as nicer clothes and jewelry and grooming. For men, respect also can be earned through their "manhood", as those who are viewed as more manly are often granted more respect than those who are less manly. Because of this, men try to be more physically strong as well as more ruthless to show others they are to be respected. The schools in the inner city are a mix of children from both decent and street families, often causing them to clash due to their different ways of showing and demanding respect. In schools, kids from decent families learn to "code switch" to better fit in, while kids from street families become even more committed to the street and the code they use and learn outside of school.

In chapter 3: Drugs, Violence and Street Crime, Anderson discusses how much crime goes on in the inner city, as well as the reasons there is so much and the effects it has on the people living there. He writes that there seems to be a much higher rate of crime in the inner cities of today than there was in the past, as shown in the subjects that rap music covers such as killing cops, rape, etc. This can also be seen in young men involved in the drug trade who apply these ideas glorified in rap music to their lives, creating a more outlaw based culture. Although this may appear as people becoming more unruly with time, Anderson describes Du Bois, an author, who had concerns about this and found that there was a pattern of exclusion leading to this outcome. Du Bois had found that through racial prejudice, white supremacy and ethnic competition, black Americans were further alienated. To make sense of the social organization of the black community, Du Bois created four different categories, these being the well-to-do, the hardworking, the worthy poor and finally, the submerged tenth. The hardworking category consisted of those who were “decent laborers who were getting paid fairly well,” (Anderson, 97), the worthy poor were “those who were working or trying to work but barely making ends meet,” (Anderson 97-98) and the submerged tenth were “those who were in effect beneath the surface of economic viability, (Anderson 98). The submerged tenth in particular was portrayed as being irresponsible when it came to drinking, violence, thievery and alienation, although the situation of this category did not play a prominent role in Du Bois study. Anderson shows that the cause of this way of life in the inner city is largely due to the changes in Philadelphia over the past twenty to thirty years. He writes that the deindustrialization of the city has caused many manufacturing jobs that required skill and semi-skilled work have been lost. These jobs had been a decent paying way of life to the urban working class since the beginning of the industrial revolution. Because of this gradual loss in job opportunities, many people living in these areas became more drawn to street life as their options were very limited or in some cases non-existent. A lack of education, connections, social skills and white skin color also prevents young black men from finding jobs in these areas, causing even more people to be drawn to street life. Anderson writes that, “many young blacks sometimes in direct response find it difficult to take white people or even conventional black people seriously, and they actively live their lives in opposition to them and everything they are taken to represent,” (Anderson, 98), this quote also helps to show even more of the alienation that people in these communities face due to distrust in others they view as mainstream or conventional.

In the conclusion chapter titled “The Conversion of a Role Model: Looking for Mr. Johnson” of the Anderson book, he writes about the story of Robert, a man living in the

inner city who had gone to jail at age 17 for the aggravated assault of a rival drug dealer. After ten years, Robert is released and returns to where he grew up, although instead of what many people believed, he didn't return to drug dealing and the street life or to settle old scores, instead he wanted space and to put that life behind him. Robert refused gifts like weapons and any offerings to get back into the drug trade, having spent his time in prison vowing to change his life and find a legitimate way to make money and earn a living. He stated that prison was good for him and allowed him to reassess his life. He spent his time in prison reading and improving his vocabulary. Robert and three other young men who sought to turn their lives around, all worked together helping one another follow a better path, eventually seeking help from a well known activist in their area named Herman Wrice. Over time Wrice helped them by providing them with money for materials to set up a small shop selling fruits and vegetables, as well as telling them the intricacies of having a small business. Having been a role model even before being arrested and being seen as a successful attempt at turning away from crime and street life, others from his neighborhood who lacked direction began to follow his lead, causing a chain reaction of positive change in the area. By being a positive and role model to those in the neighborhood, Robert was able to help others despite how alienated and poverty stricken people in the inner city are.

Anderson is able to relate the findings of his field research to larger social dynamics and poverty by showing the setbacks that people in the inner city face. As shown in the Sidewalk video, many of the people who sell books on the street have difficult lives and face a lot of pushback from local police for trying to sell books. The video shows that jobs in the area either don't pay enough to help residents of the area provide for themselves and their families, or that they don't hire them. The push back these people face from police also shows how looked down on and scrutinized these sellers are, the video shows that the reason they sell books is due to police arresting those who would try to sell other items. Despite this, the sellers find a way around this rule by selling books that come with other things they sell, such as jewelry. The Street Codes video shows the emphasis that is placed on the code of the street in inner city areas as well as how outside factors keep this way of living going. Similar to those featured in the Sidewalk video, many of those interviewed in Street Codes show that they don't have trust or respect in the police or the system due to both past and recent experiences where they have been let down or betrayed.

*Code Of The Street* is a book centered around the inner city life of those in Philadelphia, using interviews and other field research methods to bring the stories of those living in these areas to a wider audience. The research that Anderson conducted

helps paint a better picture of life in the inner city to the reader, using first hand experiences to place the reader in the shoes of that person and by extension, granting them a better understanding of what these people go through in their day to day lives.