

## Lecture 23 Reading Questions

“Justice & the Ghetto Poor”

Reading:

“Justice, Deviance, and the Dark Ghetto” by Tommie Shelby.

(1) “[W]e do not have obligations to submit to *unjust* institutions, or at least not to institutions that exceed the limits of tolerable injustice. One difficulty we must face, then, is ascertaining just where to draw the line beyond which injustice becomes intolerable.” What is the most reasonable way to draw this line, and why?

(2) “[M]ost most U.S. citizens think that everyone, including the poor, should obey the law and that all able-bodied, working-age citizens ... should support themselves through legitimate work, even if that work is hard, low-paying, and unsatisfying. Thus, when the ghetto poor engage in criminal activity or refuse to work legitimate jobs, this is widely regarded as a failure of reciprocity on their part. This would be the wrong conclusion to draw, however.” Why?

(3) “The urban poor should not be demonized, stigmatized, or otherwise dehumanized, just as surely as they should not be romanticized. Yet it would be a mistake to think that they should never be morally criticized.” Why? What sort of criticism can be appropriate?

Shelby, Tommie. “Justice, Deviance, and the Dark Ghetto.” *Philosophy and Public Affairs* 35, no. 2 (2007): 126-60. All rights reserved. This content is excluded from our Creative Commons license. For more information, see <http://ocw.mit.edu/fairuse>.

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