



# Living the Drama: Community, Conflict, and Culture among Inner-City Boys

*David J. Harding*

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For the middle class and the affluent, local ties seem to matter less and less these days, but in the inner city, your life can be irrevocably shaped by what block you live on. *Living the Drama* takes a close look at three neighborhoods in Boston to analyze the many complex ways that the context of community shapes the daily lives and long-term prospects of inner-city boys.

David J. Harding studied sixty adolescent boys growing up in two very poor areas and one working-class area. In the first two, violence and neighborhood identification are inextricably linked as rivalries divide the city into spaces safe, neutral, or dangerous. Consequently, Harding discovers, social relationships are determined by residential space. Older boys who can navigate the dangers of the streets serve as role models, and friendships between peers grow out of mutual protection. The impact of community goes beyond the realm of same-sex bonding, Harding reveals, affecting the boys' experiences in school and with the opposite sex. A unique glimpse into the world of urban adolescent boys, *Living the Drama* paints a detailed, insightful portrait of life in the inner city.

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