

## Ethics and Black Lives Matter Research

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As Black Lives Matter protests are ongoing in the United States and around the world, numerous sociologists are viewing these protests not only as opportunities to push for social change, but also as opportunities to better understand how social movements work. This is especially true for sociologists studying Collective Behavior and Social Movements. Given the emergent nature of these protests, some sociology faculty members working with students on collective action research may rely on students to collect data at these protests. While these protests may provide opportunities for student researchers, there are associated risks.

Therefore, sociology faculty should be careful not to ask students to put their bodies at risk for the sake of faculty research. The risk for these students is two-fold: the risk of COVID transmission and the risk of police brutality at the protests. Police use of force, chemical weapons, and tactics like kettling and arrests are still common, and their deployment is unpredictable. For students of color, the risks of suffering targeted police violence are even greater.

While IRBs are in place to ensure ethical treatment of research subjects, we do not have the same guidelines for ethical treatment of student researchers. The risks and costs we ask students to bear must be proportional to the benefits they receive in terms of payment or academic compensation, such as co-authorship. Faculty members should keep in mind that graduate students may feel pressured to do this kind of research to maintain good relationships with their faculty advisors and mentors. As sociologists, we have the responsibility to remain aware of the power relationships in our graduate training programs. It would be unethical and exploitative to add our research projects to the list of structural inequalities our students face. Our students and the discipline of sociology deserve better.