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Essentializing Manhood in "the Street": Perilous Masculinity and Popular Criminological Ethnographies

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Abstract

Recent popular criminological ethnographies of "the street" deal heavily with men's underlying aspirations for and constructions of masculinity. However, the presentation of manhood in the street has essentialistic overtones and reduces complex variation among men to overly simplistic and often stereotyped depictions. In this article, I offer a discourse analysis of three well-known criminological ethnographies—Randol Contreras's *The Stickup Kids*, Alice Goffman's *On the Run*, and Victor Rios's *Punished*—with three intentions in mind. First, I introduce the concept of "perilous masculinity" as a version of masculinity that dominates across these ethnographies. Second, I suggest that a more complicated (albeit contradictory) notion of street manhood is possible and can be culled from these works. Third and finally, I point toward and try to exemplify alternative readings of masculinities and street manhood about which future researchers as well as policy makers should be more self-reflexively aware.

Keywords

economic marginality, ethnographic research, intersections of race/class/gender, theory, criminality

Is criminology male dominated? Yes. But it would be disingenuous to argue that popular criminological scholarship does not attend to gender. It does. The academic who refuses to consider how gender is implicated in his or her research is increasingly rare, and the majority of scholars at the core of the discipline at least minimally engage gender as a "factor of analysis" to be "controlled for." In addition, though certainly with

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less frequency, contemporary criminologists publish more scholarship that employs gender as a primary framework for investigation than at any previous time in the discipline's history. However, the gender theorizing found in these texts rarely prompts celebration among feminist readers.

That gender is present in popular criminological research obscures the fact that feminist theorizations continue to be scarce in scholarship the discipline reveres. While in many cases the authors of admired texts purport to attend to gender dynamics in their research, a close reader is more often than not left wanting as she or he notices that gender analyses presented may be superficial or worse. In short, male-dominated popular criminology ostensibly does attend to gender but does so inadequately; it tends to leave the deep complexity and play of gender dynamics unexamined. For many feminist criminologists, such analyses are simply intellectually unsatisfying. For many others, they are scholarly and politically regressive because they fail to uphold a recent but now core feminist commitment: the refusal to essentialize marginalized groups in theory and practice.

In this article, I examine three recent criminological ethnographies to highlight shortsightedness in gender theorizing as illustrated by several well-known texts. Each of these works—Victor Rios's (2011) *Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys*; Randol Contreras's (2013) *The Stickup Kids: Race, Drugs, Violence, and the American Dream*; and Alice Goffman's (2014) *On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City*—deals with underlying aspirations for, and constructions of, masculinity among the men the authors studied. However, they do so in facile ways that perpetuate—though unintentionally—essentialist tropes about masculinity in "the street."

I argue that each author, in effect, uses a concept I dub "perilous masculinity" to grasp their research participants' masculine aspirations and constructions. By this, I mean that the authors presume street-oriented men subscribe to a one-dimensional form of masculinity—a form immersed in, and constantly intertwined with, dangers and (indeed) peril. Moreover, based on these texts, perilous masculinity emerges as characterized by schemery, chauvinism, and violence. This stereotypical usage of gender likely results from mostly superficial references to feminist texts authors employ in developing their analyses.[1] Perhaps even more insidiously, notions of perilous masculinity stem from the discipline's—and, in turn, the authors'—faulty renderings of the street.

Rather than portraying historically and structurally marginalized urban social milieus where crime and its accompanying realities are at the fore of social relations, criminologists in the main frequently characterize the street as delinquent social and cultural locales within which groups of errant individuals in "ghetto" communities[2] interact (e.g., gang members, delinquents, etc.). This myopic view tends to produce fallacious depictions within which criminological ethnographers then contemplate the role of gender. Thus, in advance, skewed views of the street foredoom the intellectual task of making sense of complex gender dynamics present in marginalized urban social milieus. As a result, and of deep concern to feminist criminologists, these texts tend to illustrate a broader problem extant in these works: Essentialistic portrayals of men, and of marginalized groups, creep through into ethnographic research, reflecting

(at a more global level) imperialistic relationships between power and powerlessness. Space limitation demands that I attend to the latter point only briefly.

This article, then, is organized into five parts. The methodological note that ensues explains the logic informing my selections of text and my methods of analysis; here, I also provide brief synopses of the three ethnographies to be discussed. Next, I define perilous masculinity and delineate its attributes as illustrated in the three texts. In a third section, I criticize usages of perilous masculinity as simplistic and one dimensional, and argue that these usages themselves result from analogously myopic conceptualizations of the street. Fourth, and drawing on R. W. Connell's (1995) theorization of multiple masculinities, I hold that despite faulty depictions of the street, classic feminist theorizations enable more nuanced gender analyses. I then demonstrate that men in the street are not consigned to perilous masculinity by rereading these ethnographies, so as to highlight moments where more complicated—albeit contradictory—understandings of the nature of street manhood were possible to reveal but left unexplored. Finally, I conclude that authors whose work is analyzed here may unwittingly assume a gaze originating back to colonialism, and that essentializing manhood in the street operates squarely (and ironically) within paradigms about which they claim to have scruples.

Popular Criminological Ethnographies and Sociological Discourse Analysis

Methodological self-awareness is an important concern, given this special issue's organizing question: "Is criminology male dominated?" Especially when it comes to gender, male-dominated texts can be acclaimed even if theoretically superficial or gender biased. But it is not sufficient to criticize only gender bias in what gets treated as prize-worthy scholarship; to confront criminology's male dominance more forcefully, feminist criticism must be wielded against any text that "dominates."

In this spirit of both gender and intersectional critique, I chose three popular ethnographies to focus on for this article's multidimensional analyses.[3] To my knowledge, few criminological texts have dominated both academic and popular conversations about the sociology of crime and deviance as much in recent years as the ones examined here. I have participated in and witnessed ongoing discussions about these texts; debates about them have circulated in both formal and informal academic circles concerned with criminology; these ethnographies have also certainly made their way into course syllabi. The three ethnographies about to be discussed have been widely reviewed, drawing critical praise, notoriety, and numerous awards and nominations.[4]

To analyze the three texts, I have used sociological discourse analysis. Following Ruiz Ruiz (2009), sociological discourse analysis is a nonlinear, circular, and bidirectional interpretation of discourse that includes three layers of analysis: a textual level, a contextual level, and an interpretive level. Textual analysis focuses chiefly on utterances or statements that allow for the characterization and coding of the discourse under study. Contextual analysis treats discourse as an event produced within a given symbolic universe, and assumes that this carries its own discursive intentions. I

approached this analysis as an intertextual form within which "the meaning of discourse emerges in reference to other discourses with which it engages in dialogue, be it in an explicit or implicit manner" (Ruiz Ruiz, 2009, para. 36). In other words, I interrogated "each fragment of analyzed discourse about its presuppositions, which other discourses it dialogues with, and thus with which other discourse or discourses it has an associative or conflictive relationship with" (Alonso & Callejo, 1999, p. 49, as quoted in Ruiz Ruiz, 2009, para. 35). Finally, while interpretation is present throughout, the interpretive level is the culmination of the analysis and "involves making connections between the discourses analyzed and the social space in which they have emerged" (Ruiz Ruiz, 2009, para. 38). Here, I treated the texts and their intertextual contexts as inroads for querying the relationships between the monographs and the broader field of criminology, and vice versa. Before delineating my findings, a synopsis of each of the analyzed texts is in order.

Punished: Policing the Lives of Black and Latino Boys (2011) is Victor Rios's skillful analysis of the "powerful culture of punishment, which shaped the ways in which young people organized themselves and created meanings of their social world" (p. xiv). After years of ethnographic work with Black and Latino boys in his hometown of Oakland, California, Rios uncovered the presence of a "youth control complex," by which he means a system of ubiquitous criminalization that includes a network of social institutions working together to treat young men's everyday behaviors as criminal. Rios suggests that experiencing life as "pinballs within this youth control complex . . . has a profound impact on young people's perceptions, worldviews, and life outcomes" (p. xiv). For his research, Rios "decided to make young people's perspective central to [his] understanding of crime, punishment, and justice in [the boys'] community" (p. 8). Put simply, "The point of [Rios's] project is to show the consequences of social control on the lives of young people regardless of good or bad intentions" (p. 9).

The Stickup Kids: Race, Drugs, Violence, and the American Dream (2013) is Randol Contreras's outstanding example of contemporary sociological imagination. At the most basic, his book "describe[s] and analyze[s] the drug robbery violence of South Bronx Dominicans" (p. 6). However, the text is remarkable for also thoroughly incorporating considerations of "larger structural transformations—such as a shifting drug market . . ." (p. 4), participants' personal biographies, and relevant historical events. Thus, Contreras sheds insightful light on his close friends' lifecourse from their meteoric rise to "street stardom" as crack cocaine dealers, to their desperate transformation into *joloperos* (i.e., stickup kids, drug robbers, "the worst perpetrators of violence in the drug world," p. 6), to their equally meteoric demise as "fallen stars," and finally their depressed existence in the wake of such tumult. On the whole, Contreras brilliantly meets the ethnographic challenge of weaving different levels of analysis into one consistent descriptive and analytical pattern—even if his gender analysis, as argued below, is wanting.

On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City (2014) is Alice Goffman's dedicated and fully immersed ethnography of daily life for many Black people in a hyperpunitive urban community. She states that her ethnography provides "a close-up look at young men and women living in one poor and segregated Black community transformed by unprecedented levels of imprisonment and by the more hidden systems of

policing and supervision that accompanied them" (p. xii). Goffman suggests that the majority of men in the 6th Street neighborhood were wanted by law enforcement. Along with her argument that "the fear of capture and confinement has seeped into basic activities of daily life," this makes her study "an account of a community *on the run*" (p. xii). Like Rios and Contreras, Goffman foregrounds her participants' perspectives: "Thus, [she] provides an account of the prison boom and its more hidden practices of policing and surveillance as young people living in one relatively poor Black neighborhood in Philadelphia experience and understand them" (p. xiv). All in all, Goffman studies life on 6th Street, where "[at] any moment, [young Black men] may be stopped by police and [have] their tenuous claim to freedom revoked" (p. 20).[5]

Each of these texts is classified and cataloged in subfields like criminology and sociology, that is, certainly not as "critical masculinities studies." Nonetheless each deals heavily with their participants' masculine aspirations and ideals; each purports to study the gender dynamics at play. In fact, Rios dedicates one chapter to a sustained gender analysis, whereas Contreras and Goffman pepper their texts with gender analyses throughout. An explicit focus on individuals who ostensibly exemplify the street also ties these texts together though, as later discussed, this can become problematic. But what is the apparent character of masculinity in the street as these authors present it?

Perilous Masculinity

> Different environments provided the boys with limited and limiting resources with which to construct their manhood. The boys would often have to default to the manhood that they knew best, those masculine resources that the streets had to offer. These forms of masculinity were often the only concrete bricks the boys had to build their houses of manhood. (Rios, 2011, p. 131)

> At the age of fourteen, then, Gus attempted murder. Sadly, such violence was one of the few ways that he, and a growing cadre of marginal youngsters, could demonstrate their toughness. (Contreras, 2013, p. 59)

> In the 6th Street neighborhood and many like it, the criminal justice system now sets the terms for coming of age; it is a key stage on which the drama of young adulthood is played . . . (Goffman, 2014, p. 136)

To the detriment of more comprehensive understandings of masculinity in the street, the authors' gender analyses rely principally on perilous masculinity. Perilous masculinity—a concept I uncovered in, and compiled from, these texts—is the constitution of manhood via avenues full of ominous risk. One of its central characteristics is the foreseeable possibility of harm, injury, or suffering; this means that a person often exposes himself to, as well as brings onto others, indubitably anticipated pain. Importantly, perilous masculinity arises from a particular structural situation that these texts designate as "the street." This situation from which perilous masculinity arises is a physical locale characterized not only by iniquity but also (and by definition) by

impoverishment, deprivation, anguish, and despair. Thus, I use perilous masculinity to designate a brazen enterprise that strives for dignity in the face of privation. However, because it is a desperate and misguided attempt to overcome injustice, it is fated to ruin. Three attributes of perilous masculinity figure prominently across these texts: constant scheming, male chauvinism, and savage violence. I turn now to consecutively defining each.

Constant Scheming

> A man in legal jeopardy finds that his efforts to stay out of prison are aligned not with upstanding respectable action but with being a shady and distrustful character. (Goffman, 2014, p. 53)

As manifested in varied ways across and in these texts, constant scheming is a sense of perpetual involvement with making secret and underhanded plans. For example, Goffman (2014) argues that to remain in the street, men cultivated a secretive and unpredictable lifestyle that facilitated running and hiding from officialdom and loved ones alike. She terms this practice "concerted avoidance" (pp. 37-39). She noticed that "the two brothers" were the paragons of street manhood when it came to scheming (pp. 44-45). Their success at evading captors and silencing potential traitors earned them respect and admiration from Goffman's core study participants. The two brothers were apparently so secretive that "no person on 6th Street had ever been to their house—or even knew where it was," and the brothers' schemes were so masterful that their deceptive strategies for cultivating allegiance included coaching and mentoring youth as well as financially giving back to the community (p. 44). Here, constant scheming is supposedly a requisite for the construction of a reputable street manhood because, after all, "[g]etting arrested is nothing to be proud of . . ." (p. 123). While concerted avoidance and cynical generosity are fairly innocuous, constant scheming also manifested in more treacherous forms.

Contreras's (2013) data include details on dozens of drug robberies, but his analysis foregrounds one as a guiding narrative. This operation included Melissa luring a drug dealer into a "masculinity trap" (pp. 121-124). Seducing the man into a long night of drinking and dancing, Melissa eventually led the mark into an apartment where Gus, David, and Jonah had set an ambush. After several hours of savagely creative torture—which Contreras is correct to parallel with state-sponsored torture—the victim still refused to divulge the whereabouts of his stash. Annoyed, Gus took the man's keys and drove alone to the dealer's apartment to retrieve the loot. When he regrouped with the others, Gus held the drugs to the victim's face and said, "Oh, I thought you don't sell drugs . . . What the hell is this?" (p. 188). As David weighed the drugs, Jonah suspected some of the booty was missing and asked, "This is it? Where's the money?" Hearing the exchange, the dealer finally spoke up. He said that aside from the money, there was substantially more heroine than the 66 grams Gus returned with: "At least three hundred grams," the dealer said (p. 189). David asked Gus simply, "What's going on?"

Gus would eventually confide in Contreras (2013) that he stashed around 200 grams of heroine—worth anywhere between US$14,000 and US$21,000—in the side panel of his vehicle before returning to the scene of the torture. The missing US$48,000 in cash from the dealer's apartment remained a mystery. In this scenario, Gus, Contreras's research participant who is reported to be the manliest in the street, activated his street status to cheat his accomplices out of an estimated US$16,000 to US$19,000 each. Gus's treacherous scheming, as Contreras suggests, was a commonplace occurrence in the construction of masculinity in the street because "betrayal [is] the name of the game" (p. 185). This precept seems all the more feasible when considering it was often a drug dealer's double-crossing partner who provided *joloperos* with the necessary details for a successful stickup in the first place. Backstabbing, then, is another manifestation of constant scheming. A third manifestation is worth addressing because it highlights how the attributes of perilous masculinity found in these texts (i.e., schemery, chauvinism, and violence) often overlap and operate simultaneously.

The manipulative and cunning ability to strategically place others at risk was another manifestation of constant scheming, and it was typically gendered. For example, Mike and Chuck used women whom they considered disreputable (e.g., "hood rats") to ". . . run balloons of marijuana or pills into the visiting room" when they were incarcerated (Goffman, 2014, p. 126). Also, Pablo engaged in a similar scheme when he tasked a "woman to do his dirty work." In his words, "She did everything." Consequently, she carried all the risk: "I was getting only two thousand 'cause I was paying her six hundred to do all that shit. But I ain't give a fuck. There was nothing on me. If anything, all that shit was on her" (Contreras, 2013, p. 112). Finally, T "resorted to using women as a central source of income." When asked how he earned his money, T replied, "Pimp a bitch, you know, let that bitch come out her pocket, . . . act like I like her so she'll give me money and shit . . . Most bitches will give me whatever I need . . . Or [I'll] make her sell shit for me" (Rios, 2011, p. 140). Constant scheming, then, manifested not only as concerted avoidance and cynical generosity, and as treacherous betrayal, but also as the objectification and exploitation of women. The man who employed his cunning to manipulate women was a consistent trope across these texts. This form of scheming highlights how, according to popular criminological ethnographies, misogyny defines the construction of masculinity in the street.

Male Chauvinism

> Of all the men, Pablo was the most extreme in his hypermasculinity and misogyny. Over the years, he grew to hate women and repeatedly harked back to a time when women *knew their place*. He wished he lived in Afghanistan, where he could have many wives and women were under constant male surveillance. (Contreras, 2013, p. 129)

Male chauvinism is the disparagement or denigration of females in the belief that they are inferior to males and thus deserving of less than equal treatment. This, too, manifests in a variety of ways across and within these texts. Contreras (2013), for

example, suggests that gaining entry to a drug dealer's hideaway was almost guaranteed when the mission involved "the girl." Playing on men's apparent hypersexual masculine aspirations as well as the situational pressure of peer judgment, the girl's role was to bait the target into the ambush or persuade the mark to open the door to his hideout while *joloperos* laid in wait. In this sense, the girl was indispensable to a successful stickup. In spite of this, she was regularly deceived and exploited.

After using "the girl" to enter an apartment, men regularly lied about the score. Pablo told Contreras (2013), "I don't tell them what's really involved . . . I let them think something else. I'll gas them. I'll lie to them" (p. 126). Neno said that he short changed a female crewmember by 90% of her agreed-upon share because he saw women as gullible. In his words, "A woman is easier, she doesn't know anything about this business. You tell her anything and she'll believe it. Because a woman is like that. Women are *boba* (stupid). They're like children" (p. 126). Gus also cheated the girl out of her fair share by convincing her that the role was unimportant. When asked why, he explained simply, "I mean, it's just not natural for men to look at women as equals. That's basically it" (p. 127). Here, male chauvinism manifested as the guiding logic for justifying inequitable partnerships, but it was also presented in sexualized forms.

Contreras (2013) offers an account of a frustrating debate with Pablo. During the back-and-forth, Pablo argued that no woman would refuse sex if "the money was right." He had solicited a woman before and knew he could do it again. Contreras challenged him by pointing out the gross overgeneralization and Pablo retorted, "Well, your sociology shit is wrong . . . Every woman would do it. I'm tellin' you, from my experience" (p. 103). All of Contreras's subsequent attempts at unraveling Pablo's sexism failed because his manhood was such that women's "standpoint was mostly ignored, [and thus] it was easy to vilify them . . ." (p. 103).

While denying women recognition as human equals produced male chauvinism within which women were considered purchasable sexual objects, it also placed men on a slippery slope toward more brutish forms of street manhood. George and Jay, for example, recalled how Pablo often got aggressively physical with women at the nightclub, and said he was known to have "smacked a woman so hard that she fell and he even fell on the floor with her" (Contreras, 2013, p. 101). In the next subsection, I attend to some of the ways in which savage violence against women figures prominently into the reported construction of masculinity in the street. But first, it is worthwhile examining briefly a related manifestation of male chauvinism—reactions to feminization—to highlight, again, how these attributes of perilous masculinity overlap.

One of the first teachings young men received in their gender education was to "not turn out gay, or *un maricón*" (Contreras, 2013, p. 96).[6] As a result, "feminizing" insults put men in the street on the defensive. To recoup their manly standing, they often resorted to violence or its threat. For example, Spider felt his street manhood was called into question when Luis crossed out his tag on the wall with "*puto*," a Spanish homophobic slur similar to fag. Intent to "*dale en la madre*" (kick his ass), Spider confronted Luis who denied having defaced the tag. Rather than enact violence on a potentially innocent victim, Spider performed emasculating violence upon Luis to regain his own masculine standing by issuing a threat: "The next time I see that shit,

I'm a slap the shit out of you" (Rios, 2011, p. 127). Rios states that "homophobic language was a common bonding and exclusionary practice for these boys" and goes on to suggest that "chauvinism and homophobia went hand in hand and served as the basis for the development of masculinity" (p. 189). Lastly, when news that Steve was a snitch spread through the 6th Street neighborhood, he sensed his masculine standing had been compromised. He invited one of the young men he suspected of outing him to his home to discuss the matter: "As the young man entered, Steve began yelling, 'Who the fuck told you I was a rat, nigga? Who?'" The young man replied coolly, "They got your statement on file." Steve threatened to kill the young man and, when the young man approached him, "Steve pulled his gun and pistol-whipped the young man in the face and then in the back of his head." Goffman (2014) argues that men occasionally "resort to violence to rebuild their reputation after they snitch" (pp. 48-49). But violence was not simply an instrument to reassert male chauvinism. Rather, each text suggests violence reigned in the construction of masculinity in the street more generally. As Contreras (2013) puts it, "it was violence and its threat that dictated street status" (p. 181).

Savage Violence

> While wealthy men can prove their masculinity through the ability to make money and consume products that make them "manly," poor young men use toughness, violence, and survival as a means of proving their masculinity . . . (Rios, 2011, p. 132)

Savage violence refers to the callous willingness to execute or endure disturbingly atrocious pain. This was demonstrated in a variety of ways across and within these texts. Rios (2011) suggests that a consequence of the street's savage violence is respect for men who brave the ubiquitous pain and injury that surrounds them. At 15 years old, for example, Spider was "brutally attacked by gang members on a night when he sat on his front door steps talking with friends." Spider recalled that for no apparent reason, "They shanked [stabbed] me four times in the stomach, one in the chest, and eight in the leg" (p. 77). Apparently a moment to cultivate reputable street masculinity, the "don't snitch campaign" (p. 60) implicitly regulated Spider's course of action. Thus, "[he] wanted to be left alone. And that's why [he] dropped the charges" (p. 77). Marquill also endured savage violence without complaint. Rios had seen the boy wearing a white shirt soiled with black tar and noticed his lip was busted open. According to one of Rios's study participants, "Marquill had talked back to [a] police officer. The officer got out of the car, grabbed Marquill by his T-shirt, and slammed him onto the grunge-covered cement parking lot of the McDonald's." After receiving the beating from the cop, one of Marquill's friends asked him what happened. In a monotone and nearly emotionless voice he stated as a matter of fact: "The Narcs, they beat my ass" (p. 81).

These texts suggest that enduring the purportedly savage violence of their environments increased masculine standing in the street. As Goffman (2014) puts it, "news may travel of a young man's bravery during the beating that sometimes accompanies

the arrest—like it did when Ronny neither cried nor begged when the police broke his arm with their batons" (p. 123). Contreras (2013) discusses the value of emerging from a knife fight with a serious wound: "Gus was scarred for life. And in most places, that scar was a stigma. But on the street, that thick slant running down his jaw became a badge of honor" (p. 81). While enduring savage violence is one manifestation of this attribute of perilous masculinity, these texts also suggest men in the street internalized barbarity, which made the enactment of savage violence supposedly figure most prominently in the construction of masculinity in the street.

As a teenager, Tyrell found himself "compelled to become a man on his own, to act and maneuver as an adult, and to take responsibility for himself." He chose to offer his brutishness for hire, and "the drug dealers began paying him to recover debts. With this work Tyrell became extremely violent . . ." (Rios, 2011, p. 64). Discussing one of his collections, Tyrell said, "I had to send a message that I was not fucking around . . . I grabbed his ass and whooped him so hard he's been limping ever since . . ." (p. 65). Jose is also said to have developed a savagely violent masculinity. As Rios conversed with him outside of a flea market, he sensed Jose was distracted. Suddenly, Jose cut Rios off and told him to wait. Rios "turned in the direction [Jose] was looking and noticed another young man walking toward [them]. Jose ran up to him and, without warning, punched him in the face and knocked him down," at which point Jose proceeded to kick and stomp his victim in the stomach (p. 66). Later, when asked why he did it, Jose explained that Puppet, his victim, was a rival gang member who recently moved nearby, and whom Jose and his friends vowed to run out of the neighborhood by unceasingly attacking him on sight.

Rios (2011) suggests that boys in the street "were inculcated into a set of hypermasculine expectations . . ." (p. 130), and make sense of savage violence by reminding that it is a general truth that "toughness, dominance, and the willingness to resort to violence to resolve interpersonal conflicts are central characteristics of masculine identity"[7] (p. 133). This, along with their "frustration with the lack of viable employment and guidance opportunities," is suggested to have made boys in the street more likely to treat masculinity as an "exaggerated exhibition of physical strength and personal aggression . . . expressed through physical and sexual domination of others"[8] (p. 130). Savage violence, then, is also reported to manifest as wanton victimization within masculine contests for street status. But it also manifested in more heinous ways.

Violence against women was a consistent manifestation of savage violence across these texts. For example, frustrated with the drama of the love triangle between himself, Marie, and Chantelle, Mike consulted his friends who agreed, "Marie needed to be taught a lesson." He contracted a female neighbor and drove around 6th Street in search of Marie. When they located her, Mike's hired muscle "beat Marie against a fence. Mike stayed in the car and called to her to hit Marie again and again. Mike said that Marie didn't fight back, only put her arms up to block the blows to her face" (Goffman, 2014, p. 103). This is repulsive enough, but not all men in these studies used a go-between to enact savage violence against women.

Contreras (2013), for example, details having witnessed Pablo beat his girlfriend. Angry that Neida talked back to him when she said she did not want Pablo to place her

above his mother, "[he] shot up from the sofa and over to Neida, and with precision, punched her repeatedly on the sides of the head. As he hit her, she stumbled out of her chair and fell to the floor on her knees…" as Pablo continued with a fury of punches as he yelled at her (p. 134).

A final example shows the most depraved manifestation of savage violence. Sitting on a public stairwell discussing drug robbery torture, Gus said, "This nigga, Neno, he even raped a bitch that was inside the apartment . . . He's done that shit before . . . While we were torturin' he just took her to a bedroom and raped her" (Contreras, 2013, p. 173). Uneasy about this, Contreras asked around. No one was willing to share details, choosing instead to distance himself from the act by claiming to know only that it had occurred. When Contreras finally raised the question of rape to Neno, he swore,

> If we find women and children in the place, we don't touch them. We put them in a room so that they don't see what we do. We don't want them to see burin' people or nothing. We don't touch them. Hell no. (p. 174)

Savage violence against women is, perhaps, the most disturbing manifestation of the overlapping attributes of masculinity in the street as it is presented in these texts. It also confirms the ruinous nature of perilous masculinity. The men in these studies are said to construct their masculinity with confidence that the street licensed them to employ violence, but at the same time executing it could make them open to disrepute. This is why, for example, Mike hired a hitwoman; why George felt Pablo's battering of women called into question his status as "the man" (Contreras, 2013, p. 101); and why Neno refused to acknowledge he had sexually assaulted a woman.[9]

To be sure, these abominable forms of savage violence exist across social categories. But social stratification is especially problematic for gender relations because structural inequality too often gives rise to compensatory forms of masculinity that falsely give some men a sense of power amid other forms of powerlessness. Violence against women is an abhorrent reality across social groups, but its carrying out by the men in these studies is particularly repulsive. Truth be told, many of the behaviors the men in these studies are said to exhibit (e.g., rape, contracted beatings of ex-girlfriends, wantonly assaulting a new neighbor, torture, backstabbing, etc.) are worthy of condemnation, and the authors are correct to bring these troubling realities to the fore. It is, after all, the ethnographer's responsibility to examine the entirety of the milieus under study, including topics that might bring ignominy.

That being said, the authors' principal employment of perilous masculinity for understanding masculinity in the street is also arguably shortsighted. I do not question that the men in these research locales, to some extent, constituted their sense of manhood in perilous ways. Rather, I suggest the problem is that the authors abandon a comprehensive examination of the milieus and people they study for a myopic look at a one-dimensional form of street manhood. My analysis found that these texts foreground perilous masculinity as the most important, even though the books show a more complicated street manhood was uncovered and could have been engaged.

Multiple Masculinities in the Street

> Block residents left stuffy apartments and were scattered everywhere. In front of the first building, several mothers sat on parked cars and talked while watching their children play street games. Kids just learning to walk (the ones that fall easily) played with bottle tops, empty wrappers, and empty soda cans . . . Other kids hopped from one sidewalk square to another, trying to skip over the dividing lines . . . Older kids rode bikes in zigzags or raced. Their recklessness almost caused collisions with people standing around. *That little nigga better watch that shit*, warned a young male . . . Others played tag, running in circles, dodging each other, hiding behind pedestrians, trying to avoid being "it" . . . Neighborhood teens, mostly males, separated into groups that sat or leaned on old cars without alarms. Their owners never fussed about scratches or dents. A smaller group smoked weed and drank beer on the block's far side to avoid neighborhood gossip. But most just talked, joked, and listened to rap music from a parked car nearby . . . Some Dominican guys played cards on car hoods and gambled dice against the storefront. They always played for money, for those wrinkled, crunched-up dollar bills they sometimes threw on the ground . . . When the winner tried to leave early, especially after winning, others urged him to stay . . . Nearby, Pablo, Tukee, Dee, and I prepared mixed drinks . . . We drank, joked, and listened to music blasting from the *bodega* . . . Showing off, a young Dominican guy sometimes danced alone, smiling as he improvised steps . . . We were all happy faces. Pablo slapped him a five. "*Coño, tu ere' el mae'tro*," . . . It was a perfect summer night to hang out—people were chatting, people were laughing, people were smoking, people were gambling, people were drinking. And some, I should add, were preparing for a drug hit. (Contreras, 2013, pp. 9-11)

This vignette is an excerpt from Contreras's masterful illustration of a perfect summer night in the South Bronx. I have quoted it at length because it highlights two important points for the study of masculinity in the street: First, a variety of actors make up the street, and amid this heterogeneity are multiple masculinities. In Contreras's scene, *joloperos* figure only minimally into the broader picture of summer nightlife in the street. Here, the street is filled with sociality, innocence, friendly competition, festivity, and terpsichorean play. The criminal elements occupy only a small part of the street and can hardly be said to define its totality.[10] What's more, this diversity of street actors, as well as the many others not included in this vignette, constructs and performs masculinity in ways that (minimally) are not identical to the perilous kind offered in the authors' gender analyses.

Rather than explore the multifarious nature of life in the street, or wrestle to present intelligibly the intricate complexity and diversity of masculinities in the street, each author centered his or her analytical attention on certain street actors. In so doing, they effectively obscured the relation between their research participants and the rest of the milieu within which the men being studied were situated (i.e., the street). Consequently, each author treated the street as delinquent social and cultural orientations exhibited by a particular group of errant individuals within "ghetto" communities. And, thereby, the authors' focus on contemptible individuals gives the false impression that only and predominantly these men, and their purported characteristics, define the street. Again, to be sure, ignoble men certainly are a part of the street, but they do not solely define

it. Depictions to the contrary are not only problematic but also, as Contreras so vividly demonstrates above, untrue. In addition to this analysis, which emanated from rich description of a perfect summer night in the South Bronx, a number of other reasons further explain why the dominant concept of the street, as employed in popular criminological ethnographies, should be rethought.

First, from a sociological perspective, nondelinquent individuals continue to operate in and navigate the street. Declared and actual attempts at self-segregation from criminally involved persons do not succeed in erecting a clear boundary between supposedly criminal and noncriminal residents. Rather, the vast majority of people in the street experience institutions of power in ways that are broadly shared, though skewed conceptions of the street do little to examine this.[11] Second, scholarly work on discrimination has found that where one lives—one's neighborhood—is frequently correlated with prejudicial treatment in a great many social realms.[12] These studies emphasize that anyone who comes from a place putatively regarded as the street can be accorded a stigma all "ghetto" residents share and carry with them beyond the boundaries of their neighborhoods. Third, misleading partitions between "the street" (in its conventional meaning) and the rest of the community participates discursively in the legitimation of power. This is because analyses that suggest a small group of errant individuals constitute the "problem" element in certain locales tend to (a) overlook the structural inequalities that often lead to criminality and criminalization, and (b) target the men being studied for negative judgments more than the countless wrongs people in these places experience daily as a consequence of broader injustice. As a consequence, and however unintentionally, such analyses thereby participate in the reproduction of hegemonic manifestations of class, race, and gendered power.[13]

Rather than depict the street as the province of a minority of criminally inclined men, the authors would have done well to present it as a historically and structurally marginalized urban social milieu wherein crime and its accompanying realities are at the fore of social relations. Such a reconceptualization takes into mind the heterogeneity of actors who comprise the street—that is, it does not focus solely on presumably ignoble men—while bearing in mind that the street is neither an ahistorical nor apolitical outcome of power. Thus, this revised understanding of the street both broadens the analytic field and shatters the misleading prism through which masculinity in the street has often been contemplated.

With this in mind, it is not difficult to recognize how the authors' spotlighting of a handful of deviant actors results in a univocal understanding of masculinity in the street. The multiplicity of masculinities that likely existed in their research sites tended thereafter to be erased; nuanced understandings were traded for canonical myopia. For example, when Jose aspired to desist from delinquency, Rios suggests that "his main concern was to stay away from the people he associated with on the street, because he wanted to escape the pressures to prove himself through violence and criminality" (p. 62). Here, Rios uncritically perpetuates a faulty conceptualization of the street. That Jose aims to steer clear of his violent and criminal peers is not to say that the street is comprised solely of those characteristics. But Rios took for granted that the street and violent criminality were synonymous; his narrative proceeded without challenging this hegemonic presumption.

In sum, these authors do not critically interrogate the street: rather, their work tends to perpetuate an orthodox criminological stance that may amount, in effect, to participating in the discursive formation of power. Furthermore, the authors' analyses of masculinity in the street are shortsighted because they focus their gender analyses on only a particular set of actors who exist in the (otherwise heterogeneous) street. Resulting from this faulty conceptualization is that all men tend to be portrayed one dimensionally; as the street is also comprised of noncriminal and nonviolent people, the lives of men who engage in crime are actually more complicated than the ethnographies illustrate.[14] This points to broader issues in the criminological study of masculinity, as demonstrated in earlier and foundational texts about masculinity by James Messerschmidt (1986, 1993). For these ethnographies show clearly that criminally involved study participants, like all human beings, lead complicated lives. Throughout the texts, the men studied exhibited an array of aspirations, emotions, and ideals; however, the implications of these complexities for the construction of masculinity in the street were left unexplored. In the next section, I make use of R. W. Connell's theorization of multiple masculinities to suggest how more adequate gender analyses could have been offered; the texts are reread to highlight moments where more comprehensive queries of street manhood were available but not pursued.

Toward a Complicated Notion of Street Manhood

Critical masculinities studies are indebted to R. W. Connell's theorization of multiple masculinities (Connell, 1995, 2000). Her work argues that investigations of gender should attend to the fact that masculinity is relational, multiple, and a site for critical theory (i.e., it concerns "questions of social justice"; Connell, 1995, p. 83). Her formulation of "the social organization of masculinity" deals with the relations between hegemony, subordination, complicity, and marginalization. Rather than fixed character types, these are "configurations of practice generated in particular situations within a changing structure of relationships" (Connell, 1995, p. 81). In other words, her work offers a way to examine gendered relations of power between classes and groups of men. In addition, she reminds us that even within a given setting—such as the street—"there will be different ways of enacting manhood, different ways of learning to be a man, different conceptions of the self and different ways of using the male body" (Connell, 2000, p. 10). Importantly, Connell's framework does not insist on crisp demarcations among multiple masculinities within a particular locale. Rather, her theorization offers a way out of essentialism by suggesting that masculinity is a gender project that involves a dynamic process of configuring practices.[15] Thus, the intellectual task at hand is not about identifying differences between and among the men being studied. Instead, "we have to unpack the milieux of class and race and scrutinize the gender relations operating within them. There are, after all, gay black men and effeminate factory hands, not to mention middle-class rapists and cross-dressing bourgeois" (Connell, 1995, p. 76). This is all to say that the "configuration" of masculinity within a group, and even within a particular individual, is much more complicated than these texts suggest.

With all this in mind, the subsections below focus on instances where men studied in these ethnographies exhibited traits incompatible with perilous masculinity, and yet the discrepancy went unremarked upon. Ironically, authors did not incorporate complexities suggested even by their own gender analyses into these ethnographies. Yet, these "unremarked" points regarding gender are worth raising as they reveal that nonruinous avenues toward a dignified masculinity in the street exist. To be clear, my argument does not seek to redeem the men in these studies for contemptible behavior that each text has revealed. Nor is my argument that the following attributes figure into study participants' actual perceptions of their masculinity: I have no grounds to make such a claim. What I am showing is that these texts present events, or happenings, that cast doubt on whether perilous masculinity is truly the only possibility present for pursuing and constructing men's identities in the street. My intention is to highlight observations each author reported on, but did not utilize, as instructive for exploring the multiplicity of aspirations and ideals men in the street exhibit—a project that would have produced a more nuanced understanding of the nature of street manhood. Here, then, are three attributes in the texts which show a more complicated, albeit contradictory, notion of street manhood than is actually theorized by the authors of these texts. I call these three traits familial commitment, exuberant generosity, and principled existence, respectively.

Familial Commitment

> She just mad you don't mess with her no more . . . She knows you pay for all his clothes, all his sneaks. Everybody knows you care for your son. (Goffman, 2014, p. 56)

Familial commitment is a prideful sense of dedication to one's family and loved ones, and it manifests in myriad ways across these texts. Goffman, for example, offers countless descriptions of men in the 6th Street neighborhood demonstrating serious interest in their roles as fathers and father figures. Chuck, at the age of 13, took on the position of head of household by obtaining work in the underground economy, so that he could buy food for his younger brothers and make an impact on his mother's drug addiction. Also, after an old friend assisted Benny with delaying his court proceedings by more than a year, "spending time with his baby-mom and two children" was the most thrilling part of remaining on the street (p. 155). What's more, during Mike's sentencing hearing, the judge said that he was most impressed by Mike's commitment as a father. Goffman recounts, "He says the letters from Mike's children made the biggest impact on him; he could tell how much his children loved him and that they actually wrote the letters themselves." Mike, the judge said, was obviously a "good person who had done some bad things." Mike's familial commitment left such a strong impression that the judge sentenced him to 6 months for what could have been a 16-year prison term.[16] Familial commitment was present in the other texts as well.

Another example emerges from Contreras's work, showing how a main source of Pablo's depression was stress at not being able to care for his children in the fashion to which he had grown accustomed.[17] Regardless, Pablo took great pride in his commitment

to his children and to his loved ones. He patiently taught his daughter to read because he wanted to positively contribute to her life outcomes; in his view, "without good education, man, she's just gonna be a statistic" (p. 222). He also dedicated himself to practicing baseball with his younger half brother. When asked why, Pablo said, "Because nobody did it with me. 'Cause I want his dream to come true . . . I just want to make this dream come true the way a father would" (p. 223). In his familial commitment, "Pablo expressed warmth and caring, traits no one saw on the street" (p. 222); nonetheless, this was clearly a core aspect of his sense of self.

For his part, Rios shares Franky's story. Since the age of 9, Franky has "played father figure in his family." After their father abandoned the children at an early age, "Franky remembered dropping off and picking up his two sisters at daycare and school" (p. 136). What's more, Franky exhibited a profound familial commitment when "At seventeen, he accomplished a lifetime dream: to help his mother with her [two and a quarter hour] commute" (p. 137). With the money he had saved from his work as a carpenter's assistant, he bought his mother a car.

Across these texts, study participants' familial commitment is presented with little explicit consideration of how the ideals driving it figure into the construction of masculinity in the street. These observations could have resulted in a more nuanced understanding of the gender dynamics at play (e.g., Franky's lifetime dream seems so obviously implicative of masculinity) but are mentioned and then left aside. But other potential attributes toward a more complicated notion of street manhood are hinted at, too, within these texts.

Exuberant Generosity

> Did they pay for anything?
>
> No, I had all the money. I spent all the money.
>
> Why?
>
> You know, because those guys didn't have money, they're from the barrio. If I have money, we're all going to have fun, forget it. (Contreras, 2013, p. 195)

Exuberant generosity is the magnanimous sharing of jubilant festivities. This arises most clearly in Contreras's text but also briefly in Goffman's (2014).[18] "High lifers," for example, "spent their robbery profits in splurges, or excess gratification. They went all out drinking, dancing, and drugging in nightclubs, having all-night orgies in hotel rooms, all-out feasting in restaurants, all-out high life in Miami or the Dominican Republic" (p. 194). Even before they were drug robbers, Contreras's study participants exhibited this kind of pleasure sharing. Reflecting on Pablo's exuberant generosity at the height of his "street stardom," Jay recalled,

> Like when we went out, he pulled out his money and was always buyin' bottles, like six, seven, eight bottles of Moet. We were drinkin', we had all these girls around us. He was tippin' the bartenders, the waitresses, givin' them mad money. (p. 100)

Contreras claims that exuberant generosity is a way of "exercising a hidden, masculine power" (p. 100). He also suggests that it is a strategy for a man to develop "a paternalistic status among his barrio peers" (p. 195). The problem, however, is that Contreras does not make clear how he arrived at this understanding of exuberant generosity. He leaves his claim unsubstantiated and quickly moves on with his narrative, leaving the impression that this part of his analysis—potentially relevant for understanding masculinity construction—was not theoretically germane. For Contreras, this trait is a cynically self-interested project for cultivating paternalistic power rather than a quixotically charitable project for "lift[ing] peers out of their misery and despair" (p. 195). Especially given his close relationship with his study participants Contreras may be right but, in the absence of closer analysis, it is also possible that exuberant generosity is more meaningful in revealing a complicated notion of street manhood than Contreras allows; in the latter case, he would have treated manifestations of such generosity in too cursory and dismissive a fashion. A third attribute of a more complex understanding is as follows.

Principled Existence

> Pops wouldn't steal from nobody. He would rather starve than steal. (Rios, 2011, p. 49)

Principled existence is the valuing of a dignified lifestyle that transcends one's marginalized structural situation and the stigmas associated with it; here, again, evidence appears across and within these texts. For example, Rios discusses Tyrell's father's valiant efforts "to keep Tyrell sheltered from the effects of poverty" and raise him to be an upright person (pp. 48-49). Although this father–son relationship eventually became strained, and the "youth control complex" along with the lack of economic opportunity came to push Tyrell into small-scale drug dealing, it still appears Tyrell continued to strive for a principled existence. As he clarified, "It was only weed" (p. 51), a statement especially meaningful considering the progressive state and radical city within which he spoke. But it was not only with regard to criminality that the men in these studies hinted at their appreciation for a principled existence.

When asked what he would do if lack of resources in his community were no longer an obstacle, Jose replied that he would finish high school and continue his education in community college where he would earn a mechanic's certificate (Rios, 2011). Study participants across these texts reported desiring legitimate work: In and of itself, this arguably points to the value men in the street place on living a principled existence. But Jose's second answer suggests that he longed for a more profound kind of human dignity. He continued, "Maybe a lawyer, maybe helping the community, those in my position now or those who will be in my position. People who get in trouble, I like to help them" (p. 70). Here, Jose is positing that principled existence involves more than economic security, that is, it also involves engaging one's community in a transformative way.

Transformative politics are mentioned in two of these texts but neither plumbs the accounts for what this could mean about masculinity in the street. Contreras (2013),

for example, mentions that the end of the crack era emerged from several factors, not least of which was the community's refusal to any longer accept the ravages of the drug epidemic. As Contreras puts it, people in the street decided "enough was enough [and] took a stand" (p. 110). Certainly, this was a moment when notions of street manhood were being contested and redefined; rather than incorporating this principled moment as part of his gender analysis, though, Contreras quickly moves on.

For his part, Rios (2011) offers considerable discussion on how boys in his study exhibited transformative politics in the street. For example, he recognizes the infrapolitical (Scott, 1990) nature of some of the boys' minor crimes; he also examines how the "hyphy movement" promoted dissident action against respectable decorum, acts Rios refers to as "deviant politics" (p. 118). What's more, Rios discusses how some of the boys in his study developed a radical social justice consciousness intent on "dismantl[ing] punitive social control and transform other forms of oppression." Nine of the boys in his study "became involved in an organization that protested police brutality and . . . 'the prison industrial complex,' a system of private and government agencies that economically benefit from the incarceration of marginalized populations" (p. 121). However, Rios does not contemplate how these youth's furtive, deviant, and radical politics as demands for a principled existence figure into the construction of masculinity in the street. Certainly, political consciousness and struggle against the prison industrial complex do not take these boys out of the street; indeed, it announces their commitment to and solidarity with the street. Unfortunately, then, these authors do not push their analyses further to explore the more complicated nature of street manhood they chronicle: Their accounts nonetheless suggest that perilous masculinity is not the only possible form of masculinity that exists, or can exist, on the street.

Conclusion: Refusing the Colonial Gaze

In this article, I presented a sociological discourse analysis of three well-known criminological ethnographies. In particular, I concentrated on authors' discussions of masculinity in the street. I found that each author employed perilous masculinity as his or her principal analytic through which to understand street manhood. This is problematic in ways that suggest criminologists, in the main, do not adequately research nor include in their research people who actually do come together in the everyday life of communities however marginalized: Noncriminal and nonviolent elements are just as major occupants of the street though they generally go unseen. Vis-à-vis this omission, a more facile analytic prism (i.e., "the street") foredooms what is actually a more complex intellectual task at hand, that is, understanding the complicated nature of street manhood through a widened (rather than foreshortened) depiction of gender dynamics at play. Next, I questioned whether street manhood is solely constituted through perilous masculinity, drawing on R. W. Connell's theorization of multiple masculinities to highlight nonperilous attributes men in these studies exhibited but which authors did not take up in their gender analyses. By way of conclusion, it must be said that this article also takes the authors to task on their apparent lack of self-reflexivity concerning the colonial gaze.

Both explicitly and implicitly, each author acknowledges and expresses scruples about the imperial pitfalls of the ethnographic practice. Goffman (2014), for example, sought to avoid storming into the 6th Street neighborhood on a mission to extract valuable knowledge about the locals, and instead took great efforts to develop a sense of empathy with the men she studied. She dedicates several pages to a reflexive engagement on her place in relation to the people she studied and shares her aim to "walk in their shoes" (pp. 235-243). Contreras (2013) also offers reflexive ruminations. For him, distancing his work from that of the so-called "cowboy ethnographer" is of primary importance. By this, he means researchers who exploit "exotic others" they study to satisfy middle-class readers' curiosity about places only known to them through "images on the nightly news" (pp. 26-27). Rios (2011) is even more explicit about work he feels perpetuates the colonial legacy of the ethnographic practice. He identifies Venkatesh's (2008) study as an exemplar of a "jungle-book trope" which, as he explains, is a

> familiar colonial fairy-tale narrative in the Western imagination of the "Other" [that] goes something like this: "I got lost in the wild, the wild people took me in and helped me, made me their king, and I lived to tell civilization about it!" (Rios, 2011, p. 14)

At the level of practice, each author is correct to think critically about his or her specific research program and does well in his or her strategic attempts to avoid the imperial pitfalls ethnography presents. But, at the level of discourse, I suggest the authors' essentializing of manhood in the street in effect operates within the imperial paradigm about which they claim to have scruples.

It is not enough to scrutinize only the intention of research practice. It is also imperative that criminological ethnographers interrogate the theories and concepts employed when making sense of places and people studied. This analysis suggests that these celebrated authors' failure to interrogate the street, in tandem with their reliance on perilous masculinity, participates—however unintentionally—in hegemonic official discourse about structurally oppressed people in certain locales. By overlooking the heterogeneity of the places they study, and not sufficiently engaging with the complicated—and contradictory—character of their participants' gendered aspirations and ideals, ethnographers may unwittingly perpetuate status quo power relations and produce narratives that are more orthodox than progressive. This is, and should be, of deep concern to feminist criminologists who have long refused essentialist tropes about marginalized groups; for male-dominated criminology often remains politically regressive at the same time as it purports to incorporate gender analyses. On a hopeful note, though, these ethnographies nicely chronicle—even as they do not adequately theorize—the existence and the potential for alternative masculinities that are far more complex, and notably less perilous, than these authors themselves acknowledged.

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Notes

1. To be sure, feminist texts are also culpable of overly emphasizing perilous masculinity when studying marginalized groups. See, among others, Messerschmidt (1993) and Mullins (2006).
2. Influential texts for this unidimensional conceptualization of the street include, among others, Sutherland (1939), Cohen (1955), and Anderson (1999).
3. Conversations with this special issue's guest editor also informed the selection of these texts.
4. *Punished* (Rios, 2011) received, among other accolades, the "Best Book Award" from the Latino/a Sociology Section of the American Sociological Association and was a finalist for the "C. Wright Mills Book Award" from the Society for the Study of Social Problems. *The Stickup Kids* (Contreras, 2013) received numerous "Honorable Mention" endorsements from various sociological as well as anthropological societies and was also a finalist for the "C. Wright Mills Book Award." Before the controversy, *On the Run* (Goffman, 2014) received widespread acclaim from national as well as international book review organizations and was held in high regard by premier American intellectuals; before its published form, the work earned Goffman the American Sociological Association's prestigious "Dissertation Award."
5. Treating a text by a woman in the same interrogation of "male dominance" is necessary for the critique I put forth in this article. I aim to call into question the jejuneness and myopia that characterizes much of the "dominant" criminological discourse on gender. That male-authored texts prevail in this discourse should not obscure that women are equally able to produce superficial and problematic gender theorizations. As I have already stated, it is my view that calling out the gender bias in what comes to "dominate" is but an inroad toward a more forceful confrontation of criminology's male dominance; a confrontation that must wield feminist criticism against any text that "dominates," especially when it purports to examine gender.
6. This reflection is couched within a rich intersectional rumination on his friends' hatred toward Black women. Contreras (2013), however, was the only author to deal with anti-Blackness in the constitution of perilous masculinity, so a longer discussion of this in the body of my article would be disingenuous to the findings of my sociological discourse analysis. Consequently, academic propriety again deploringly relegates Black women to the endnotes.
7. Rios does well to not pathologize his study participants by avoiding individual and—to a lesser extent—cultural determinism. Instead, he suggests that a consequence of the "youth control complex" is the production of a particular form of masculinity. Rios has perilous masculinity in mind when he cites Kimmel and Mahler (2003) to suggest boys in the street are "overconformists to a particular normative construction of masculinity." Still, his gender analysis is unsatisfactory and problematic because it is, at its base, a socially

deterministic model for understanding masculinity in the street. As he puts it, "The system dichotomized manhood. It forced the boys to choose between "good" working-class manhood or hypermasculinity and did not allow them room to shift between the two" (Rios, 2011, pp. 128-135).

8. Here, Rios is employing Harris's (2000) definition of hypermasculinity.
9. Kenya best articulated the ruinous nature of savage violence against women from her experience in the street. Asked how she dealt with male chauvinism, she responded, "I had to fight dudes . . . I've fought hella dudes . . . That's what made hella people scared of me. [She fist fought with males to prove herself] . . . And even though he won physically, the story got around that he was a punk for fighting a girl. One time, my friend got raped by this dude. So we beat the shit out of him and took a baseball bat with nails in it to his ass, . . . taking justice into our own hands. I mean, not justice, 'cause beating his ass is not enough . . . It sent a message out there that . . . that shit, it's just not acceptable" (Rios, 2011, p. 132).
10. While Contreras's vignette best illustrates the multiplicity of human life in the street, both Rios and Goffman also acknowledge the presence of noncriminal street actors in the neighborhoods they study. Rios (2011) suggests that nondelinquent youth found themselves "guilty by association" when they maintained ties with people who had previously been arrested (pp. 142-156). Goffman (2014) talked to "clean people" who reportedly hypersegregated themselves from 6th Street boys (pp. 163-180). But these authors make note of other street actors, so as to construct dichotomies between people: "lawful" and "deviant" as well as "clean" and "dirty." I later discuss how this hampers a nuanced study of life in the street, and why it is problematic.
11. For example, Rios (2011) observes, "Young men who were not delinquent but lived in poor neighborhoods also encountered patterns of punishment. They were also, for example, pulled over by police officers, questioned by teachers and administrators, and looked at with suspicion by merchants and community members. Kids who were good, those who had not broken any law and did relatively well in school, experienced part of this stigma and punishment as well" (p. 19). As a consequence of similar forms of state harassment in the 6th Street neighborhood, Goffman (2014) reports, "the police have lost considerable legitimacy in the community: they are seen searching, questioning, beating, and rounding up young men all over the neighborhood. As Miss Regina often put it, the police are 'an occupying force'" (p. 60).
12. For example, Keene and Padilla (2010) found that people relocating to Eastern Iowa from "ghetto" Chicago neighborhoods encountered pervasive stigmatization in association with their previous place of residence, Rist (2000) sheds light on teachers' differential treatment and expectations of children who live in the "ghetto," and Bunel, L'Horty, and Petit (2016) found significant employment discrimination against young people according to their place of residence.
13. Here, I follow Said's (1979) employment of hegemony as a Gramscian concept for interrogating the durability and strength of discourses that serve dominant groups.
14. It must be said that although I exact a feminist criticism against these texts, outside of this article I often express my gratitude to, admiration for, and acknowledgment of these authors. In different ways, each has inspired my own scholarly development, and I hope my focused engagement with their work is taken, minimally, as a sign of respectful collegiality.
15. Perhaps, then, it is more hindrance than help to imagine the production of masculinity as labor toward building "houses of manhood" that requires concrete masculine bricks and resources. Such a metaphor is overly stative when the critical study of masculinities requires dynamism.

16. Goffman (2014) offers many more examples of men demonstrating profound familial commitment. At the same time, her research presents instances for examining the contradictory nature of street manhood. For example, at the same time that Mike spent hours on the phone pleading with Marie to not compromise his ability to spend time with their children, he also refused to acknowledge he was the father to Lisa's niece's pregnancy.
17. Not without contradiction, Pablo remained a male chauvinist, so the other main source of his depression was "his inability to be paternalistic to his girlfriend" (Contreras, 2013, p. 220).
18. Goffman (2014) mentions, and quickly moves on from, a time when Mike hosted his own birthday party: "He paid for [a] hotel room and bought two hundred dollars' worth of hard liquor and another fifty dollars' worth of marijuana for his guests" (p. 227). It is not surprising that Rios's (2011) joyless narrative is absent of exuberant generosity.

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