

9-2015

Pimps of Harlem: Talk of Labor and the Sociology of Risk

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Pimps of Harlem: Talk of labor and the sociology of risk

by

Amber Horning Ruf

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Criminal Justice in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy.

The City University of New York

2015

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Criminal Justice in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Abstract

Pimps of Harlem: Talk of labor and the sociology of risk

by

Amber Horning Ruf

Adviser: Valli Rajah

This dissertation examines how third-party labor is socially constructed by pimps or third parties.¹ Pimps and their labor are investigated using sociological paradigms of risk. Risk is defined as exposure to danger (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991) and can produce negative or positive feelings and outcomes (Lupton, 1999). I explore how third-party labor is connected to risk with the following research questions: 1) How does the U.S. media portray third parties as risky, and how does this influence proposed remedies to this social problem? 2) How do third parties' at-risk status impact their role in illicit and licit economies? 3) How do third parties' social networks influence their business practices, and how do these nexuses impact the riskiness of the work? and 4) How do third parties perceive their voluntary, work-related risk-taking as positive?

I chose this population of lower-echelon pimps because they are present in the public imagination in two ways. First, since the 1970s the “ghetto pimp” has been depicted through Blaxploitation films such as *SuperFly* and *The Mack* and by the news media as flashy, dangerous predators within “ghetto” landscapes. Second, since the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) (2000),² many pimps legally qualify as sex traffickers. This legal conflation, combined with the policy agenda of abolitionists and anti-traffickers, shapes a cultural image of pimps as a

¹ I use these terms interchangeably (see Chapter 1 for definitions).

² See Chapter 1 for the legal definition of the TVPA.

new, global danger. Because these lower-echelon pimps have been written and are being re-written into the history of the sex trade, their overlooked stories are more important than ever.

The findings show that the U.S. news media portrays third parties as predatory, omnipresent, and organized. This is likely to reflect the kind of *risk knowledge*, or public idea about who is at-risk and who is risky (Douglas, 1985), in commercial sex markets. Overall, pimps are branded as quite dangerous — not only in “ghetto” landscapes, but also on Main Street. The proposed remedies to this social problem are generally punitive solutions, which do not address the roots of this problem, such as poverty.

The social context of this sample of pimps is akin to Loic Wacquant’s description of advanced marginalization, where due to poverty and being relegated to “ghettos,” this group experiences extreme deprivation at the margins. Third parties’ social constructivist accounts of their labor shows how they view their at-risk status in relation to social and economic boundaries. Younger third parties (18 to 23 years old) move more seamlessly across licit and illicit boundaries in line with David Matza’s (1964) theory of drift, whereas older pimps are more confined to illicit spheres and speak from subcultural positions. This is further reflected in how their accounts differ: while older pimps tend to use at-risk discourse to explain their motivation to pimp, younger pimps have a bicultural discourse in which they use not only at-risk discourse, but also discourse about mastering both worlds.

In terms of the dangers of their work in illicit sectors, pimps’ existing social networks play a role in how they perform this labor. This is especially true of younger pimps, who tend to work with friends or family. More insular work networks make this work less risky. Compared to older pimps, younger third parties tend to use less violence with sex workers and clients, and they are not as controlling about their businesses. In contrast, older pimps more commonly work

outdoors and with stranger clients, so they have to embody violence and control. They do, however, have more close-knit social relationships with sex workers. Working with stranger clients and having pseudo-family work networks may play a role in older pimps' more lucrative economic returns, but some of these differences may be attributed to differences in age, such as maturity, youth's reliance on technology for communication, and their insular social networks based on homophily (sameness).

Pimping involves voluntary risk-taking that can produce positive feelings and outcomes. In line with Stephen Lyng's idea of edgework, pimps engage in risk and its successful navigation, which results in feelings of control through mastering danger or escaping from social controls. Older pimps more often successfully run dangerous businesses, whereas younger third parties more often suspend social controls through "carnavalesque" or "worlds turned upside down" (derived from Bakhtin, 1984) parties. Because of their at-risk status and gender, race, and class positions, third parties approach risk differently than more traditional edgeworkers. Some marginalized males flirt with the edge from a subcultural position. Yet edgework can facilitate a form of hegemonic masculinity, but with simultaneous resistance to raced and classed positions. This connects to "hustler embodiment," where slickness and abilities with money and girls are exaggerated. This brand of "hypermasculinity" may be the result of being at the margins and wanting to outperform those at the center. Unlike traditional edgework, which results in feelings of authenticity, pimps' outperformance is a way of resisting mainstream culture.

This dissertation is one of the first empirical studies of third parties to explore how they not only perceive the dangers of their work, but also how they interpret the meaning of their work from marginalized socio-structural positions and risk orientations.

Acknowledgments

I am deeply grateful to Sara Jordanö, who was the only one brave enough to hit the pavement with me and interview participants. Your countless hours, dedicated interviewing style and ongoing, thought-provoking feedback have been invaluable to me. I acknowledge Anthony Marcus and Ric Curtis for helping me to find the seeds of this project on the streets and boardwalks of Atlantic City and for our continued scholarly collaborations. Also, I thank members of “the Swamp” for literally years of repartee about third parties, pimping and similar topics. Thank you to Cory (Feldman) Rowe for your initial input and connections to key people and indoor interviewing spots during the cold winter months. Latecomers to the project Christopher Thomas and Julie Sriken have shown that “better late than never” is a dumb expression. You both have given rich input, and your continued scrutiny of interview transcripts gives you insider status in the “Pimp Project.” Thank you FACES, NY and Citicare. I give a special thanks to our two gatekeepers (who shall remain unnamed) for allowing us access to their communities. I acknowledge The Graduate Center, CUNY, for grants (DSRGP #6, #8) and for the Dissertation Writing Award (2014-2015).

I thank the original Hornings for their outstanding support and enthusiasm for all of my endeavors. I thank my perfectly brilliant son, Dante Oscar Ruf, for listening to my concerns about the project. Even though you probably did not understand much of what I was saying, you were still there with a hug and a smile. Thank you, Ashmini, for forming the informal and then virtual dissertation support group.

I would like to thank Valli Rajah for guidance and smart feedback on this beast of a project. After I collected the data, I felt that I had wrangled a large bull. So thank you for helping me tame him and make him sensible to the world. Also, I thank Jock Young and Regina Arnold for posthumously continuing to present me with challenges.

I thank my trustworthy and dynamic gatekeepers, Bol Be and Mista Warbux, for allowing me access to their communities and to their perspectives. Last, but never least, I thank all of the participants who took the time to speak with us about their lives and their feelings.

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Chapter One

Third parties, pimping, and, paradigms of risk

Introduction: Key concepts and questions

This dissertation largely examines how marginalized pimps who are predominantly from housing projects in East Harlem socially construct their lives, with a focus on their labor practices. The term *pimp* is a highly contested, racialized term, but in the United States it is a term familiar to many audiences (Davis, 2013; Staiger, 2005). Also, it is readily used by many black males doing third-party work in the lower tiers of the sex market. Third parties are people who play ancillary roles in commercial sex markets, such as connecting sex workers and clients, and providing resources and support (Overs, 2002) by serving as managers, madams, or sex traffickers (see Table 1.1). In this dissertation, the terms “pimp” and “third party” will be used interchangeably. There are only a few contemporary studies that investigate pimping from third parties’ perspectives. That third parties are a hidden population explains, in part, the absence of scholarly work focusing on this group. According to Heckathorn (1997), a *hidden population* is a population in which public knowledge of its existence is dangerous to its survival, largely due to the illegal activities of its members. The lack of firsthand data facilitates the perpetuation of an extreme representation of pimps, which is mostly uncontested. Many scholarly depictions portray pimps as manipulative, abusive, violent, and even psychopathic (see Greaves, Spidel, Kendrick, Cooper, & Herve, 2004; Hodgson, 1997; Kennedy, Klein, Bristow, Cooper, & Yuille, 2007, Norton-Hawk, 2004; Williamson & Cluse-Tolar, 2002). These studies are methodologically flawed and distorted, because they typically are based on interviews with former prostitutes in rescue institutions, anti-trafficking advocates, and law enforcement personnel. Scholarly critiques of these extreme portrayals rarely garner much public attention.

There is an emerging genre of studies, or “new pimps studies,” that investigate third-party work from pimps’ perspectives, and many of these are more humanizing (e.g., Bovenkerk & van San, 2011; Dank et al., 2014; Davis, 2013; Katona, 2015; Levitt & Venkatesh, 2007; Marcus, Horning, Curtis, Sanson, & Thompson, 2014; May, Harocopos, & Hough, 2000; Morselli & Savoie-Gargiso, 2014). Some focus on the social dynamics between pimps and sex workers (Katona, 2015; Marcus et al., 2014; May et al., 2000; Morselli & Savoie-Gargiso, 2014). These studies show that the power relations between third parties and sex workers do not often reflect “rescue narratives” or stories of pimps’ domination over and subjugation of sex workers. In these empirical studies, sex workers can have power and pimps can be powerless. While these studies provide a more nuanced view of pimp/sex worker dynamics, the analyses generally remain at the micro level. Further, there are a few studies about the economics of pimping (Dank et al., 2014; Levitt & Venkatesh, 2007; Marcus et al., 2015), but they rely on rational-choice models in which pimps and sex workers are shown to engage in micro-level cost/benefit analyses, but with limited investigation of social and socio-economic contexts. Third parties’ work-related social dynamics and economic decisions occur in a global context, which may be reflected in their political, economic, and socio-structural realities and in constructions of these realities. To fill a gap in the literature, this study analyzes third parties’ accounts of their work with a focus on the social, cultural, and economic boundaries that disenfranchised third parties encounter. Further, this study is unique because it attempts to show how third parties interpret the risk-taking involved in third-party labor that may reveal underlying social processes, such as accomplishing and resisting race, class, and gender positionalities.

Understanding the meanings of third-party work requires a multi-faceted view of this labor. Sociological paradigms of risk provide such a vantage point. Risk is defined as exposure to danger (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991) and can produce negative or positive feelings and outcomes (Lupton, 1999). This study is framed by a kaleidoscope of risk theory. I explore how third-party labor is connected to risk with the following research questions: 1) How do the U.S. media portray third parties as risky, and how does this influence proposed remedies to this social problem? 2) How do third parties' at-risk status impact their role in illicit and licit economies? 3) How do third parties' social networks influence their business practices, and how do these nexuses impact the riskiness of the work? 4) How do third parties perceive their voluntary, work-related risk-taking as positive?

Throughout this dissertation, I compare younger and older third parties to show that labor practices may vary by generation, and also that social constructions of risk can vary based on age (Cohen, Macfarlane, Yanez, & Imai, 1995). Key aspects of pimping and associated social constructions of risk are explored, with each empirical chapter examining the relationship between third-party work and risk from a different vantage point.

Social context, sample characteristics, and methods

A majority of the data collection for this study took place in open courtyards in three housing projects in East Harlem. (More details about interviews and procedures are in the Methodological Appendix.)¹ Specifically, I interviewed 85 third parties from these housing projects and other low-income condos in East Harlem. East Harlem has one of the largest concentrations of low-income housing in the country and has more than 16 public housing developments with over 16,000 residents (NYC Public Housing Authority, 2011).

The first and primary location was Taino Towers, built in 1972. At the time, it was considered a high-standard, low-income housing project, a pilot block and a new urban model for the integration of the urban poor in major cities (Haitch, 1985). The complex spans one city block and has 35-story towers providing 656 subsidized rental units for over 3,000 residents. This \$48.5 million housing project was intended as a luxury building for the poor, with Italian tile floors, laundry facilities, and central air conditioning (the first in New York City Housing Authority). By New York City standards, the apartments are spacious. Despite being conceived of as a model for low-income housing, Taino Towers has been plagued by high crime rates, including rampant gang- and drug-related activity (Johnston, 1981). Between 2009 and 2010 the rate of index crimes in New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) properties in greater Harlem increased at twice the rate of crimes in other NYCHA properties (Harlem Community Justice Center, 2011). Other research sites for this study included the George Washington Carver House, which has 13 buildings and houses 2,723 residents, and East River Houses, with 10 buildings and 2,435 residents.

People living in these housing projects are at high risk for family poverty and high rates of juvenile delinquency (Harlem Community Justice Center, 2011). East Harlem is one of the nation's poorest communities. According to census data from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Harlem is rated 10 out of 10 on the community disadvantage index, which means that it is poorer than 100% of communities nationally (as cited in Harlem Community Justice Center, 2011). In 2011 (the year of data collection), the household median income in East Harlem was \$34,379, which is above the poverty line of \$22,201 for a family of four with no children (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). However, due to the gentrification of Harlem, annual household income does not reflect the economic realities of many people living in this

area (Sumo, 2014). New York City is rated one of the most expensive cities in the United States. The mean annual income for residents of New York City (including its boroughs) is \$54,057 (2007-2009). Comparatively, the annual income for residents in East Harlem is almost unlivable (Goodman, 2013). In 2009, the unemployment rate for greater Harlem was 13.6%, as compared to 9.1% in Manhattan and 9.3% at the national level (U.S. Department of Labor Statistics, 2009). Overall, this is a disadvantaged area with some residents experiencing high levels of deprivation.

Understanding study participants' social context is crucial because sex markets are stratified by race and class. Sex workers are "stratified by income, race, drug dependency, and third-party involvement" (Weitzer, 2009). Where and how sex workers labor is determined, in part, by these factors. Similarly, the race and class of third parties constrains how and where they work. Historically, lower-class black males have dominated street-based sex markets, which comprise the lower tiers of the sex market (Davis, 2013; Wacquant, 1998; Weitzer, 2009). Notably, they have not made substantial inroads in the more profitable and prestigious indoor sex businesses, which operate in exclusive sex clubs, escort services, massage parlors, strip clubs, and brothels. However, there has been an overall shift in all sex markets toward more indoor work (Dank et al., 2014; Levitt & Venkatesh, 2007; Weitzer, 2009, 2010), making race and class distinctions intrinsic to the indoor-outdoor dichotomy less clear.

This sample of pimps work both indoors and outdoors and they are mostly from the lower echelons of the commercial sex market. They fit Wacquant's categorization of those experiencing new kinds of exclusion at the margins, or *advanced marginalization*. Wacquant identifies distinctive properties of the rise of marginality, including desocialization of wage labor; mass joblessness; concentrated advanced marginalization in bounded territories, such as

housing projects; and the alienation and deteriorating sense of community in these spaces (Wacquant, 2008). The levels of deprivation experienced by those relegated to American ghettos, such as housing projects, not only influence how they connect to licit sectors, but also how they operate in the overall commercial sex market. The participants in this study operate in the ground-floor tier of the market, and historically their work is street-based. Consequently, I refer to them as *lower echelon* third parties.

For this dissertation, two samples are used for analyses. The first sample consists of interviews with 85 third parties in Harlem. Most of the participants are racial minorities: African-American, (n=63, 74.1%); Latino (n=13, 25.3%); Other (n=9, 0.6%). All participants are male. The average age when they began this type of work is 17 years old (range 9 to 37). The average time working in the market is six years (range 1 to 30). The mean number of sex worker employees is six (range 1 to 63). (For more details, see Appendix B.) There are 40 younger pimps (ages 18 to 23) and 32 older pimps (ages 24 to 67), which allows for comparisons between younger and older groups (13 have missing information). Within this sample, 40 (55.6%) of the third parties are actively pimping and 56 (65.9%) worked in the last five years. In chapters 3, 4, and 5, the majority of analyses are based on the 56 third parties who worked in the last five years. Because these chapters focus on risks that shift in the ever-changing marketplace, cases older than five years have been eliminated from numeric data reported on, and these accounts are used sparingly.

The interviews are semi-structured and the basic premise of the interview guide is to understand how third parties perceive their work and its related risks. Each interview is analyzed using the *Listening Guide* (see Doucet & Mauthner, 2008). With this approach, interviews are analyzed using a grounded theory approach (see Glaser & Strauss, 2009). This is followed by

several readings of the interviews using queries such as, “How do participants speak about themselves and their social worlds?” and “What are the structured power relations?” Next, each interview is analyzed using sensitizing concepts or general guides (Blumer, 1954) of “doing difference” and risk. “Doing difference,” a term coined by West & Fenstermaker (1995), is accomplishing or resisting race, class, and gender via social performativity. Interviews are evaluated for how doing difference may be accomplished through engaging in voluntary risk-taking required of this labor. (For more details, see the Methodological Appendix.)

For the second sample, I collected U.S. news articles from August 1, 2013, to August 1, 2014. To find articles, I used LexisNexis with keywords “pimp,” “sex trafficker,” “pimping” and “sex trafficking.” I collected 1,467 U.S. news articles. From this collection, I drew a random sample of 209. News articles are content analyzed. Each article is coded using these sensitizing concepts or general guides for analysis: 1) Who is portrayed as risky? 2) How are they portrayed as risky?, and 3) Who is at-risk? Further, frame analysis is used to critically assess how media representations portray 1) The definition of the problem; 2) The causes and diagnosis of the problem, including who is at-risk, who is risky and in what way; and 3) The suggested remedies for the problem (see Entman, 1993; Entman & Rojecki, 1993). (For more details, see Methodological Appendix.) This technique facilitates analyses of how the framing of social problems connects to proposed solutions.

Before I explain the links between these samples and theories of risk, it is important to understand how the historical and political landscape influences public constructions of the modern-day pimp.

Historical and political landscape of this social problem

Pimps rebranded: From glamorized hustlers to predatory bogeymen

In scholarly and popular discourses, pimps usually are assumed to be glamorized hustlers. They are portrayed with crude strokes in popular culture, in movies such as *SuperFly* and *The Mack*, using tropes of “ghetto” black masculinity. At the extreme, pimps are shown to be the worst type of predatory bogeymen. This image of the pimp reflects stubborn stereotypes and the recent conflation of the legal definitions of pimps and sex traffickers. Pimps were subject to intense scholarly and cultural attention in the 1970s, when Milner and Milner (1973) produced their comprehensive ethnography on San Francisco sex workers and their third parties. Public scrutiny of pimps and third parties lapsed for decades until, in 2000, the U.S. Congress passed the Trafficking in Victims Protection Act (TVPA), which broadened the legal definition of *sex trafficker*. For the American public, these legal changes create a semantic collapse of the terms “pimp” and “sex trafficker.” The idea of dangerous neighborhood sex traffickers has entered popular discourse, as third parties have been legally and culturally rebranded from the flashy pimps of the 1970s to the predatory, organized sex traffickers of the new millennium.

Key terms and the conflation of pimps and sex traffickers

In order to understand how the anti-trafficking rhetoric is currently applied not only to sex traffickers, but also to those who were formerly pimps, it is important to understand how relevant legal and policy changes in the United States have helped to make these two terms nearly interchangeable. U.S. pimping and pandering laws, or other similar legislation, prohibits the facilitation of sex work and exists in various forms in all 50 states — even Nevada, where sex work is legal. (See Table 1.1.) Pimping laws have more serious consequences but do not

require evidence that sex workers are exploited. In 2000, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act and subsequently the Trafficking Victims Reauthorization Act (TVPRA) (2003), (2005), (2008)

Table 1.1 Definitions of sex traffickers, pimps and third parties

Academic Definitions	Study definitions	Legal definitions and changes
<p><i>Sex traffickers:</i> The meaning of this term varies by country. Historically, the term was used by academics to define cross-border sex trafficking. In the United States, the term also is used to describe sex trafficking without crossing international boundaries. This is also referred to as <i>Domestic Sex Trafficking (DMT)</i>.</p>	<p><i>Sex traffickers:</i> This term is based on the U.S. legal definition. As noted, this definition is subjective because coercion is included in the definition, where discretion may be used.</p>	<p><i>Human trafficking:</i> The U.N. defines human trafficking as follows: The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud or deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability, or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person (United Nations, 2006, 7).</p>
<p><i>Third parties:</i> This is a broad term used to define people who play ancillary roles in commercial sex markets, such as connecting sex workers and clients, and providing resources and support (Over, 2002) by serving as managers, madams, pimps, or sex traffickers. Academics use this as an umbrella term to describe many types of sex market facilitators.</p>	<p><i>Third parties:</i> The terms <i>third parties</i> and <i>pimps</i> are used interchangeably. <i>Third parties</i> is a more politically correct term, but it is also vague because it describes many types of sex market facilitators.</p>	<p><i>Sex trafficking:</i> Based on <i>TVPA (2000)</i> and <i>TVPRA (2003), (2005), (2008)</i>, the U.S. government's definition of human trafficking includes: sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age; or ... the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery (P.L. 106-386, codified at 22 U.S.C. §7102).</p>
<p><i>Pimps:</i> There is no consensus on the definition of a pimp. This is highly contested, racialized term. Historically, the popular image of a pimp is of an African-American male (Wacquant, 1998; Weitzer, 2009). Also, due to its expanded meaning in popular culture, the term has many meanings (Davis, 2013; Staiger, 2005).</p>	<p><i>Pimps:</i> This term is used to describe those who facilitate sex work because it is still widely recognized to describe lower-echelon third parties and is still used by many of them.</p>	<p><i>Pimping and pandering laws:</i> These vary by state. The crime of pandering is typically committed by a "pimp" or a procurer. Most states laws include solicitation of customers for prostitution services and recruitment of prostitutes for hire. These laws target intermediaries - those who solicit money from prostitutes, transport prostitutes to and from hotspots, advertise sex services, and recruit prostitutes into the sex industry. Exploitation may be present, but is not necessary.</p>

legislation widened the legal definition of sex traffickers and this overlaps with pimping legislation.

The current U.S. legal definition of sex trafficking is the “recruitment, harboring, transporting, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act” when “induced to perform a sex act through force, fraud or coercion” (22 U.S. Code 22 *U.S.C.* 7102(8)). This legislation changed the legal nature of sex trafficking in a few ways. First, sex trafficking no longer requires movement across international boundaries. Second, part of the legal requirement is murky, specifically *coercion* is subjective and allows for considerable discretion. Many third parties may be arrested under both laws based on the presence of coercion, so the distinction between pimping and sex trafficking can be unclear. Third, the TVPA also added a “bright line” rule under which those younger than 18 are automatically deemed child trafficking victims because minors are unable to legally consent to sex. Last, if third parties move sex workers across state lines, they also are deemed sex traffickers. In the United States, the expanded scope of sex trafficking means that many of those formerly categorized as pimps are absorbed under the *sex trafficker* label.

In terms of a global definition of sex trafficking, the United Nations definition was created to serve as a guide for nations (see Table 1.1), but each country has distinct legislation. These distinctions manifest, in part, depending on whether prostitution is legal and if pimping and pandering laws exist. Moreover, even when these laws do exist, each nation interprets the legislation differently and ascribes a different level of seriousness to these types of violations. While U.N. and TVPA definitions of sex trafficking are similar, the conflation of pimp and sex trafficker has not occurred in many nations as it has in the United States.

In the United States, this conflation is evidenced in FBI arrest data of sex traffickers. It is worth noting that 62% of the suspected sex traffickers in the United States are African-American (U.S. Department of Justice, 2011). As previously discussed, this group is most closely associated with the public image of the “pimp” (Davis, 2013; Wacquant, 1998; Weitzer, 2009), in part because they have dominated lower-echelon sex markets. It can be inferred that many of these individuals targeted by the FBI were at some point labeled “pimps,” and they have been reclassified under the current legislation as domestic sex traffickers. In the United States, the conflation of pimping and sex trafficking is a concern for many critical scholars (see Weitzer, 2010).

This new definition not only encourages further legal changes, but also spotlights existing groups rallying around the social issue of prostitution (e.g. “radical” feminists vs. sex-positive feminists) and invites many other groups to join the debate. There is extensive scholarly discourse about pimping and sex trafficking. Many scholars claim we should be panicked about this form of “modern-day slavery” (see Barry, 1995; Dworkin, 1997; Farley, 2003; Farley & Kelly, 2000; Jeffries, 1997; MacKinnon, 1990, 1993; Pateman, 1988; Raymond, 1998). Others, however, are concerned that we are in the midst of a moral crusade (see Agustín 2007; Bernstein 2007, 2010; Kempadoo, Sanghera, & Pattanaik, 2005; Weitzer 2010). Scholars who hold the latter view document how anti-trafficking rhetoric gives momentum to abolitionists who seek to completely eliminate all paid sex work (Weitzer, 2010). Using alarmist rhetoric, proponents of the abolitionist agenda capture the public’s attention, which helps to propel policy and legal change. For instance, based on TVPA (2000), organizations that promote, support, or advocate the legalization of prostitution will not be funded by the federal government, and applicants who seek financial support are required to provide a written statement of their opposition to sex work

(Block, 2004; Ditmore, 2007). This crusade, moral or otherwise, leads to third parties being prosecuted more often and subjected to harsher penalties.

Because of the TVPA, prison sentences for sex trafficking, including domestic trafficking, are 15 years to life. In some U.S. states, individuals charged with trafficking now are required to register as sex offenders (see California's Proposition 35). Criminal justice solutions that focus on deterrence and incapacitation may allay public fears temporarily, but critical criminologists argue that these policy responses are inadequate. The extreme and incomplete representations of third parties on which these policy responses are based perpetuate a limited understanding of social actors in illicit sex markets, and they do not address the roots of this social problem, which often are connected to third parties' and sex workers' social, cultural, and economic marginality (Baker, 2013). It is important to keep in mind this sample of third parties' socio-structural marginalization, because it impacts how they are socially constructed as risky by the public and the media, and also how pimps may socially construct risk.

Risk theories and their application to third-party work

Understanding the global risk context and why and how publics construct risk

Understanding the social and cultural climate and constructions of the anti-trafficking debate is important to this dissertation because that debate is so highly publicized. Therefore it shapes the many ways that people think about third parties and perhaps the way pimps think about themselves. To comprehend perspectives and tensions between those who think we should be morally panicked about pimps/sex traffickers and those who deem this a moral crusade, it is important to first understand risk within the global context. This climate influences public

perceptions of safety and security, so identifying its contours helps to elucidate how cultural constructions of risk may trickle down to influence people and policy-makers.

The current global context of risk is explained by two prominent risk society theorists, Ulrich Beck (1992) and Anthony Giddens (1991), who assert that we are moving from an “industrial society” to a “risk society.” [The challenges of global risk manifested at the beginning of the 21st century, but these are prescriptive terms that derive from the first modernity of the 19th and early 20th centuries (Beck, 2001: 99).] Those in contemporary societies have moved toward more awareness of risk and are more sensitive to what they define as “risk” (Lupton, 1999). A risk society comprises new uncertainties, instability, and major changes. Ironically, science and technology intended to reduce risk or make living easier often produce more risk. And paradoxically, these risks are the result of Western industrial development. For instance, rapid communication facilitates business, makes individuals’ everyday lives easier, and allows for a more globalized world. At the same time, such technology can facilitate communication between organized crime syndicates that may be involved in terrorism or human trafficking. In other words, while technological progress is beneficial, it also creates dangers that are byproducts of progress itself. Beck’s and Giddens’s theories advance the idea that significant changes due to modernity produce risks, which leave people feeling unsure about their safety and lives.

This feeling of insecurity is elaborated on by social theorists who connect living in a risk society to what they call an “age of uncertainty” (Bauman, 2007; Lyng, 2005; Young, 2007) where people not only are aware of these risks, but also feel anxious, insecure, or afraid. These unpleasant feelings can be linked to macro- and meso-level changes, such as fluctuations in the economy and labor markets that, in turn, disrupt people’s employment. On an individual level, these feelings may be cumulative and not easily articulated, because they manifest in a subtle

manner. For instance, according to Jock Young (2007), *ontological insecurity* or feelings of disembeddedness and personal crisis in modern contexts occur, in part, because the “flexibilization” of labor leads to constant job changes, which renders people economically vulnerable and lacking stable work identity narratives. Macro-level concepts influencing daily lives, such as global level financial crises, are difficult to measure empirically. But there is a trickle-down effect, where macro-level risk leads to micro-level feelings of uncertainty.

In the context of widespread feelings of uncertainty, some certain groups, such as pimps, may become the focus of great societal concern. There is more reflexivity about risk, but people also feel insecure about their own lives, which incites them to focus on how other groups are risky. This process is cultural, and dominant groups tend to develop ideas of risk that focus on the dangers posed by excluded groups. Mary Douglas’s cultural theory of risk explains this process. Douglas argues that risk cannot be defined solely in objective terms, since what constitutes risk depends on the cultural values of the group that makes a given risk assessment. When “faced with estimating the credibility of sources, values, and probabilities, [individuals] come already primed with culturally learned assumptions and weightings” (Douglas 1985: 84). These assumptions and weightings often are influenced by the ways that people perceive themselves in relation to others. For instance, marginalized groups, such as immigrants, often are cast as scapegoats and blamed for myriad social problems. Douglas’s theory is intended not to repudiate the reality of risks, but to highlight the cultural biases and politics that imbue them. These cultural biases are likely in play in the anti-trafficking debate and in the media, which is a primary source of public knowledge.

In Chapter 2, how the media portrays third parties is analyzed to understand how the public may receive *risk knowledge* — that is, constructions of who is at-risk and who is risky

(Douglas, 1985) in the scheme of the sex trafficking problem. The public's perceptions of and involvement in social problems and policy are directly created through risk knowledge. Understanding the formation of risk knowledge and its relationship to dominant public discourse is crucial to understanding how social problems such as human trafficking are defined and why certain solutions are identified as justifiable remedies. The public readily acquires risk knowledge on a daily basis through the media and other avenues. A continuous awareness of global problems and a constant stream of information about those problems and the dangers that people face have changed conceptions of risk from individual concern to collective worry. Instead of worrying about personal survival, members of society may be concerned about people in distant lands, who are more present because of mass media. Additionally, there is more of a focus on collective survival due to threats to humanity.

Social processes derived from living in a risk society influence how the public responds to policy. Risk society theorists discuss *reflexive modernization*, meaning the public is reflexive about living in a risk society, and group anxieties about personal and collective danger prompt questions about government policies (Lupton, 1999). The public discourse surrounding the societal risk of pimps, especially in the news media, is in part socially constructed through emotional processes involving panic (Bovenkerk & van San, 2011). The remedies to this social problem are constructed as rational solutions. These concerns are heightened by citizen awareness and involvement in global-level risk. Citizens' concerns incite cooperation among international institutions and sometimes lead to worldwide alliances (Beck, 1992). Deborah Lupton (1999) calls this shift a move toward *global citizenship*. This process may be applied to human trafficking. For instance, Bonß (1995) explores how policymakers show how different strategies are used to transform (unmanageable) uncertainties into (manageable) risks (Zinn,

2004:8). With the social problem of sex trafficking, public uncertainty is allayed because the risks of “predatory bogeymen” become manageable by being “managed.” To do so, the U.S. government is working to exert global influence. The State Department is attempting to standardize sex trafficking by dictating appropriate government responses to this social problem. In addition, the State Department annually tier-ranks countries on their progress toward protecting trafficked victims and prosecuting traffickers. These rankings influence foreign aid. The U.S. government and other organizations lead management through enforced standardization, awareness campaigns, stiff sentences, and related public policies. Punitive and far-reaching policies allow certain publics to feel that larger social problems, such as sex trafficking, are being handled rationally and, on an individual level, personal formulations of risk permit similar illusions. This is easier to accomplish in a risk society, where the public feels collective uncertainty.

Cultural orientation contexts: Talk of inclusion and exclusion and border crossing

A major critique of the risk society theories is that they universalize risk. Lupton (1999) argues that race, gender, class, ethnicity, and sexuality still matter, and they influence experiences and constructions of risk. As discussed previously, third parties are socially and economically marginalized, but I posit that due to cultural inclusion, their accounts will demonstrate orientations of both exclusion and inclusion in mainstream society. In Chapters 3 and 5, I explore the idea of third parties’ having flexible orientations to mainstream culture and marginalized subcultures. Because they are part of culture and operating within the economy, albeit the illicit sector, they are likely to occupy both positions, and this is reflected in their accounts. I extend this concept in Chapter 5, where third parties’ bilingual orientations

(mainstream and marginalized) are applied to different risk contexts. I discuss in detail the comprehensive background literature on “deviant” social actors’ orientations to hegemonic and marginalized culture and how this impacts their perceptions of crime, as well as their sense of self. Below is an account of a criminological debate about offenders’ orientations to culture and how, based on this, they may conceive of themselves as risky actors, which can be both “good” and “bad.”

Existing criminological literature explains *deviance* and orients *deviant* actors differently to culture. Subcultural theory is often used to explain “bad” acts of the urban poor in which mainstream cultural values are rejected (inverted, subverted, or otherwise) and *opposition identities* are guided by a distinct moral code and, at the group level, create a different brand of culture (Anderson, 1999; Bengtsson, 2012; Cohen, 1955; Cloward & Ohlin, 1960; Topalli, 2005, 2006; Wolfgang & Ferracuti, 1967). Deviant actors who subscribe to subcultural rules are often portrayed as valuing law-breaking to gain status and respect. The other dominant view, neutralization theory, argues that everyone, deviant or otherwise, adheres to similar cultural mores, rooted in middle-class values. In order to engage comfortably in deviant acts, actors must neutralize the bad feelings of shame and guilt through excuses and justifications (Maruna & Roy, 2007; Sykes & Matza, 1957). In this way, actors can maintain the position that they are “good.” The idea that deviants will display either oppositional or mainstream allegiance is problematic, because these positions do not have to lock horns; they may simply serve different functions in accounts of crime.

In his research, Sveinung Sandberg (2009) shows that it is difficult to imagine deviant actors fully embodying an oppositional or mainstream orientation. In narrative accounts, subcultural (difference) and neutralization (sameness) discourses can be readily performed

within a single narrative (Sandberg, 2009). Sandberg surmises that these supposedly opposing positions are rarely articulated in criminology simultaneously, because recognizing the co-existence of these positions threatens prevalent criminological models, which are typically coherent and parsimonious.

These two aforementioned perspectives rest on a set of implicit assumptions about cultural exclusion and inclusion discussed in earlier works of criminology. Drawing on the work of Carl Nightingale (1993), Young argues that “ghetto” youth are fully immersed in the American Dream, as illustrated by ghetto residents’ interest in designer labels, heavy consumption of television, and cultural obsession with violence. This cultural immersion, paradoxically, coincides with ghetto residents’ exclusion from engagement in mainstream culture in everyday life. Young surmises that the “problem of the ghetto was not so much a process of it being simply excluded, but rather one that was too strongly included in the culture.” (2003:394). Cultural inclusion is virtually inevitable for all, courtesy of a globalized culture. Young argues that the idea that the “excluded” have their own code divorced from a mainstream perspective is nearly implausible in the late modern era. There are no clear cultural demarcations between the excluded/included. Individuals’ orientation to culture, therefore, will not be either/or. Young also elaborates on the emotional experiences involved, which include resentment resulting from exclusion and pleasures associated with criminal activity. The emotional components of crime often are overlooked and are also key to understanding motivations to transgress.

Understanding the “bad” and “good” risks of third-party work

The idea of risk society is tied to the development of instrumental rational control, in all spheres of life, from an individual’s assessment of their own risk to collective assessments of

global risks, such as a worldwide increase in sex trafficking. In many formulations of risk, especially where uncertain futures feel unmanageable (Zinn, 2004) and danger is ever lurking (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991), human decisions are constructed as potential costs (Austen, 2009). For example, sex traffickers face 15 years to life in prison for sex trafficking convictions. They are portrayed as accurately weighing this risk into their cost-benefit calculation about whether this crime is worth it. The majority of the public agrees to this arrangement because they believe their personal and collective risks of being trafficked are reduced. However, the decision to commit crime has irrational components, and the public's acceptance of punitive solutions as beneficial for society is rooted in the emotion of fear.

In Chapters 4 and 5, third parties' decisions and conceptions of third-party labor are analyzed. In part, these chapters challenge the utility of theoretical perspectives that rely on pure rationality in criminal decision-making in favor of those that center on the feelings associated with criminal activity and the social processes underlying crime. The ways that criminological theories frame rationality are over-simplified, and researchers sometimes impose their own biases on subjects as they evaluate the costs and benefits of crime. Ideas about what is "worth it" are directly tied to the consequences of crime, which produce feelings, good and bad. This is best understood through offender accounts. Below is a detailed description of the debate between these two theoretical camps and how they conceive of criminal experiences from offenders' perspectives.

There has been extensive criticism of rational choice theories, as well as their application by criminologists, sociologists, and economists. Some specifically question the dominant discourse, which holds that human decision-making is dictated by cost-benefit assessments. Keith Hayward (2007) argues, for instance, that even if transgressors could accurately evaluate

risks and benefits before committing a crime, there is still a crucial process that informs what these individuals do. That crucial process is feeling.

Many cultural criminologists (see Ferrell, 1997; Hayward, 2003; Katz, 1988; Lyng, 1990; Presdee, 2000; Young, 2003) demonstrate that the social processes behind human action and transgressions include feelings. Even positivists have come to understand that feeling is an important element in risk perceptions (Fernandez-Huerga, 2008; Gigerenzer & Selton, 2002; Yar, 2004). For instance, Paul Slovic's (2010) work, *The Feeling of Risk*, is dedicated to uncovering the role of emotion in day-to-day human assessments of probability. Although theories that recognize a role for both emotion and reason have growing currency, theorists such as Pierre Bourdieu (2005) argue that economic metaphors should not be applied to social actors. Even if these metaphors are applied, transgressors' assessments of whether crime is worth it based on known risks is difficult to measure empirically, because of the bias inherent in the dominant discourses, which define the pros and cons of criminal activity.

Other criminologists do not entirely discount reason, but they argue that there are other social processes associated with criminal outcomes. These critiques notwithstanding, those who hold the dominant rational-choice view argue strongly for its relevance. Some of these scholars and activists support a pragmatic approach to the study of sex work. For instance, John Salt (2000) maintains that sex trafficking should be understood wholly in business terms. There are a few studies about sex workers and pimps that focus on economics and indirectly on business models. For instance, Steven Levitt and Sudhir Venkatesh (2007) explore the economics of street-based sex work in Chicago. They posit that street-based prostitution is dangerous, and so, in essence, they ask whether sex work yields sufficient economic gains given the risks involved. They find that sex workers make twice the weekly wage of a typical female non-manual worker,

and three times that of a female manual worker. This analysis, which reports substantial monetary gains, portrays sex workers as instrumental rationalists. Further, Meredith Dank et al. (2014) estimates that in illicit underground economies in eight American cities, pimps chose pimping over other types of illicit work because it is the crime with the lowest risk and highest return. The report concludes that pimping is worth doing despite the risks, with estimated returns from sex markets ranging from \$39.9 million in Denver to \$290 million in Atlanta (Dank et al., 2014).

These types of analyses seemingly make sense when applied to disenfranchised groups actively engaged in illicit markets, like drug or sex economies. However, as Jack Katz (1988) and others argue, criminal activity has both a foreground that includes the sensual and emotional facets of crime and a background of cost-benefit analyses, demographics, and prior history. Both components of criminal activity should be analyzed. In other words, crime involves several elements, including, according to Katz (1988): 1) a path of action (practical requirements); 2) a line of interpretation (understanding oneself and how one is seen by others); and 3) an emotional process in which seductions have special dynamics. His theory of crime could be applied to any kind of decision-making because it includes not only logic, but also emotion and perception.

The emotions and perceptions involved in criminal decision-making are equally important to the lure of transgressing. These decisions may produce “good” or “bad” feelings and outcomes. Chapters 4 and 5 are, in part, explorations of how pimps use their bodies to accomplish key aspects of third-party work and how they view these risks as “good” or “bad.” Our ideas about sex work are profoundly influenced by our risk discourses. In the dominant discourse, risk has a negative valence. The body is central to this discourse, which cautions individuals to regulate themselves and their bodies to avoid risk. The counter discourse casts risk

in a positive light. The body is central to this perspective, which makes risk desirable and “valorizes escape from the bonds of control and regulation, expressing a hankering after the pleasures of a ‘grotesque’ body (Lupton, 1999: 148).” Arguably, pimping is a form of labor that can be explored through the negative and positive implications of risk and the specific ways that the body is situated relative to each type of risk. The former perspective, as previously discussed, has been explored in existing research. The latter perspective, however, is under-theorized and warrants further consideration.

To consider the positive aspects of risk associated with pimping, we first must understand what embodied activities are involved in facilitating all labor, including sex work. As Donna Haraway (1991:10) explains, “our personal bodies ... [should not] be seen as natural, existing outside the self-creating process called human labor.” Pimping exists within the confines of human labor, which inherently involves *bodywork*. Bodywork has four facets: 1) work performed on one’s own body; 2) paid labor carried out on the body of others; 3) management of embodied emotional experience and display; and 4) the production or modification of bodies through work (Gimlen, 2007: 353). Individuals’ bodywork, moreover, is shaped by gender, race, class, and age.

Several studies examine the risks that underprivileged minority males navigate through bodywork in their lives generally, and in illicit economies specifically. In his study *Inside the Zone: The Social Art of the Hustler in the Black American Ghetto*, Wacquant examines how social actors negotiate in the “predatory” economy of the street through embodied *street smarts*. One can examine street smarts in terms of the negative facets of risk. In this case, street smarts imply the capacity to avoid risk of exploitation. Street smarts also can be understood as an embodied capacity that garners respect and status from others. Street smarts, in other words, may

be associated with risky activity that yields a positive outcome. Wacquant recognizes that *hustler embodiment* is produced by social structural constraints. His insight that economic and social boundaries directly impact bodywork generally, and how capital is acquired specifically, is germane to this study. But Wacquant did not see these boundaries as porous or traversable. In fact, he writes that “street smarts have currency only in the streets.” This study, however, explores how embodied capacities involved in pimping are associated with both positive and negative risks and have currency beyond illicit sex markets.

The links between bodywork and positive facets of risk are more readily mapped out when labor is performed directly on the street. Philippe Bourgois discusses this in his study of East Harlem crack dealers, where *juice* or street credibility is achieved through violent embodiments. There is a direct relationship between status and wild behavior: extremely violent displays yield more juice. In other words, engaging in violence, a risky activity, and yields rewards. My preliminary findings show that when reflecting on a life of crime, many third parties portray themselves as having a high social status. Pimping is a form of labor that involves bodywork associated with social power on the street. Accordingly, pimps define themselves in terms of an array of qualities and actions to which I apply the term *badass*. “Badass” is a common slang term, but the badass is a concept that was explored in Katz’s *Seductions of Crime* to describe adolescents’ symbols of deviance. Katz largely approached the idea of badass from a subcultural perspective. In order to accomplish a badass veneer, youth must show that they can “be tough, be alien and be mean,” and much of this is accomplished through embodied practices and gestures. In this dissertation, I extend this theoretical construct to include the idea that through their labor pimps are not only seen by others as badass, but they also come to develop a

sense of themselves as badass. In other words, pimping, with its positive and negative risks, is associated with changes in social identity.

Pimping and the badass me

For purposes of this dissertation, identity is defined as “an individual’s sense of self as a member of gendered, raced, and classed categories” (West & Fenstermaker, 1995:33). How they show and work on these identifications is changeable, based on context. People creatively construct their identities through sociocultural contexts. Taking crime as our example, gender, race, and class not only influence the way crime is committed, but crime itself is a way of demonstrating and thereby accomplishing these social identities. Taking these points about cultural inclusion, structural exclusion, and how social identities are created and sustained through social practices, I make the following argument about third parties’ identities. Specifically, I extend Katz’s original badass concept as follows: Pimps define themselves in terms of an array of badass practices, which also are central to constructing a social identity as a “badass me.” For instance, a pimp remembers the feeling of being a hustler, financially successful, running a business in a dangerous setting, and other positive states. “Badass me” is associated with points of both exclusion and inclusion. By making money, third parties’ actions are aligned with mainstream cultural goals such as financial success. Whatever financial success they do achieve, however, pimps are largely excluded from achieving financial success by mainstream means. Even so, they interpret their successes in line with hegemonic masculinity. In this sense they are socially included. Although they occupy a marginalized social position, their relative success and sense of accomplishment may create their sense of self as a “badass me,”

which originates from representations and practices associated with points of both inclusion and exclusion.

In Chapter 5, the social process of accomplishing race, class, and gender, as well as feeling badass, is applied to the idea of voluntary risk-taking. I explore how risk-taking is linked to social processes and even social identity. People creatively construct their identities through sociocultural contexts. Taking crime as our example, gender, race, and class not only influence the way crime is committed, but crime itself is a way of demonstrating and thereby accomplishing these social identities.

To consider how pimping is associated with changes in social identity, we must better understand what social identities are and how they work. Social identities are made up of social representations of individuals based on their gender, race, and class. Taking the example of gender, we should note that there are various forms of masculinity. Notably, *hegemonic masculinity* is the ideal form of masculinity associated with fulfilling certain masculine goals such as marriage, having dependents, and providing for the family. *Marginalized masculinity* is a form of masculinity in which a man lacks access to hegemonic masculinity because of characteristics such as his race and class, but he still subscribes to norms associated with hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2005: 77). While dominance, toughness, and the willingness to use violence are characteristics that we expect men generally to embody, social settings and activities provide resources by which men can accomplish gender expectations differently across various settings. People creatively construct their identities through sociocultural contexts. Taking crime as a second example, gender, race, and class not only influence the way crime is committed, but crime itself is a way of demonstrating and thereby accomplishing these social

identities. There are various forms of masculinity, and they may be performed through engaging in “good” risk.

Feeling and edgework

Negotiating a badass identity in the context of pimping is a risky activity that yields its own somatic and psychosocial rewards. I explore these in Chapter 5, which examines *edgework* and pimping. Specifically, maintaining a badass identity for socially marginalized pimps necessitates flirting with *the edge*, which Lyng (2005, 2012) describes as signifying “life/death, chaos/order or form/formlessness.” Individuals engage in voluntary edgework for paradoxical reasons. On one hand, individuals take risks to transcend restrictive institutional controls associated with mainstream society. In other words, edgework is a form of escape from control. On the other hand, individuals develop human capital by navigating the edge, which helps them to more successfully navigate the challenges of living in society (Lyng, 2005:10). In other words, the skills involved in edgework facilitate success in mainstream society.

The analysis in Chapter 5 centers on how third parties construct being at the edge. Accounts are analyzed for feeling in control or release from/escaping social controls, and how the social processes related to accomplishing race, class, and gender link to these feelings. Lyng, like many others, characterizes the *risk actor* without reference to gender, age, ethnicity, social class, or sexual identity (Lupton, 1999: 123). In line with other scholars (Bengtsson, 2012; Garot, 2012; Rajah, 2007), I apply edgework and an “edgeworking” identity to at-risk groups whose members “skillfully manage risks” in their everyday lives. While illicit work is considered dangerous, marginalized populations may be primed to navigate these endeavors. Multiple marginalized statuses can increase risk in some respects, but also can create opportunities and/or

resiliencies in other areas (Crenshaw, 1989). This chapter explores how aspects of race and poverty that lead to disenfranchisement also make the edge closer to the everyday experiences for some groups in society.

Progression of chapters

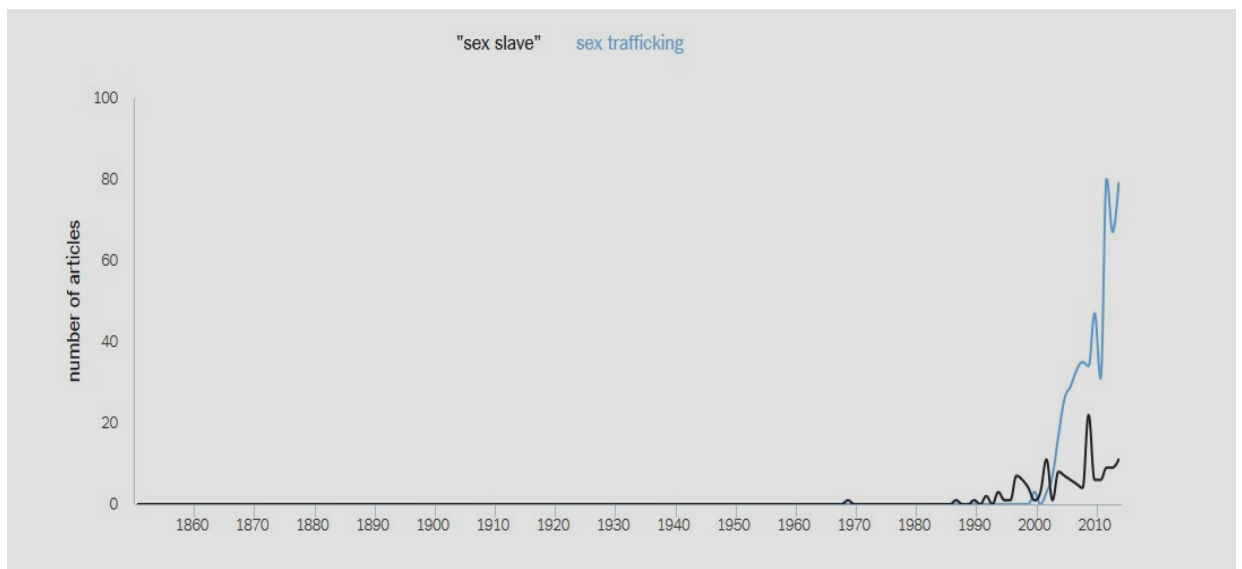
There are four empirical chapters in this dissertation. Chapter 2, “Media Portrayals of “Villain Pimps” and Social Dangers,” demonstrates how the U.S. news media portrays third parties as a “dangerous class” and views the risk of sex trafficking and traffickers as ubiquitous. This chapter unpacks this representation by drawing on the work of Douglas and Aaron Wildavsky (1983), who discuss *risk knowledge* or the ways that the public differentially perceives risk and its management based on historical era and local culture. In Chapter 3, “Pimps and the Political Economy: Playing at their Own Risk,” third-party work is contextualized within the political economy, systems of production, and consumption based on power relations inherent in social systems. Third parties’ accounts of power and powerlessness are explored in relation to the dynamics of licit and illicit markets. Chapter 4, “Risky Business: Intersections of Cash and Caring,” explores how social networks influence how and where third parties run their businesses. The links between social network composition and the riskiness of third parties’ work is also explored. Chapter 5, “Pimping as Edgework: Doing Differently,” argues that there are reasoned components to pimping, such as evading police and protecting businesses, but this work also involves positive feelings. The emotional processes involved in the pimping arena are explored in terms of “good” risks or positive affective states, drawing on Lyng’s concept of *edgework* — that is, flirting with danger and using expertise to avoid injuries, but with the underlying need to feel excitement through mastery or transcending institutional controls.

Chapter Two

Media portrayals of “villain pimps” and social dangers

Over the past 15 years, forms of human trafficking, especially those involving minors, became visible on the public’s radar as a substantial criminal threat. Around the same time, the terms “sex trafficking” and “child sex slave” emerged in major U.S. news sources, such as the *New York Times* (see Figure 2.1), which ran numerous articles with incendiary titles such as “Not Quite a Teen, Yet Sold for Sex.” Because news stories like these are readily consumed by the general public, media analysis is important to understanding how social constructions of danger serve to make the public more amenable to stringent and even inhumane policy solutions.

Figure 2.1 The emergence of contemporary third parties in U.S. media



The number of times the terms ‘sex slave’ and ‘sex trafficking’ were used in the *New York Times* between 1850 and 2014.

Mass media shape *knowledge production* and the public's conceptions of reality (Pajnik, 2010), but not all knowledge produced garners public recognition (Douglas, 1985). The anti-trafficking campaign, however, has had enough public recognition to be considered a dominant discourse (Baker, 2013; Bernstein, 2007; Gulati, 2011). Because of this, members of the public are primed to pay attention to news focused on this topic. Non-empirical and essentialist portrayals of pimps as wholly villainous are driven by moral crusaders, or people involved in social movements or organizations with a moral cause (derived from Becker, 1963). Girish Gulati (2011) reviews mainstream U.S. news media about trafficking from 1980 to 2006 and finds that these news stories rely heavily on official sources, and that the content tends to reflect the dominant anti-trafficking discourse. As previously discussed, in 2000, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) widened the legal definition of sex traffickers to include those who either profit from sex workers under the age of 18 or move sex workers across state lines. Accordingly, anti-trafficking rhetoric is currently applied not only to sex traffickers, but also to those who formerly were identified as pimps. Notably, such one-sided and morally charged depictions instill fear in the public. Social constructions of danger — that is, who is at-risk, who is risky, and how they are risky — is called *risk knowledge* (Douglas, 1985; Douglas & Wildavsky, 1983).

In this chapter, dominant socio-historic and cultural risk knowledge conveyed to the public about third parties is explored. The purpose is not to challenge the veracity of extreme scenarios, because they do occur, but rather to understand how extreme renditions are absorbed as dominant discourse and touted as typical. Specifically, this chapter examines how news media portray third parties (pimps and sex traffickers) and evaluates U.S. news articles to see how the media inform the public about this apparent risk. The overarching research questions addressed

include: How do U.S. news media frame pimping and sex trafficking as a domestic threat? How do framers prey on the public's anxieties to justify particular policy remedies? U.S. news articles are content-analyzed for this risk knowledge, and frame analysis is used to understand how news media construct the public's risk knowledge about pimping and sex trafficking.

How sex trafficking has been portrayed in media campaigns

A number of studies explore how sex trafficking is portrayed in the news media (see Baker, 2013; Berman, 2003; Gulati, 2011; Pajnik, 2010; Sobel, 2014). Many of these studies reflect on how stereotypes are used to justify social policies. Carrie Baker (2013) explores how U.S. anti-trafficking campaigns use images and stories produced by the government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), news media, and popular films that rely on rescue narratives. Generally, these narratives reinforce traditional values about gender, sexuality, and nationality. The social construction of the domestic threat of sex trafficking is often framed around the public's fear of others as dangerous classes, with the purpose of surveilling and incarcerating them and cracking down on gangs and local criminal syndicates to protect the "worthy." In her analysis, for instance, Baker (2013) focuses on portrayals of female victims and their potential rescuers, who are often white Western males. She points out that these white male "heroes" are often contrasted to "dangerous brown men" portrayed as third parties. Robin Bernstein (2007) and G. Bhattacharyya (2008) also document these racialized depictions. The individuals to blame for "white slavery" are foreign men, or domestically they are "African American men living in the inner city" (Bernstein, 2007:144 as cited in Baker, 2013). In other words, states use media frames of trafficking to socially construct the threat of outsiders, which in turn helps to justify stringent government policy solutions, such as restrictive migration

policies, as a means of protecting one's own. In a content analysis of mainstream U.S. news sources (*New York Times* and *Washington Post*) from 1980 to 2006, Gulati (2011) finds that news pieces echo narratives advocated by major participants in sex trafficking policy. In her study, 44% of the articles reference government officials. She argues that the media have an important role in anti-trafficking policy, because their output helps to legitimize government consensus about how to solve the trafficking problem.

Public discourse about third parties based on news media

Immunity versus 'no one is immune'

In this sample, many news articles depict third parties as predatory. Forty-five percent of news media sources in this sample depict recruitment as requiring force or coercion, with some portraying third parties' abilities to recruit as relying not only on violence, but also on far-reaching manipulative techniques (e.g., one article asserts that "We can warn [teens] about being lured into trafficking with promises of fame, fortune and a great life" (Hackett, 2014, Case 7). However, many articles focus on stories involving force, some with extreme narratives of kidnapping and torture. For example, one journalist describes a third party who "forced a woman into sex slavery and beat her for years before she escaped" (Gilliam, 2014, Case 101). The most common media frame shows third parties using physical brutality to recruit and retain sex workers, thereby constructing third parties as violent abusers and relying on the archetype of the villain pimp. Violent cases do occur, but selectively focusing on them is not only sensationalistic, but distorts the public's perception of danger.

In this sample, thirty-three percent of U.S. news stories implicate clients as pedophiles, and 36.8% implicate pimps as pedophiles. There is limited discussion about sex traffickers who

move adult sex workers across state lines, the other mode of domestic sex trafficking. In fact, only 15.8% of stories mention this topic as news. The images of child victim and adult predator are most central in media stories about domestic sex trafficking.

There are some differences in how these children are depicted. The most common victim is portrayed as vulnerable because of various structural inequalities and bad circumstances (42.1% of stories describe a victim this way), and she is often young, female, a U.S. citizen and a runaway or abandoned child. However, some articles focus on the idea that no one is immune from being a victim of domestic minor sex trafficking (DMST), with assertions such as, “It doesn't matter whether [potential victims of sex trafficking] had a home, because if [sex trafficking] can happen to [Brittany], it can happen to any young girl” (Zimmerman, 2014, Case 158). This message of ubiquitous risk is more likely to be mentioned in news about arrests and convictions ($\chi^2=6.96$, d.f. =1, $p=.008$) or in news about police response, such as sting operations or sweeps ($\chi^2=6.50$, d.f. =1, $p=.011$). A few articles focus on more distant “others,” that is, trafficking as experienced by foreigners in the developing world or happening only to those young people who dared to cross the U.S.-Mexico border.

Historically, the archetypal pimp is a lone African-American male.³ With the emergence of domestic minor sex trafficking, alternative depictions of sex traffickers emerge. Instead of focusing on individuals, minority gangs (such as the Crips, Sureños, and Disciples) are implicated in DMST. Some articles focus on supposedly trustworthy authority figures as villain pimps, such as former military members, police officers, and probation officers. This type of media frame tells the public that anyone can be involved in DMST. Some news stories focus on

³As in popular 1970s films such as *The Mack* and *Superfly* and in the popularity of Iceberg Slim's autobiography, *Pimp*.

more distant “others” influencing the local sex trade, such as Mexican cartels. In articles about young victims of sex trafficking, clients are implicitly pedophiles, but demographic information such as race and class is rarely mentioned (9.5%).

Pimping is not here on Main Street, or it’s omnipresent

The dominant public discourse about sex trafficking often portrays third parties as omnipresent in real and virtual worlds. News media tell different stories about the prevalence and location of pimping and DMST. Opinion/editorial or news pieces sometimes portray the scope of the threat as omnipresent and mushrooming, including ominous assertions such as, “Even Franklin County is not immune to trafficking” (Cappuccio, 2014, Case 9) and “It is happening right here in Alameda” (Spangler, 2014, Case 188). In this sample, 29.7% of news articles portrayed the DMST problem as escalating. Other articles depict exponentially growing risks by linking a single case of sex trafficking to child pornography and slavery rings. Massage parlors or brothels generally are portrayed as ubiquitous and multiplying. In other cases, sex trafficking is depicted as hidden and unpredictable. In some articles sex trafficking is aligned with difficult-to-predict disasters, as reflected in statements such as, “It’s a tsunami.” There are suggestions that there are a multitude of hidden victims. “It’s those high-profile cases, but for every one, we have 10 more cases that no one hears about” (Milkovits, 2013, Case 3).

U.S. news articles suggest that the threat of third parties happens in different contexts. Street-based threats are typically linked to “bad sections of town,” not “Main Street.” But street-based threats are not often depicted. News articles more often depict sex trade transactions occurring on the Internet (28.7%), with sex typically transacted in hotels. The Internet is portrayed as an extremely dangerous threat. It is true that sex markets have moved off the streets

and have moved online (Dank et al., 2014; Hughes, 2005; Musto, 2004; Venkatesh, 2011); however, depictions are extreme, and everyone who sits down at a computer is portrayed as at-risk. One article quotes a panicked parent: "... (A)s a parent, once I knew about sex trafficking, I couldn't stop thinking about those kids, targeted in their own communities and over the Internet, then lured into a nightmare of slavery" (Hackett, 2014, Case 7). The most cited online predators are strangers and pedophiles, and the website most implicated is Backpage. This modern-day risk, the Internet, magnifies the enduring reality of "stranger danger." In a few cases, carrying out sting operations to stop third parties is portrayed as useful, but more often articles indicate uncertainty about the scope of sex trafficking.

Lone bad apples versus untouchable criminal syndicates

Depictions of third parties by the news media range from lone pedophiles to those operating in highly organized groups, such as criminal syndicates. In 34.4% of the articles, sex trafficking groups are mentioned. In news articles about arrests or convictions, third parties are shown as working alone or sometimes with one other person, but not in an organized group. However, opinion/editorial pieces or articles about police response often focus on gangs and mafias who recently added human trafficking to their long list of illicit businesses. For instance, in an article about a police sweep of Sureños, the reporter describes the gang as being involved in "a variety of criminal activity, including murder, extortion, narcotics trafficking, human trafficking and prostitution" (Klernz, 2014, Case 6). On occasion, families of third parties are implicated. Other illustrations of organization emphasize third parties' connections to licit businesses (11%) such as massage parlors (typically Asian), strip clubs, and nightclubs. Also, accounts focus on hotel owners who aid and abet third-party work. When third parties are shown

to be connected to licit businesses or working high-profile sporting events such as the Super Bowl, the focus is on the substantial profits associated with sex work, and news articles include assertions such as “trafficking is a lucrative industry, representing an estimated \$32 billion per year” (Hickey, 2014, Case 198).

In the sample analyzed, there are no media portrayals of true organized crime, except in articles on trafficking in developing countries (see Hagan, 2006). However, regular use of violence, a part of the definition of organized crime, is mentioned in half the articles about organized third parties, as opposed to 12% of news articles overall. Third parties are not often shown as organized, but they are depicted as relying on frequent/daily brute force to obtain and keep sex workers. Articles portray tactics such as hitting, punching, kicking, rape, and torture as part of a successful business strategy for some third parties.

Quelling the public’s anxieties through proposed remedies

News media often portray remedies to combat third-party work in different ways, such as through a victim-centered response (25.8%), harsh or increased sentences (24.9%), and increased surveillance (14.8%). Currently, the trend in sentencing for sex traffickers is 15 years to life, with some states requiring sex offender registration (e.g., California’s Proposition 35). When an article covers events such the opening of a safe house, or a fundraiser for sex trafficking victims, the remedies are more often victim-centered and focus on decriminalizing sex workers, expunging their criminal records, or providing them with support and resources. Some of the stories about unaccompanied children at the border focus on tightening national borders and criminal deportation. When victims are rendered as foreign “others,” however, responses are more punitive. In these cases, solutions such as the use of surveillance are presented. For

example, one article highlights a method of tracking the demographics of documented workers to see if a high concentration comes from a certain area, because such a pattern may indicate trafficking. Another article calls for curtailing the sale of false documents to illegal immigrants. In these narratives, the presence of legal and illegal foreign “others” are portrayed as a threatening uncertainty linked to human trafficking, and punitive remedies are justified.

Many of the U.S. news articles create risk knowledge: 59.8% depict social actors who are risky, and 79.4% depict social actors who are at-risk. These depictions are more specific because they often align with particular remedies. For instance, articles that mention the government’s policy response of imposing longer prison sentences on offenders are more likely to portray third parties as pedophiles ($\chi^2=18.14$, d.f. =1, $p=.000$). Correspondingly, those shown to be at-risk are significantly more likely to be depicted as children ($\chi^2=5.58$, d.f. =1, $p=.018$) or members of vulnerable groups, such as those who are victim of structural inequalities, runaways, or abandoned children ($\chi^2=8.30$, d.f. =1, $p=.004$), but not as “others” or victims who are legal/illegal immigrants or those in developing countries. Arguably, this is the case, because in the United States we prioritize protecting our own nationals. These articles play on the public’s uncertainty about whether sex trafficking is happening in our own “back yard.” Articles portraying hard luck victims and hardened criminals mention deterrence or incapacitation through incarceration as best remedies. Articles about victim-centered responses are significantly more likely to mention all three types of victims. However, many of the articles about the victim as “other” are about local people becoming involved in the fight against sex trafficking in developing countries. There is also some focus on tightening borders or creating invasive policies for foreigners who could be risky. In the victim-centered articles, pedophiles ($\chi^2=10.96$, d.f. =1, $p=.001$) and criminals ($\chi^2=7.73$, d.f. =1, $p=.005$) such as gang members or sex offenders

are significantly more likely to be mentioned. Overall, this supports the trend of focusing on punishing third parties and moving toward viewing sex workers as victims, while demonizing third parties in the process.

Articles that mention other government responses (not included in the scope of stiffer/increased sentences, surveillance, or victim-centered responses) are significantly more likely to mention third parties as “others” ($\chi^2=6.96$, d.f. =1, $p=.008$), criminals ($\chi^2=3.92$, d.f. =1, $p=.048$), or pedophiles ($\chi^2=13.39$, d.f. =1, $p=.000$). This indicates that articles that rely on depicting who is risky have more specialized types of responses.

To better understand these targeted responses it is necessary to scrutinize relevant news articles using qualitative analysis. This approach allows us to assess connections between diagnosing the problem and drawing connections between causes and proposed remedies. An article about minority gangs — specifically the Disciples, a group that is often portrayed as the worst of all dangerous “others” — begins by explaining why gangs move from selling drugs to selling sex. As explained in one article, “Once they sell their drugs or sell a labor-trafficking victim to someone, those drugs or victims are gone. ... But with sex trafficking, they sell these victims multiple times a day and continue making a profit” (Martinez, 2014, Case 194). This article goes on to describe how gangs are now focused on teenage sex workers (even though the piece does not explain why such an approach would be advantageous to the gang). The article further argues that “to date, the U.S. government has prosecuted more than 200 cases of street gangs, motorcycle gangs, and prison gangs in which commercial sex acts, prostitution or human trafficking are mentioned, according to Global Centurion, a nonprofit” (Martinez, 2014, Case 194). Compared to those proposed by other scholars, these numbers seem relatively high, and what follows in the article is a contradictory assertion: “Juvenile prostitution is expanding as an

additional source of income for many gangs, primarily for its high and steady financial rewards and perceived low risk of apprehension and punishment” (Martinez, 2014, Case 194). The article sets up the idea that gangs are operating using rational choice (constant human calculations of costs versus benefits). The logic is that if law enforcement closely monitors predatory gangs by setting up special operations task forces, and also if gangs expect exorbitant sentences, then they will re-evaluate their urges to target children. Arguably, the primary purpose of this article is to justify monitoring as the best remedy to redress sex trafficking.

Another relatively unique remedy discussed in the media is the use of a sex offender registry. As previously mentioned, California passed Proposition 35, which doubled penalties for sex trafficking and placed those who are convicted on the sex offender registry for life. In California, many different acts qualify as sex trafficking, including moving workers across state lines and coercing someone to perform sex acts for pay. The first two individuals in Orange County to be punished based on these legal criteria were a 33-year-old male and a 28-year-old female who were accused of forcing a 14-year-old girl into selling sex. Very few people will argue against affording special protections for the young. But presumably it is not by chance that this particular case was the first charged under Proposition 35. The most attention-getting victim is an innocent child. This news depiction, moreover, describes the coercion involved, including details such as, “He collected the money the girl earned and threatened to withhold meals if she didn’t bring in enough clients on a daily basis” (Emery, 2014 Case 189). As previously discussed, with frame analysis, it is important also to analyze what is omitted or repressed (Pajnik, 2010). Although two offenders were involved in the case, the article analyzed does not mention the female third party. Instead, there is a photo of a black male along with the details of his terrible behavior toward the teenage victim. This gives the reader the impression that the

female third party was probably also manipulated or somehow coerced to engage in this behavior. This first Orange County case is unmistakably extreme, and media accounts of it helped to justify harsher punishments for domestic sex trafficking.

In the news media there is some discussion of laws passed in 14 U.S. states that move toward decriminalizing prostitution in certain cases. Specifically, if sex workers can establish that sex trafficking has occurred and they agree to testify against their traffickers, then all prostitution charges will be expunged from their criminal records. The reasoning behind this legal approach falls in line with the Nordic model, where sex work is legal, but procuring and pandering are illegal. In an article about this type of bill passing in Maine, a Polaris Project advocate states, “It’s really about allowing victims to move on from their trafficking experience.” She proceeds to discuss how those with prostitution convictions find it difficult to find a job. Her closing remarks are, “It can be humiliating. It haunts them” (Moretto, 2013, Case 159). In the process of explaining her position, this advocate stigmatizes many sex workers by emphasizing the shame they apparently feel. This may be well meaning, but it omits the fact that sex workers must not only take on the “trafficked victim” label, but also testify in order to receive a desirable criminal justice outcome. This reinforces rescue narratives and the dominant discourse of helpless women and the state as their rescuer. It further justifies punitive criminal justice solutions to sex trafficking, with no mention of structural inequalities, human rights issues, or public health concerns. If former sex workers, trafficked or not, could have their criminal records expunged with or without testifying against traffickers, then this would be a progressive policy.

Media portrayals of villain pimps using crude strokes

The social constructions of the domestic sex trafficking threat are somewhat similar to scholarly works that rely on depictions of the villain pimp. Often, third parties are portrayed as *folk devils*, or evil perpetrators and therefore a dangerous class (see Bovenkerk & van San, 2011; Weitzer, 2009, 2010). This term was originally used by Stanley Cohen (1972; 2002) to describe actors in socially constructed moral panics. Anti-trafficking advocates, scholars, policymakers, and the media fuel the public imagination about third parties and largely portray them as dangerous.

Many U.S. news articles depict third parties as actively recruiting children, with implications of rampant pedophilia, and using force and brutality to recruit and sometimes to retain workers. The Internet is portrayed as the primary mechanism by which clients and third parties connect. It also is depicted as a place where third parties find young sex workers. Selling sex online is a particularly threatening risk, because it relies on society's lack of certainty about regulating who is using the Internet (e.g., children and predators). The unknowns about the Internet create uncertainty about the scope of DMST and the enduring risk of stranger danger. The public's fears are fueled by their own lack of adeptness at managing new technology.

Perverting policy: Construction of risk knowledge and irrationality

The construction of risk knowledge seems to be inextricably linked to proposed remedies, with a focus on public uncertainty so that the proposed strategies of management can be justified. Similar to the findings of Mojca Pajnik (2010) and Jacqueline Berman (2003), when journalists' purpose is to convince readers of a stringent policy's value, they rely on the mainstream public's irrational feelings about others to relay "rational" plans. These cost/benefit plans home in on the

mainstream public's deepest insecurities, which are best explained by the process of *othering* (Lupton, 1999), to convince citizens of the benefit of particular policy responses, despite the costs they may incur in the form of higher taxes and infringements on citizens' human rights (Baker, 2013). This formula is indicative of larger trends in government, which often relies on media to maintain its discourse as dominant (usually peppered with fear tactics) to justify unfair policies with little public resistance (Garland, 2004). The resources allocated for prosecuting and imprisoning third parties may be better spent addressing social structural disparities that contribute to this social problem and many others.

The news media typically frame the villain pimp as predatory, omnipresent, and organized. Some of the characterizations may be valid, but the ways that pimps are depicted are more aligned with portrayals by abolitionists and extreme anti-trafficking advocates and perhaps the State. Based on the existing empirical research, it appears the media are portraying third parties erroneously in many ways. Media sources are not only using crude, broad-stroke caricatures, but they are providing the public with information that may incite fear of others in relation to their children and families in real and virtual communities. Being afraid to walk through one's community or go online is not a healthy way to live. Many depictions about how domestic trafficking works are based on extreme cases or incorrect portrayals. The specific ways that the news media portray the risky villain pimp are not often supported by the empirical literature. Third parties may be risky, but not in many of the ways shown. Misinformation may lead to prejudice and scapegoating, and also to the public being unaware of where actual danger may lie. Future studies should focus on more nuanced portrayals of pimps and their work, including pedestrian pimps, in order to demystify some of these threatening depictions.

Chapter Three

Pimps and the political economy: Playing at their own risk

The term *political economy* has many meanings. Broadly defined, the term is typically ascribed to the social relations, particularly the power relations that mutually constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources. Power relations, in particular the relations between those at the margins and those at the center, are guided by age, race, and class. These dynamics impact licit and illicit labor markets. In practice, due to their social marginalization and poverty, people with multiple at-risk statuses face real social and economic boundaries (Larson & Mohanty, 1999; Shulman, 1996) that prevent them from reaping benefits in the licit economy (Hulme & Shepherd, 2003; Wood, 2003). In addition, social and economic boundaries differently position individuals in illicit labor markets. However, neither of these realities is acknowledged by prominent risk theorists, who typically outline universal reactions to the uncertainty produced by modernization (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991; Lyng, 2005). Specifically, at-risk statuses are often ignored and the risk actor is depicted as “lacking a gender, age, ethnicity, social class or sexual identity” (Lupton, 1999: 123). This chapter explores these realities by discussing the position of minority youth in licit and illicit labor markets and how younger and older study participants construe and experience their economic prospects.

At-risk statuses and the political economy

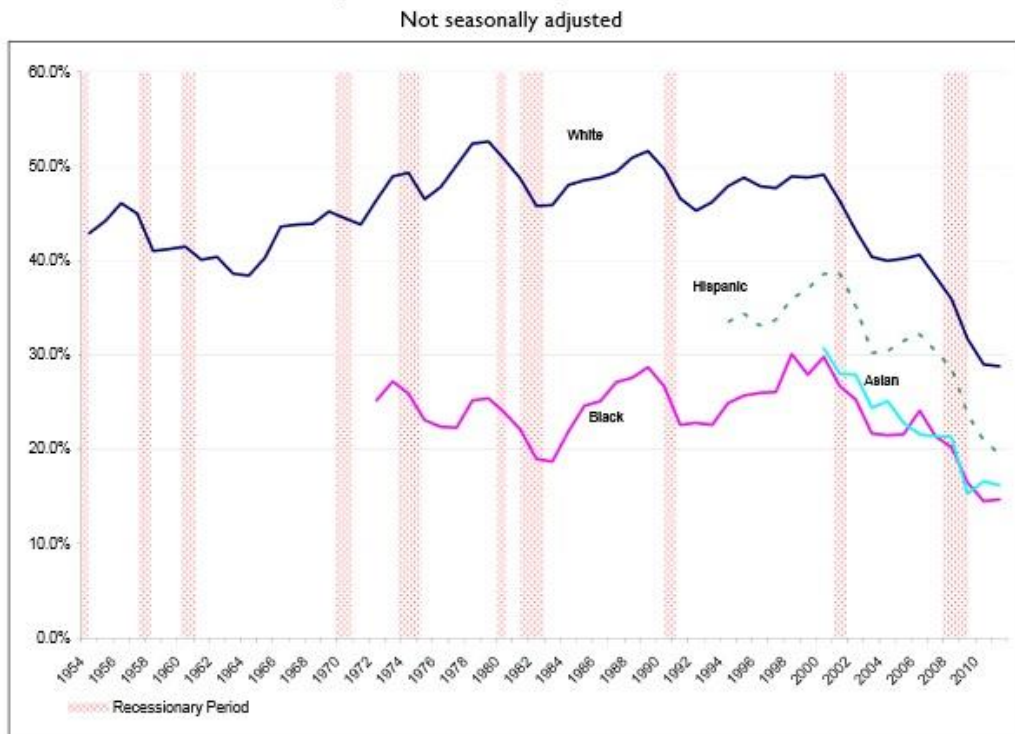
The men in this study occupy multiple risk statuses, which combine to shape their participation in labor markets. These dynamics are particularly salient because of changes in the U.S. economy that occurred over the last several decades. As the U.S. job market has moved

toward service industries with greater educational requirements, African-American adults have increasingly suffered layoffs, unemployment, and underemployment (Larson & Mohanty, 1999; Shulman, 1996; Wacquant, 2008). Blacks who earn a high school degree have an employment status comparable to or worse than that of white high-school dropouts (McDaniel & Kuehn, 2013). Moreover, bypassing corporate employment and starting an independent business is fraught with its own obstacles. Within predominantly black neighborhoods, black-owned businesses are less likely to receive loans and support from banks, which makes entrepreneurship unattainable for most (Immergluck, 2002). Should black youths decide to enter the licit economy, their prospects for success remain limited. In contrast, participation in the unregulated illicit economy offers financial rewards for these socially marginalized individuals. Paradoxically, work in the illicit economy, as compared to employment in the licit market, may allow youths to be less at-risk. This is because in the illicit sector, marginalized youths can make more money, which allows them greater financial independence.

Young people who work in licit economies often labor in part-time service-sector jobs that have no benefits (McDaniel & Kuehn, 2013; Wacquant, 2008). Recent economic findings (see Bell & Blanchflower, 2010; Olivares, 2012) suggest that the group hit hardest by the post-2007 economic recession is African-American youths, whose unemployment rate is regularly twice that of their white peers and for whom joblessness has risen to record highs. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2013), black teenagers had a 44% unemployment rate.

Figure 3.1 Teen employment rate by race, 1954-2011.

Figure 4. Employment-Population Ratio of Teens Ages 16-19 by Race and Ethnicity, 1954-2011



Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS), based on data from U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

Notes: Employment-population ratios represent the percentage of the non-institutionalized population who were employed. The Bureau of Labor Statistics began recording employment data for blacks in 1972, for Hispanics in 1994, and for Asians in 2000. Persons of Hispanic origin can be of any race and individuals of any race may be Hispanic.

Of course, all teens do not fare the same in the political economy. For example, employment rates for teens ages 16 to 19 from 1954–2011 show the differential impact of race on joblessness (see Figure 3.1). In 2011 about 70% of white teens were jobless, while about 85% of African-American teens were jobless. The realities of black and Latino joblessness and other facets of their economic, cultural, and socio-political marginalization provide a context for the empirical analysis that follows.

In *Generation on Hold*, James Côté and Anton Allahar (1996) outline the *political economy of youth* model. These authors critique governmental policies barring teenagers from entry into the medium-wage labor force who, upon entrance into the low-wage labor market, await meager financial rewards due to the paltry minimum wage. Côté and Allahar (1996) further argue against business practices requiring more educational credentials for technical/professional work — practices that benefit the economy overall and, more specifically, the middle-aged people within it (Côté & Allahar, 1996; Dornbusch, 1989; Hynes & Hirsch, 2012; Shanahan, 2000; Shanahan et al., 2007; Wiesner, Vondracek, Capaldi, & Porfeli., 2003). Côté and Allahar (1996: 49) discuss how the declining middle class is an age-based phenomenon “where the primary change in all sectors of the economy has involved a decline in the relative wage rates of young people and an increase in the relative wage rates of middle-aged workers (35 to 65).” The reality that youths have lost their earning power to the benefit of middle-aged individuals is demonstrated in studies of several Western economies, including those in Canada, the United States and many European countries (see Arnett, 2000; Côté & Allahar, 1996; Macunovich, 1999; McMillan & Baesel, 1990; Myles, Picot & Wannell, 1988; Slack & Jensen, 2008). A legally and socially imposed lengthy childhood not only enables middle-aged individuals to gain more of a nation’s wealth, but also relegates youths to a disenfranchised class position.

In an advanced industrial society such as the United States, there is an unnecessary prolongation of adolescence, with youths not coming of age until 20 or later (Côté & Allahar, 1996; Dornbusch 1989; Hynes & Hirsch 2012; Wiesner et al. 2003). Governmental policies about age and labor are tied to the idea that there is a biologically based developmental difference between adolescence and adulthood, with adolescents being deficient in some ways

(Albarracin et al., 2001; Côté & Allahaar, 1996; Steinberg & Morris, 2001; Quadrel, 1993). Many scholars argue that this demarcation is, to some extent, arbitrary, rather than based on a timeless biological truth. In fact, conceptions of adolescence, which are both socially and culturally constructed, have dramatically changed over time (Baumeister & Tice, 1986; Côté, 1997; Shanahan, Porfeli, Mortimer, & Erickson, 2005). Nevertheless, within today’s cultural and historical moment, this period of adolescence is relevant to the lived experiences of youths, even third parties.

Table 3.1 The political economy of youth model

Youths are cheap surplus labor in the licit sector (e.g., 9; 10; 11; 12; 13; 14; 16)
Youth disenfranchisement directly benefits the middle-aged worker (see 1; 9; 14; 15; 16)
Youths once were an asset, now an economic burden (see 9; 10; 12)
Youths targeted to spend meager earnings from service jobs on clothes, entertainment (see 9; 10; 12).
Education keeps young people out of the job market and instills often false promises of returns (see 9)
Youths are stripped of agency potential through prolonged adolescence and late coming of age (see 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 15; 17).

Sources (Critical PE of Youth Rhetoric): 1 Baumeister & Tice, 1986; 2 Côté, 1996; 3 Côté, 1997; 4 Lapsley & Murphy, 1985; 5 Muus, 1996; 6 Neugarten, 1996; 7 Schlegel, 2011; 8 Shanahan, Porfeli, Mortimer, & Erickson, 2005; 9 Côté & Allahaar, 1996; 10 Dornbusch, 1989; 11 Hynes & Hirsch, 2012; 12 Shanahan, 2000; 13 Macunovich, 1999; 14 McMillan & Baesel, 1990; 15 Arnett, 2000; 16 Myles, Picot, & Wannell, 1988; 17 Wiesner et al., 2003 18 Hertz, 2005; 19 Slack & Jensen, 2008

Some youths in the United States become cheap, surplus labor. But minorities, especially those living in housing projects, historically have been barred even from these lowly positions. In

response, these marginalized youths may develop illicit means of generating income, such as drug dealing or pimping (Wacquant, 2008). But even in the illicit labor market, young people experience disenfranchisement at the hands of their elders. For instance, in a study of the commercial sex market in Atlantic City, New Jersey, many of the young third parties, called “spot pimps,” merely connect sex workers to clients and, in exchange, are paid a meager wage.

In this context, some more seasoned local sex workers scoff at the idea that these youngsters are pimps (Marcus, Riggs, Horning, Rivera, Curtis, & Thompson, 2012). Further, considering the possible prevalence of families who collectively sell sex (Dank et al., 2014; Katona, 2015; Raphael & Myers-Powell, 2010), teenage and young adult pimps may be exploited by older male family members.

The work of these scholars helps us to understand how young third parties who experience *triple marginalizations*, or disenfranchisement due to race, class and age, fit into the overall political economy of youth. These realities are important, but instead of focusing only on these outcomes, this chapter also examines how marginalized youths perceive their own economic prospects and assess the risks associated with participation in economic markets.

Multi-lingual discourse

There are important alternative perspectives on how the disenfranchised perceive social inclusion and exclusion. According to Young (2003), in this global age there is an eroding cultural boundary where the included social actors may absorb cultural positions of both inclusion and exclusion. Social actors may not perceive risk positions as static; that is, as either associated with a status of “other” or not. This especially pertains to youths, whose major life choices are just beginning. It is understandable, therefore, that young people’s accounts might

reflect multiple social and risk positions. In fact, third parties may view their activities in the dual worlds holistically, without a clear demarcation between their participation in each milieu. Their participation in each arena, moreover, may be associated with mechanisms that allow them to achieve a greater sense of control in their lives. Other scholars have developed similar ideas that help us to understand the practices and perceptions of third parties.⁴ In addition, I contend they may also use more mainstream discursivities — that is, they may have a multi-lingual discourse. As previously discussed, this view counters that of several scholars who suggest there are firm spatial, social, cultural, and economic boundaries between socially included and socially excluded individuals (Wacquant 2008). I further explore the multiple discursivities of the study participants below.

Youth and perceptions of power in the political economy

Institutional forces influence youths in particular ways because of their age, but these influences are particularly pronounced for teens who are on the border of adulthood. Like most adolescents in advanced industrialized nations, young third parties in the United States are required to participate in school (until age 16⁵) and have an adult guardian (until age 18⁶). They are barred from institutions such as full-time labor (until age 16⁷) and marriage (generally until

⁴ For instance, Matza (1969) argues that transgressors constantly trample illicit/licit boundaries to feel control.

⁵ School attendance law varies by state. In New York, minors are required to be in school until age 16 unless state requirements for early withdrawal are met. See, for example, “Age range for compulsory school attendance and special education services, and policies on year-round schools and kindergarten programs,” National Center for Education Statistics (retrieved October 2013): http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d08/tables/dt08_165.asp

⁶ Federal and state laws regulate parental obligations and rights, but most states generally require adult legal guardians until age 18, with some exceptions. For an overview of these laws and regulations, see Jean Pardeck’s *Children’s Rights: Policy and Practice, Second Edition*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

⁷ Federal law regulates labor. See, for example, “Minimum Age for Employment,” New York State Department of Labor (retrieved October 2013): <http://labor.ny.gov/workerprotection/laborstandards/workprot/schlatttd.shtml>

age 18⁸), and they are restricted from participating in activities at adult venues such as bars and nightclubs where alcohol is served (until age 21⁹). The age-based restrictions of institutional processes shape the experiences of third parties. These prohibitions influence the everyday social life of third parties, as well as their feelings and perceptions of their social position and sense of personal power.

While these social realities are widely recognized, we know little about how youths experience or feel about the social restrictions in their lives and the ways in which the third-party label may modify or redress them. Notably, we do not know the answer to the following questions: Does third-party labor enable adolescents to come of age earlier? Does this activity enhance their feelings of self-efficacy and capacity to demonstrate agency in their lives? One means to answer these questions is to examine how third parties conceive of pimp labor in terms of rational action; that is, in terms of *means* and *ends* logic based on an assessment of the rationality of criminal action. Arguably, in criminology there has been a move to eradicate irrationality from explanations of crime (Young, 2007). Some young pimps may have elements of rationality in their means-to-ends accounts of their criminal activity. But as my research shows, many also relay accounts of the feelings associated with their acts. It is by looking at both the rational *and* emotional bases for their acts that we are able to understand how third parties view their own social position. Pimping may not only generate income; it also may be a means of escaping uncertainty and transcending the institutional and structural restrictions of the political

⁸ State law regulates the marriageable age, which varies between 16 and 18 in all states, with some exceptions for minors below 16. In New York, minors between 14 and 16 can get married with written consent from a parent and judge, minors between 16 and 18 can get married with written parental consent, and individuals 18 and over can get married without parental consent. See "Information on Getting Married in New York State," New York State Department of Health (retrieved October 2013): <http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/4210/>

⁹ While minors can access nightclubs and similar venues that are organized specifically to include all ages, they cannot drink alcohol or access bars until age 21, since federal law regulates the U.S. drinking age. See National Minimum Drinking Age Act of 1984 (23 U.S.C. § 158).

economy. Below, I review the participation of study participants in both the illicit and licit markets. Following this, I analyze their perspectives on these experiences.

Realities of pimps in the political economy

Several study participants work in both the illicit and licit economies. Specifically, at the time this research was conducted, 12.5% worked in the licit economy. Generally, they performed service jobs at fast-food restaurants and grocery stores, or performed manual labor jobs such as delivering packages for the United Postal Service. Other participants have a history of legal employment. Over one-fourth, or 26.8%, formerly worked in the legal economy. Another one-fourth of the participants would like to have licit work, but they more often aspire to higher-level positions, such as being managers in licit businesses or owning their own business in the formal sector. Overall, 64.3% of study participants had some relationship to the legal economy, and 30.4% never had licit work and often did not express interest in this type of work, and 5.3% did not provide responses to these questions.

Study participants express different views about their work experiences in the legal economy. Some of the older pimps (24 to 67 years old) in the study appear to occupy a subcultural position in which pimping and other illicit work constitute a lifestyle. When asked where he sees himself in five years, Leon, 30, replies, “I am a pimp forever.” There are some individuals who have worked in this arena and other illegal sectors for so long that they have no conception of licit labor. Isaac Taylor, 27, who pimped for 12 years, says, “I never worked before regular. All my life I was just selling drugs, selling ass, and robbing. Robbing and stealing.”

Other older pimps have straddled the legal and illegal economies, and they are well aware of the boundary. George talks about how he works for the Board of Education during the week, but from Thursday to Saturday he pimps in the evenings. He describes many people who have similar lives and keep the two worlds separate.

George: Like I said once in occasionally like Sundays, once in a blue moon I would get a phone call during the regular weekday or something like that. One of the guys would call me. Hey, man, what you doing? Listen, I feel like hanging out with one of the girls, da da da da. You think you can set something up? But that didn't really happen too often during the week 'cause you know they still had to maintain their regular lives, too.

Similarly Vikel, 27, has a 9-to-5 job as a salesman, as do many of his sex workers, who work during the day as sales associates but spend the evenings selling sex. He says both forms of employment are necessary because of the low wages these workers receive in the shoe sales industry. Interestingly, almost none of the younger pimps describe such firm boundaries between their licit and illicit lives. Before exploring the accounts of youths in depth, I use the *political economy of youth* model to explore how illicit labor influences their perceptions of power in the economy.

As previously discussed, the rhetoric in the political economy model characterizes youth as largely powerless and subject to manipulation by the institutions of education and work, which largely benefit middle-aged populations (Côté & Allahar, 1996). The scholarly perspective argues that young people are “tricked” into paying for college, working for nothing, and buying status items, all with little return or benefit.

Young third parties' ideas about education and going to college vary. Some believe that education is worth it (n=10, 37%), and they aspire to complete associate and bachelor's degrees, typically in business and communications. Some believe that being credentialed will positively change their futures. More than half of the young third parties in this study, however, challenge

this idea. For example, Reno is quite aware of the enormous debt incurred by his educated counterparts. He feels that social movements such as Occupy Wall Street reflect young people's reluctance to believe in the "American Dream."

Reno: So many people are part of that whole Zuccotti Park and the one percent, and I think people from your school and those schools have gone and protested about that they're, you know, their tuition hundred thousand, two hundred thousand dollars in tuition. There's not jobs. And so the American Dream has is changed. ... Don't go to college anymore.

Reno's point about the widening gap between the rich and the poor is a reality. This sentiment may apply to those in various social strata, not just those experiencing triple marginalization. A few decades ago, his sentiments would be considered oppositional, but this idea is gaining traction within the mainstream, especially in middle-class populations. In fact, mounting student debt has become a political matter, with some, such as President Obama, advocating for erasing or reducing U.S. student debt. Others, such as former Secretary of Education and conservative pundit William Bennett, take this perspective further to argue that a four-year higher education is not financially worthwhile and not even necessary to success.

In terms of self-sufficiency, young third parties probably fare better than their counterparts who do not engage in illegal work. Only 10 (41.7%) participants live with their parents. Over one-fourth (n=10, 32.3%) also have jobs in the licit sector to complement the income earned from pimping. The money that third parties earn is particularly important, because these youths come from at-risk families. They typically have parents who are unable to support them. Moreover, many of these youths use their income to support struggling family members by paying rent and buying food, clothes, and even schoolbooks. For instance, Buddy Love, 21, talks about the "bigger picture," or how he distributes his income and his vision of his economic future.

Buddy: I'm looking at the bigger picture. I don't wanna live with my parents for the rest of my life. The majority of them (my family) work, but I feed them too, so it's like I make sure they good. I have two more older brothers. They in school (college). I pay for them to get they books. (---) Send 'em they checks they can just do whatever they want with it so like. I'm the type I give you money. I don't want it back like.

However, more than half of the study participants receive financial support from their parents. This sub-sample is typically engaged in third-party work part time, typically hosting weekend sex parties. This particular group of third parties is similar to youths in licit economies who often are supported by their parents into their early twenties.

Many third parties discuss their urge to spend the often meager money they earn from pimping on clothes and entertainment (n=20, 64.5%). Many mention a need for sneakers, a symbol of status for many black teenagers (Collins, 2006). The ability to sport the latest fashion trends, despite being poor, is very important to youths in this demographic. Percy reflects on this necessity.

Percy: I told her, Do you love me? She said yes. And it was like OK, the newest Jordans came out. I'm not gonna lie. The newest Jordans came out. I really wanted 'em. And a guy he wanted her. So I told her, I said, Yo I really need this. It's a dire need.

Third parties also talk about how these social status symbols are important to young sex workers. In some cases, youths may band together so they can successfully don symbols of social status. Javalucci, 20, and his girlfriend do not make much money in the licit market. One day, they decide to sell sex for basic living costs. They have been saving money for a while and they finally can buy nice clothes. Javalucci talks about saving for the future, but a portion of his earnings go to new clothing. He says, "I'm saving it for the future, of course. Like I said, it takes money, takes time to add up. You know, so I take time to buy my sneakers you know. ... You know, she gets her stuff too. She wears nice clothes. Louis Vuitton, Hermes. Haha. Just adds

up.” This spending of meager earnings on clothes and entertainment is typical of most youths who are disenfranchised because of their age. Youths who are not socially marginalized typically earn money in service-sector jobs but purchase similar kinds of items. Corporations advertise to youths because they are the biggest spenders.

Generally speaking, over one-fourth of third parties (n=10, 32.3%) in this study serve as cheap, surplus labor in the illicit marketplace; many work for older family members. Those third parties who work for family members (e.g., fathers, uncles, or cousins) either work for free or serve as apprentices for a period of time. Taking legal and illegal employment together, almost half (n=17, 48.6%) of the young third parties in this study qualify as cheap, surplus labor in the all-encompassing political economy. In contrast, most of their licit counterparts in the general population are portrayed as cheap, surplus labor in the U.S. economic market. Based on this metric, it appears that those in illegal markets fare better than those working in legal sectors. Such earning potential may be associated with the perceptions that youths have the ability to exercise agency and power. Respondents’ remarks in this regard are analyzed below.

Table 3.2 Types of discourse related to exclusion/inclusion

Types of discourse	
Oppression discourse	Personal narratives of unemployment and racism used to describe why they are precluded from the licit sector economy (derived from Sandberg, 2009).
Gangster discourse	Personal narratives of being hard, respected and “street smart,” thereby bypassing the need to be included in the licit sector economy (derived from Sandberg, 2009).
Versatility discourse	Personal narratives of being adept at navigating both illicit and licit sector economies.

Power and powerlessness and multi-lingual discourse

Many third parties contrast their third-party work to licit work. In their remarks, third parties suggest that they gain a sense of empowerment by taking control in illicit sectors and bypassing the degradation and low returns of menial labor. This is evident in their self-characterizations of “being the boss,” “having an empire,” “being respected,” and basically taking the reins in their communities within a capitalist system. These descriptions of being street savvy and therefore respected and powerful are aligned with gangster discourse (see Table 3.2). Also, third parties frequently tell of how they have limited opportunities due to their disenfranchisement in licit sectors, and this is aligned with oppression discourse. For instance, Baby Sean, 26, reflects on the low wages he once received at McDonald’s and compares this to the fast economic returns from pimping.

Sean: I wouldn’t give up this for no McDonald’s. No, not any more. I mean I’m making a little minimum wage, 7.25 or 7 dollars an hour. Back then, uh, it wasn’t doing nothing compared to what this is doing for me right now. No way. I can make that in about a couple minutes you know [through third-party work].

Percy, 21, started pimping at age 14. He calls pimping “straight negativity.” But at the same time, he talks about the perks of being his own boss. For Percy, the independence he obtains through pimping provides a means of escaping the confines of menial labor. His movements are not regulated by the traditional institutions of work, and no one has the power to fire him. Percy’s feelings of control are derived from the fact that, while he is engaged in money-making endeavors (similar to mainstream accounts) along with other members of his

demographic, he has freedoms that other working-class people from his demographic do not.

Oppression and gangster discourses are present in these types of accounts. Many youths talk of initially being limited to low-wage jobs. Rejecting that position, they are now badass. They are bosses who can do as they please. These accounts are about difference, but they still align with American cultural goals of money-making (Merton, 1938).

Percy: I went from being a kid with a lot of positive outlooks to straight negativity. And yes, pimping has done that. But then you gotta look at a pimp's life. Pimp nigger, do what he wanna a do. You clock in when you wanna clock in. You clock out when you wanna clock out. You pay yourself how much you wanna pay yourself. If I wake up 9 o'clock and say I wanna drink liquor, I'm gonna drink liquor. If I wake up and say I wanna smoke, I'm gonna smoke. I'm my own boss.

Interviewer: So you set your own . . .

Percy: I tell myself, I hire and fire myself.

Some third parties refuse to see the difference between licit and illicit work. They appear to de-emphasize this boundary and instead see sameness between themselves and the mainstream. They view degradation and subordination as inherent in any kind of labor. They argue, moreover, that “pimp” and “ho” are merely imposed labels. For instance, Cyril believes that irrespective of race, many people operate in the pimp-and-ho paradigm, although unlike him and his workers, these other people are being paid only minimum wage.

Cyril: I would say this not only a black and Spanish thing, and when you put the word pimp, ho, you limit it. You know. Because it's much bigger than the four-letter word. And two-letter word. You know.

Interviewer: That's true.

Cyril: There's people that's pimping people right here working at this desk, and there's hos that's running to the fax machine back and forth. That ain't never gonna leave that minimum wage bracket that they working for. And at the end of the day they saying damn, I been here for three years and I ain't going nowhere. And the boss is like, you been here for three years and you been doing a good job. Now keep on doing it and you gonna be here for another three.

Younger pimps also discuss access to education, a topic that older pimps tend to disregard as a possibility. But some younger pimps do feel that college is out of their grasp. Steve, 19, uses Sandberg's (2009) oppression discourse to explain his line of work. His reason for pimping is to pay bills; he just moved out of his family home, and he could not otherwise afford to be independent. But he wishes to return to school to study business administration. He uses oppression discourse to clarify why he uses pimping as a creative means to earn and save money. But he does not ultimately feel barred from obtaining an education and/or from being a businessman in the formal sector.

Steve: Just made my ambition higher to get money. That's it. Everybody's life is not planned out for them. So everybody can't go to college, get degrees, and make money. It's not easy. You know what I'm saying? It's not as easy as it looks. It's the right way to go, but it's not as easy living in the hood. You living through poverty. You know. You don't got it. Whatever, you got little sisters making some money and you they need sneakers. Gotta go out and get it one way or another.

Interviewer: Not everybody is doing this though, right?

Steve: Nah, nah, everybody do they own thing. Everybody get they own type of money through they own way.

Other third parties are more skeptical about formal education and feel that college is not worth the effort or costs. If we return to Reno's quote about Occupy Wall Street, his position does not align with the standard oppression discourse, where exclusion is framed through being at-risk because of race and class and other marginalized positions. Instead, he directly references angry college students in the Occupy Wall Street movement, and specifically the protesters in Zuccotti Park, where a main slogan is about the solidarity among the 99% who are united in some form of oppression against the 1% who hold wealth and power. This assessment aligns Reno with the majority of the population.

Some third parties believe they do not belong in college because of their triple marginalizations, which respondents articulate through oppression and gangster discourses. A team of three third parties speaks frankly about how, for them, some things were unattainable. The team leader states, “We’re obviously not gonna be, you know, lawyers or doctors or CIA or anything.” But they include that they are also too badass for that kind of setting. Such remarks are more aligned with gangster discourse. Even though at-risk discourses are prevalent in their accounts, there is also another discourse that study participants articulate — that is, their ability to make dreams come true no matter what. (In the case cited below, the dream is making it in the rap music industry.)

Trio 2: It’s like when we was young coming up we had dreams of doing that, but it’s like now how you see reality is like, you know, some dreams can’t come true. But it’s like that’s not gonna stop me from making it come true you know.

Pimping as a means to an end

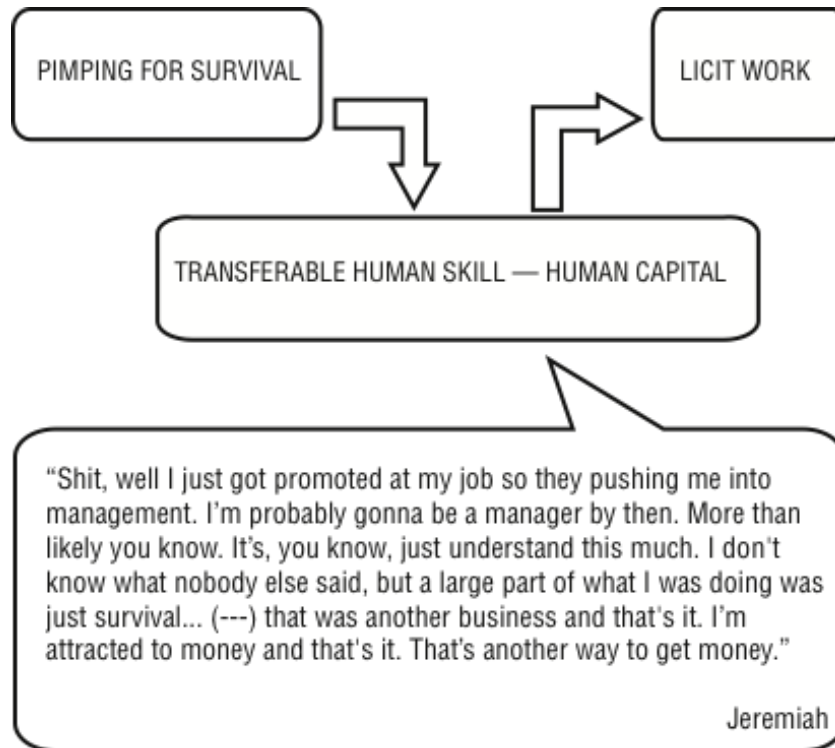
There is evidence of both the old and young pimps having subcultural positions. Several young third parties describe the need to pimp as a means to survive, but because of their young age their accounts are reflective of disruptive family environments. For instance, many respondents describe how they and other at-risk teens come together in order to get money. The need for this cooperative activity stems from an array of problems, including having ill, poor, or absentee parents. Those disconnected from their parents meet in places such as foster care, homeless shelters, or the streets. Their disenfranchised status is magnified by the reality that they live with little to no adult guardianship. Having limited options in licit markets, they facilitate selling sex and engaging in sex work to survive. We discuss this type of pimping for survival

by imagining that he might be lacking in the most basic aspects of human needs on Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Wes: I was thinking about what can I do with my life for me to get some kinda money out of it? Cause it's like I don't wanna walk around the streets broke. Cause when I'm hungry I'm a-be starving. When I'm thirsty ... when I need something to drink, I'm a-be thirsty.

At-risk third-party/sex-worker dyads spend some of their money on teenage "necessities" such as sunglasses. Many more, however, are more interested in paying bills, eating, and basic survival. Still other third parties focus on more long-range plans.

Figure 3.2 Pimping as a means to licit work

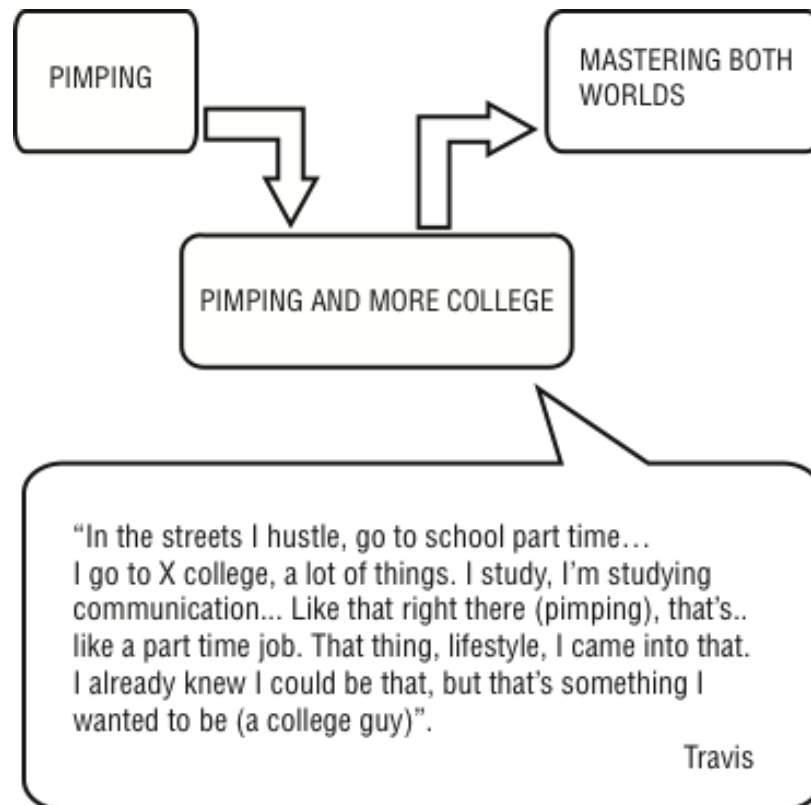


In stark contrast to those who are just trying to survive, some young third parties' discourse centers on using pimping as a means to enter licit spheres, whether college or work in the licit world. These youths are skillfully navigating borders between the legal and illegal

markets. For instance, Jeremiah discusses how, for him, pimping is about survival. He discusses how it not only puts food on his table, but also provides him with a transferrable skill (see Figure 3.2). He continued in business, but in the formal sector, and he describes pimping as helping him to do this. Some others feel that going to college allows them to gain skills to improve their illicit businesses.

Many reference business courses that give them business ideas. For others, college is a great place for business. For instance, John chose a large community college where he can easily expand his client base and recruit more workers. The border between licit and illicit spheres is not so firm for these third parties for whom skills learned in one arena can be used in the other, and who blend these spheres in creative ways.

Figure 3.3 Pimping as a means of mastering both worlds



Many third parties recognize the perils of their at-risk status and in being in the all-encompassing political economy. They pride themselves on their ability to skillfully navigate both worlds. The more surprising accounts are from those who not only move seamlessly between worlds but master both. Travis discusses always knowing that he could pimp, but feeling unsure of his ability to be a college man (see Figure 3.3).

He tells the story of how he discovers that he can excel in both arenas, but without a specific aspiration of quitting either. While he sees a boundary between them, he also sees himself as not only being able to glide across it, but also to skillfully control both worlds. This is reflective of a discourse of versatility, where both licit and illicit spheres are navigated (see Table 3.2).

Similarly, Jason, 22, is pimping in order to finance purchasing multiple legitimate businesses, and he claims to have already saved over \$100,000 as a starting point. His vision of owning a condo and multiple businesses can be interpreted as an ambitious American Dream; however, he claims to have the money to purchase a condo and is in the process of saving for the rest.

Interviewer: In five years what do you see yourself doing?

Jason: I'm trying to be self-employed, man. I wanna own two businesses.

Interviewer: OK.

Jason: And a condo.

Interviewer: You're gonna do all of it.

Jason: That's my goal. Man, I got enough for the store. Right now, I got a couple hundreds, hundred thousand (dollars) stacked up (saved). But for the condo, man. That's what I wanna get first. I wanna get my main place. I want my own spot. Like I could call mines. Know what I mean? Now me I wanted to be official. I want a piano in my shit type shit, I want like carpets, cashmere carpets. Understand? I want to live good type. You know what I mean.

Interviewer: Yeah.

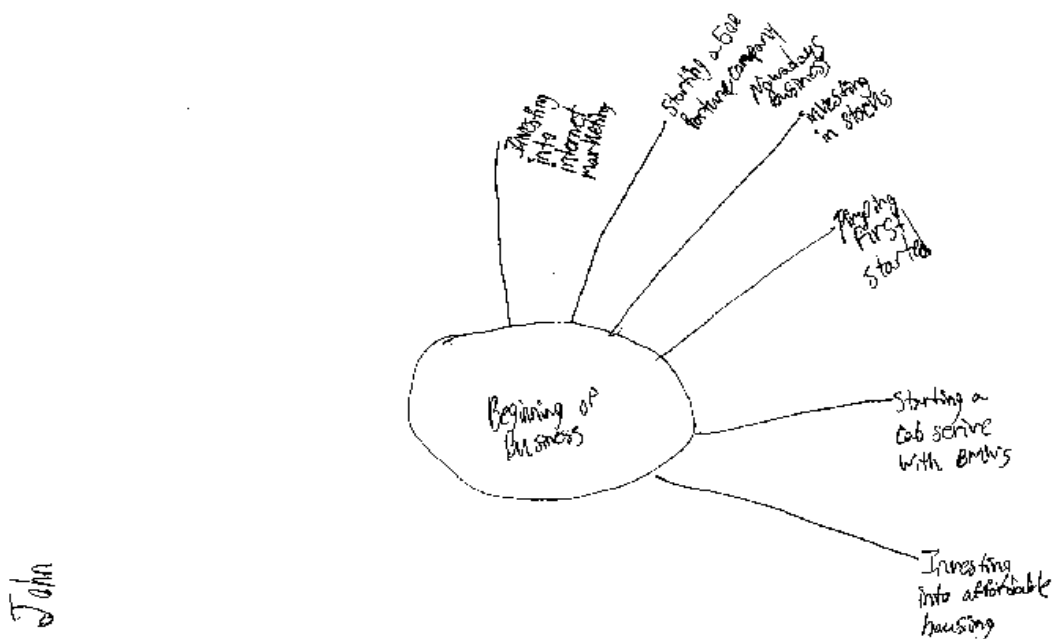
Jason: So, I'm not gonna quit no time soon. Know what I mean, stack know what I mean.

Interviewer: You want some nice stuff.

Jason: Half a mill mark something. You know.

Jason does sound like a rational-capitalist, and his story may even reflect Young's (2007) ideas that criminology tends to embrace a "stunted version of means to ends" while ignoring irrationality. Jason yearns for an official life replete not only with luxury, but with symbols of high culture such as a piano and fancy carpets. The tangibility of this may be questionable, but that hardly matters. His main imaginings are not just about simple financial gain, but also about aesthetics and something much more emotionally palpable than the rationalist process by which money is earned.

Figure 3.4 Map drawn by young pimp of his business plan



In other extreme cases, third parties articulate an unfeeling rationality. John draws a pen-and-ink map of his business plan (see Figure 3.4). He is currently a business major and seems to be constructing his business model based on various courses he is taking, such as online marketing. His plan is to gain enough capital through pimping to expand to licit-sector businesses such as a limousine company, various online endeavors, and eventually ownership of a Fortune 500 company. He already has invested in the stock market and is increasing his capital. This is an example of a young man who discusses successfully mastering his environment.

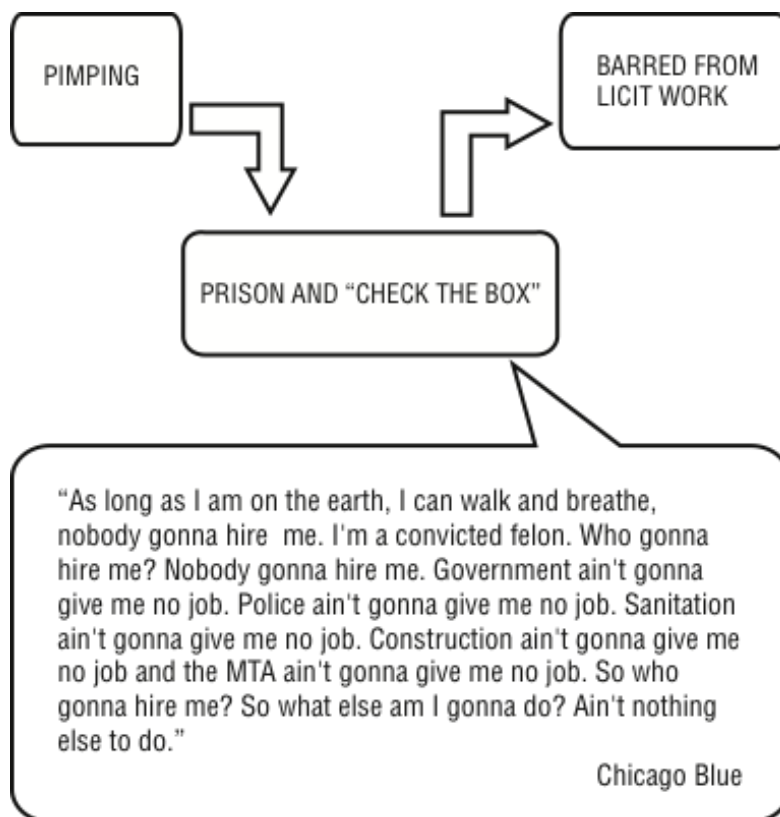
Rationalist-capitalist or not, many of these young third parties pride themselves on skillfully navigating economic markets, despite their at-risk status and, in some cases, while skating over dangerous borders without so much as a scratch.

More often, these younger third parties seem unbothered by their at-risk status and undeterred by social and cultural barriers. While their talk of economic solvency comes from positions of exclusion based on raced and classed identities, some of these third parties are technically included because they are currently college men or at least feel they can be included by eventually becoming businessmen in formal markets. Often pimping is not a means to an end, but a means to a means, such as “keep pimping and pay bills” or “keep pimping and own a licit business” or “keep pimping and go to college.” Within the all-encompassing political economy, dual worlds are unseen or seamlessly navigated by these young men. Many skillfully carve out human capital via their illicit work and seem to draw from their feelings of control and potential control, even with grandiose ideas such as owning a Fortune 500 company.

In contrast, many older pimps (ages 24 to 67) have more distinctly excluded positions in the political economy. Many of their options are shaped by prior felony convictions that preclude them from holding many licit jobs. Chicago Blue, 44, discusses how he will always be engaged

in illicit activities because he believes that he is unemployable due to his prior felony convictions (see Figure 3.5). In most U.S. states, felons are required to identify their status on job applications. Many of them are bypassed as unsuitable even for menial labor (Mathias, 2015). In 2015 New York City passed a groundbreaking policy called the Fair Chance Act that means felons are no longer required to check the box on job applications that identifies them as having a prior conviction. Similar policies have passed in 17 states and more than 100 cities (Mathias, 2015). However, these policies only apply to private-sector jobs, which is problematic because this bars felons from applying for civil service positions, such as jobs with the U.S. Postal Service that historically have been accessible to racial minorities (Rubio, 2010).

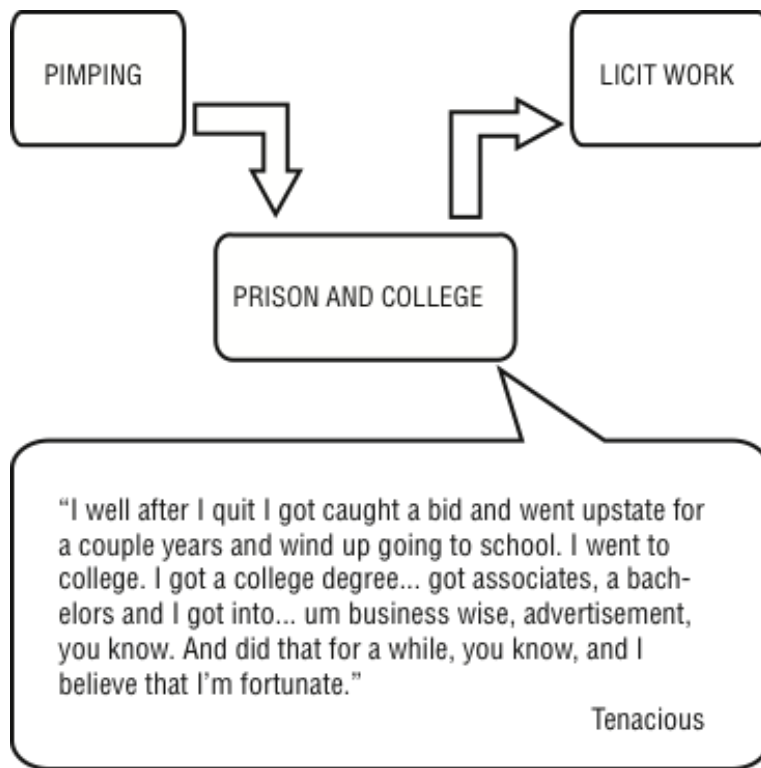
Figure 3.5 Pimping to prison and barred from licit work



Nonetheless, if this type of “fair chance” policy remains intact, gains traction in other states and/or expands to public-sector positions, then this type of means-to-ends trajectory may become obsolete.

Although many older pimps resign themselves to criminal lifestyles and excluded positions, a few find that the prison experience helps them to gain the capital necessary for the licit sector. Tenacious, 35, discusses how the prison experience afforded him a college degree, and therefore the ability to be hired.

Figure 3.6 Pimping to prison to college and licit work



When Tenacious spent time in prison in the 1970s and 1980s, there were more educational opportunities for people who were incarcerated. These types of programs began in

the 1950s and showed positive results in reducing recidivism (Steurer & Smith, 2003; U.S. Department of Education, 1994; Vacca, 2004). However, in the 1990s nearly all educational programs in prison were discontinued. Unless these programs are re-established, it is likely that this type of means-to-ends trajectory will diminish.

Some older third parties who have quit pimping do find jobs, but as previously discussed they are in menial positions or manual labor. These men do not view their positions as optimal, but as long as they can pay the bills and have a somewhat comfortable life, they describe some satisfaction. Debonir discusses the many menial labor positions he has held between stints of pimping and afterward.

Debonir: Oh man, I done went and got me some security jobs. I done worked in some factories. I done worked at Universal. I done went back to Florida for a couple years. I worked at Universal Entertainment for maybe like two years. You know I done came back to New York. I done did me, um, I done worked for a lotta private messenger services where I drive they trucks and stuff like that. And then I started feeling like OK I can find me a lazy job and make a lot more money. I went and got a baller's license and became a maintenance man. And then learnt I can be even more lazier with it and got me a superintendent's license and got me a building. Haha. The only thing I do is just mop a floor and drain a boiler. And I get my I get a nice little decent penny to pay all my bills and still have a nice little penny in my pocket. I'm living comfortably. Cause it's just me. You know. That's what life boil down to. I'm happy.

Some older pimps do move across illicit and licit sectors, but they seem to need both to survive economically. The types of jobs they obtain in licit sectors are low level positions. With the decline of factory work, decreasing menial labor positions and the increase in technological skills needed to work (even in service-sector positions), this type of means-to-ends trajectory may become more infrequent.

Many older pimps also have a disadvantage in licit markets because they are not native to technology. Even though third-party work has moved online and technology is more readily used for this kind of work, many describe lacking the technological savvy required for jobs other than menial labor. Chicago Blue ponders the idea of returning to college to update his knowledge of technology, but he reflects on the impossibility of actually becoming proficient enough, even with training.

Chicago Blue: Can't go back to school. I'm forty-something years old. Go back to school and learn what? Technology? Computers? What that gonna do for me? Nothing. What's it gonna do? Everything changes. They got the iPads, and you know, the iPhones. All them technologies, for what? I remember *Total Recall*, remember when Arnold Schwarzenegger back in the day? That's the same shit they're doing now. Have you ever noticed, all the movies that came out, that has something to do with technology, it's coming. It's a cycle, everything changes.

Those older pimps nearing retirement age already may have quit pimping or are thinking about it. Some older pimps have set up business arrangements so they can comfortably retire. For instance, Kelvin, 50, uses the money he earned from pimping to purchase residential homes in Virginia. Currently, he is renting them for income. In contrast, Dred did not plan much, but he brags about manipulating a middle-aged working professional into falling in love with him and supporting him. She thinks he is a handyman, and while he likes her somewhat, he stays with her largely because she is his retirement plan. Third parties nearing the end of their careers generally focus on the next life phase and reflect on their preparedness for this transition.

Urban poor in illicit economies and the global age

The urban poor do face many actual social and economic boundaries, yet they describe being able to carve out human capital creatively in “ghetto” lands. It is evident that third parties

are aware of their at-risk status when they talk about their position in the political economy. Often, the third parties in this study express at-risk discourse in line with Sandberg's oppression and gangster discourses. (Sandberg found that non-white, Norwegian drug dealers showed similar interdiscursivity, using both types of discourse in single accounts, which indicates conformity and oppositionality to mainstream culture.) Some of the youths in this study demonstrate a third type of discourse — one of versatility and even mastery of both the illicit and licit markets. This perceived mastery differs from the Mertonian goals of achieving cultural goals such as money-making, but through illegal channels, because many of these young men also attend college and have plans to remain in the licit and illicit sectors simultaneously. It appears that the actual border between illicit and licit activity is quite eroded. While some of these young men see boundaries and even barriers between themselves and opportunity, many do not seem to feel that this is so pronounced. In the *dual city* hypothesis, an underworld is depicted as divided and even unseen. There are certainly real boundaries, but many do not construct their narratives this way. The actual realities of these young men's lives cannot be verified, but one purpose of this study is to understand how they socially construct these boundaries.

I attempt to look at some of the realities of third parties in relation to the political economy model. Third parties are not always cheap, surplus labor (except in families who sell sex), and they are less financially dependent on their parents, so perhaps pimping allows them a fairer shake in the all-encompassing political economy. It may even allow them a more empowering coming-of-age. The perspectives of these young men should be compared to similarly aged sex workers. Third party/sex worker dyads should be investigated to understand how sex workers perceive themselves within the political economy and if they also feel empowered by work in the commercial sex market.

How third parties pimp as a means to achieve different ends is crucial to understanding the motivations behind this activity. As described, there are various reasons for pimping, which range from survival to fantasized or real economic gain. Some pimps' motivations are aligned with rationalist-capitalist agendas, including money-making in the all-encompassing political economy. For others, this labor is a means to attaining a higher status. The idea of a higher status connects to aesthetics, ranging from having teenage status symbols such as the hottest sneakers to a home replete with middle- to upper-class items. Pimping involves both an economic motivation and the feelings associated with higher status, such as being badass at a local level and feeling more independent from socio-structural constraints. The feelings associated with success in illicit and licit economies should be explored in more depth.

Many older third parties feel they have limited possibilities outside of the illicit world. Many have prior felony convictions that preclude them from job opportunities, and some older men have trouble keeping up with new technologies. In terms of future generations of pimps, some of the current issues facing those identified as felons may become less salient as prisoner re-entry strategies change. Younger third parties, despite their at-risk status, have several distinct advantages in moving between licit and illicit worlds. Among them are technological savvy and attributes such as versatility that go hand-in-hand not only with being postmodern, but with being millennial. They make both worlds work for them, and their narratives may be more reflective of future trends.

Chapter Four

Risky business: Intersections of cash and caring

Pimping can be characterized as illicit work, and sex markets operate through supply and demand like other economic sectors. What distinguishes this labor from licit labor is that work arrangements often originate in private social spheres (Dank et al., 2014; Marcus et al., 2012; May et al., 2000), in contradistinction to typical social arrangements in which family life, work, and leisure spheres are separate (Lefebvre, 1958). In sex markets, there often are not clear boundaries between work, leisure, and family. These social arrangements may foster complex relational and economic nexuses.

Individuals are typically initiated into sex work via individuals whom they already know (Dank, 2014; Katona, 2015; Marcus et al. 2012; May et al., 2000; Raphael & Myers-Powell, 2010). Recently, research about sex markets and organized crime has been framed in terms of *social network theory* and its central concept, homophily, which demonstrates that bonds typically form between people who are close in a) geographical proximity; b) language, culture, religion, shared history, and political ideas; and c) economic and other motives (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). A few studies explore the social networks of sex workers and those for whom they work (Curtis et al., 2008; Zhang & Gaylord, 1996). This research suggests not only that family and friendship relations are crucial to sex work, but also that work and affective relationships are often intertwined. This is especially true for street-based third parties, who often grow up in households where the family business is selling sex (Dank et al., 2014; Katona, 2015; May et al., 2000; Petrunov, 2011; Raphael & Myers-Powell, 2010; Raphael, Reichert, & Powers, 2009; U.N. Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking, 2008). The social

relationships between third parties and sex workers are also similar to *affective kinship networks*; that is, people with close social relationships who live together and merge their resources to make money (Agustín, 2007; Marcus et al., 2012; May et al., 2002).

One important reason that high-risk illicit labor occurs between people who are already networked is that there is a higher level of trust between such associates. Trust is a necessary element of high-stakes illegal work, albeit one that can lead to irrational business decisions (Arsovska & Kostakos, 2008).

Indoor and outdoor dichotomy of third party work

Before these intersections are explored, it is crucial to understand how the sex market is segmented; that is, the distinctions between indoor/outdoor markets and lower-/higher-echelon third-party work. Weitzer (2009) argues that sex workers and third parties are diverse, “stratified by income, race, drug dependency, and third-party involvement.” These social characteristics and corresponding constraints and connections influence how third-party work is done.

Historically, more marginalized people in the sex trade work outdoors. Outdoor work is more physically and legally dangerous. Indoor markets, such as exclusive sex clubs or escort services, are more accessible for those within higher strata of the sex trade. But there has been an overall shift toward more indoor work (Dank et al., 2014; Levitt & Venkatesh, 2007; Weitzer, 2009, 2010) in response to changes in criminal justice policy and the increased use of technology, such as the iPhone and the Internet. Younger generations rely on communicating via smartphones and the Internet, and this translates to their work spheres, including the sex trade (Dank et al., 2014; Hughes, 2002; Musto, 2014; Venkatesh, 2011). These tools are useful for finding clients, thereby reducing the need for street-based work. As a result of these changes, the

race and class distinctions intrinsic to the indoor/outdoor dichotomy are less apparent. Even so, lower-echelon third parties who have trouble breaking into the high-end escort industry typically use local spots such residential houses, makeshift nightclubs, and less controlled indoor spaces. The indoor/outdoor dichotomy still shapes how this labor is performed and the associated risks for all parties.

Key social activities involved in pimping

The physical requirements and embodiments required for pimping have rarely been explored, because research more typically focuses on the negative risks sex workers incur in the sex trade, often at the hand of violent pimps (see Katona, 2015; Marcus et al., 2012 for some exceptions). While third parties embody aggressiveness and a capacity for violence, they use violence to protect their work status in various ways; that is, to protect their reputations as businessmen and to protect workers. At the local level, third parties embody control through running successful businesses. A pimp is expected to control his business, from clients, police, sex workers, and sometimes other third parties. This expectation comes not only from others in the sex-trade community who watch how the pimp handles workers and clients, but also from sex workers themselves.

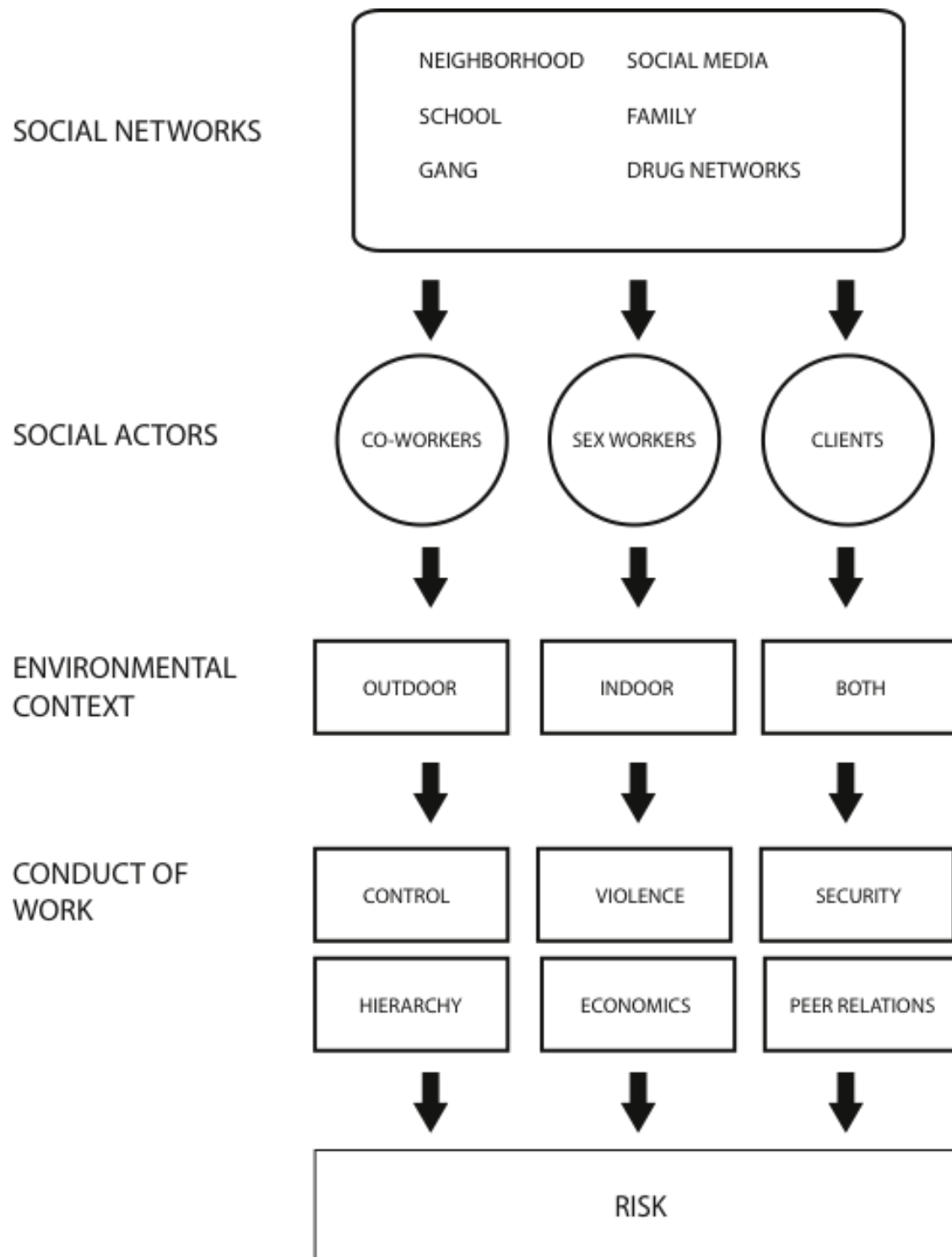
When third parties fail as managers, sex workers steadfastly note the failure and may decide to work independently or with another pimp who embodies control. Marcus and Horning (2015) find that actors in commercial sex markets in the United States can develop reputations for being lazy, for not bringing in clients, for being unable to protect sex workers, for being unable to control other sex workers, and for being too emotional with some sex workers. These third parties may not even be considered real pimps. When third parties lose control, whether it is

because they are not adept at pimping or in other ways, such as their incarceration, their street credibility diminishes in the eyes of others in the sex trade, including their sex workers.

Third parties control their workers in different ways in concert with their respective business models. The term *business model* has various meanings, but it necessarily involves some form of internal infrastructure (Morris, Schindenhutte, & Allen, 2005), or the basic services needed for the organization to function. This may include important social factors such as caring for workers as a business practice. How pimps formulate their business models illuminates social relations between social actors in the sex trade. These nexuses between the social and business strategies arguably impact economic risks, such as the monetary returns of labor.

Figure 4.1 shows how social networks may influence where third-party work is performed. In turn, social network and location variables may impact how third-party work is performed. How third-party work is done is directly related to the dangers of the job, such as bodily and economic risks. Third parties may draw sex workers, clients, and co-workers from their existing social networks. These existing relationships have varying degrees of intimacy and different types of social arrangements, which may play a pivotal role in how the business is set up. First, the model is analyzed — although this static “snapshot” representation is not wholly accurate because in real life networks change, leading to related changes in the conditions and location of the work. Second, how social arrangements and location impact risk and economic outcomes is explored. In line with Granovetter’s (1973; 1983) perspective on social network theory, called *the strength of weak ties*, those from lower SES groups (in this case, lower-echelon pimps), may not benefit economically through *weak ties* or having many acquaintances. They are similarly disenfranchised, with limited opportunities.

Figure 4.1 Social networks and how and where third-party work is done



However, there may be other important factors that impact economic returns, such as where business is conducted and the types of clients drawn from those locations. Third, case studies are used to demonstrate how social networks are fluid and change business plans over time.

Social actors: Selecting work crew and client base

A vast majority (n=49, 83.9%) of third parties know sex workers from their existing social networks. More than one-fourth (n=17, 30.4%) meet sex workers through sexual encounters. More than one-fifth (n=12, 21.4%) know sex workers from school (high school and college). Almost 20% (n=11, 19.6%) know one another from the neighborhood. In this study, less frequent types of networks are social media (n=1, 1.8%), within nightclubs (n=2, 3.6%), or through some combination of these settings.

Typically, sex worker/pimp dyads begin between people who know each other through school, family, or work, and the younger third parties tend to begin with people from school or family settings. This may be because many of these third parties recently were teenagers, who are more reliant on these institutions. For instance, youths are forced to participate in school and live with family. Being required to attend school means that most young pimps forge their friendships in high-school hallways. These beginnings are important, especially considering that third parties in the overall sample started pimping at age 17, on average (mean=17, median=16, mode=15, SD=4.93). For the subsample of younger pimps (ages 18 to 23), the mean age when pimping begins is 16, and ranges from 11 to 20 years old.

The most common type of initiation is through sexual encounters. Sexual encounters involve a range of intimacy from one-night stands to long-term, boyfriend-girlfriend relationships. Some third parties have sex with women specifically to recruit them, and sex

workers get into sexual relationships with third parties for the same reason. (These scenarios will be discussed in the section about coercive control.) Typically, third parties and sex workers mutually decide to sell sex during the course of intimate relationships.

Some at-risk teens and young adults form work unions in order to make money for basic needs. Their problems range from having parents with little income to being unable to pay for rent and groceries. These disenfranchised young people are failing to make ends meet. Having limited options in licit markets, they work in commercial sex markets to survive. Travis Smith, 21, discusses how he met his first sex worker in the neighborhood.

Travis: I already knew her from the block, I already knew what she was about, like. ... She used to be doing this on the regular. I used to be like, "You know, yo, you could make money with me! 'Cause I see, why, you not even getting nothing. You having sex with guys and stuff ... like a fool and stuff like that ... fool!"

Terrance, 46, recalls how he first negotiated a work arrangement with his girlfriend when he was 19 years old.

Terrance: Well, I think it was my job. I was working at the airport and I was sitting home, stressing one day. So she came over my house, and she said, "Honey, what's the matter?" I said, "I have to pay these bills and I don't know how I'm gonna pay them." Then she goes, "Well, what do you want me to do? How can I help?" I said, "Well, you're not working." She said, "How can we work together as a team?" Because before I met her, she was into boosting [shoplifting]. I said, "Well, no, I have a better idea."

There is another category of initiations that involve *teen partiers* or youths who host sex parties. These beginnings are often spontaneous and occur when parents are not at home, on housing project rooftops, or in "traphouses" or abandoned buildings. Groups of teens occupy these adult-free zones and use them for "wilding" or extreme partying. Daddy, who started pimping at 15, describes how impromptu sex leads to ongoing business arrangements. This is a typical teen partier beginning.

Daddy: Oh nah, she wanted to do it. When I first met we was talking and everything. We was like best friends. She came one time she came over to my house whatever. Started fucking. Fucking. Soon as she left, I guess she told her friends ... and her friends start hitting me up. Trying to talk to me on the low and everything. And I just tell 'em to come through. They'll come through. And I'll just be fucking her friends. And then it's like ... all of them knew. And I would just have all them one time. I'd throw a little party whatever, they'll come through. And then tell my peoples, oh ah. Then it'll be just like that.

In over two-thirds of the cases examined, third parties draw co-workers from existing social networks (n=38, 67.9%). One-fourth of collaborative relationships are with a *bottom*, or a pimp's sex worker who manages a lot of the business operations. More than one-fourth (n=15, 26.8%) begin working with family, but only 8 (14.3%) continue to work with family long-term. Less commonly, they work with those from gang (n=3, 5.3%) or drug (n=1, 1.8%) networks. Many collaborate with another person to do third-party work, which meets the barest definition of organized crime (see Hagan, 2006). The more common business partners are their bottoms and family members, and these hierarchies are simple, yet functional.

Some young pimps are recruited by family members into the family business and begin as *pimp apprentices* or pimps in training. They are given sex workers — or at least a blueprint about how to obtain them. Teenagers who live in families who sell sex are often employed by their legal guardians or older family members, such as uncles or cousins. These teens are expected to carry on the family legacy, with family obligations ranging from cooperative to coercive (Horning & Paladino, 2015). In some cases, they describe being used by family members. The family business sometimes operates out of the house, making non-participation difficult. Daryl lives with his uncle, as well as sex worker employees:

Daryl: Someone was basically training me ... not physically training me but telling me, "Oh you can do this. You can make some money off of it and you can make a whole lot of money." So when I was introduced to it, that's when I started doing it. So I had one girl and then she knew a couple

other girls and I have to live with my uncle. My uncle who has two bedrooms that are empty, so they sleep there. I mean he's pretty much with everything that's going on. But it's not mainly me, it's him. So I don't really like it, but it's money. I do it, but ...

However, many pimp apprentices willingly learn the trade. Sometimes they describe this initiation as a "test." At 15 years old, Dantes began third-party work for his father, who is a pimp.

Dantes: (---) It started with me when I was really young. When I had my first bitch though I was like 15. (---) My father actually gave me or introduced me to her. You know what I'm saying. Ha. My father wanted to see if I could do it, so. I showed him I could.

These initiations to third-party work by families raise interesting questions about exploitation within the institution of the family. Many young people are taught a family trade and expected to contribute. It could be argued that these young men are cajoled into this work through tests of masculinity or even forced to participate. When family and work spheres are intertwined, it can be more difficult to tease out agency.

Within this sample there are several third parties (n=14, 25%) who collaborate with their bottoms. The vernacular for these sex workers is "bottom bitch." Many pimps did use this term, but a few corrected fieldworkers and said, "This is my "top," "top notch," or "top bitch." These tops or bottoms often control the other sex workers, collect money, negotiate with clients, and sometimes embody the violence required to protect the business, and a few even take over third parties' businesses. While pimps who work with them may not be classified as feminists, they may subvert gender norms, particularly in the street-based market that is historically male-dominated. Blue Goose, a seasoned pimp who has worked with his top for many years, explains.

Blue Goose : It don't have to be one man and got all they girls. You can have a side partner could be a woman. They ain't gotta be a man, just being running the show. You could have a man and a woman running the show. Just like

you got womens that don't need no man and they do what they do on they own.

Other types of collaborations include loosely knit business arrangements between friends. For instance, a group of three young males, the Trio, collectively facilitate sex work to pay for music-recording costs. (They are trying to make it in the rap music industry.) I interviewed them simultaneously to see how they collectively discussed their work. The youngest describes how he listens to workers and has a knack for interacting with women. He claims to genuinely care about their problems. The leader does not seem too interested in the welfare of workers and discusses drumming up business and hatching new plans. He tells the others how to save their earnings so they can pay for music-recording costs. The middle one is very quiet. He explains that he uses his silence to intimidate others, such as sex workers, clients, or anyone who threatens their dream. Each partner is in charge of his finances, but is expected to contribute. In this collective arrangement, they each have different roles, including how they interact with sex workers and one another. This is an example of small groups collaborating.

Thirty-eight (67.9%) participants find clients through existing social networks and 20 (28.6%) also sell drugs, so they already have a client base. 13 (23.3%) know clients from the neighborhood, and 9 (16%) know clients from school (high school and college) (categories are not mutually exclusive). 4 (8.9%) are familiar with clients through clubs, bars, or lounges. In addition, 4 (7%) draw from a combination of networks, 1 (1.8%) has other types of networks, and 2 (33.6%) have missing information.

Many pimps simultaneously run other kinds of illicit business (n=27, 48.2%), and sometimes their clients are customers for their drug businesses and other illicit trade. Marshall collaborates with a few friends and hosts a once-a-week party in the basement of the barbershop

where he works during the week. They charge admission and also make money from selling alcohol and drugs, and from collecting a small percentage from sex workers.

A client base may be derived from existing illicit social networks. Of the younger pimps, 28 (73.7%) choose clients from their school or neighborhood networks. As illustrated with the teen partiers, male peers are commonly clients, especially when the business first starts. Of the older pimps, 14 (82.4%) have stranger clients, as compared to 10 (26.3%) of the young pimps. This difference may have to do with older pimps having less elaborate peer networks, fewer interested peers, a lack of interest in partying, or greater skill at attracting stranger clients. Alternatively, stranger clients may generate more money, and more seasoned pimps may be able to embody the violence and control necessary to manage unpredictable clients.

Indoor and outdoor work and both

Fifty-five participants (31 %) work indoors, 11 (19.6%) work outdoors, 13 (23.3%) do both, and 1 (1.8%) had missing information. Street-based sex work and third-party work is moving off the street, but in this sample 24 (42.8%) third parties still work outdoors in some capacity (this percentage includes those who do both indoor and outdoor work.) Of the young pimps (ages 18 to 23), 23 (60.5%) work indoors, 7 (18.4%) work outdoors and 8 (21.1%) do both. Of the older pimps (ages 24 to 50), 7 (47.1%) work indoors, 4 (23.5%) work outdoors and 5 (29.4%) do both. These percentages are not terribly different, but how younger and older third parties use outdoor and indoor space is distinct.

It is it is striking that almost half of the sample still work outdoors in some capacity. Despite efforts to sanitize New York City with quality-of-life policing, many third parties still work openly in communities. Their turf ranges from a corner, a few blocks, or tracks (well-

known sex trade locations) such as Hunt's Point. But indoor work is gaining in popularity, and this often involves private parties or third parties finding clients on sites such as Fuckbook, Craigslist, Backpage, and Xanga. However, only a few third parties use the Internet alone, and those working on the street also use nearby hotels. The hotels or motels are not upscale, cost little, and often are known as zones where unsavory activities take place. In this lower-echelon market, indoors may not necessarily mean safer. Due to economic downturns, there appear to be many abandoned buildings in poorer areas in New York City. Teens easily break into these traphouses and occupy the space for as long as they need access. Sometimes former or current owners rent out the buildings to make money while they are unoccupied. This is a riskier endeavor in terms of controlling clients, protecting sex workers, and being detected by police.

Conduct of work: Hierarchies, risk, and economics

Initiations into the sex trade are often portrayed as coercive or violent, but in this sample many mutually agree to sell sex (n=45, 80.4%). This is an overlooked story in the public discourse. Walter, who started pimping at age 17, collaborates with his best friend.

Walter: So I was telling my best friend about this. You know what I mean, I was telling her about this. She told me that she was interested. She told me that she, you know, done some things like that for some money and whatever. If I get some guys, you know, some attractive – she has like standards, attractive, gotta have money, no staircases, hotel rooms. Gotta buy her weed, get her liquor, get some coke for her, you know what I mean.

In this sample, third parties do not report using force or kidnapping to recruit. Some do recruit using coercion (n=7, 12.5%), usually through pseudo-romance. Initiations sometimes involve young males deceiving their female friends. The younger ones speak at length about what they call “swindling” girls — that is, coercing them into sex work in various unsavory ways — and targeting girls they think are gullible, desperate or, more commonly, sexually

promiscuous. They call them “slides,” “smuts,” “freaks,” or “hos”.” Orlando, who started pimping at age 17, states, “I used to just catch stragglers, like I would find little dummies, little hos. The type of bitches you could be like, Yo, let’s go fuck, like let’s come to my man’s.” These scenarios confirm public discourse about the recruitment of easy marks. The more troubling aspect of these stories involves culturally based gender dynamics that are mutually destructive. For instance, Wiley, who started pimping at age 16, states, “I just swindling ’em with words. How I be telling ’em what I think about them or calling ’em baby and stuff they like to hear. Telling ’em ‘I love you’ when I really don’t.” This is consistent with the public discourse about the hyper-manipulative villain pimp, although these men are not nearly as adept at trickery as those depicted in the media.

Some third parties specifically target the vulnerable, such as runaways (n=19, 33.9%), although not in expected ways. Mike J met his first sex worker at a local shelter for homeless teens called Safe Horizons, where he was getting a free meal. While vulnerable youths such as homeless runaways are sometimes targets, third parties can be in similarly dire situations. This can muddy intentionality and therefore interpretations of coercion. For instance, Mike recruits from his homeless peer network, and describes mutual agreement between friends to get out of poverty, or at least the homeless shelter where they both live, which is qualitatively different from searching for runaways in shelters because they are easy targets.

Instead of adults cajoling juveniles into sex work, the conversations are more often between similarly aged teens, contradicting the prevailing media accounts of third-party narratives. As previously discussed, many third parties begin as teenagers, and some technically become adult traffickers when they turn 18, because their workers are still 16 or 17. These types of initiations are qualitatively different from those described in anti-trafficking public discourse,

because they occur between similarly aged youths who presumably have comparable levels of agency. These findings pose challenges to the public discourse about domestic minor sex trafficking where portrayals rely on wide age differentials to explain the ability to coerce. They do not entirely discount the public discourse of the villain pimp, but these unions occur within existing peer networks, unlike the risks portrayed in the media.

A few pimps report they were recruited by sex workers (n=3, 5.4%), a largely untold story. The public discourse is usually about pimps luring sex workers, but sometimes sex workers do the luring. Jean, 19, met a sex worker whom he says gave him a “freebie,” and then took him in and taught him how to be a “daddy.”

Jean: What she explained to me was that she says being a daddy — like that’s what they call it, being a daddy — is, it’s a responsibility like. It’s like having a daughter, even [though] that’s a sick twisted way, but it’s like having a daughter ’cause she says all I have to do is provide hair, nails, clothes, food, and like protection. When she said the protection see that’s what had me at first. Like I’m not too sure, but when she said the whole protection part I was, I was like I was a bad kid, so like when she said protection, I was like, “Alright, I’m for it.”

Most would probably not interpret this as coercion, despite the initiation through sex and wide age differences (Jean’s first sex worker was in her late 20s). There is often an automatic assumption that young women cannot make proper decisions because of constrained agency, but this assumption is seldom applied to young men.

The element of control in third-party work

Changeability of coercive control

While initial recruitment has been a focus, the dynamics between pimps and sex workers are, like all social relationships, changeable. The case of Jason illustrates the changeability of coercive control. Jason, who started pimping at age 16, describes how he and his first sex worker

grew up in the system. She eventually gains the upper hand by running the business. Since the age of 12, Jason has grown up on the streets and spent time in foster care and jail. His high school sweetheart has a similar background of “growing up in the system,” and he explains that this is why “she does not have a mind of her own.”

Jason: I was already fucked up, so I just brought her in with me. I molded her and she became something extravagant, and she just brought mad girls. You know, she was more the boss, you know what I’m sayin’.

The beginning of his account can be interpreted as a story of coercive control, because he describes her as not being able to make her own decisions and needing someone to take care of her. While he does say that he molded her, the story changes when he finally confesses that she became “the boss.” He later discusses how she ran the day-to-day operations. Relationships between sex workers and pimps are not static, and the dynamics can begin coercively and become more egalitarian, and vice versa.

Control to maintain the business

On a daily basis, some lower-echelon pimps must embody control to run their businesses successfully. They must protect their businesses from clients and police. Projecting or displaying control can be explained by West and Fenstermaker’s (1995) concept of *doing difference*, or doing masculinity differently based on race and class. At local levels, third parties’ ability to control business operations is based on raced, classed and gendered embodiments. Their *hustler embodiment*, or the street savvy required to pursue all forms of money-making, is established through neighborhood reputation and allows them to exert control successfully in illicit markets.

Third parties also exert control through their daily living arrangements with sex workers. Older pimps have the ability to provide housing and food for sex workers (n=32, 57.1%), which some third parties claim is a more sustainable arrangement because workers are cared for and

may stick around longer. In addition, third parties can monitor sex workers more closely. In this type of pseudo-family hierarchy, third parties are more apt to take on a “daddy” role. They often have real sexual and emotional relationships with some of their workers. They adopt quintessential masculine roles, much like husbands or fathers, by caring for sex workers. Anton talks about his role as a daddy.

Anton: Take them ladies out for their night and show 'em, go out to eat or something, go out to dance. That's why you go out and wine and dine 'em, that's what they want. They want you to wine and dine 'em, take care of them, buy them clothes, buy them shoes, take care of them. Set them up with a nice little place in a hotel or whatever, apartment. And once you do that, they'll take care of you, so that's how I get to drive around in my pretty, nice little car. This is my Mercedes Benz.

Other seasoned pimps have strictly business relationships with sex workers. They do not live with them, but they still provide food, shelter, clothing, and others things, such as paying to get their hair and nails done.

Some third parties feel that getting emotionally involved with sex workers signifies a loss of control, and they talk about this as a weakness or something to avoid. They have strict rules about not having emotional or sexual relationships with workers. Dantes has sex with his workers, but he will not kiss them. Steve, 19, says that he “does not mix business with pleasure,” and some third parties are very firm about this rule. Buddy Love's first sex worker is someone whom he paid for sex. With his current sex workers, he says that he has strict boss/worker relationships; however, he later reveals he “tries them all out,” and that once a month he pays one of them for sex, so this rule is not always so strict.

Buddy Love: (---) I don't wanna know they personal life. I don't wanna get involved with the personal. Keep it business. You see what I'm saying, like same thing is working, like you don't your boss might is gonna know where you live, but you don't invite your boss to your house if you don't have that type of relationship with them. See what I'm saying. Like I don't want to be knocking on they door. They have kids. I don't know what they do. On

they personal time, on they off time. I don't ask 'cause that's not what we're here for. We here to make money. That's my job. Get money. ...

Raymond, a 40-year-old pimp, is concerned because he unwittingly fell in love with his bottom. He views this as antithetical to “real pimping.” He provides an interpretation of real relationships between pimps and sex workers that is derived from family schooling about the sex trade. He states, “See, my father was a pimp you know. My uncle was a pimp, and for you to just, you to give in to a broad and get all emotional with her, it's not called pimping, it's called simping.” For some third parties, falling for sex workers is the lowliest type of pimping, as it represents a loss of self-control and may be the beginning of a failing business.

In the at-risk teens' paradigm there often are existing relationships between third parties and workers. These are usually small operations with only one or two sex workers. Javalucci describes his bottom as the “love of his life.” Often, pimps have a real relationship with a woman they call their “main,” “top,” “bottom,” or “down girl.” In other cases, they have feelings for their top girl, but she is not always interested.

Younger pimps, especially the teen partiers, almost never organize their businesses this way. The pseudo-family arrangement is often not possible because they still live at home or they cannot afford it. Many younger pimps are rather laissez-faire about what sex workers do at work and in their daily lives. Often, they do not explicitly control sex workers. Some mention making sure they are “clean” or “looking good,” but many do not get overly involved with them. Generally, they may have a different conception of pimping. These loose standards may be because selling sex is impromptu and occurs in blended work and leisure spheres. They often participate in the sex parties or orgies. Also, their sex workers work for a while and quit, or they swap them regularly to keep the interest of young partygoers. This ever-adapting model does not require too much control.

Within this sample there is only one case of a young but seasoned pimp controlling his sex workers in extreme ways to protect his business. Dr. Love is 21 years old and has been pimping since he was 12. He takes sex workers' Social Security numbers, and they sign contracts detailing what he calls the "business arrangement," including a clause about which drugs they can take. This is an atypical case, but it is the kind of case that is touted as typical within the public discourse.

Several third parties, mostly older, collaborate with their bottoms, who help them run the business. These women have different roles, ranging from a "wife" to "one of the guys." These bottoms often control other sex workers and sometimes embody the control required to protect the business. Rip talks about his bottom.

Rip: Well, a bottom bitch is, like, the bitch that, like, stays under you. That's your little eyes and all that type of stuff. You feel me? That's like your second head. You know? The person under, the person under you. And then, after that, everybody under ... everybody under her is just straight up nobodies.

Sometimes, the bottom stops doing sex work and becomes a more equal business partner. In these arrangements, there can be a real romantic relationship between the third party and the sex worker. Other times, she takes a more active role in the business, but there is not a romantic relationship. A few bottoms even take over third parties' businesses. There are a few cases where pimps are afraid that have lost control to a bottom. Nelson talks about how control with his bottom changes.

Nelson: The only thing I really don't like is that now, like, when they do it I'm not there. Like when in the beginning I was there with her, so I knew exactly what was going on. (---) So, it's like now it's more of a worry, 'cause I'm not there to know exactly how everything is playing out.

On average, third parties take a little more than half (60.3%) of the total earnings from the business. The most common reported money split is 50/50. In scenarios where the money

breakdown is over 50%, third parties often pay for living (food, shelter) and work necessities (clothes, hair). Some of the younger third parties are more apt to take less because they are working with peer groups or making profit from party admissions, while others take the majority of the profit.

Young third parties who create more egalitarian relationships with workers tend to move into adult third-party work. For example, Marvin started third-party work in his early 20s and is still pimping at 46. Initially, he started with a girlfriend and they split the earnings 50/50, but once he acquired more workers, this changed to 60/40. (He explains that he has to pay for clothes and hair, so this is why he collects slightly more.) Those with more equal work arrangements have the advantage of keeping workers for longer periods of time, establishing harmonious work settings and continuing in this market.

Control in indoor versus outdoor space

A main threat to third parties' businesses is the police. Avoiding law enforcement requires one to be street savvy. Most third parties mention how they evade police and avoid arrest. Street-level pimps often use elements of the urban landscape to protect their businesses. There are many examples of this. Dred has his sex workers wait near a train stop, so they appear to be waiting for transportation. Travis Smith has his workers hang out in a local bodega (corner store), so they looked like they are shopping. Some street-level pimps canvass their usual work areas for police before deciding if it's safe to work. Jason, who works in Hunt's Point, a well-known track, feels that most problems with police can be fixed by having sex workers offer the officers oral sex. Kelvin has sex workers and co-workers use walkie-talkies to notify one another about police presence and any other problems that arise. Most third parties stay in the vicinity of

their main work location, but they do not stay too close. That way they can avoid being implicated in case of arrest, but they can respond quickly if needed.

Some third parties, especially the young, find street-based work not only dated, but too dangerous. Dantes, who transports sex workers using a driver, shares his view.

Dantes: See, that's some back-in-the-day shit like I don't — I don't go, you not gonna find me on the corner with six, seven girls or nothing like that. Nah, it's just everything is off the phone, like this is New York City so it's too hot, meaning that's the police. Like [you] can't really do that out here.

Many third parties who work off the streets are not as concerned about police on a daily basis, but they are still cautious. In the wake of the 2010 Craigslist crackdown (Adler, 2011), law enforcement targeted the Craigslist sex trade and made numerous arrests. Because of this, some third parties describe online sites such as Craigslist, Xanga and Backpage as too risky. Even in online advertisements they use vague descriptions such as “woman looking for generous gentlemen.” Also, they often screen the calls. The use of new technology such as cell phones and online social networking sites is more common with the younger pimps (n=31, 91.2%) as compared to their older counterparts (n=10, 62.5%). Some use online social networking sites, using their “friends” base and friends of friends to get clients, while others use the Internet for advertising. Younger third parties have photos of their sex workers on their iPhones and show potential clients options by texting photos of sex workers. They take new photos, trying out fresh marketing ideas. Their use of technology is not only a standard form of communicating, including doing business, but it also feels safer to younger pimps. Generally, technology is used to generate business within existing social networks, eliminating the need to loiter around neighborhoods trying to drum up business. Also, pimps avoid leaving traces on public online sites or relying on online strangers. This confirms that the sex trade is moving to one-on-one virtual communication and online friend networks.

Consequences of control

There is great diversity in terms of how third parties view emotional attachments in this business context. Older and younger pimps have different ideas about the controls they impose on sex workers, with young third parties being more laissez-faire. For some third parties, emotional attachment to sex workers is a form of being “out of control.” Being “in control” means being savvy, and this is one of the more rewarding kinds of risks, according to both younger and older third parties.

The element of violence in third-party work

Violence, insecurity, and security

Over half of the third parties in this sample (n=30, 53.6%) report never being physically violent with sex workers. A violent business model, in which violence is used regularly with sex workers, is infrequent (n=8, 14.3%). However, some third parties do use occasional violence with sex workers (n=12, 21.4%), primarily when they feel that sex workers are not being loyal to them. Usually this is when third parties feel that sex workers are cheating them or otherwise being disrespectful. Baby Sean, 26, describes this.

Baby Sean: It was times ... I'm sorry, but I have to put my hands on her and uh you know, I had to let her go because, you know, it wasn't working and the money situations, when you fuck with that money, sorry again but it's times when you get outta hand and put your hands on females, which I know isn't a good thing, but yeah.

Another type of disloyalty involves disrespect. Some third parties use physical violence with sex workers when they feel that sex workers belittle them. This use of violence is intended to re-establish authority and sometimes to show other sex workers that this behavior is not

acceptable. Javalucci discusses being physically violent when his sex workers “talk slick,” which means being verbally disrespectful.

- Javalucci: Now you have to get them, it’s like a dog, you know. They first get rough you have to beat them a couple of times. Not that harsh, you know slaps or two.
- Interviewer: So you would have to slap her around then, you said?
- Javalucci: Slap her around. Haha. When talk outta they mouth. You know. Talk slick.

Those with violent business models are particularly brutal. Buddy Love, 21, admits that he regularly slaps his sex workers. He describes an incident where a sex worker hits him with a bottle and he beats her so brutally that she has to be hospitalized. This kind of continuous violence is not common and is not easily explained from a business perspective.

Many third parties in this study are opposed to, and even have distain for, pimps who are regularly physically violent with sex workers. For instance, Kelvin, 50, who started pimping at age 30, discusses his views of how to treat sex workers. “You can’t assault them. You can’t belittle them. You can’t make them feel like a ho. You gotta make them feel like the most gorgeous motherfuckin’ women in the world.” Similarly, Blue Goose feels that pimps who are regularly violent with sex workers are abusers and not pimps. He describes the quintessential image of a pimp that relies on tropes of ghetto and black masculinity, and is similar to the caricature of pimps depicted by some advocates and the media. He does not specify whether he has been affiliated with this type of third party or whether he acquires this narrative from the media. Either way, he makes a point to say that he is not this type of pimp.

- Blue Goose: Yeah, where be like I said lot of ’em they pimps and lot of ’em they messed up. Beat ’em and belt and all that, man, you ain’t no pimp. You abuser. You abusing women and bruises and stuff all on they body. They ask you to look out for ’em. I don’t go around like these beating like some of these pimps they go around, they got guys kidnap these girls, 17, 16 years old. (---)

Many older or more seasoned third parties discuss the difference between *smooth* and *rough* third parties. They use various terminologies to describe this distinction, but the gist is that smooth third parties use verbal finesse as opposed to violence. Often, these smooth third parties do not respect pimps who resort to violence with sex workers or clients; they view them as unprofessional. Pimps who are violent are thought to lack not only finesse, but also intelligence.

Leon discusses different types of third parties.

Leon: You can't get money and mix violence at the same time.

Interviewer: I see.

Leon: You don't forget that.

Interviewer: Right.

Leon: Sometimes you can, sometimes you can't. You got some tough pimps and you got some, you know, some smooth pimps. You know what I'm saying. You got some pimps that always think about making a dollar and they cut they loss, and you got some pimps that's rough and they kill a bitch. They run up, they hit you in the head, they'll shoot you, they'll do whatever.

Interviewer: So, what kind are you?

Leon: Me? Ha. I'm more of a, I like to play chess. Right? So, I'm more of a person that outthink you like three steps before. So. I done already outthought you like three steps before, 'cause I don't always expose all my shit. And that one I can't even explain to you. But you know I just stay three steps ahead of the game, so I'm more the thinking type pimp. I'm a smart pimp. Haha.

As previously discussed, many third parties work in families who sell sex, and they are sometimes more violent. Spanky's mother is a sex worker and his uncles run the operation in a smaller town north of New York City. They have a large house where all of the workers live, and they have control over and work in a main intersection of town. Spanky was expected to carry on the family legacy. He describes himself as the "worst pimp in the world." He says that his uncle gave him three of his most difficult girls. Spanky emphasizes that his uncles were "very

ruthless,” and he does not agree with how the business operated. He was eventually fired.

Spanky feels that he is “too soft” to be a good pimp.

Similarly, Frederick worked for his cousin, who runs an operation in multiple New York City boroughs. After school his cousin drove him to a location where he monitored the operation, which included carrying a gun. Frederick talks about how he quit pimping because he could not handle the violence he witnessed toward sex workers. Interestingly, 73.4% of those who learned from families do not continue with a violent model, and some quit pimping altogether. Violent family business models do not often get passed on to the next generation.

A violent model is not advocated by all family-run businesses. Some families have the opposite business strategy. For instance, Jason, who started pimping at 16, discusses what his uncle taught him about pimping and violence.

Jason: He said don't ever put your hands on a girl. That is something that you don't do. You cherish [them] like a diamond. Cause that's what females are, they worth a lot of money. Between they legs, they mind, how they give it up, they persona. He just taught me the ins and outs of the game, man.

This attitude about violence is still demeaning to sex workers, because they are portrayed as products. However, several pimps use this rhetoric to describe how irrational being violent with workers is from a business perspective. One third party even makes an analogy about selling apples and marvels about why a businessman would bruise the very apples that he is trying to sell.

Violent bodywork and security

In the sex trade, violent bodywork is often related to protecting the business in various ways. Some third parties described themselves as “bodyguards, protectors, enforcers, there in

case something goes down,” or as someone who is able to respond using friends, a posse, fellow gang members, or hired goons. Less commonly, they respond with extreme force via weapons. Either third parties or affiliated males protect the business by embodying meanness, toughness and aspects of the badass embodiment described by Katz. Often, this requires only the threat of aggression. Percy thinks his sex workers view him as “a black, ugly, mean, tough motherfucker,” which epitomizes the idea of the badass and may be derived from the discourse of racialized tropes used to describe pimps. The feeling of being badass may be raced, classed, and gendered, because this embodied violence may be necessary only in dangerous urban areas, which often are impoverished. Few think that this type of embodiment is their primary worth as pimps. For many, violent embodiment is only one aspect of third-party labor, with other worth centering on street credibility and being successful hustlers.

Many pimps protect their businesses from clients by simply being present enough that clients can see them or know they can appear at any moment. Typically, this potential for violence is enough to maintain security. It is necessary to protect the business from clients who may try to cheat sex workers or harm them physically or sexually. Anton talks about these dimensions of security. During work hours, he is physically present and even talks to clients to ensure that all parties trust in a smooth exchange. He claims there have never been physical or sexual conflicts with his clients. Anton feels assured that his presence alone assuages clients, and he claims this is why he does not need to carry a weapon.

A few street-level pimps, particularly those who work in more dangerous areas, may resort to extreme levels of force to secure their businesses. Baby Sean works in unfamiliar areas, so he carries a weapon with him at all times. When he was asked if he ever needs to use it, he states, “Never really had to use it. Once they see the barrel it’s time to give up. But if they don’t

have money, I have to beat the shit out of 'em, so it was a couple a guys where I had to pistol whip 'em, but nothing serious.” Similarly, Dantes hires a group of males to take care of threatening situations, but unlike Baby Sean he does not get involved in these altercations.

Dantes discusses the unpredictability of clients in the sex trade and the need to act violently.

Interviewer: How do you handle situations like that?

Dantes: If the dude has to get beat, dude gets beat. Dude has to get shot, gets shot. Stabbed? Whatever. Whatever happens. Depends on the situation. I had a girl who's go far as much as a guy actually kidnapped a girl before. You know what I mean, trying to get me to pay money to him. To get her back. There's all types of shit happens in this game, you just gotta be prepared for it. You gotta be a step ahead of it. You know what I'm saying.

Some street-level pimps are aware of onlookers viewing their ability to embody violence. They feel the need to convey their capability to the community. Embodied violence is crucial to maintaining street credibility. This is described as important to many types of street-based illicit work. For instance, in Bourgios' ethnography of East Harlem crack dealers, he finds that the street lingo for this is “having juice.” Dred discusses the necessity for this type of embodiment.

Dred: It's like being smooth, but being firm at the same time. Showing them I got the muscle because everybody's observant, everybody's looking.

Interviewer: So, it's all visible on the street?

Dred: Right.

Many of the younger third parties bypass violent bodywork by allowing only boys and men from their social networks to be clients. However, they rely on their reputations within social networks, including virtual networks, to protect their businesses and themselves. Advertising on social networking sites such as Facebook and facilitating sex work in more controlled settings allows them to avoid the dangers of the streets, and unknown older clients in particular. When they do sell to strangers, they often express fear of bodily harm. For instance, Orlando has his sex workers meet unknown clients in hotel rooms. His fear of violent clients is

so great that he secretly waits in the shower, clutching a firearm, and listens to the interaction. Other young pimps do not even bother to wait close by. Instead, they have sex workers carry weapons. They disengage from violent aspects of this labor. They are available by text or phone, but overall their violent embodiment is rather disembodied.

In contrast, young pimps who use traphouses are more physically present and on the alert. These abandoned buildings are more dangerous indoor settings, but traphouses are in the pimps' own neighborhoods and attract local customers, so they either know the clients or are able to monitor them. Mike J checks the ID of every neighborhood youth entering the traphouse to see where he lives; this ID check again illustrates that younger pimps safeguard their businesses by selling sex to similarly aged clients within their networks, including their neighborhood.

Mike J: I check IDs. Just to see where the person lives. 'Cause we're not gonna ... we listen ... we're intelligent. We take you, we check your ID. "Lemme see your ID. Oh that's where you live? Write that down. Anything happens to anybody in that house, we coming at you."

Some third parties collaborate with other males to run their businesses. They may partner with bodega owners or rely on older family members or even fellow gang members who act as security. Some third parties hire "goons" or "muscle" who are on call in case of conflicts. These third parties have other males display violent embodiment or act aggressively for them. Leon mostly works with one other pimp, but he is part of a loose-knit gang of 50 members called the Number One Boys. They support each other when major problems occur. Leon takes clients' aggression towards sex workers very seriously, because his first sex worker, who was also his bottom, was stabbed to death while she was working. He was no longer her pimp when the stabbing took place, but he still thought of her as family.

Leon: Well, you know, we had a customer one time that mistreated the girl. You know what I mean? And they held her down in a truck

and they made her walk out with none of her shit. You know what I mean.

Interviewer: Oh wow. Yeah.

Leon: And she was drunk.

Interviewer: Like humiliating her. Yeah.

Leon: And she was drunk. You know? ... So you know what I mean, this man had to be dealt with. Another friend of mine, you know, he had to take care of him, you know what I'm saying, but he was dealt with, you know (he was not killed).

Consequences of violence

The third parties who are physically violent with sex workers construct this type of bodywork as necessary to maintaining loyalty, and so this violence is rooted in their insecurity. Physical aggression is a negative risk for sex workers, and many pimps agree that violence is not a beneficial business strategy, so violent bodywork is often constructed as a negative risk. However, embodied violence also can be a source of status, including street credibility. There is a major distinction in the use of violence between those who work on and off the street. Off-the-street pimps with known clients almost never have to perform violent bodywork, whereas those with stranger clients must at least embody violence, with some relying on other males for backup and even weapons. This kind of bodywork is not done without a great deal of fear, as illustrated by the case of Orlando.

Social and economic nexuses and risk

Third parties sampled for this study were asked how much they earn per week, and they provided a wide range of responses, from as low as \$10 to as high as \$110,000. Some of the exorbitant amounts may be attributed to male braggadocio. Others report "it depends," with one respondent saying that earnings range from \$5,000 to \$40,000. (In cases where a range is reported, the amounts are averaged.) The average yearly salary was \$71,599, with a median of \$8,550.

Typically, younger pimps report the lowest earnings, based only on earnings reported from third-party labor. In the United States, \$290 is the weekly pay for those making minimum wage. Four (10.5%) younger pimps surveyed make as little as \$10 to \$290 a week, as compared to 1 (5.6%) older participant. Robert Reich (2014), the former Secretary of Labor, defines U.S. middle-class yearly earnings as income between \$25,500 and \$76,500. Based on this definition, 20 (52.6%) of younger pimps fall within the low-income bracket, compared to 3 (16.7%) of the older pimps. Slightly more than half (n=9, 50.6%) of the older pimps fall within the middle-income bracket or above, as compared to 10 (36.3%) of the younger pimps. There may, however, be other factors involved in this disparity.

In this lower-echelon market, outdoor work may be more lucrative because stranger clients may be able to pay higher fees. Of those working outdoors, 6 (54.6%) participants claim to earn within the middle-class bracket or above. This is compared to 15 (35.5%) of those working indoors. Also, older pimps more commonly create pseudo-families, in which they care for and sometimes live with sex workers. A little over forty percent of the participants (n=13, 40.6%) claim earnings within the middle-class tier or higher, as compared to 5 (27.8%) who do not have this type of pseudo-family structure. In terms of economic outcomes, those who have closer-knit work groups but stranger clients tend to fare better in this lower-echelon market. Caring — in the form of providing housing, food, shelter, and even company — generates more earnings. Those with pseudo-family structures outperform those who do not have such intimate social relationships with workers.

More organized structures, such as those who collaborate to sell sex, may enable higher earnings. 5 (28.5%) participants who have bottoms as co-workers earn within the middle-income bracket or above, and 3 (27.3%) of those who work with friends also claim to earn within that

range. This is probably because these third parties have assistance with violent or violence-embodiment bodywork, making the job more manageable. Also, they may help to monitor larger numbers of workers.

Generally, indoor sex markets generate more than outdoor settings. However, in the lower-echelon market, indoor work often means that clients are within the pimps' social networks. Based on the tenets of homophily, they may be people with less income. Also, there may be a learning curve for finding worthy clients online. Perhaps online markets are saturated because anyone can post an advertisement, which may drive down prices. Outdoor work also may yield more commuters who do not have the time to search for the best prices.

Table 4.1 Old- and new-school: Social and economic nexuses and risk

Younger third parties	Older third parties
Not often violent with customers or sex workers	More violent with sex workers and customers
Laissez-faire with little control	More control over sex workers and business
Existing social networks key in business	Often work with stranger clients
Casual relationships with sex workers	Pseudo-family structure with sex workers
Less risky work environment	More risky work environment
Less work risk leads to lower returns	More work risk leads to higher returns
More economic risk	Less economic risk

Table 4.1 summarizes the major differences between younger and older pimps' business models, which influence how dangerous the work is and how much money is earned. For instance, young pimps work with known clients because they are easier to control due to common affiliates and a level of predictability. Because of this, they often bypass violent bodywork and the risks involved. In contrast, older pimps gravitate toward stranger clients, so they incur more risk but have higher economic returns. On the other hand, they foster much more intimate work groups: pimps and sex workers may cook breakfast together, watch movies, go grocery shopping, and do things that typical families do while discussing the night ahead. There is a blend of (pseudo-) family and work spheres. Inherently, being family produces high levels of loyalty, and these constructed families may foster more job dedication. This also may be why those with this combination of pseudo-family and work have higher earnings. The differences hinge on types of work hierarchies, which foster varying levels of intimacy and trust, as well as the location of work and the client base. Because younger pimps rely more heavily on acquaintance networks to find customers, they experience less work danger, but also a lesser economic return. Older pimps have more steady employees, but their work settings are much more dangerous because of the location and client base.

For both groups, existing social networks are pivotal to lower-echelon, third-party work arrangements. Like smugglers, human traffickers, and other third-party workers, recruiters often select co-workers whom they know. In this case, they are networked by homophily, based on their residing in housing projects that are largely homogenous in terms of race and class. Their reliance on existing social networks is similar to that of other social actors in illicit markets, such as those studied by Arsovska and Kostakos (2008), for whom trust is crucial to illicit dealings.

In terms of economic returns, the figures reported in this study are probably not wholly accurate. Participants are asked to provide estimates, and many struggle to come up with exact figures. Others may embellish their earnings — although a large number reported very low earnings, so exaggeration may not have been widespread. The difference between the reported earnings of the younger and older pimps is striking and indicates a real difference in yearly earnings. There are conclusions to be drawn about this difference. The younger pimps largely draw their client base from acquaintance networks. This finding confirms Granovetter's (1973; 1983) theory of the strength of weak ties, where being poor and having acquaintances with similar incomes has a negative impact on earnings. While his theory centers on differences in job opportunities for lower- versus middle-income people based on social networks, the concept of weak ties can be applied to those in illicit markets. For third parties, job prospects may, in part, hinge on the socio-economic status of those in initial social networks, and then in the expanding, work-related social network. Older pimps do initially have similar weak ties, but the difference could be that they mostly deal with stranger clients, who eventually may become like acquaintances, and this may change outcomes.

It is important to note that young people may also be less interested in being rational capitalists and instead focus more on excitement, as opposed to cold hard cash or caring. In the case of teen partier pimps, sex workers often are members of existing peer networks, and these social groups enjoy a party setting. They blend leisure and work. These partiers do not impose many rules on sex workers, perhaps because rules are antithetical to these carnivalesque zones. Mikhail Bakhtin uses this term to describe the culture of the marketplace, which he describes as “escapes from the usual ‘official’ way of life” (1984:7-8). Escapes and rules do not go hand in hand. This may explain why younger pimps are more laissez-faire when it comes to controlling

sex workers and their businesses. Social arrangements shape business plans, and sometimes even form them. Teen partiers are sexually intimate with workers, but they less often have ongoing, socially intimate connections. They are more interested in feeling good with fast friends, as opposed to developing long-term relationships. Young pimps may intentionally avoid risks, but their less risky environment also may be due to the social forums where they prefer to sell sex. They not only view outdoor work as lowly and dated, but recognize that street-based work would preclude them from socializing and gaining status in peer groups.

Older pimps are much more engaged in bodywork, including embodied violence and control. In part, this is because they often work outdoors, but it may also be an “old school” management style developed through being in the market for a long time. For older pimps, enduring bodily risks and facing dangers is part of a lucrative strategy.

It is difficult to say if these distinctions between younger and older pimps are tied strictly to maturity or if they reflect a split between old-school and new-school third parties. It is impossible to know if younger pimps are dabbling in the market and will move on. There are a few seasoned younger third parties, but they tend to engage in more risk. On the other hand, these young people may be slated to become the next generation of third parties, so their work style may be a snapshot of new management styles.

Chapter Five

Pimping as edgework: Doing differently

Prominent risk theorists typically conceptualize risk as exposure to danger, which is associated with emotions of fear or uncertainty (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991). Risk, accordingly, is something to be avoided altogether or managed in order to cope with the associated unpleasant feelings. In contrast, a few risk theorists not only conceptualize individuals' experiences of risk in varied ways, they also focus on the positive feelings produced by risk-taking. Social theories explain the varied responses to risk using the assumption that people define, experience, and respond to risk in unique and fluid ways based on social, cultural, and individual factors. Another crucial element intertwined with risk judgment (perceptions and reactions) is emotion. Emotion and risk configure each other. Lupton calls this reciprocal relationship the *emotion-risk assemblage*, where ever-present emotions assist in shaping rationality.

In keeping with this view, Lyng pioneered the idea of edgework, exploring how voluntary risk-taking produces positive sensations. This chapter examines some of the positives related to the voluntary work-related risks undertaken by third parties.

Broadly defined, edgework involves voluntary risk taking or skirting the edge, which Lyng conceptualizes as the border between life and death, order and disorder, sanity and insanity, consciousness and unconsciousness, form and formlessness, and other dichotomies where control is important (Lyng, 2007, 2014; McGovern & McGovern, 2011). The ability to navigate these risk boundaries successfully, which requires highly tuned skills and specialist knowledge, provides people with a sense of mastery and being in control. The other prong of edgework is also related to control, by way of escaping social restrictions. Specifically, some

people engage in voluntary risk to escape temporarily the rules and controls that structure their everyday lives. Paradoxically, by losing control through edgework, individuals reclaim authorship of their own lives and attain a sense of authenticity and control on their own terms.

As various fields, including criminology, adopted the concept of edgework, the idea broadened to include more excluded groups. Edgework has been used to explain myriad transgressive acts by groups such as drug users (McGovern & McGovern, 2011), graffiti artists (Ferrell, 1997), and gang members (Garot, 2012). There are some important things to consider when applying edgework to illicit actors, because they may have different orientations to risk. First, differences in risk perception may vary based on individuals, neighborhoods, and cultures. At-risk populations may be more primed for risk because they live in more dangerous settings (Crenshaw, 1989). Some argue that already being at the edge makes one better suited to edgework (Le Breton, 2004). There is evidence that those at the edge may be more resilient in dangerous situations (Ungar, 2002). It is unclear if those living at the edge are really more suited to edgework, but they probably perceive risk differently because of their continuous exposure to danger. Second, edgework may occur in illicit or licit spheres, and similar feelings may be attained in both spheres. But for marginalized individuals, engaging in seemingly harmful behavior can enhance feelings of authenticity, because they are controlling their lives on their own terms. Finally, edgework is constructivist, and so courting danger in pursuit of positive emotions and “real” states of self are realities created by social actors.

The concept of edgework originally was applied to dangerous activities sought out by white and middle- or upper-class men (Lyng, 2005; Miller, 1991; Rajah, 2007). Lyng came to admit a flaw in his conceptualization of edgework, because it failed to account for race, class, and gender (Bengtsson, 2012; Garot, 2012; Rajah, 2007). Recent research has explored how key

experiences of “isolation, marginalization, and stigmatization”—in line with Wacquant’s characterization of advanced marginalization — are profoundly linked to edgework. A strategy to handle the uncertainties of advanced marginalization may be to skillfully navigate the riskiness of illicit work.

At the same time, as previously discussed, the younger third parties in this study are *bicultural*. For these parties, edgework includes navigating edges from positions of both exclusion and inclusion. Specifically, biculturalism or expressions of inclusion and exclusion presents two risk contexts, which are linked to different types of edgework. In turn, edgework in different risk contexts enables different forms of mastery/control and different restrictions from which to escape.

The concept of edgework also expanded to include riskier natural contexts, such as the “streets” in poorer neighborhoods. Some edgework researchers, such as Jeff Ferrell (1996), have attempted to capture edgeworking contexts through thick description or photographs. However, there have been only a few studies that directly investigate the environmental context where edgework happens. As discussed in Chapter 4, pimps, especially those working on the streets, must be ready for violent encounters, mostly with stranger clients. There is also the risk of arrest, which threatens freedom and therefore control. Street-level third parties have more unpredictable work settings that produce risk. In addition, street-based pimps may engage in criminal acts that more often transfigure their bodies and emotions, and so they may more often engage in traditional edgework. Navigating these precarious situations makes them feel the work is exciting and personally rewarding. Third parties in this sample are asked to draw pen-and-ink drawings of their everyday workspace to enhance understanding of their edgeworking contexts.

To explore the edgeworking contexts of lower-echelon third parties in my study, I draw on a broader concept of street savviness in the pursuit of money-making, or a *hustler embodiment*. In lower-echelon markets, hustler embodiment has a long history. In Wacquant's (1998) study about a self-described street hustler from a Chicago housing project, this "social art" is described as crucial to "negotiating one's way through the social space of the ghetto." Street-based hustling and edgework are often inextricably linked, because hustlers seek out the voluntary risks involved in the hustle in the hope of successful navigation, which produces positive feelings related to control. Third parties may be able to survive through the street credibility and manipulation skills that are central to hustler embodiment, and simultaneously usurp economic gain. Economic gain through illicit work may allow third parties an escape from institutional controls. They are able to sidestep humiliating labor and avoid being controlled by the institution of work and all the restrictions tied to this convention. For younger pimps, illicit work also may temporarily suspend many types of social controls imposed on youths via school, family, etc. All of these escapes allow for regaining control, or at least feeling free from control.

In the United States, crafty ways of getting by and "making it" are status enhancing; that is, these activities are considered badass. Being badass through successfully capitalizing in almost any form is a valued cultural attribute. For this reason, lower-echelon third parties may experience mastery from points of exclusion and inclusion, but social processes where raced, classed, and gendered performances orient social actors to risk contexts still underlie edgeworking experiences. For the marginalized, doing difference and working through a bicultural orientation may be at the heart of edgework.

Hustler embodiment and pimping

The edgework experience is thought to produce feelings of authenticity, and one form of authenticity is about social identification. First, I ask respondents if they think of themselves as pimps, and their answers seem to be predicated on their age and how often they engage in third-party work. Older and full-time third parties are more apt to view themselves as pimps. They have specific conceptions about what it means to be a pimp and are more heavily invested in pimp embodiment.

Leon, 34, learned how to pimp from his father and uncle. He feels that being a pimp requires certain skills. He explicitly talks about a certain type of gender performativity that he thinks is required for this work. He illustrates the interplay between doing masculinity, embodiment, and pimping.

Interviewer: What is a pimp?

Leon: Everybody have they game. See what I'm saying. Some people good at riding bikes. Some people good at flying planes. You know you just can't go from a flying a plane to being a pimp. You know what I'm saying?

Interviewer: OK. What do you have to have then? What is it?

Leon: You got to have a hunger. You know you got to have some type of charisma. You gotta have a talk game. You gotta have, you gotta be a real fucking man to be a pimp. You know what I'm saying.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Leon: That's what it is. You gotta be a real fucking man.

Interviewer: What does that mean?

Leon: You just gotta be a man. The women just love real strong men. So you know, you just gotta, you just can't come off like a faggot these days. You just gotta ...

Interviewer: Gotta be kinda masculine.

Leon: You gotta stay strong in this pimping game. You know what I'm saying. You just gotta always stay strong. You can't never, you know, get weak. You can't never let 'em see you slip.

Even retired third parties continue to construct their masculinity around pimping. In the courtyard of a housing project in East Harlem, a group of older, senior pimps often gather for drinks where they swap old and new stories about pimping. A few from this group still work in the sex trade. Anton, 47, is part of this group and is still actively pimping. When we meet, he is embarrassed because he is not wearing a suit and his crocodile shoes. However, his hair is coiffed and oiled, and he is wearing his gold Mercedes Benz ring. (He says he wears this because he has a nice Mercedes.) He is very invested in a sharp look — crucial to the quintessential pimp embodiment that reflects a version of the oppositional masculinity described by X and Haley (1965). It also signifies the ability to make what respondents call “fast money.” Every month Anton attends a local event, called the Players Ball, where pimps gather to celebrate their success in the business. They attend in their best outfits and with their most attractive sex workers. This event is fashioned after an annual national event, also called the Players Ball, where pimp professionals from all over the United States receive awards for the best pimp labor. The celebration of pimp identity still exists in the national Players Ball and in local players’ balls in Harlem and the Bronx.

Some seasoned younger third parties do describe prototypical pimp identifications that center on making fast money and hustling women. There is a combination of not only fast money and cavalier spending, but also cavalier sexual encounters. These encounters affirm heterosexuality, part of the definition of hegemonic masculinity. Third parties describe abundance in both economic and sexual arenas. For third parties, “doing difference” can be about affirming that they are doing much better than the majority of males (not just their licit counterparts) could dream of. The notion of being able to toss away dollar bills and sleep with

endless numbers of women conjures scenes of the luxuries experienced by high-class gangsters or kings. Rip talks about the thrill of this excess.

Rip: Oh. Well that's a different story. Well, [umm] let's just say I'm not gonna over-exaggerate and say I was the best thing out. ... Oh, I was hittin' them [having sex with them] left, I was hittin' them right. Everybody got they thing. You know? But I could tell you, that was the greatest days of my life. I ain't gonna lie to you. I was making so much money that I just started giving money away. Literally, just throwing it: Oh, I got a dollar; I got twenty dollars in singles...throwing 'em. 'Cause all I got was hundred dollar bills. Fifty dollar bills. Twenty dollar bills. Hell, what I use singles for?

Many third parties talk about how they use sexual embodiment to obtain and keep sex workers. This embodiment centers on gendered sexiness. It is related to a hustler embodiment and gangster embodiment (Sandberg, 2009). This embodiment is also raced and classed. A sharp look conveying fast money is intertwined with sexiness. Percy feels that appearance conveys a lot, and for him, his appearance signifies that he does not look like a prototypical pimp during the interview. "I get my hair done, I don't do anything, but it's appearance. It's appearance. Appearance. I don't look like no pimp. My hair not done." Even though the pretty and sometimes outlandish-looking pimps are rare, modern-day pimps rely on their appearance and sex appeal to obtain and retain sex workers, which is crucial to their business. Appearance attracts sex workers, and the more workers that pimps obtain, the more status they may have. When I ask Darnell if third-party work changed him, he replies, "I am a baller. I could do whatever I want. I got money. I got bitches. I felt like nobody could touch me, you know?" This brand of sexiness centers on capital, power, and even invincibility from danger.

In stark contrast to the older and seasoned respondents, many younger third parties in this study explicitly do not want to be called pimps and are not invested in a pimp identity. Some young third parties think the term "pimp" is funny, as it references old-school pimps who are

often satirized as flamboyant in television and film. Others think the term is offensive. This is usually because the pimp label sometimes carries the negative connotation of someone who is abusive to women (in part due to anti-trafficking rhetoric). Others do not recognize their work as pimping. For instance, Percy says, “I don’t consider myself a pimp. I consider myself a bodyguard.” Others define themselves as managers or players. The label of “pimp” just does not reflect who they feel they are.

Most respondents describe themselves as hustling or as hustlers. Almost all of the respondents explicitly and implicitly describe what I call “hustler embodiment.” The younger third parties, like the more seasoned third parties, still take pride in their appearance, but their ability to make fast money is symbolized through wearing expensive clothing and, commonly, new and many kinds of sneakers. For instance, Javalucci, 20, says, “I’m handsome you know. I have the money. I have everything. ... So look at me. Clothes ... lotta sneakers, good jeans. Hundred dollar jacket, you know.”

Hustling is not confined only to pimping. It seems to pervade third parties’ embodiment in licit worlds and illicit markets. Many third parties also sell drugs, and others make fast money through other illicit trade, from selling cigarettes to trafficking guns. Travis Smith, 21, approaches me in the courtyard and asks what the interviews are about. I tell him that we are interviewing pimps. He looks at me inquisitively. “What is a pimp?” After telling him that it is someone who gets money or other goods through helping to sell sex, he quickly replies, “Oh, I do that.” He talks about hustling and how his attraction to pimping centers on its ease.

Travis: I got a little hustle here and there. I go and sell movies here and there. ... Oh it’s a lot of stuff. I got a lot of ways to make money. A lot of ways, but that main one that caught my eye was with the, with the girls...the pimpin, that really caught my eye. That’s easy money right there. That’s money that just, I don’t even have to do anything but just pick a phone up, keep paying my phone bill. Just, that’s it. And keep the girls happy.

Orlando, 19, is so invested in being a hustler that he has a symbol for hustling tattooed next to his daughter's birthdate. Initially, he claims that third-party work is "all about money," but his accounts center on the ability to get money in clever ways, which is more about the thrill of hustling.

- Orlando: It don't make me feel no stronger or no weaker. It don't make me feel like yo I'm this big bad nigger 'cause I can control this bitch. It just make me feel like I could get money off her. Getting that money. You know, like a hustler. Like yeah, getting money... I love money. All about money.
- Interviewer: Yeah, so you just dig the dollars.
- Orlando: I got a hustle tattoo.
- Interviewer: Oh, nice.
- Orlando: That's my daughter birthday right here, but see got the stack of hundreds with the hustle.

Race and class as an everyday risk

This sample of third parties experience double or triple marginalization; they are primarily African-Americans from a low socio-economic status group. From their disenfranchised position, where survival may depend on daily edgework, risk may be interpreted quite differently, especially as compared to white, middle-class men who have triple privilege. Mike Jones, a poor, young, African-American, homeless man thinks his physical appearance makes him at-risk.

- Mike Jones: Everything is a risk. You walking down the street, well me walking down the street with a black hoodie on with some jeans on or some black sneakers is a risk.
- Interviewer: In what way?
- Mike Jones: I can look like I'm about to rob someone. That's how an officer would look at you.
- Interviewer: Right.
- Mike Jones: Well, look at me rather.

This quote resonates, especially after recent events in the United States involving the vigilante public, police officers, and black men — incidents such as the fatal shootings of Trevon

Martin in Sanford, Florida, and Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri; and the death of Eric Garner in New York City, and Freddie Grey in Baltimore. For people marginalized due to race, physical appearance can be a risk in many contexts. The constant feeling of being a target because of race may be one factor in normalizing risk, but also in feeling that simply leaving the house is a risk. It could be argued that for some people, edgeworking identities do not even need to be crafted. Being an African-American male and surviving could be considered tantamount to edgework, but constantly skirting these threats lacks the positive thrills and actualizing qualities intrinsic to edgework. Instead, everyday life as an African-American man on city streets is a life that cannot be divorced from threats.

Walking the neighborhood and primed for risk

People living in poorer neighborhoods may deal with negative risks every day. Some have witnessed massive amounts of violent crime, including rape and homicide. Threats to life are not unusual. Dred, 48, a street pimp with ties to the Bloods, describes how risky scenarios play out every day in his neighborhood.

- Dred: Yeah, I know a lot of people, a lot of my friends are major drug dealers in the game. A lot of them just hardcore rapists, criminals, and these are kids I grew up with.
- Interviewer: Yeah, so you just know all of them like forever.
- Dred: Yeah, I grew up in the Bronx. And that was like the roughest neighborhood. And I've seen women get raped, thrown off the roof, I've seen gangs beating each other up senselessly, ya know. Everybody... I just thought it was a way of life.
- Interviewer: Just the normal.
- Dred: Right.
- Interviewer: So, you've been seeing that since you were pretty young.
- Dred: Yeah, pretty much. Bloodshed is nothing, ya know.

Constantly being in survival mode may create protective factors in residents of these neighborhoods. They may more readily notice threats and know what to do. Perceptions of risk

for those who become involved in crime may be quite different from those of law-abiding residents in the same area. Perceptions of risk vary quite a lot, and Dred's quote points to someone who has become desensitized to threatening situations and therefore primed to court danger.

This desensitization makes a lot of different criminal activity seem plausible, and sometimes it is portrayed as the only option in line with advanced marginalization. For instance, Isaac Taylor, 27, discusses the three types of crime common in his neighborhood, "selling crack, pimping, or robbing." He describes an awareness of the risk to life, but he says "that's the whole thing of the streets." He says he has been involved in all three types of crime.

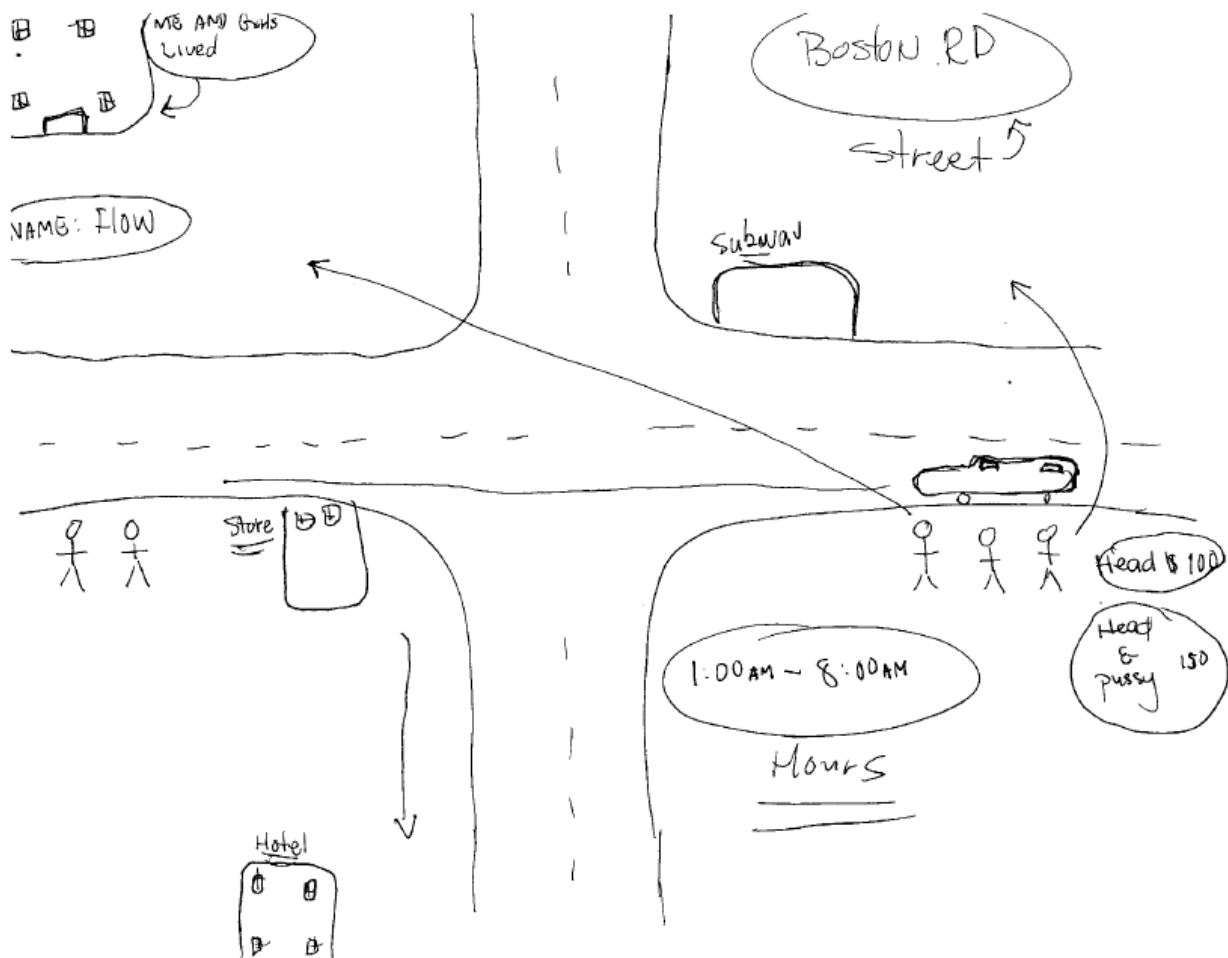
Isaac Taylor: I started selling crack when I was 13 years old. You know. I started sellin' crack when I was 13 'cause that's all there was out there on my block is crack, and all drugs and violence. That's all it is: drugs and violence. You know people die every day over selling crack, pimping, or robbing. You know? That's was, that's the whole things of the streets. Selling drugs, if you selling drugs you selling ass, or you robbing people. You know? That's was what everybody was doing. People wasn't working, you know what I'm saying, nobody worked like enough and it's just straight street life shit.

Living in settings with pervasive and continuous danger may prime some for risk-taking. This desensitization to risk and the availability of risk options without many other options normalizes this kind of edgework in some communities. But normalization does not make this option a given. It is still a choice for social actors to engage voluntarily in third-party work. When compared to robbing or selling drugs, it may be a lower-risk option, but it is nonetheless a chosen risk.

Environment creates different opportunities for edgework

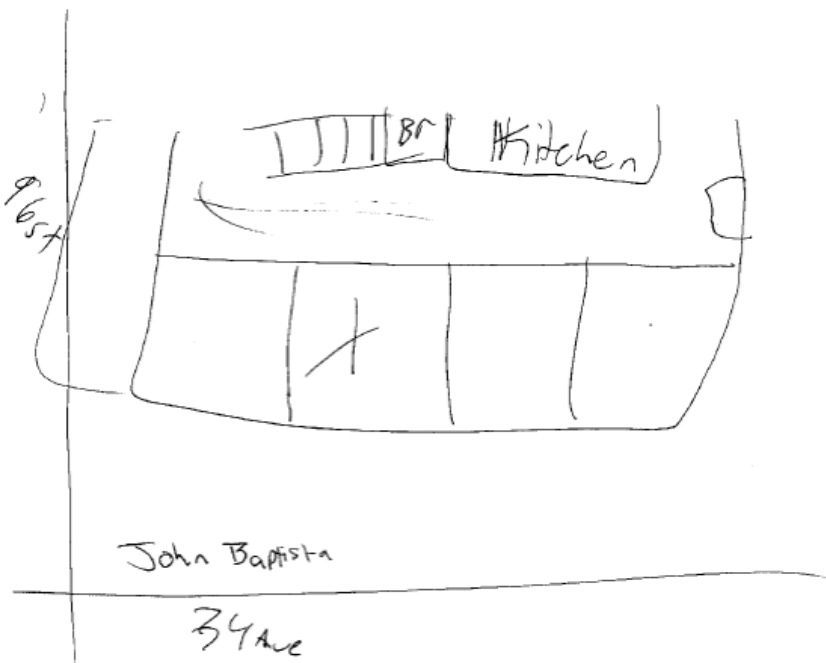
There are different brands of third-party edgework that occur in various edgeworking environments. As previously discussed, the edge can be the border between life and death or order and chaos, and each has its distinct contours. Missteps in flirting with the edge can result in death in the first construction and anarchy in the second. The levels of voluntary risk incurred are vastly different and have different potential outcomes. Third parties' work occurs in many settings, including indoors and outdoors or both, and even within these contexts the risks and potential outcomes differ.

Figure 5.1 Map drawn by street pimp of his outdoor workscape



In Figure 5.1 Flow draws his workscape, which consists of an intersection. He lives nearby with his sex workers; they can easily leave their apartment and work across the street. Sex workers stand on one side of the intersection and Flow and other third parties stand across the street near the store.

Figure 5.2 Map drawn by young pimp of a traphouse



Clients drive up and sexual exchanges occur in the car or at the nearby hotel. In the 1970s, outdoor work was very visible, with flamboyant pimps and open exchanges (Iceburg Slim, 2012; Messerschmidt, 1997). It was still visible until the early 2000s, but quality-of-life policing

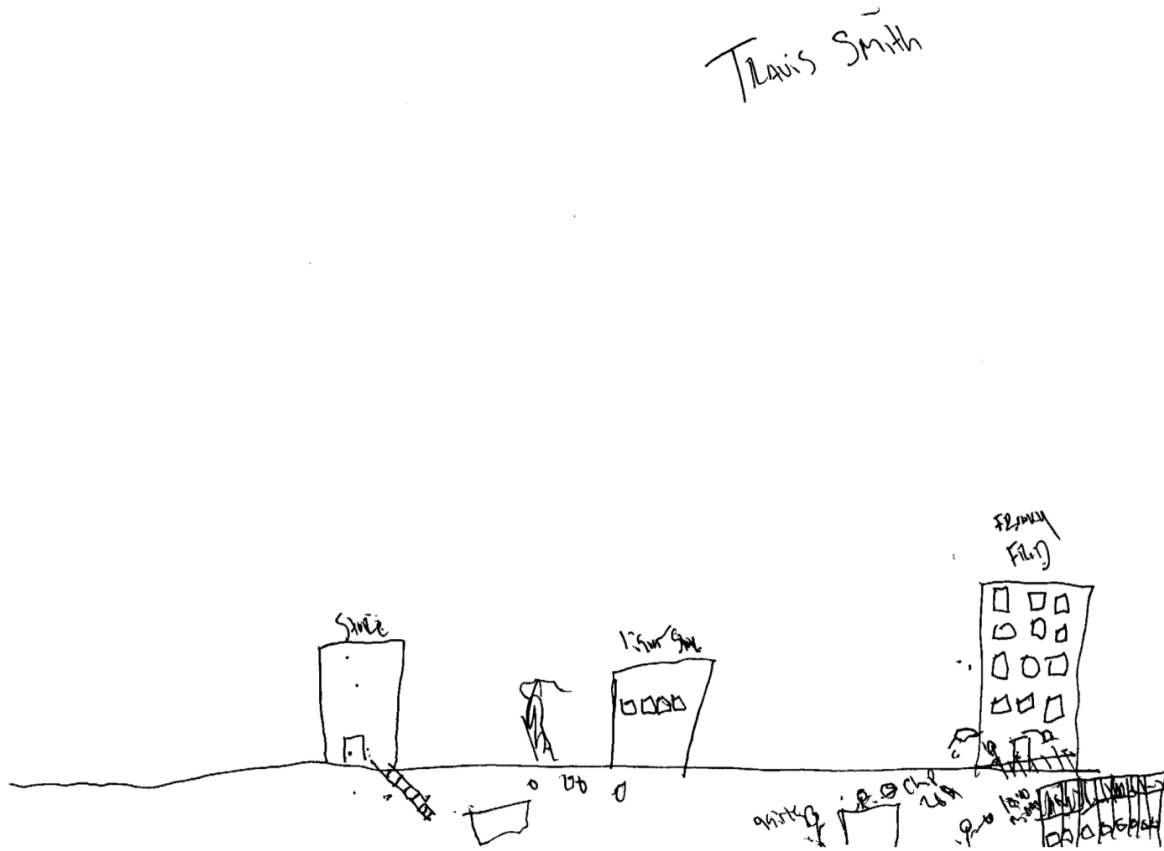
changed the visibility of markets in New York City. Now, third parties and sex workers are more discreet in their street-based dealings. Third parties' street presence is minimal, and the pimps often wait in a nearby hotel lobby, car, coffee shop, bar, or supermarket. Nevertheless, their ability to run these businesses hinges on their street credibility and ability to handle disputes, and even violent encounters. This type of edgeworking context can involve skillfully flirting with the edge of life and death.

In community-based sex work, traphouses are one common venue for selling sex. Due to economic downturns there appear to be many abandoned buildings in poorer areas in New York City. Young people occupy these buildings to engage in extreme partying and myriad illicit activities. John Doe says, "I think if the cops was to run in there, like everybody would go down [get arrested]. That's how crazy it is." John Baptista makes a pen and ink drawing of a traphouse (see Figure 4.4). He draws a floor plan and describes very little furniture beyond a couch. Primarily, he talks about a space for wilding, where participants skirt the edges of order and chaos or even life and death.

These edgeworking contexts require skillful navigation, because they are in residential neighborhoods, so there are threats from neighbors, including neighborhood thugs, security, and police. But there also are opportunities to flirt with anarchy, which allows young third parties to suspend institutional controls.

As previously discussed, some younger third parties sell sex at informal parties in unoccupied family homes and friends' apartments. Figure 5.3 is Travis's drawing of his everyday workspace, which is more like an escape. He describes "Freaky Fridays," once-a-week parties that take place at a new location each week and are publicized to young clientele through a mass text.

Figure 5.3 Map drawn by young pimp of his indoor workscape



Travis and a few friends rent a space, beds, etc. and sell poker chips at the door that are worth different amounts of time (e.g., a red chip may be worth 20 minutes). This pen-and-ink drawing shows indoor space that is literally underground. While this conjures ideas of subterranean underworlds, in actuality a lot of New York City nightlife is off-the-grid or unlicensed and often underground. These zones rarely involve the threat of death and instead involve a flirtation with the edge of order/chaos. These escape zones allow youths to suspend institutional controls and feel free, and therefore more in control of their destinies.

How is pimping edgework?

Engaging in criminal activities is risky, whether it is violent crime or working in an illicit market. To be sure, there is a spectrum of risk, with some third parties stating that they prefer one line of work to another because it is less risky. For example, third parties assert that some hustles, such as drug dealing, are riskier — but pimping is still risky. Dred talks about many of his friends selling drugs. When asked why he does not sell drugs, he mainly focuses on lethal violence and police interest.

Dred: Cause that involves guns. And, and um, it draws a lot of heat, ya know. Because now it's not even about the girls, the police don't even care about the little girls on the street. Now they wanna know who's bringing in the drugs, why they ain't getting their cut, ya know, on their watch, ya know.

Many of the street-based pimps, who are often older and more seasoned, describe each night out as filled with danger and thrills. Kelvin, 50, describes how he prepares his sex workers and himself for the night ahead. Through his description of their morning rituals, he also reveals that he wants their daytime hours to be low-key in order to prepare for the evening. He describes the inside of this crime as “dangerous and exciting” — that is, having both negative and positive risks. Kelvin views himself as tethered to his sex workers, who are on the frontlines of risk, but he is responsible for skillfully handling all threats that arise.

Kelvin: You try to get there at like 10 o'clock in the morning, cause the beauty parlors be jammed if you taking in like four, five hos, bitches. You gotta' wait for all four, five of them to get done.

Interviewer: So you get them all ready.

Kelvin: You get 'em all ready. Then you probably go out for breakfast. You know what I mean? Just try to soften the mood 'cause what you going into at night is very, it's very dangerous. It's exhilarating. It's dangerous. And you can get locked up for it, too. So you try to ... after they get theyselves together, you try to soften the mood, 'cause they know what's coming. I mean you might like soften the mood, so you may take them to breakfast. Then we might just go into the car. Go riding some place. Just to get them

out. Get it off their mind. Then you bring 'em back and put them on the track.

Interviewer: So it's like an all-day preparation kind of thing.

Kelvin: All-day preparation and not just for them, for yourself, too. Cause you gotta get into that frame of mind before you put them out there at night, because there's no telling what might happen to them. And whatever happens to them you got to be there.

As discussed in Chapter 4, some younger third parties are more apt to avoid risky work settings. This, in part, is because they are native to technology, allowing for virtual negotiations; based on their existing social lives. They safely sell to friends in their social networks. This is only a snapshot of early careers, so it is difficult to know if, as they mature, these younger third parties will move into riskier work situations.

However, third-party edgeworkers who work in traphouses must display a hustler embodiment because of the dangers in these zones. As previously described, these spaces are abandoned and using them can attract attention. These young edgeworkers must sneak into the building, occupy it, and protect it. No one must notice it's being occupied, because this raises a number of different threats. These activities are thrilling and require what Wiley, 18, describes as a "sneakiness." He talks about what is required to inhabit an abandoned apartment.

Interviewer: Wow. Yeah, and no one else notices you're in there?

Wiley: Yeah, you gotta be real sneaky. Like yeah.

Interviewer: So you just go in at night or something?

Wiley: No, you can go in the daytime 'cause it's not like it don't be active, like all of this doesn't be active, so you just you go in anytime just gotta make sure nobody sees you. The best ones to get is the ones on the inside of the building.

Interviewer: OK. So then why? Just 'cause no one can see you from the outside?

Wiley: Yeah. And like 'cause people could look out so many windows in here if I'm over here, if I'm getting into this house, somebody can see me from over here. They probably call security.

Many younger third parties facilitate wild times in line with Mikhail Bakhtin's (1984) idea of carnivalesque zones. According to Bakhtin (1984), carnivalesque zones are unofficial worlds where if you are not looking from the vantage point of a "world turned upside down," you may see chaos. The carnival's nebulous rules and accompanying social disorder, with an emphasis on bodily pleasures, allow participants to escape everyday constraints. These parties can range from small- to large-scale events reminiscent of Bacchanalia. Some younger pimps arrange their work around sex parties and orgies, where they gain status and freely engage in unconventional sex. Miguel facilitates sex work at his parties (he earns a profit), but he also participates in the orgies.

Miguel: It started off we was just friends having parties. We just having fun. We just having orgies. Like yo we get drink, we get fucked up. We just having a fuck. We had a bunch of energy. Who cared? Haha. But it actually became like other people started trying to come. Because people would tell stories about what was happening at the house parties. So started charging 'em, like fuck it.

Sometimes groups of hustlers arrange these parties in larger venues. Instead of saving their money, they "irrationally" spend much of their earnings in pursuit of creating the ultimate pleasurable escape zones. Leon mostly works with one other third party, but he is part of a loosely knit local gang of about 50 members called the Number One Boys. Again, they use one another for protection when major problems occur. However, instead of pooling funds in an organized manner, the Number One Boys use their profits to throw elaborate parties in Manhattan nightclubs. They dress up, bring their most attractive sex workers, and open hundreds of bottles of champagne. Another third party, Billy, 18, talks about the appeal of participating in the orgies. He states, "I know I'm not gay if I accidentally see his junk. But, you know, in the midst of it, I'm not focusing on him. He's not focusing on me. We're both aware of each other. If anything, that intensifies the moment." Billy's type of sexual embodiment subverts pro-typical

conceptions of heterosexuality; whereas Leon's rendition affirms it, but in an excessive way. These adult-free escape zones center on heightened pleasure, excitement, and reinforcing as well as subverting traditional masculinity (as evidenced in Billy's openness to others males' sexuality).

Billy also spoke with the female sex workers participating in his parties. According to him, they also experience some type of rush through the experience. He reports that sex workers say they participate for the feeling and not the money. This is aligned with Katz's (1988) description of the seduction of crime with the lure of palpable reality and emotions. He compares sex workers' adrenaline rush to his desire to fight for the natural high.

Interviewer: So it's a weekend thing.

Billy: Yeah.

Interviewer: What's the girls do?

Billy: Go to school, some of them. Got jobs, some of them ... just, actually like to do it, as far as I understand, for, like, not so much as a thrill, but just because it feels good. I guess. I don't know how to put it, 'cause I would've thought the way she said it, it was a thrill, but the way she put it was: she do it, not for the money, but, just to, not even for the stimulants of it, just to, she do it just to ... do it. There was really no touchy-feely.

Interviewer: Would she feel some kinda power over the guys? Or ... why would she say that?

Billy: It was weird, like, like ... I guess she feel some type of ... inner sensation, some type of a natural high. That's the way I can explain it.

Interviewer: Aha.

Billy: The way I feel, like, I'm not gonna get a lot of money, or I don't want a trophy, but I just ... wanna fight. I feel a natural high. I feel good.

Third-party accounts are divided into three groups: those taking control in workscapes, those losing/taking control through escapes, and those who do both. The first group gains control through skillful mastery within the political economy, and successful hustling makes them feel badass. On the local level, this skill often involves navigating the street, and the threats within these workscapes bring them to the edge of life/death. The second group temporarily escapes institutional controls through experiences in carnivalesque party zones. On the micro-level these

partying activities involve flirting with anarchy. Many lose control in these party zones in order to regain control and feel alive. The third group, the younger edgeworkers occupying traphouses, skirt both of these edges.

Edgework for the young may be experienced differently because there are many more institutional controls to escape from. This may be why the young are more prone to risk-taking, such as heavy experimentation with drugs, extreme partying, unsafe sex, or other kinds of risky behaviors (Baron, Forde, & Kay, 2007; Boardman, Menard, & Roettger, 2014). Researchers find that youths who engage in risky behavior are more likely to work in the informal economy, as compared to teens who play by the rules (Huang, Pergamit, & Shkolnik, 2001). These teen partiers may be primed to continue pimping or hustling in other ways.

How is edgework done differently?

Dred describes what he likes about pimping, which reflects the excitement of pimping on the streets and mirrors Katz's description of a badass who garners respect through public displays of bravado and control under pressure. This display epitomizes a kind of "doing different" with a code of streets orientation. It is similar to Sandberg's gangster discourse, but his use of the term "businessman" qualitatively changes this statement, with the excitement inextricably linked to "doing" masculinity in line with Mertonian cultural goals of financial success and hegemonic masculinity. The feeling of being a businessman is part of the lure. For some third parties this is the core of pimping.

- Interviewer: What's the main thing you like about the work?
Dred: It's exciting.
Interviewer: It's exciting?
Dred: The money, it's fast.
Interviewer: Yeah. What's exciting about it to you?
Dred: It's a rush. To have that control, ya know. Be in charge.

Interviewer: Is it control over the women? Or control over, what do you mean?
Dred: Control over the women, ya know, being like, feeling like a businessman, ya know. Making sure everything is running. The respect on the streets, ya know.
Interviewer: So you're known in a way.
Dred: Absolutely.

Many street-based pimps describe feelings of control, which is evident in their sentiments about “being the boss” and “being respected,” and basically taking the reins in their communities and within a capitalist market, albeit through illicit labor. This form of edgework is done differently because of raced and classed intersections, but with appropriated hegemonic talk.

Another form of control is the appearance of “having it together.” Sonny Boy, who grew up in a family of pimps, runs his business out of the “money house,” a cooperative housing arrangement between several young third parties who also sell drugs and have various other hustles. He talks about how people see him looking good, surrounded by good-looking women and making fast money. He portrays himself as badass, partly because he thinks others perceive him as “in control” and he enjoys being seen this way. This type of portrayal is about doing masculinity, but with traces of marginality. However, he talks about feeling like a celebrity, which shifts marginalized discourse toward an exaggerated hegemonic positionality.

Sonny Boy: Nah, I mean ... I had fun, that's all I can say. It was, it's a fun life, 'cause you got the control, and you, and you know you dress nice, and you know, and you ... girls be around you, you know? You go out in the street and you walking with females, and they young and they look so good, especially [name], she lookin' all good. Got [name] over here, and the other girl. ... You got three girls around you, you walking by yourself and they just paying attention to you. ... I, I feel like I'm a motherfuckin' celebrity. Yea, feel like a celebrity.

Other third parties are able to visibly assert dominance in their own neighborhoods. They compare themselves to the working chumps who sit around waiting for meager paychecks. Meanwhile, they feel satisfied at having been able to escape this fate by outdoing their friends

and neighbors and outsmarting the system. Dantes describes this scenario, where his friends are subordinate because they have been tricked into straight work and rely on him when they need to borrow money.

Dantes: I see people in the workforce struggling every day. Why would I wanna do that? ... Struggling. Living check-to-check and shit like that. I don't wanna do that. Ha ... yeah, financial problems. I don't wanna be like that ...yeah these regular people. People that work. (Muffled) citizens. . . [I] see them struggling. You know what I mean, asking me for money until they get they checks and shit like that. So I don't wanna do that

For some third parties, skillful mastery over their economic situation is the real draw of pimping, but for others the feeling is equated with taking a “drug” or having an “addiction.” For many, the rationalist-capitalist attraction to money is not present. Instead, they talk about pimping as a “game,” and an exciting one. The fun is in outwitting and outsmarting, despite their marginalized positions and the grave risks involved. For many, it is the thrill of the game coupled with monetary rewards. Clyde describes his attraction to pimping.

Clyde: I make money the way I wanna make it. That's really what I try to pursue. No trying to pursue different other things. Trying to deviate myself around things that's not gonna make me wealthy or, um, eligible to do different things. I wanna do things my way. I wanna do this that way, that that way, so I do that at the same time. No sleep means like staying 24/7. Doing the same thing. I do other things, too. That's what I like. This game is that I'm addicted to it. It's like a drug to me. I just like it. Money coming in hot. Getting this and that. Picking up that and that.

Interviewer: You like the fast pace? Yeah.

Clyde: Fast pace is non-stop. Lean back, smoking. Whoo.

Interviewer: Yeah, you think you'll do it forever?

Clyde: Imma do it 'til I die. ... I wanna quit but I love doing it.

Interviewer: Why do you wanna quit though? Sounds like you like it?

Clyde: I mean I wanna quit because I know one day somebody's gonna catch me slipping. ... It's fun but it's not easy.

As discussed previously, traditional edgeworkers seek authenticity through synthetic realities, but with real risks and feelings. Often they describe the ability to navigate as innate.

Some of the older pimps talk about pimping as an inborn ability. Randall, 40, states, “Yeah, so you know, you know, it runs in the blood. A pimp, you know it pimping have to be blood-related. You can’t learn it, and it can’t be taught. It have to have to be in your blood.” Those who come from families of pimps are more apt to say things like this. Generally, the concept of being authentic through pimping is related to being cold and calculating or, on the other hand, smooth talking. This depends on the type of third party. Terrance, 46, talks about himself as the former type. When asked to describe himself, he says, “Ruthless. Non-caring. Selfish, when it comes to money. I’m not a loving ... I don’t have a love spot in my heart. I’m hard. You gotta be hard. If you aren’t hard, you can’t make no money.” Clyde also talks about having to manage and regulate emotions in order to do third-party work.

- Clyde: Economy. All economy. You just take control. Like we got our own ourselves and lot of people know they self. Choose to be out there for they emotions. But if you talk to a lot of people. Talk about emotions, don’t know how to control emotions.
- Interviewer: They what?
- Clyde: They’re not focused on their emotions, so they chose to react off they emotions. That’s what I’m trying to control at the same time too.
- Interviewer: Trying to control your emotions?
- Clyde: Be a smooth, laid-back criminal.

In contrast, the smooth talkers describe this risky endeavor as perfect for them because they can use emotions to outwit and outsmart everybody. Anton discusses his ability to be smooth, which he claims is a skill he already had.

- Anton: I’m a smooth, I’m a smooth type of guy. I’m like a gangster pimp. You know what I’m saying, ’cause I was like a club dealer before in my life so, I’m smooth, you know. So I like to treat my hos right nice; the same way how you treat them out on the street, needing the money that brings customers towards me to buy my product.

In either scenario, third parties describe the work as being made for them. Their stories center on authenticity, but more often third-party work is done to find exaggerated or better “real” selves.

For some third parties, this type of work can be life-altering. There is a change in perspective or even in the self. Jeremiah talks about how third-party labor has enlightened him.

Jeremiah: It probably changed the way I looked towards a lot of females out there. Other than that, it didn't change me. I was probably worse before I started that. As far as like what I'm doing in the streets. But that probably made me, it opened my mind to other things and you know to see things from another perspective, and it like I said it's just something that's about money, business. So yeah, it kinda enlightened me if anything.

As Jeremiah says, third parties feel that through this work they are enlightened in various ways. There is a perspective shift, with some expressing feelings of realness. Many others, however, say that the lure of pimping is in the escape or in an exaggerated reality. There is a search for desired selves, but not necessarily authentic selves. Some craft and exist in fantasy zones (such as carnivalesque parties), and others seek to be known as the quintessential smooth criminal, high-class gangster, or even king. Third parties voluntarily engage in risk and successfully navigate edges in order live in fantasies and be their fantastical selves. Escaping from reality to other better realities is different than merely seeking out authenticity.

How identity is constructed around edgework is different based on intersectionality. The original subjects of research in this area spoke about how edgework produced feelings of authenticity. This could be because they are white, middle-class people with stable jobs in licit markets. Because of their middle-class lived realities, they may feel deadened by 9-to-5 labor in formal sectors, so they engage in edgework to reclaim a self that feels more alive. In contrast, the third parties in this survey often have been overexposed to threatening situations and involuntarily live at the edge. With bleak prospects in licit sectors, edgework may allow them to escape these confines. Alternatively, interpretations of the word "authenticity" may be problematic. If we dream that our real self is akin to a king, then perhaps this is being authentic.

Escape zones, where worlds are supposedly turned upside down, may in actuality be right side up for social actors. Therefore, third parties may feel most authentic in these zones.

In this study, older pimps often are invested in a pimp identity, which for many of the younger respondents is an unknown or alien embodiment, as well as a dated and sometimes offensive term. Most of the third parties in this study, both young and old, describe versions of hustler embodiment, from cultural positions of inclusion, exclusion, and both. The more seasoned pimps often subvert hegemony through oppositional talk about bypassing menial labor (oppression discourse) and making fast money through crafty means (gangster discourse). This finding of a bilingual yet marginalized discourse is supported in Sandberg's (2009) study. This is not surprising, because for many seasoned pimps, third-party work is not only an extra or alternative labor, but a counter-lifestyle. Many respondents, however, use marginalized (excluded) and hegemonic (included) discourse, so they use bilingual discourse (inclusion/exclusion) in their constructions of masculinity. Many third parties talk about hustler embodiment in line with Mertonian cultural goals of financial success. As evidenced in Chapter 3, for the young, the ability to make fast money is in theory and sometimes in practice a transferable skill in illicit and licit worlds (e.g., applying illicit work knowledge to business courses or to licit management jobs).

Some third parties perceive themselves as at-risk due to race and class, in line with advanced marginalization (Wacquant, 2008). Their lived realities — being alienated, living in violent neighborhoods, and even being targets — shape how they perceive risk. One interpretation is that third parties are desensitized to dangerous situations, but another is that they are primed for risk with skills to handle such situations resiliently in a search for emotional and financial rewards.

Most third-party labor involves unpredictable threats and being at the edge. Indoor third-party work is less risky, but there are always unpredictable threats. The more seasoned street-based pimps are acutely aware of the risks and drawn to the thrill of danger. The lure of dangerous situations involves being able to skillfully outplay and outsmart threatening people. Some third parties describe pimping as addictive, which sounds similar to accounts of edgeworkers engaged in high-risk sports (see Ferrell, 2005; Lyng, 1990). Being inside the crime and feeling an adrenaline rush is part of the lure (Katz, 1988), but there is more going on. This adrenaline rush also is connected to outplaying and outsmarting the system itself and usurping control within the larger social and economic world.

Before discussing edgework in relation to the macro level, it is important to understand how third parties interpret control. Control is part of the definition of hegemonic masculinity, and third parties pride themselves on the ability to take the reins and gain independence. This form of control can be displayed on the street, where some third parties feel glamorous or even like celebrities — the emotional rewards of bypassing menial labor and degrading jobs.

It is important to understand that third parties are doing edgework differently than white, middle-class men who are weekend edgeworkers. The emotions and some of the sensations may be comparable, but being at the margins makes edgework in the lower echelon sex trade possible. Advanced marginalization (poverty, isolation, alienation) motivates third parties to pimp, just as Garot's (2015) high school students gang bang in situations where feelings of alienation give rise to "molding a hard, edgeworking identity." Ironically, this high-stakes activity also enables third parties to appropriate hegemonic talk and actually connect in more tangible ways to the larger economy, such as gaining the capital that allows engagement in the

stock market or a licit-sector business. People within marginalized and illicit economies perform edgework differently, and because of difference.

Because of third parties' at-risk status, pimping as a type of edgework takes on a new quality. These men may still be searching for their authentic selves through a hyper-reality, but perceptions of risk vary. Even the meaning of authenticity is probably different for third parties, as compared to middle-class edgeworkers. For third parties, feelings of realness may emerge in fantasy worlds and through fantastical selves (e.g., selves who have massive amounts of money and vast numbers of women). Intersectionality (race, class, and gender) precludes some of these individuals from finding success in formal sectors. These barriers shape their routes to authenticity, and this changes how the term is conceptualized. However, authenticity is subjective within this sample of third parties, and even within single accounts.

Types of risk activities are different. In Tea Torbenfeldt Bengtsson's (2012) study of edgeworking street fighters, Bashaar is in search of authenticity through "real" fighting, where pain is intense, blood can be drawn, and camaraderie is palpable. But third-party work is somewhat distinct. It does occur in a marketplace — and one that historically centers on a certain ghetto opulence. Also, embedded in illicit work is a resistance to the straight world and to the menial work assignments marginalized individuals would be relegated to within it. Instead of searching for realness that equals aliveness, third parties search for magnified selves and selves that are visibly badass in the neighborhood, the market, and even in the larger economy. Third parties may feel authenticity through this labor because they are free from oppression in licit markets. Further, through this labor, third parties may craft grand expressions of the self to ensure that they are visible across sectors.

Edgeworking contexts vary depending upon the type of edgework, which is inextricably linked to different edges – life/death or order/chaos. Few studies have directly investigated these contexts. Similarities and differences should be drawn between varied contexts, such as engaging in high-risk sports, smoking crack in an abandoned building, or facilitating sex work in a high-crime neighborhood. Each context is inscribed with social meaning, and each allows for flirting with different edges. Ferrell (2006) feels that it is important to experience these contexts through participating in edgework, as illustrated in his study of graffiti artists. Firsthand experience allows for a deeper understanding of edgeworking contexts. However, because of ethical concerns, many types of criminal edgeworking contexts cannot be explored in this way. Instead, researchers can collect data on edgeworking contexts and corresponding edges through in-depth interviews or through sound or visual materials. This allows for a more comprehensive portrait of how edges correspond to different risk contexts, where access and performance can depend upon one's position in the social structure. Through pimps' pen-and-ink drawings of their everyday work, different types of edgework and edges are identified. In this sample, the variation had less to do with socio-economic position and hinges more on age differences.

Future research addressing edgeworking identities should focus on the variable of age. This process of identity-creation may be influenced by how young people perceive risk. This could be typical teenage risk-taking, so differences in edgework based on age are something altogether distinct to research. This chapter shows distinctions between temporary and lifelong edgework, but these distinctions may be due to typical youth-based social activities and maturity levels. It is important to match third-party participants based on demographics to see how temporary edgework compares to lifelong edgework. Dabbling or young edgeworkers likely will

be wildly different from hardcore edgeworkers who have dedicated their lives to these activities and to their risk-taking identities.

Chapter Six

Concluding remarks

Modern-day pimps have been rebranded as an extremely dangerous class by the media and biased research. They are depicted as easily seducing young girls and lurking around everyone's neighborhood or personal computer, and their supposed level of organization has given them organized crime status. In part, this mediated, archetypal, bogeyman pimp has emerged because of the legal and cultural conflation of pimps and sex traffickers and the public's obsession with modern-day slavery (Bernstein, 2007; Weitzer, 2010). This risk knowledge is cultural (Douglas & Wilavsky, 1983), and these imaginings have turned into a moral crusade led by abolitionists, Christian fundamentalists, progressive housewives, Hollywood actors, good-hearted liberals, etc. The cause is well-meaning, and human trafficking surely does happen, even on Main Street; however, these crude strokes and caricature renditions limit our understanding of what is actually happening, create a bottleneck in important research, and unduly instill fear in the public. This fear is bolstering the U.S. neo-liberal agenda, which includes heightened social control and stiff prison sentences, especially for minorities (Treadwell & Garland, 2011). For instance, in California and many other states, pimps now are required to register as sex offenders for the rest of their lives, and a typical prison sentence for them is 15 to 25 years.

This hidden population has been labeled as very risky, and perhaps this is why there has been little research in which pimps/traffickers are interviewed. Generally, hidden populations are labeled as such because finding them would put them at-risk, but after studying this population, I believe there has been a real fear of actually talking to pimps. In light of incendiary stories that emphasize their propensity for physical violence, such as tales of pimps tattooing and branding sex workers, it is little wonder that firsthand interviews with third parties are largely missing

from what are deemed key scholarly works about the commercial sex market. A lot of research about third parties focuses on pimps' dominance, misogyny, and abuse of sex workers (Barry, 1995; Dworkin, 1997; Farley, 2004; Farley & Kelly, 2000; Jeffries, 1997; MacKinnon, 1990, 1993; Pateman, 1988; Raymond, 1998). Since most of these scholars interviewed women in rescue institutions, their analyses are framed by victim/perpetrator models (Marcus et al., 2014; Molland, 2011), along with radical feminist critiques. These studies are important and do depict a segment of pimps/sex workers operating in the sex trade, but this narrow view provides little information about the pedestrian pimp.

A few studies that investigate pimps in their own right have relied on rational-capitalist models in an attempt to understand them. These studies mostly focus on the economics of third-party work and rely on classical theory and its predecessor theories to explain how this work is “worth it” (Dank et al., 2014; Levitt & Venkatesh, 2007). Again, there is the idea that pimps and sex workers are somewhat organized, because they are working in an illicit economy. The typical interpretation is that they must be engaged in a cost/benefit analysis with more calculated wins than losses if they choose to stay in this risky marketplace. Surely, there are calculations being made, but to understand pimps and pimping it may be best to look at risk-taking in multiple ways, including how they construct third-party activities as positive (Lupton 1999).

Mostly, risk has been construed as negative (see Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991), but risk can also be positive. In Chapter 4, I explore how pimps gamble through this type of bodywork, and how these gambles are centered on “good” and “bad” risks. Pimps use their physical bodies and embodiment, which includes violence and control, in their day-to-day work. Many conceptions about how pimps are controlling or violent are demystified in this study. In Chapter 5, I discover that this labor involves an investment in a hustler embodiment and identity. The term “hustler”

conjures the idea of a rational-capitalist, but the history of hustler identities shows that they originate from resistance to white culture and subverting existing power structures (Clever, 1968; X & Haley, 1965). In edgework, who is navigating the risk situations shapes its meaning. A number of third parties are regularly exposed to risk and have limited opportunities because of their at-risk status. This involuntary exposure to risk often gives them the opportunity to engage in edgework, but it is their other limitations that give them the resiliency to maintain control over chaotic situations. The inside of this crime is largely about feeling the thrill of being able to navigate dangerous settings, but part of that thrill comes from navigating in the larger economy despite one's at-risk status. While some pimps did exhibit hypermasculinity, the roots of this expression are about gaining control from marginalized positions and managing bicultural orientations.

Throughout this study, it was evident that younger pimps' stories are unique and the most divergent from stereotypical portrayals of pimps. These men potentially represent the next generation of pimps, so how they pimp, their motivations for pimping, and how they see themselves in the all-encompassing political economy are most relevant. It is important to understand that some of them are still teenagers or young adults, and they feel the sting of social control most heavily. Young people in Western societies have few rights and freedoms and are inextricably tied to institutions. These impositions influence how they view the world, such as how they interpret risk, including dangerous opportunities.

In Chapter 3, I sought to understand how young third parties are subject to some of the same disadvantages as their licit counterparts, such as being cheap, surplus labor when working for family members (the political economy model). However, overall they seemed to fare slightly better, which may indicate that third-party labor has the allure of agency and perhaps an

earlier coming of age. Next, in support of Matza's theory of drift, I found that the boundary between licit and illicit worlds is quite eroded. Many of the young third parties in this study are in college or have plans to attend, and also work in the licit sector. They do not rely only on Sandberg's (2009) at-risk discourses (oppression and gangster discourses); they also rely on a discourse of versatility and even mastery.

In Chapter 5, I find that feelings of uncertainty lead people to engage in voluntary risk that allows them to usurp control through skillfully navigating or escaping institutional controls. Younger pimps navigate risk both to escape institutional controls and to usurp control. They may create carnivalesque zones where rules are inverted, and they engage in orgies and heavy partying. This may sound like typical teenage activity, but while they participate in these risky zones, these pimps skillfully conduct business. These young edgeworkers pride themselves not only on being able to suspend controls, but in both facilitating the suspension and making a profit in the meantime.

In Chapter 3, I explore how the lure of pimping is about gaining power in the larger economy. Interestingly, the younger third parties seem most focused on this, and their accounts center on mastering both illicit and licit worlds. This ranges from doing well in school and expanding their pimp businesses to well-developed strategies for gaining power within the all-encompassing political economy (including both licit and illicit worlds). Even though these young third parties are surely excluded by social, cultural, and economic boundaries, their accounts show that they often do not perceive these barriers. In fact, many express feelings of agency within both worlds and economies. This may be due to their age, or because more globalized economies allow for perceptions of inclusion.

There may be several reasons for differences in third parties' performativity in brokering the sale of sex. For the young, notions about performativity, such as embodiments of control and violence, may be shaped by their maturity level, insular social networks, inexperience, and use of indoor workspaces or escapes. Because of the age divide in this sample, I was able to see what performativities — such as hustler embodiment — are depicted as important to pimping across generations. A limitation of this study could be that talk by older pimps will lead to red herrings in the search for future pimp performativity in sex markets. But I contend that it allows for a snapshot of “old school” embodiments constructed as crucial to this labor, and how these are changing for future generations of pimps. Often, extreme cases of old-school pimping are depicted as prototypical by abolitionists and neoliberal, anti-trafficking lobbyists. This study demonstrates that pimping is diverse, and that third parties' constructions of embodiment through their labor often challenges stereotypical depictions. It also illustrates the new ways that third parties construct performativity of their work in their communities and in the capitalist marketplace.

The next generation of third parties seems to be less focused on violence and control over sex workers. These young pimps run their businesses in a rather *laissez-faire* fashion and even shrink from the idea of actually using physical violence on the job. Compared to older pimps, they less frequently use violent business models, with the exception of a few young pimps whose families taught them to work this way. The embodiments necessary to pimping are changing, and — because of technology, some would say — moving toward more egalitarian relationships between sex workers and pimps.

For future research, both parties in pimp/sex worker dyads should be interviewed to understand how each views the dangers of working in the sex trade. This would assist in making

outdoor and indoor work safer. Bottoms are crucial to many operations, and the complexity of their positions as sex workers and bosses should be in the focus of future research. Longitudinal studies about pimp/sex worker dyads may be important, because these relationships often do not start with selling sex and do not persist as impersonal business arrangements. Long-term study would allow for a clearer picture of changeable interpersonal dynamics and corresponding risks.

The sex workers' stories in these third party/sex worker dyads should be explored to understand the underlying social processes involved in their engagement in this type of crime. It may be that they are forced or coerced or that they are rational-capitalists. But I assume that like third parties, they would identify other factors, including the lure of being able to partake in the political economy in more tangible ways.

Challenges to the public discourse

This study challenges the prevailing assumption about the centrality of coercive control and violence in pimp/sex worker dyads. Often, dyads began between similarly aged teens, presumably on somewhat equal footing. For some researchers, constrained agency is inherent in being young, and any young person in the sex trade is viewed as commercially sexually exploited (Dank, 2011; Lloyd, 2011). This bright-line legal and cultural rule is designed to protect the young, but it often serves to bury how agency is constructed in these dyads. The flexibility of these relationships, like most social relationships, should not be ignored. Some may argue that peer status does not impact exploitation. However, this response squashes a number of important stories about how young people collectively negotiate selling sex, and it usually is constructing through moralizing about child sexuality and sex work. The recruitment of vulnerable girls and women into the sex trade is an enduring risk, but recruitment is rarely

imagined as occurring between pals, crushes, boyfriends/girlfriends, and families with girls and women who at some point collaborate in the business. Assumptions about stranger danger as a risk should be quelled because, like most crimes, recruitment of sex workers usually occurs between people with existing relationships. This may explain the inability of researchers to find accurate estimates¹⁰ of domestically trafficked minors. Researchers may be looking for stereotypical scenarios of much older males coercing young girls. The discourse often explains the lack of reliable estimates¹¹ as related to young girls' literal entrapment in secret locations (Lloyd, 2011; Polaris Project, 2013; Shared Hope, 2012). The search for the villain pimp — thought to be a savvy adult with an underground human trafficking cellar — will not turn up typical neighborhood sex traffickers. Further, young sex workers are not often sold to pedophiles. In fact, many teen pimps avoid adult clientele and focus on clients who are controllable, i.e., similarly aged males from their social networks.

The idea of the omnipresent third party depicted in scholarly works and news media takes a very different shape in the neighborhood. Many younger third parties refuse to work on the streets due to a fear of personal risk at the hands of police or violent clients. The off-the-street trend of the young may indicate the future of third parties' work. These accounts support the notion that visible sex work is moving off the streets (Kennedy et al., 2007; Lloyd, 2011), but neither the lurking pimp (Lloyd, 2011), the dungeon (De Chesnay, 2012; Getu, 2006), or the online stranger/predator (Hughes, 2002; Iton, Oliver, Torgensen, & Bailey, 2005) is probably not the future of third-party conduct. Using new technologies to sell sex is common among the young and is probably indicative of what future sex markets will entail. This research confirms

¹⁰ (e.g., U.N. global trafficking estimates have varied between 600,000 and 27 million over the past decade.)

that third parties have a growing online presence (Dank, 2014; Hughes, 2002; Musto, 2014; Venkatesh, 2011), with the threat of socializing (an enduring risk) magnified by technology (a manufactured risk). The most common business partner is the “bottom” or “top,” who is nearly nonexistent in the media and never the focus of scholarly works. The longer-term mutual-agreement relationship between bottoms and third parties challenges the Domestic Sex Trafficking (DST) discourse. Many of these relationships are not coercive and rest on continued mutual agreements between teens and teens, and adults and adults.

Ruthless business models, such as those in the families of some third parties, confirm anti-trafficking rhetoric, but one surprise is that this violent approach fails to be transmitted through generations. In fact, the best business model is more egalitarian. The DMT business model advocating use of force (Barry, 1995; Farley, 2004; Hughes, 2005; Kennedy et al., 2007; Lloyd, 2011; Polaris Project, 2014; Shared Hope International, 2014; Wilson & Dalton, 2008) may not be sustainable over time.

The image of pimps as “high rollers” has been perpetuated in public discourse and confirmed by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and The Urban Institute. However, the pedestrian pimp is not generating over \$1 million a year with underage workers. Generally, even the most organized third parties in this sample had lower- to middle-class earnings. Only in one case does a third party claim to make over a million dollars. Ground-floor pimps, who may be more common, counter the prevailing narrative of the “high roller” pimp.

While this sample is in no way representative of pimps in the United States, or even in New York City, these accounts provide a more nuanced look at how pimps operate in New York City communities and how they fit into public discourse. The public discourse on DST is challenged in many respects by these stories from pimps and neighborhood sex traffickers.

Hopefully, these contradictions will be accounted for not only in future studies, but also used to challenge the DST discourse, which has been used recklessly, without reliable estimates or using evidence-based research.

Policy recommendations

Media renditions of the “villain pimp” should be counterbalanced by more realistic portrayals of third parties. These media renditions spread misinformation that results in public fear. As revealed in chapters 3 and 4, most pimps begin third party work in their teenage years and often recruit similarly aged sex workers. The predatory pimp with manipulative superpowers and the ability to be anywhere and everywhere is blinding the public to some of the real risks. The institutions of school and family could be watched more closely. These real risks also include the threat of families who encourage and sometimes coerce young males to be third parties. Then there are the manufactured risks, such as the Internet. In the scope of the commercial sex market, the age of technology is creating a less violent market by moving aspects of the sex trade off the street. It also gives sex workers a greater ability to work without third parties, or at least not have to be so closely monitored (Curtis et al., 2007; Weitzer, 2009). From a harm reduction perspective, the Internet actually may be reducing danger in the commercial sex market. Media campaigns can be effective (see Mahmoud & Trebesch, 2010), but portrayals of the threats of pimping and domestic trafficking should be based on empirical data to provide a more realistic portrait of risk.

Instead of relying on rescue narratives to understand social aspects of this labor, more humanizing approaches should be applied to sex workers and third parties. Harm reduction models are preferable over the generally ineffective rescue operations. When practitioners assist

in rescue cases (when coercive control or violence are at play), they should be aware of changeable interpersonal dynamics. They should be aware that these dyads may have long-term and perhaps extensive and changeable social contact, which makes assessing needs difficult. Some sex workers may not seek escape, but rather improvement of their situations (Weitzer, 2010). Alternatively, they may seek escape from a brutal third party, but not from sex work. Relational aspects of the business are nuanced and should be assessed case by case. Researchers should thoroughly investigate a harm reduction plan to ensure the safety of sex workers and those labeled as trafficked. Instead of imposing their bias that this work is inherently harmful and that sex workers lack agency, researchers should focus on sex workers' perceptions of their needs related to danger and risk.

In the United States, sex workers can expunge their prior criminal history related to being trafficked or obtain T visas, which temporarily allow undocumented victims to remain in the United States, in exchange for testimony about their pimps or traffickers. This testimony is used to build sex trafficking cases. While this approach seems progressive, requiring sex workers to provide testimony is harmful in two ways. First, victims are forced to confront their perpetrators. Second, some sex workers opt for this because of the benefits, even when their situation may not include the coercion required for a sex trafficking case. In some cases, this policy may be putting sex workers in harm's way, and in other cases it may bolster the number of "rescue" cases when the sex worker may not need that type of rescuing. These options for sex workers and trafficking victims would be progressive if they did not require testimony.

If the objective is to produce conditions that deter third-party work, this study reveals some important findings. Older pimps' narratives reveal that prison sentences and felony status bar many of these third parties from licit work. Felony status makes them feel that licit

employment is out of reach. Some states are banning the requirement to “check the box,” which allows for more licit job opportunities. The Fair Chance Act in New York City, and similar acts in other U.S. states, prohibits this requirement on applications for private-sector employment. This prohibition should be extended to civil service positions that historically hire many racial and ethnic minorities (Rubio, 2010). This trend is progressive and would allow third parties who wish to desist to quit pimping and turn away from other illicit work. Some older pimps who were incarcerated in the 1970s and ’80s obtained college degrees in prison, and this allowed them to enter the licit work force more easily. Prison-based college degrees have been largely phased out, a situation that is problematic. In addition, upon re-entering society felons are required to “check the box” on college applications, and they are precluded from applying for federal student loans. While some may argue that being credentialed is no longer necessary, those with little work history or sub-par technology skills (such as the older population) may require such skills, or even a college degree, in order to obtain decent, licit employment.

For at-risk young people, pimps and sex workers alike, working in the commercial sex market provides income, but there seem to be several underlying social processes at play. The idea of simply providing these young people with higher paying jobs is a good first step, but it is not likely to remove them entirely from the sex trade. When young third parties skillfully navigate risk and boundaries, they are rewarded with feelings of excitement that are, in part, tied to their at-risk status. I am not suggesting that young potential third parties be placed in jobs that entail life-threatening or highly risky circumstances, but perhaps job opportunities for youths should be considered more carefully. Jobs that include built-in risks, emotional or otherwise, may actually be more alluring, especially to those who are primed for risk at an early age. I am not necessarily suggesting that young third parties be given the opportunity to work on Wall

Street or in physically dangerous jobs. I am, however, suggesting that youths be provided with jobs that are less predictable than flipping burgers at a fast-food restaurant, where the biggest risk is getting burned by the fryer.

If youths are relegated to fewer customer service and other menial and tedious service positions, and instead steered toward positions with real growth potential and some level of excitement, they may be less attracted to illicit hustles. Job programs targeting youths should be constructed around their skill sets and their long-term potential. Treating marginalized youths as equals in terms of pay and responsibility may provide them with feelings of mastery. For the most part, jobs programs such as Job Corps are designed for those with low skills sets, and these short-term programs do not elevate the status of young participants within the larger political economy. In fact, they are designed to keep youths occupied and out of trouble, instead of treating them as potential equals and even competitors in the workforce.

While some younger pimps fear the riskiness of digital communications, they are digital natives and thus more likely than their old-school counterparts to use cell phones, texting, online tools and social media sites in their work. In fact, in both licit and illicit markets, mastery of digital technology may give younger people an edge. Those seeking to provide licit employment avenues for young people should hone in on these skills. Young adult employment programs may also be useful, but again I think that a major revamping is necessary in order to appeal to youth and move them out of being disenfranchised due to age. Consideration also should be given to other at-risk statuses, such as gender, race and class.

The current approach to dealing with the sex trade involves criminal justice solutions such as lengthy prison sentences and sex offender registration. But incapacitation is not likely to reduce pimping or sex trafficking in dramatic ways. The roots of this problem lie in inequality,

and there is no shortage of disadvantaged people, especially considering the U.S. economic downturns of 2001 and 2008-2009, and the widening gap between the rich and the poor both domestically and internationally. The enormous amount of money spent on criminal trials and incarceration could be better spent bolstering equality and fostering more substantial and lasting opportunities for the growing number of marginalized people within the political economy.

Appendix A: Methodology

According to Anthony Giddens, a prominent risk theorist, “modernity is essentially a post-traditional order. The transformation of time and space, coupled with disembedding mechanisms, propels social life away from the hold of pre-established precepts and practices” (1991:20). Disembeddedness propels us to find creative solutions to survival. We must look past Maslow’s hierarchy of basic needs to the skills required to survive the chaos of a post-traditional order. Through this study, I sought to humanize members of a demonized population by contextualizing their accounts in light of this chaotic new order. This study is one of just a few where third parties’ perspectives are explored in their own right and beyond the confines of the sex trade. A detailed account of my research process will follow.

This study presents an empirical account of the work experiences of pimps from New York City, mostly from the El Barrio section of Harlem. The research sought to reveal how third parties perceive risk and the social processes born out of voluntary work-related risk-taking. It also sought to uncover connections between the rhetoric of risk (risk-taking, being viewed as risky, and being at-risk) and pimps’ talk of inclusion, exclusion, or simultaneous inclusion and exclusion. Third parties’ interdiscursive accounts revealed complexity in their relationships to sex workers, families, peers, and the institutions of school and work. The relevant underlying social processes included “doing difference,” where intersectionality shapes social interactions and where social processes such as “doing masculinity” are accomplished. This concept was extended to doing edgework differently or engaging in risk activities from the margins. Most studies about “doing difference” use ethnomethodological approaches to obtain socially embedded levels of information (see Messerschmidt, 1993). This approach was not possible, but

interviews were conducted *in situ* in Harlem housing projects, that is, in the participants' everyday context.

A social constructivist approach considers the process of meaning production as important as the meanings produced (Garfinkel, 1967). While this study did not explicitly use the interview site for meaning-making, this process naturally occurred. My research also was guided by humanistic and postmodern perspectives, which will be discussed in more detail.

Defining risk

Conceptualizations of risk vary. To understand how public discourse forms around risk, I relied on Douglas's cultural analysis of risk. Using a structuralist framework, Douglas analyzed the Western cultural role of and importance of risk. She theorized that the acquisition of risk knowledge is guided by cultural fears of danger and pollution. Riskiness is used as a concept for blaming and marginalizing others.

Beck's concept of the risk society explains our greater awareness of risk on a daily basis. In his conceptualization, risk is a danger or threat. It is never positive. Lupton (1999) challenged the universality in Beck's (1992) and Giddens's (1991) formulations of risk. She emphasizes that risk is interpreted differently based on race, class, and gender. We are not yet all on the same playing field of risk (despite looming threats to the human race and humanity). Being at-risk or experiencing double and triple marginalization shapes perceptions of and reactions to risk.

At the heart of the definition of risk is danger. This is affirmed by the Oxford Dictionary, where risk is defined as "a situation involving exposure to danger." I include the notion that exposure to risk can produce negative or positive feelings and outcomes. Embedded in risk experiences are key social processes linked to micro and structural levels.

Defining “doing difference”

The term “doing masculinity” or accomplishing gender through performative social interactions was theoretically expanded to “doing difference” (West & Fenstermaker, 1995). This theoretical extension includes intersectionality (race, class, and gender). Instead of accomplishing gender only, race and class also may be accomplished through social experiences. These intersections can move in tandem or in opposition. The expansion from doing masculinity to doing difference is a more holistic approach because different social processes (based on race, class, or gender) may be accomplished simultaneously. For purposes of this study, the concept of doing difference is key, as gender performativity cannot be divorced from race and class. This term also is applied to edgework, where social actors voluntarily engage in risk in search of positive feelings. The successful navigation of risk leads to feelings of control and mastery. Social actors approach and perceive these risk situations based on their intersectionalities of race, gender, and class. Further, the extent to which social actors are included in mainstream culture varies based on their socio-structural position, and so they perform edgework differently.

Study inclusion criteria

At the bare minimum, to qualify for this study participants had to have played an ancillary role in commercial sex, such as connecting sex workers and clients or providing resources and support (Over, 2002). The term “pimp” is a highly contested, racialized term, but many black males doing lower-echelon third-party work use this term. I used the term “pimp” during the recruitment process because the term “third party” is not commonly known among this population. Because of the pimp’s ubiquity in popular culture, the term means different things to different people. At times, the word created confusion among younger males who

interpreted “pimp” in many ways, including someone who has sex with a lot of women. Similarly, Staiger (2005) found that high school students often interpreted it as sexual prowess. In her study, African-American students also associated the term with manipulation and power. The term may represent all of these things, but alone they do not qualify as third-party labor. Davis (2012) wrote a piece about definitions of pimps drawing from cultural, popular, and scholarly sources. She determined that the new definition of a pimp should not include “personality descriptions or behavioral characteristics.” For the purpose of this study, I chose the definition of third party because of its inclusivity for many who may not identify as pimps, but who legally qualified as such.

Toward the end of the study, five female third parties were interviewed with the idea that their stories might be similar to males’ accounts, including gender performativity. The study did not find parallels to masculine expression among the female accounts; because this study focused on masculinity and crime (Messerschmidt, 1993; Presser, 2004), these cases were eliminated.

Recruitment and sampling strategy

Those working in illicit markets, such as pimps, are considered to be a hard-to-reach or hidden population (Curtis, 2010). Researchers, social scientists, and artists alike are aware that certain populations are difficult to locate. This difficulty is often related to social exclusion of the group, such as people who are homeless, HIV-positive, mentally ill, sex workers, criminal offenders, transgender, or members of any group that experiences social stigma. This creates methodological challenges to understanding more about their lived experiences (Atkinson & Flint, 2001). A strategy to respectfully access them is important. One route is through a trustworthy sponsor, or gatekeeper to a community. Fortuitously, I needed to have an industrial-sized air conditioner moved, and I asked a colleague if one of her clients (parolees and

probationers) would be interested in the job. My first sponsor was the person who moved my air conditioner. Bol Be was a former pimp who had grown up in a housing project where he socially networked with many pimps. He was willing to help me to gain access to this population. After working as my sponsor for several months, he violated parole and was sent back to prison.

Although I had a lot of contacts in the community, only one person struck me as the right person to rely on for continued access. Mista Warbux, one of the first people interviewed, was always hanging around, watching interviews, and asking questions about the progress of the study. He seemed to be a regular fixture in the community and appeared to have an extensive social network. Through his sponsorship, I was able to interview more than 50 additional participants.

Snowball sampling was the intended strategy for my study because it typically is used in non-probability fieldwork studies, particularly when participants are active offenders (Flick, 2009; Maxfield & Babbie, 2011). In this sampling technique, participants are found through a series of referrals. Specifically, initial research participants (or sponsors) refer similar participants. One limitation of snowball sampling is selection bias, because the pool of participants is derived through a few initial contacts or seeds. With this hard-to-reach population, my initial sponsors remained the primary sources of referral.

I was dependent upon my sponsors for entry to the primary research sites; they assuaged the fears of participants, easily recruited interview subjects, and provided informal security. My initial sponsors escorted me through security at different housing projects. Only residents or those with permission were allowed entrance, so I could not get into these courtyards without their help. When I moved to indoor spaces in winter, they were even more important, because they had to convince participants of their safety in going to off-site locations (nonprofit organizations).

While my sponsors were invested in getting the story of pimping out there, they also viewed their sponsorship as a job, and maybe as a hustle. Allowing others to provide referrals with a payment of \$10 sometimes created minor conflicts. To avoid disputes, I paid both the participant who made a referral and the sponsor. After a few uncomfortable situations, I decided that the traditional snowball technique was encumbering data collection, and I allowed my sponsors to be the sole recruiters.

The lack of a true snowball sampling may be viewed as a limitation to my study, because it potentially created an even more insular pool of participants. However, I am confident that this limitation was not too significant, since I was able to recruit subjects from several different housing projects. More importantly, there are advantages to using an *agora* sample, or a sample obtained from public space (A. Marcus & R. Curtis, personal communication, May 29, 2015). As previously mentioned, interviews took place in housing project courtyards that are akin to the “town square.” Residents and their friends and acquaintances socialize in these spaces. Participants witness the on-site interviews and ask about the study. This sampling technique may create a less insular sample as compared to a snowball sample that is based solely on referrals between people who know each other. Further, participants who are actively offending may feel more comfortable because they can see that other participants safely complete interviews without being arrested. Participants often asked one another, “How did it go?” They were able to gauge if interviewers were trustworthy.

The disadvantages of this technique are that participants may be uncomfortable with public interviews. In these cases, participants were interviewed in my sponsors’ apartments. Another disadvantage may be that participants embellish or alter their stories because they feel that others are watching or listening. Interviews took place in a quiet part of the courtyard and other

participants were not able to hear interviews, only watch them. This sample also was more diverse because participants were obtained through two different sponsors who knew different people. In addition, they often recruited people they did not know personally, and some participants were recruited at off-site locations (nonprofit organizations).

In all, 85 third parties were interviewed for this study, including 31 who were actively pimping. Most of the participants are racial minorities: African-American, (n=63, 74.1%); Latino (n=13, 25.3%); Other (n=9, 0.6%). The prevalence of African-American participants was higher than local demographics and the percentage of Latinos lower.¹² All participants are male. The average number of sex workers a third party “managed,” or worked with, was six. The average time spent doing third-party work was six years. Most third parties started this labor when they were young, with the average starting at age 17 (initial age ranged from 9 to 27). Because of recent changes in the sex market, such as sex trade negotiations moving from the street to indoors or online (Dank et al., 2014; Weitzer, 2009), I only included third parties who had worked in the last five years. Selecting this sub-sample of 56 third parties who had worked in the last five years was also important to understanding current conceptions of risk as it relates to labor. Most worked in the lower-tier market; that is, they worked in their own neighborhoods, with their friends, or with lower-end online customers and local sex workers.

After the first 20 interviews I engaged in theoretical sampling. These first interviews were mostly with retired pimps who often were local fixtures in the courtyards. I began to request interviews with actively working pimps and younger third parties. Actively working third parties provided more current accounts of work-related risk, which was an important component

¹² According to the Center for Urban Research’s analysis of Census data (<http://www.urbanresearchmaps.org/plurality>), Central Harlem South is 55% black, and Central Harlem North is 67% black.

of the study. After interviewing a few younger pimps, I realized that their accounts of third-party work and their perspectives of risk were distinct from those of older third parties. In addition, their performances of gender, race, and class were influenced by their status as youths. For these reasons, I requested interviews with third parties between the ages of 18 and 23. Throughout the analysis, comparisons between the young and old were made in order to understand crucial age-related differences.

The sub-sample of actively working pimps (n=31) was often younger (18 to 23 years old). This may be because the mid-career pimps felt that the \$30 being offered was not worth their time, or they were more actively involved in the work and did not have the free time to interview. The younger pimps worked more casually and sometimes part time, and the older pimps may have been winding down their activities in the sex trade.

Figure A.1 Housing project courtyard where *in situ* interviews took place



Figure A.2 Taino Towers



With the actively working third parties, this wide age span may have contributed to findings of age-based heterogeneity in their constructions of risk and embodied practices. Alternatively, the age divide may have allowed for a snapshot of how third parties' conceptualizations of work-practice and work-risk remain the same across generations and how the work and related risks may be changing.

In situ research sites

A majority of the interviews took place in open courtyards in three housing projects in East Harlem (see Figures A.1 and A.2).¹³ Many of the respondents were from these three housing projects and other low-income condos in East Harlem. East Harlem has one of the largest concentrations of low-income housing in the country and has more than 16 public housing developments with over 16,000 residents (NYC Public Housing Authority, 2011).

Most of the interviews took place in Taino Towers. During the summer months, the courtyard was active with children running around, young teens smoking marijuana and K2 (synthetic marijuana), older guys drinking, and many people socializing. Many of the interviews took place in the courtyard, which can be likened to the town square. Those who did not want to be visible were interviewed in my sponsor's mother's apartment in the Towers. I also used this location when it was raining or when gang-related shootings peaked.

Although this study was not ethnographic, *in situ* interviews were important for several reasons. First, the courtyards were hangout spots for former and current pimps, many of whom lived in the projects or nearby; therefore, these were natural settings. Second, the interview process was very visible; the courtyards could be seen by many residents. Potential participants observed my sponsors, whom they knew and trusted, and saw that there were no adverse effects to participating. These sites in the open field allayed participants' fears.

Similar to Venkatesh (2006) in his work on underground economies in Chicago Housing projects, I, as a researcher, got pulled into what felt like hustling and sometimes even being hustled. Unintentionally, my research operation may have mirrored illicit work or a hustle in a

¹³ During the very cold winter, interviewing outside became too hard, so two nonprofit organizations in Harlem allowed use of interview rooms. The first was Citicare, a health center, and the second was FACES, NY, formerly the Minority Task Force for the Prevention of HIV/AIDS.

few ways. First, I did not have explicit permission to conduct interviews in the courtyard. Second, a lot of money changed hands, because participants were paid \$30 per interview and sponsors were paid \$10 per referral. I carried several hundred dollars with me in order to pay everyone, as we generally conducted 10 to 12 interviews per visit. Third, the process of recruitment and payment involved multiple parties all working together in cautious ways. Fourth, my sponsors acted as informal security. Our work hierarchy in the open field involved a lot of caution, negotiations, and money changing hands, giving me the sensation of working in an informal economy. Our sponsors' primary work experiences were in various illicit markets, and they may have replicated these operations naturally. Also, this structure may have been more familiar and therefore comfortable for participants.

During the winter months, interviewing outside became unbearable, and I had to negotiate indoor interview sites. Accessing institutions is often a strategy for finding participants (Flick, 2009); however, I was concerned that institutional settings would deter active offenders. Two nonprofit organizations in Harlem agreed to allow me to use interview rooms in order to continue the project. The first was Citicare, a health center, and the second was FACES, NY, which was formerly the Minority Task Force for the Prevention of HIV/AIDS. Both organizations hoped that participants would be interested in their free and low-cost services. At the Citicare site, the interview rooms were located on an unoccupied floor. There was little furniture and wires hung from the ceilings. Some participants were fearful that it was a sting operation. Despite this, both settings were more formal than the courtyards, as these organizations were in operation during the interviews. My sponsor did not seem to have difficulty recruiting participants. In fact, crowds of young third parties waited in conference rooms or other lobby areas. They sometimes became disruptive. These sites were probably less

comfortable for participants, and this may be why they “acted out” more indoors than in the open field.

Interviews

The interviews were semi-structured, each lasting from 30 to 90 minutes.¹⁴ Semi-structured interviews allowed for asking predetermined questions in a systematic order, but had flexibility, permitting me to digress and probe far beyond the standardized questions (see Berg, 1998). Unscheduled probes are crucial particularly with a group, such as pimps, that has rarely been interviewed. It allows for a more organic interaction and a more natural exploration of accounts of their lived experiences.

Interviews are often described as conversations with a purpose (Berg, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1980). Researchers and participants are the main instruments for collecting data, so neutrality is not an option (Maxwell & Miller, 2008). The interview process is undeniably active, as both parties are engaged in a meaning-making process, and so the interviews should be interpreted in context (see Holstein & Gubrium, 1995). Unfortunately, participant observation was not possible, so the accounts are the primary data source. Because many of these third parties work in their communities, interviews took place near their homes, with their friends nearby in the courtyards, and this allowed me a glimpse into some aspects of their everyday lives.

The interview guide focused on everyday third-party labor. In an effort to capture socially embedded accounts, participants were asked to produce a visual/verbal display of pimping in everyday life. Participants were asked to draw a map (using paper and pen) and use it to explain

¹⁴ Interviews were confidential and tape-recorded; verbal consent was given for participation. Participants were warned about the potential risks and benefits of participating in this study.

their everyday labor experiences in New York City's urban space. This map-making technique was a vehicle to evoke socially embedded accounts of routines in their third-party work. Situated social interactions often dominated these accounts. In the meantime, it also helped to build rapport. Questions were asked about interactions and business practices with sex workers, police, other pimps, and customers (see Interview Questions, Subparts I, III) to elicit stories where structured action could be located. Also, questions were asked to elicit discussions of interactions in other formal social spheres, such as school and licit work (see Interview Questions Subparts II, IV, V). Questions about other contexts were specifically included in order to understand substantive differences or contradictions in accounts of structured action. Also, questions about licit worlds were used in order to understand if and how third parties conceptualize social and economic borders.

The initial interview guide was piloted based on an interview with an actively working third party, JoJo, 38. For nearly 20 years, JoJo worked on and off in the sex market in New York City. His interview lasted two hours. JoJo provided valuable feedback about question content, how questions were formulated, and whether important questions were missing. Interview questions were revised according to his comments.

Theoretical framework and interviews and analysis

In this analysis, I applied various sociological risk paradigms to interpret aspects of third parties and third-party work. With a postmodern approach, I was acutely aware of the power differentials between me and my participants. I was reflexive about my own subjectivity as a white, gender-fluid, homosexual female posing sensitive questions to mostly minority males. The second researcher was a Swedish-born artist whose gender expression is normative, but she is also a homosexual woman (although not necessarily interpreted that way). We may have felt

vulnerable in interviews because of gender and sexuality differences, but we were quite aware that we mostly had the upper hand in these social dynamics. Even though this population does not qualify as vulnerable based on Institutional Review Board (IRB) criteria, their at-risk status in terms of race, ethnicity, age, and poverty was evident.

Inevitably, meaning-making occurred in interactions with us. Third parties had mixed responses to me, with some wondering if I was interested in third-party work and others mentioning queer bottoms, sex workers, and same-sex activities that their workers were willing to perform. Unlike the second interviewer, I was not asked to engage in sex work or to have sexual relationships. While most interviewees seemed eager to tell us about their work, they tried to assess our interest in the work and in them. This shaped their storytelling. Aside from the core questions, our interviews had distinct storytelling lines and wildly different spontaneous probes from participants and ourselves. We both tried to remain neutral while the interview participants tried to gauge our “real” intentions. We did encounter some stories that were disparaging to women or revealed physical or sexual violence toward sex workers. These stories were very difficult to hear. Some accounts were about male subjugation of women, but many more reflected the collective pain of acute poverty and difficult circumstances. As a means of processing and tracking these experiences, my research assistant and I tape-recorded our conversations after each time in the field. These conversations, which lasted between one and two hours, allowed us to psychologically process upsetting stories, but also to see how they fit into the emerging themes.

A purist postmodern approach would be that all realities portrayed are my own. Yet I am skeptical that the findings of this study are merely reflections of my reality, which would then be interpreted by readers in wholly distinct ways. Many of the questions were about the nuts and

bolts of the business, so some chapters, such as Chapter 4, have more of a critical realist approach (Maxwell, 2009). Chapters 3 and 5 were guided by social constructivism, but I approached these from an impure post-modern perspective; I do not believe they are entirely my constructions. The analytic purpose of these chapters was to challenge theory and to theoretically extend or refine existing theory (Snow et al., 2003) through third-party accounts. Existing approaches toward the “excluded” rely on subcultural theory and depend on the firm boundaries between dual cities to illustrate an unshakeable exclusion. Through these accounts, those theoretical ideas were both affirmed and challenged. This signified the need to understand participants’ feelings of inclusion/exclusion regarding mainstream culture as changeable within single accounts and also from a more global vantage point. I further added to existing scholarly work redefining edgework. Edgework is not only accomplished through high-risk sports, but also through crime. Additionally, intersectionality, or difference, creates a distinct brand of edgework. In sum, how third parties talked about boundaries (included/excluded) and edges (life/death and order/chaos) were analyzed, but with the idea that participants had flexible perspectives and selves. I expected interdiscursivity in line with postmodernist theories. I approached their stories using a humanistic perspective in which I assumed that, like most people, third parties sought self-actualization. Within this illicit economic market, and through third-party labor, they were able to usurp power and control. At times, they recounted personal change and actualization through created fantasy worlds and constructed fantastical selves that could be seen as self-actualizing.

My initial approach with the data analysis was to use Doucet and Mauthner’s (2008) *Listening Guide*. These authors outline a flexible yet rigorous approach for analyzing accounts.

This approach allowed for multiple readings of interview transcripts and a multiphase technique. Each interview was analyzed using this technique.

First, interviews were analyzed for a basic grounded theory question — “What is happening here?” — with a focus on a recurrence in themes, storylines, etc. This phase also involved reflexivity, where participants’ words were in one column and my responses to those words were in another. Second, transcripts were analyzed for how third parties speak about themselves and the contours of their social worlds. The places where participants shift between “I,” “we,” “you,” and “it” were analyzed for shifts in the meaning of perceptions of self. Essentially, this is where third parties were discussing who they “believe they are.” The accounts were analyzed for phases of becoming through “doing difference.” Next, I read through the interview transcripts for patterns in social networks and close relationships. “Narrated subjects are understood as intrinsically relational and as part of networks of self-in-relation” (Somers 1994 as cited in Doucet & Mauthner, 2008: 406). Last, accounts were scrutinized for structured power relations. This is where micro narratives link to macro processes and structures.

After this I selected sensitizing concepts or general guides (Blumer, 1954) of risk and “doing difference.” Accounts were analyzed to draw out these intersections. Transcripts were evaluated for participants’ orientation (normative or oppositional), and for contradictions in single narratives. Contradictions were pronounced when third parties’ traversed social contexts. Intersectionality or social structural positions became more salient. An example is when a young third party discussed his daytime hours taking college courses and his nighttime hours pimping. Sometimes different versions of the self, from different positions, were introduced. I also looked for thematic similarities (see Doucet & Mauthner, 2008; Maxwell & Miller, 2008), which is a standard qualitative approach (see Glaser & Strauss, 2009). For many there was continuity.

Using the same example, many third parties who traversed supposedly dual worlds went from a business self in the day to a business self at night. Many even blurred boundaries and did third-party work at school, using information from school to improve their illicit businesses. With this type of narrative, the idea of dual worlds collapses.

Trustworthiness, rigor, and limitations

There are a number of ways to ensure quality and rigor in analysis or interpretations of qualitative interviews. I have an extensive log of data, including field notes and memos that make up my *audit trail*. The audit trail is not only a document of decisions; it is also important to ensure the trustworthiness of the research (Bowen, 2008). First, I took extensive field notes after every session in the field. Next, I listened to the interview again and wrote memos. Some types of memos are operational, about coding decisions, or analytic (Birks, Chapman, & Francis, 2008). All three types of memos can occur during fieldwork, but the latter two are used after data collection. Field decisions can change based on memos and relevant new avenues explored along with analytic decisions that are guided by the data. Data was transcribed by four master's degree students from John Jay College's forensic psychology program who have undergone CITI training. The remaining interviews were transcribed by a professional using a grant award from the Doctoral Student Grant Award Program #8. I read through transcriptions and checked them for accuracy. I managed my audit trail using ATLAS.ti 7. Generally, with qualitative data collection it is crucial to have a transparent record to trace your research process.

According to Egon Guba (1981), in naturalist as opposed to rationalistic enquiry, *member checks* are the best way to establish *truth value*, or confidence in the "truth" of the findings in a particular context. Member checks involved discussing concepts with a few "insiders" or

members of the group, to verify that key themes are relevant. My key themes were discussed, and to a degree verified, using member checks. Two pimps — one current and one former — who participated in the study provided extensive comments on themes.

The sampling strategy was not random, and the findings are not generalizable. In naturalistic inquiry, applicability or transferability (see Guba, 1981) occurs when working hypotheses transfer from one context to another. In order for this to be possible, *thick description*, which is rich observation, must be obtained from both contexts. This current study focuses only on pimps in New York City (many were from El Barrio, West Harlem, and the Bronx), but the level of analysis allows for subsequent researchers to test the transferability of the hypotheses formed by carrying out a similar study in another setting.

The consistency or stability of results in a naturalistic inquiry is viewed differently, as naturalists believe in multiple realities. Instead of interpreting inconsistency as error, I expected “contradictions” in identity constructions across contexts. Scholars with more traditional perspectives on criminal narratives are highly concerned about offenders lying. They are worried about being duped and view this as the biggest detriment to qualitative interviewing. I was more interested in how stories are constructed and the multiple realities held by the participants. However, stories that were overly vague or where factual information did not add up were eliminated. Toward the end of the study, a few participants tried to interview twice with different stories, and they were eliminated from the final sample.

The interview guide may have contributed to interdiscursive accounts because of questions about both the third parties’ illicit work and their experiences outside of crime. The interview guide may have conjured micro-macro tensions. Often, accounts of doing race and class were from oppositional positions and connected to third parties’ socio-structural positions.

In contrast, accounts of doing gender relied more on hegemonic talk, where power was garnered on more local levels. These two lines of questioning may have unwittingly drawn out the tensions between being both included and excluded from mainstream cultural ideologies, thereby producing more bilingual narratives.

Accounts may appear to contradict one another and contradictions may occur within single narratives (Sandberg, 2009). In part, this is because the interview setting, including researchers, influences the accounts. More importantly, these contradictions reflect larger cultural discourses (Sandberg, 2009). Being both included and excluded in the mainstream may produce what appear to be confused accounts. But this confusion may simply reflect postmodern, schizophrenic-like renderings induced by the contradictions of living in a globalized and unequal social world.

Neutrality, as opposed to objectivity, is obtained not by scrutinizing the certifiability of the investigator, but rather by establishing the confirmability of the data generated (Guba, 1981). Testing the confirmability of the data is done through member checks and the ability to transfer findings to another context.

Lastly, reliability in qualitative research relies on internal and external consistency. Internal consistency was achieved by asking the same key questions and relevant probes across interviews. However, probes varied based upon the dialogue, because unscheduled probes allow for the spontaneity necessary to hold more natural conversations (Berg, 1998). In addition, I consistently looked for sensitizing concepts across interviews. External consistency is accomplished by considering “rival explanations” of the data during analysis (Patton, 1990:462). Negative cases or cases that did not fit the tested theories were used to challenge analysis and reframe theories (Buroway, 1998). While internal consistency is achieved by consistently

looking for sensitizing concepts in narratives, external consistency is achieved by considering other possibilities.

My concern involved the validity of third parties' self-descriptions. I assumed that third parties would prettify their accounts of pimping, but many openly discussed their failures as third parties, ranging from the inability to manage sex workers to making meager amounts of money. Further, unexpected common themes and parallel facts emerged in strangers' accounts.¹⁵ At around interview 70, theoretical saturation was achieved. I began to hear the same stories repeating, and I could almost predict where stories would lead. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), this is when you can conclude your study. I continued to be sure. Unfortunately, little guidance is available to establish when theoretical saturation is achieved (Bowen, 2008). My analysis focuses on those common themes.

Informed consent and risk benefits

Interviews were confidential and tape-recorded, and verbal consent was given for participation. I received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for participants in the study to waive written documentation of their informed consent/assent, because the main threat to these participants would be the existence of written documentation of their participation in the study. There are no identifiers, and participants gave pseudonyms. Participants were warned about the potential risks and benefits of participation (see Appendix C).

¹⁵ See Glaser and Strauss (1967) on grounded theory techniques to identify saturated themes.

Positionality and official and unofficial worlds

In *Rabelais and His World*, Bakhtin describes the concept of *carnivalesque*, which he characterizes as a world turned upside down or inside out. In Bakhtin's critical analysis of Rabelais, he deconstructs the idea of carnival folk culture derived in medieval carnivals and antiquated marketplaces. He characterizes this culture as "an escape from the usual official way of life" (1984:7-8). Worlds turned upside down appear chaotic and without rules or boundaries. These unofficial ways of life may be right side up for their inhabitants, but this social chaos makes the carnival confusing to outsiders.

Often outsiders construct the social worlds of sex markets as morally questionable and destructive. Yet in the sex trade, schoolyard peers can be pimps, boyfriends can be daddies, strangers can be mommies, wealthy clients can be beggars, and social networks can equal orgies or dollar signs. Many of us unknowingly inhabit worlds turned upside down, but because of the illegality of exchange/benefit (through money or resources) for sex in these markets, some outsiders perceive this carnival as a place where moral realms are distorted and even perverted.

In Mike Presdee's (2000) book *Cultural Criminology and the Carnival of Crime*, he establishes links between Bakhtin's carnival and modern-day crime. Presdee focuses on how sensations from carnival folk culture manifest in contemporary events such as large-scale joyriding or riots. He explains that people no longer receive the temporary relief from life found at the carnival, so chaos can simply erupt. I argue that this metaphor can be applied to loosely regulated, illicit markets. In fact, there are neater links between Bakhtin's carnival folk culture of antiquated marketplaces and modern-day sex markets.

The metaphor of the carnival conjures the notion of dual cities (e.g., Bauman, 1998) that is sometimes used by subcultural theorists (e.g., Anderson, 2000) and reflected in fictional works such as China Melville's book *The City & The City*, where two cities are superimposed. Dual cities often are used to draw lines of inclusion/exclusion, to explore the process of othering, or at worst to illustrate how exotic "subterranean worlds" can be. Because of this latter use of the dual worlds notion, I was reluctant to employ the concept of the carnival. But as a researcher, I found the concept useful in order to keep boundaries between unofficial and official worlds intact. Everyone has the potential to be included in both worlds and to move freely between them. While doing fieldwork, I kept a foot in each.

Presdee rightly reminds us that some "pleasurable" performances in the carnival reflect on or articulate pain (2000:32). My use of the carnival to contextualize my research in the sex market is not used playfully. Rather, I used it to illustrate how happenings in the carnival are ethically/morally acceptable in context, making my decisions in the research process more difficult.

Involvement and emotional entanglement is integral to good ethnographic fieldwork and *in situ* research. But I contend it may be important to keep a foot in the official world rather than completely immersing oneself in a subculture, especially when researching potentially dangerous and vulnerable populations. There are possible academic and legal ramifications when one becomes immersed in subcultures involved in illegal activities. While Bakhtin's world turned upside down may not always apply, the concept of official/unofficial worlds is useful. I utilized the concept of a world turned upside down as a device to help me remain open to understanding

what is normal within that upside-down world, and to help me make real connections with participants, even with one foot outside their subculture.

Ethical considerations and the worlds

It is essential to have an ethical framework when engaging in qualitative research. My interactions with human subjects, informed consent, privacy, and confidentiality were approved by the IRB and the risks and benefits of the study are described in the consent form (see Appendix C). Many of my participants were active offenders, and ensuring their protection and privacy was of utmost concern. For this reason, I asked for no identifying information, including the names of sex workers, and only required verbal consent. This project did not involve participant observation; therefore, I did not witness interactions between pimps and sex workers where ethical issues such as violence or underage sex workers may have arisen. In this world turned upside down, straddling the unofficial and official worlds sometimes posed ethical problems. Mista Warbux talked about his biological father and stepfather both pimping. At the time of the interview, he was well into adulthood, but he described hanging around sex workers from the time he was 8 years old and being more “ardent” about pimping around age 13. The theme of families selling sex and encouraging and sometimes requiring young male family members to pimp was typical. Teenagers who live in families where this business exists are often employed by their legal guardians and are expected to carry on the family legacy.

Some participants, such as Daryl and Dantes, may have recently qualified as labor trafficked based on the U.N. definition. Some family-based operations were coercive, and participants, such as Dantes, were given something akin to a masculinity test. I indirectly probed Dantes about “the test” to see if he felt coerced into the work. Despite his coerced initiation, he described learning the family trade and indicated he was happy that he had found a way to be

financially solvent. I was more concerned about Daryl (now in his late teens) and the other similar cases where coercion was still possible. Early in the interview, it was unclear if Daryl had been forced to work for his family. To understand the scenario fully, I probed in different ways about his willingness to work. He eventually admitted that he could quit, but he felt he needed the money.

For most people, these scenarios do not qualify as ethical dilemmas, because of how we construct male sexuality and agency, even for teenagers. If you replace the young family member with a young female who is forced or coerced into selling sex or even pimping as part of a family business, this readily would be viewed as a human trafficking case. In the cases of underage boys being recruited into a family sex-work business, what constitutes an ethical problem? Official cultural rules were not violated. This distinction brings up who is more readily categorized as a trafficking victim, despite legal definitions. This is a murky area because of how agency is constructed based on gender and the lived realities of males and females. However, while a call about the potential of labor trafficking to social services, a nonprofit that serves victims, or a law enforcement agency might have been received as a prank, I was left with the moral dilemma of having no options (if needed) and plenty of questions about the construction of ethics around teenage males.

Young people are constrained by the formal sector and therefore denied tools for basic survival. The sad, paradoxical reality may be that families who provide transferable skills to enable their children to achieve economic solvency are often the only people around to play the part of heroes and heroines in the “world turned upside down.”

The scenario of similarly disenfranchised youths banding together to sell sex was another recurrent theme. This was illustrated in the case of Mike J, who met his first sex worker at a local

shelter for runaway teens called Safe Horizons, where they were both getting a free meal. They hatched a plan to sell sex.

While vulnerable youths such as homeless teens are sometimes targeted to be sex workers, their pimps can be in similarly dire situations. The collaborative efforts of at-risk teens to sell sex may begin with coercion and segue into a mutual agreement; sometimes an arrangement that is viewed as coercion is the start of an entrepreneurial dyad. More typically, both teens are at-risk. While constrained agency is easy to ascribe to females, it is easier to assume that young males are acting by choice when they participate as third parties. Mike J was living in an abandoned building and still getting free meals in local youth shelters. I asked Mike J if he needed help connecting to any other services, and he shrugged this off by telling me that he was fine. If Mike J were female, or even a female pimp, I probably would have been more persistent in helping him to connect with services. My own gender biases got in the way.

As previously mentioned, I heard stories of incidents that sounded like sexual assault, where participants used language such as, “We ran a train on her.” With a concern about ongoing victimization where reporting is necessary, I probed further (with a foot in the official world). Interview subjects always made a point of saying that it was “not rape,” or at least they did not think it was. These types of stories were more prevalent among the young survey subjects.

This study is largely social constructivist, so the renditions of teen and young adult orgies as carnivalesque zones are aligned with their renderings. I tried to keep one foot in the unofficial world to produce a more accurate portrait of their perspectives. However, these types of accounts demonstrate the possibility of carnivalesque zones being more like horror zones for young females. The perspectives of young sex workers involved in these sex parties, and whether their participation is voluntary, should be researched further. A more holistic account is called for.

Another issue was rampant drug use. Many of the young pimps smoked blunts or joints during interviews. Others came to the interviews clearly high on marijuana or admitted to recently using other drugs, such as K2, cocaine, or ecstasy. Marijuana use is socially acceptable among this population. This mirrors the current national climate, with legalization occurring in many U.S. states. On several occasions I was asked to partake, but I declined. Sometimes participants were offended or self-conscious. I allayed their fears and explained that I could not use marijuana for medical reasons. After long interviews in the cold weather, I invited my sponsor to lunch with a friend of his who was another participant in the study. This participant was young, and a similarly aged friend of his followed us. His friend sat down near us; he was high (or rolling on ecstasy, E). He made quite a scene in the restaurant and was sexually harassing the other interviewer. I knew that my sponsor would be embarrassed or offended if I left, so we stayed. In these situations, I put myself in potential danger of arrest, and in the case of the restaurant, I put an interviewer in an uncomfortable situation. I accepted these risks with the knowledge of being in a world turned upside down. Sometimes both of my feet strayed into the unofficial world in order to sustain the research.

Interviewers face common ethical dilemmas that often can be foreseen and averted, but there are ethical problems that develop where fieldworkers have little control. Blind spots inherent in this type of research make it difficult for ethnographers to prepare for diverse problems such as handling the researcher-participant relationship; maintaining anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy; and guarding participants against exploitation (Dunlap, Johnson, & Randolph, 2009; Goodwin, Pope, Mort, & Smith, 2003; Sandberg & Copes, 2013; Scheyvens & Leslie, 2000).

Often, unanticipated ethical dilemmas are tied to the specific context of the situation at hand and therefore must be resolved on a case-by-case basis. How dilemmas are perceived and dealt with depends on the larger research setting and also influences the reciprocal process through which fieldworkers and participants shape the data together (Ferdinand, Pearson, Row, & Worthington, 2007; Goodwin et al., 2003). While out in the field, ethnographers typically are left on their own to make *standing decisions*; that is, “to develop a plan so they can act more quickly and more effectively when problems emerge” (Sandberg & Copes, 2013:177).

My approach to fieldwork with third parties was to have a foot in both worlds, allowing for *intersubjectivity* or a bridge between the personal and the shared. This approach diverges from the populist manifesto of total immersion, where fieldwork and life are intertwined but where everything is “right side up” and in the same world. I do not advocate for this two-world approach with all types of populations, or even when doing research with other participants in the sex marketplace. Ideologically, I believe that fieldwork and life should be merged when possible. However, flexibility is required when doing research with a population that is vulnerable because of official-world constraints and official discourse that socially constructs their lives. Using this method of having a foot in each world was an important device to research a demonized world-upside-down and document lived accounts from inside it.

Procedures for content analysis of U.S. news articles

In Chapter 2, I used a different data source and procedures. In an effort to understand how the U.S. news media portray the domestic human sex trafficking problem in terms of who is at-risk and who is risky, I analyzed U.S. news articles. First, I conducted a content analysis on a probability sample of U.S. news articles published from August 1, 2013, to August 1, 2014. To

create the population of articles, the keywords “pimp,” “sex trafficker,” “pimping” and “sex trafficking” were used as search terms in LexisNexis, with 2,166 results. In order to include only articles that actually described the phenomenon, I eliminated 699 duplicate and irrelevant articles. (Irrelevant articles are defined as those articles using the terms metaphorically or in other non-substantive ways, and those articles about artistic depictions of pimps or traffickers.) This procedure left a population of n=1,467 articles, which is a reasonable count of all the U.S. newspaper articles about these phenomena that year.

A random sample of 209 articles was selected from this population so that analyses of this probability sample could be generalized to the population of 1,467 articles with a margin of error of 6.26%. A random number generator was used to derive the sample of 209 articles so that each article had an equal probability of being selected. This procedure ensures that the sample is representative within the above margin of error (see Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 2014; Lovejoy, Watson, Lacy, & Riffe, 2014; Mastro & Stern, 2003; Neuendorf, 2002).¹⁶

Then I used frame analysis (see Entman, 1993; Entman & Rojecki, 1993) to examine news media risk frames and how this connected to proposed policies. Several news articles were analyzed for how authors portray 1) the definition of the problem; 2) the causes and diagnosis, including who is at-risk, and who is risky and in what way; and 3) suggested remedies (see Entman, 1993; Entman & Rojecki, 1993). Discursive framing involves “selecting some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment

¹⁶ Here are a few related events overrepresented in the LexisNexis article data: the FBI’s Operation Cross Country (an annual law enforcement sweep to arrest sex traffickers in multiple U.S. cities), the Super Bowl (thought to create a demand for prostitution), and controversy about “unaccompanied” children crossing the U.S.-Mexico border.

recommendation (Entman, 1993:52). Further, frames are defined not only by what they include but also by what they omit or repress (Pajnik, 2010).

Appendix B: Sample Characteristics

Table A.B.1

Sample Characteristics

***n* = 85**

Variable	Present N	(% known)	(%total)
<i>Gender</i>			
<i>Male</i>	85	100	
<hr/>			
<i>Race</i>			
<i>Black</i>	63		74.1
<i>Latino</i>	15		15.3
<i>Other</i>	9		10.6
<hr/>			
<i>Current Age</i>			
<i>Younger pimps (18-23)</i>	40		55.6
<i>Older pimps (24-67)</i>	32		44.4
Mean			28
Median			23
Mode			21
Range			18-67
<hr/>			
<i>Age Started</i>			
Mean	81	95.3	
Median			17
Mode			15
Range			9-37
<hr/>			
<i>Number of Workers</i>			
Mean	82	96.5	
Median			4
Mode			3
Range			1-63
<hr/>			
<i>Length of Time worked</i>			
Mean	82	96.5	
Median			4
Mode			2
Range			1-30
<hr/>			
<i>Work Status</i>			
Currently pimping	40		48.2
Pimped in last 5 yrs.	56		65.9
No longer pimping	43		51.8

Appendix C: Study Materials

Interview Questions

Introduction: I would like to ask you a few questions about your life. The purpose of these questions is to learn about you and the people in your life and understand your job and how you became involved in the sex industry. If you find any of these questions too personal, just let me know and we can skip it. You can end this interview at any time.

First, I would like to ask you some questions about what you do at work on a daily basis.

I. The Nature of Your Work

- a. How long have you been working as a pimp?
- b. Tell me about a typical day at work. Draw a map on this piece of paper showing what the area where you work looks like and how you use this space on a daily basis. (Do not write down any identifying information.)
- c. How many workers do you have?
- d. How do you find/recruit workers?
- e. Do you connect them to clients? If yes, how?
- f. Do you keep track of where they are with clients? If yes, how?
- g. What kind of competition is there between pimps over workers?
- h. On average, how much money do you make per week?
- i. What type of pimp are you?
- j. What strategies do you use to make sure that business runs smoothly?
- k. What do you like or dislike about your work?

Now, I would like to ask you some questions about how you got started in the business. If you find any of these questions uncomfortable or too personal, we can skip them.

II. Entry Point

- a. How did you start working as a pimp?
- b. What were you doing before you started this?
- c. What type of community did you grow up in?
- d. Do you think that working as a pimp changed you in any way?

- e.* How does it compare with other changes that you have experienced?

Now, I would like to ask you some questions about relationships. If you find any of these questions uncomfortable or too personal, we can skip them.

III. Perceptions about Interactions

- a.* How well did you know your first turn-out before she started working for you?
- b.* Where did you meet her?
- c.* Why do you think she decided to work for you?
- d.* How did you negotiate money with her?
- e.* Did you have any conflicts with her?
- f.* Do you have sexual/romantic relationships with your other workers?
- g.* Why do you think your other workers continue to work for you?
- h.* How do you decide how much workers cost and earn?
- i.* How do the women who work for you get along?
- j.* How do you think the women who work with you feel about you?

I would like to ask you some questions about your work history. If you want to take a break or any of the questions are too personal, just let me know. You can skip any questions you don't want to answer.

IV. The Career Arc

- a.* Is this your only source of income?
- b.* How do you feel about the people you have worked for in the past?
- c.* Do you think you were a good employee?
- d.* If you worked for other people in the past, why did you stop?
- e.* What are some differences between your previous work and what you do now?
- f.* If you weren't doing this, what do you think you would be doing?

The next set of questions is about your point of view. How you see yourself and how other people see you. If any of these questions make you uncomfortable, feel free to tell me and we can skip the question.

V. Perceptions about Interactions in the Non-Criminal Context

- a. Describe your first relationship.
- b. How did it start? Can you describe her?
- c. If you are currently in a relationship, describe it?
- d. How do you think your girlfriend/spouse would describe your relationship?
- e. What do you have in common with him or her?
- f. How are you different?
- g. What are your biggest strengths/weaknesses?

The next set of questions is about people that you know in different areas in your life. If any of these questions make you uncomfortable, feel free to tell me and we can skip the question. Please take out your cell phone. We are not going to ask for any names and phone numbers.

VI. People in Your Network

- a. Look at the first number in your phone. Describe your relationship to this person.
- b. Look at the second number in your phone. Describe your relationship to this person.
- c. Look at the third number in your phone. Describe your relationship to this person.
- d. Look at the fourth number in your phone. Describe your relationship to this person.
- e. Look at the fifth number in your phone. Describe your relationship to this person.
- f. Look at the last number in your phone. Describe your relationship to this person.

Thank you for sharing your views and answering these questions. Before I end this interview, is there anything I didn't ask you about your work or life that you think I should know?

Thank you again for your time and participation.

Consent Form

A. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

You are invited to help us do a study of men who work as pimps, or people who manage sex workers and make a profit. We are interviewing 30 people involved in this kind of work. The information I will give you can help you make a good choice about joining or not joining the study. We hope that the information we collect will help people understand more about your job.

You are invited to be part of this study because you said that you manage sex workers and profit from this and you are 18 years of age or older. This study is being done by researchers from John Jay College.

B. PROCEDURES

If you agree to take part, you will participate in a 60-minute interview about your work and other areas of your life. We will ask you if you are willing to have your interview audio recorded. If you are not, then the interviewer can take written notes instead. Once you have agreed to the interview, you may refuse to answer any questions at any time for any reason. If you refuse to answer questions or do not want to participate any further, you will not be penalized in any way.

As part of the informed consent process, the researchers will ask prospective research subjects to give permission to: 1) conduct the interview, and 2) audio record the interview. If subjects give permission to conduct the interview, but not audio record it, the researchers will gain permission to manually take notes before proceeding.

C. RISKS

There are minimal risks from being in this study, but our interview may cause you some stress. Remember, you are free to not answer any questions or stop the interview at any time. All the answers you give will be kept private and confidential.

D. BENEFITS

A benefit is that this study will help people learn more about your life and your job.

E. COMPENSATION

You will be paid \$30 for your time in answering questions.

If you agree to participate in helping the project recruit additional people to interview, you will be paid \$10 for each eligible person that you recruit who completes the interview.

F. PERSONS TO CONTACT

This study is run by Ric Curtis, a professor at John Jay College. His phone number is (212) 237-8962. You may call him with any questions about your participation.

If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant that have not been answered by the researcher, you may contact Dr. Kucharski, the chairman of the John Jay College Institutional Review Board, at (212) 237-8961.

G. PRIVACY STATEMENT

Your participation in this study is anonymous. Only a number will be attached to your responses. No one except the study staff at John Jay College will have access to anything you tell us. The report on our findings will not be written in a way that would let someone who reads it figure out who you are.

While your responses are confidential, there is a very slight chance that an unauthorized person may get access to them. To prevent this from happening, you will not be asked to give your name or the names of persons you know to any member of the study team. The audio recording or the notes from the interview will be kept in a locked file cabinet at the study office, to which only specific study staff will have access. All information from the study will be destroyed in 5 years.

H. VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL STATEMENT

This study is VOLUNTARY. You are not giving up any legal claims or rights because of your participation in this study. If you do join, you are free to quit at any time.

I. AGREEMENT Are you willing to be in this study?

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