

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY SAN MARCOS

THESIS SIGNATURE PAGE

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

MASTER OF ARTS

IN

SOCIOLOGICAL PRACTICE

THESIS TITLE: "Testing Nuts": Masculinity in Gang Culture

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DATE OF SUCCESSFUL DEFENSE: May 2, 2017

THE THESIS HAS BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE THESIS COMMITTEE IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN
SOCIOLOGICAL PRACTICE.

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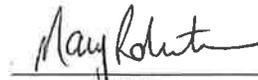
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“Testing Nuts”: Masculinity in Gang Culture

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Acknowledgments

Primero quiero dedicar este proyecto a mi madre, padre, y hermana. Má, Pá, y Jessica gracias por siempre apoyarme y ayudarme desde el primer día que empecé el colegio para cumplir mi sueño. Juntos logramos las metas que he recibido desde el BA en Criminología Estudios de Justicia hasta ahora el regalo más grande que hemos recibido la Maestría en el programa “Sociological Practice”. Los quiero mucho y sin ustedes esto no fuera posible.

To the rest of my family and family friends thank you for always supporting me through my educational journey as an undergraduate and graduate student. Much love to you all and thank you for always being by my side since day one.

Professor Bickel, thank you for always keep it real and being humble since the first day you began to teach as a professor at this university. Continue to encourage students to further their education just how you influenced me to pursue graduate school. Much love and respect my brother it was an honor having you as a mentor through undergrad, grad school, and for always believing in me.

Professor Bates, thank you for the guidance you provided in completing this research project and for always being a great professor with an awesome sense of humor.

Professor Robertson, thank you as well for mentoring me through this project with great ideas and feedbacks. Thank you for believing in me when you asked me to present in your undergraduate class and continue being an awesome professor.

Professor Glover, thank you for being an awesome professor and the first professor in reaching out to me to pursue graduate school. I always rejected your encouragement, but in the end I appreciate the fact that you believed in me in attending grad school and I succeeded. Continue to empower students in pursuing graduate school just how you believed in me.

Professor Poole, thank you for always being supportive and an awesome professor since the first day I met you. I appreciate for always believing in me and the guidance you provided.

Professor Santos, thank you for introducing me to the positive power the unity clap delivers and for having your classes in a circle, which had a powerful impact on me. I appreciate that you always had guest speakers come to speak to our class and having them teach us important knowledge. You're an awesome professor and continue making your classes an empowering space just how it had a powerful influence on me.

Bickel, Bates, Robertson, Poole, Glover, and Santos I will always have love and respect towards you all. All of you were my favorite and are the best professors. Each of you helped me grow and develop into a great scholar.

To Arnold, Jen, Maria, Dawn, Travis, Roxanne, Jordan, Aida, Shane, Guillermo, Denise and Blanca you were all an outstanding cohort. Much love and respect to you all and best of luck in the careers the future will bring you all.

To my participants thank you for participating in this research your voices were acknowledged in developing this project. Your voices gave a light in the importance of understanding the marginalization that occurs in communities of color.

Abstract:

This ethnographic study examines how young Latino men in lower income communities navigate their masculinity through gangs. This was a qualitative study that consisted of seven participants who affiliated with the Emiliano Zapata Gang and the data was collected through face to face interviews, to understand their perspective of masculinity and how it influences them. Through my participant's answers and previous research, I was able to identify issues that have led individuals to use their masculinity as a tool to shape the development of street gangs. We continue to stigmatize these young men who are involved in gangs without knowing the real answer to why the cycle of gangs expressing their masculinity in the communities continues. My research presents that gender is a key issue as to why the reproduction of masculinity is heavily produced among young men and that leads them to find alternative ways such as gangs to increase their masculinity.

Key Words: Gender, Hegemonic masculinity, Gangs, Gender performance, Street masculinity, hyper-masculinity

Introduction

My interest in street gangs began in the years of 1998, when my parents opened their restaurant in the City of Emiliano Zapata. During these years my parent's restaurant became a hangout spot for gang members. I would always analyze them from inside by studying their interactions. When cars drove by slow, they would post up and give a dirty stare and begin whistling or throwing up their gang signs. When I would go outside and clean up the gang members mess, I often came across gang related tagging such as "EZG" (Emiliano Zapata Gang) and gang members names on the tables. Seeing all this made me more interested in knowing what all this meant, but since I was young I knew not to ask questions.

As I transition from elementary school to middle school, I experienced two very different environments. In elementary school, everyone got along with each other and there was no need to worry about being excluded if you didn't fit in. However, in middle school everything changed. I entered a world in which likeminded individuals formed into cliques. Not fitting in often lead to exclusion and possibility of being bullied. I was lucky to find a clique; it consisted of all males, some from my neighborhood, while others were from school. Being part of this clique meant that during lunch and after school, we would walk together. This served two purposes, one was to make our presence known and the other was to present that we were tough. Being able to represent our masculinity gave us the power to dominate those who didn't have this, and it created feelings of superiority. Some of my friends glamorized this idea of masculinity and wanted to take it to the next level by representing it on the streets, which led them to join gangs.

When dealing with masculinity within gangs it is a different type of masculinity presented, because it consists of aggressiveness. For example, my friends, who were already, gang affiliated, attempted to represent their masculinity by “hitting up” rival gang members to see what gang they claimed. This was a typical activity that took place while the students sat at lunch tables talking to each other. Teachers and principals supervised in order to make sure that there were no altercations. In one instance, I was hanging out with my friends at the lunch table when an individual came over to our group. He mentioned there was another student who was claiming a rival neighborhood. My friends got up angrily and I tagged along as they wandered off to look for this individual throughout the entire school. When they found the person, they quickly circled him and asked if he claimed Guelaguetza. He looked scared and softly responded he didn’t gang bang. After he responded my friends told him “alright just making sure because this is “Emiliano Zapata Gang turf” and just walked away. This happened a lot, because any new male coming to our school having short hair, dickies, or any clothing characteristics that gang bangers use to represent a gang would get hit up. Interestingly, it was always the kids who looked and dressed just like us who would get hit up. I saw these acts of masculinity performed multiple times throughout middle school and high school and in the streets, which involves doing more violent and illegal types of activities.

In the following sections I highlight the statement of problem in explaining why it’s important to research the factors that continue to create the development of masculinity within gangs. Next is the literature review by helping answer the fundamental question “How does gang membership shape the production of

masculinity”, which I begin showing how the construction of masculinity is accomplished in the everyday interactions of gang affiliated men. I discuss the importance of language and behavior used as a tool in our institutions to continue regulating masculine roles. Race and class is discussed by analyzing how street masculinity functions through everyday interactions and how it influences street gangs. Lastly, the history of why gangs form due to the marginalization is explained and how gang members perform and demonstrate their masculinity within the gang to fulfill an identity.

Statement of problem

In the following sections I explore a fundamental question, “How does gang membership shape the production of masculinity?” In doing so, I first discuss the literature studied on gangs and the construction of masculinity that has led males to pursue this identity. Within the literature, I apply a theoretical framework Butler’s, “Gender Performativity” and West and Zimmerman, “Doing Gender” that explains how masculinity is performed by young men, and how this performance shapes the structure of street gangs.

Hegemonic masculinity consists of understanding how men present their masculinity, which can be both negative and positive characteristics and behaviors (Alcalde 2014). Today boys are often confronted with comments such as “you better not cry because only girls cry” and “you better straighten up and act like a man.” When this occurs, it perpetuates an idea that boys are meant to be tough and must not show any weakness (Cheng 1999). This affects the child in a negative way because now they must learn how to become tough and carry the false mask to fit the manly role. At a young

age, this affects young males by forcing them to adopt “masculine characteristics,” characteristics to protect them from violence, while simultaneously reproducing the very same violence.

The problem of masculinity continues to grow because once introduced to these individuals; it motivates them to continue on adding to their masculinity. Masculinity doesn't have to be toxic, and doesn't have to be bad, but the problem is that there is a lack of alternative masculinities. Alternative masculinities can consist of football, which creates a masculine identity by influencing men to represent masculinity characteristics through model of fitness, strength, and competition (Smith 2007). Sports may not be toxic or a bad environment, but men take advantage of using this space to increase their masculinity when they come across other men. West and Fernstermaker (1995) state that when we interact with others we take for granted that we have an “essential” manly or womanly nature that comes from our sex and can be detected by the “natural signs” we give off. This belief in the essential nature of gender, as carried out through everyday interactions, often leads to constructed social norms – norms to which all men and women are held accountable. Men, then, use masculinity as a power tool to obtain dominance and respect. Yet, this power tool causes damages to those who don't represent this ideology of masculinity, and can cause a lot of damage for those who embrace these more hegemonic forms of masculinity. Connell's (2005) work explains that Hegemonic masculinity was understood as a practice that is done (not just role expectations), that allowed male dominance over women to continue through everyday interactions. Hegemonic masculinity also refers to men engaging in toxic practices such as physical violence—that stabilize gender dominance in a particular setting. Once the individual has

mastered the power tool of masculinity, it becomes a game of survival because these individuals must follow that ideology and not express any signs of weakness.

So much of the literature on masculinity focuses at the individual level by analyzing their behavior, without looking at how other social factors promote such behavior. A social factor is the development of gang injunctions that was designed to control the movement of black youth by criminalizing activities and behavior. A gang injunction is a policy that relied heavily towards controlling the lives of people of color in lower class neighborhoods (Muñiz 2014). Under this policy hyper-surveillance is placed in these communities by police officers racial profiling individuals by constantly targeting and harassing them, due to their skin color. Not only is racial profiling occurring, but the police officers test these individuals masculinity. Goodmark's (2006) work highlights that the training Police officers receive leads them to become an abusive officer towards civilians. Police officers are trained to be in control at all times and it's accomplished through their physical presence by using their tone and volume of voice and stance to intimidate their suspects. Police officers enforce "command presence" as another way to intimidate their suspects by reminding them that the weapon they have gives them the power to hurt them. The criminal justice isn't doing positive impacts through the policies it creates and how the police officers interact with the people of color who live in marginalized communities. The criminal justice is at fault for the development of street masculinity in the streets due to police officers training ideology, which leads to oppression of manhood placed on them.

The development of street masculinity affects the individual in a negative factor when it comes to gangs because of the massive masculinity influence that gangs are

produced on them. Individuals see gangs as a community where they can become part of this lifestyle. The organization, then, becomes a family that will support and teach members beneficial skills. Gang members develop body skills to identify as a member and developing social skills is a key factor to intimidate others when they “hit up rivals”. Using the language “Where you from” is a way to let rivals know where he stands in the gang and is willing to do anything to protect his territory (Garot 2015). Protecting their territory consists of taking the risk of being killed or taking the lives of rival gang members (Stretesky & Pogrebin 2007). Living in this type of environment leads gang members to carry weapons to protect themselves from other gang rivals coming to invade them in the neighborhood. The weapons give them power and it is a technique used to protect their tough image and keep their gangs reputation strong by showing they are a dangerous group and to show their rivals not to come into their territory (Stretesky & Pogrebin 2007). What is happening is that gangs provide both a family environment and teach individuals valuable survival skills that can lead to violence and destruction, which is one of the reasons why we continue to see gang violence in our neighborhoods. Everyday more young men are joining gangs to obtain this masculine persona which is why it needs to be researched to highlight and expose the factors that continue to create the development of masculinity within gangs.

Masculinity navigation of Gang Affiliated Youth: A Literature Review

In this section, I discuss how the construction of masculinity is accomplished in the everyday interactions of gang affiliated men. In doing so, I show how the construction of masculinity is maintained, reproduced and legitimated within gang culture. I explain Goffman’s theoretical framework by demonstrating that when one interacts one has the

constructed ideology of having manly or womanly behaviors that one must fulfill. The theoretical framework of “Doing Gender” is discussed by showing it consists of one engaging in behavior, so one will not get judged for not fulfilling the social norm.

Gender Performativity framework is explained by showing that gender performance is a survival lifestyle strategy, which humanizes individual to fulfill the social norm. I deploy the literature to help answer my research question: How is masculinity used as a tool to shape and lead to the development of gang membership?

The emerge of Masculinity

Where does the problem of masculinity emerge from in our society? Cheng (1999) explains that an introduction to the problem of masculinity begins with a fundamental ideology on sex, where sex is viewed in binary terms, female and male. This ideology of an “essentialist gender” leads to the development of two gender roles (masculine and feminine). These gender roles become an institutionalized system, because it develops societal expectations towards individuals who identify as male and female that must fill in these constructed roles. A gender role isn’t just a role that people adapt to fulfill the social norm, but through this ideology it creates power relations. Wetherell & Eldy’s (2014) work in the Discursive Psychology and the Gender Role Strain Paradigm argues that masculinity comes from an ideology that serves to maintain and reinforce power relations between men and women. The ideology of this role is constructed through belief systems, attitudes, norms, and stereotypes. Cheng’s (1999) work presents that characteristics developed by masculinity includes domination, competitiveness, and aggressiveness, which shows they are in control. By performing their masculinity, men often reproduce ideologies and practices that not only oppress

women, but other men as well. Donaldson's (1993) work explains that gaining masculinity helps to achieve subordination over women. When it comes to the development of masculinity it brings more opportunities for men to abuse this characteristic. Oppression done on women through dominance is influenced through femininity. Cheng's (1999) highlights the development concepts of Connell (1987) by explaining that Hegemonic masculinity is empowered through "emphasized femininity," a gender performance that helps please the masculine men in boosting their masculinity by making them feel stronger and wiser. Masculine performances are influenced through the process of gang affiliation. Through this theoretical framework, we see how the ideology of masculinity is reproduced through everyday interactions and how it creates an identity for men, an identity that is often based on the oppression of women. Besides societal expectations, power dynamics develop creating tensions within these limited gender roles.

A tension shapes everyday interactions. West and Fenstermaker (1995) highlight Goffman's argument that when it comes to interactions with others we already have the constructed idea of having a manly or womanly nature that falls under our sex and can be detected from the signs we give off. West and Fenstermaker (1995) work states that looking through an ethnomethodological lens; sex is constructed socially and culturally rather than biologically. The research described can apply as to why masculinity is performed within gangs. Since the construction of gender roles is already engraved in our minds, it correlates as to why gang members adapt in believing it's a behavior that must be demonstrated. The production of gender divisions involves the visible decisions and

procedures that control, segregate, exclude and construct hierarchies' based on gender and race (West and Fenstermaker 1995).

Why is masculinity performed? West and Zimmerman (1995) argue gender is more than a role or even an individual characteristic, but rather it's a characteristic that is accomplished through everyday interactions (West and Fenstermaker 1995). Gender is something that is "done" through everyday interactions, interactions that are often assessed as to its womanly or manly nature. When it comes to "doing" gender, it is not always to fulfill the normative ideology of femininity and masculinity, but it's to engage in behavior at the risk of gender assessment (West and Zimmerman 1987). Gender isn't just a constructed ideology that people strictly follow to fulfill the social norm, but it also creates differences. West and Zimmerman's work argues that when it comes to "Doing gender" it consists of creating differences between girls and boys and women and men. These differences are not natural, essential, or biological (West and Zimmerman 1987). John Heritage's framework on accountability shows that members in society characterize activities in ways that take notice of those activities (e.g., naming, describing, blaming, and excusing) and place them in a social framework (i.e., situating them in the context of other activities that are similar or different). Heritage mentions that "activities is what leads the possibility of conducting them with an eye to how they might be assessed (e.g., as "womanly" or "manly" behaviors" (West and Fenstermaker 1995). Heritage's work makes a great point why gang members commit activities that will get them recognized and honored for their behavior being masculine. Heritage mentions that when it comes to the notion of accountability, the evaluation of action is important if it fulfills the normative conception and the evaluation consequences that will lead to a subsequent

interaction. Accountability allows persons to conduct their activities in relation to their circumstances, which allows others to see those activities for what they are (West and Zimmerman 1995). This point described explains why gang members commit activities due to their performance that will be acknowledged as an interaction accomplishment.

Where does the problem of gender performance emerge? Judith Butler's (1998) work argues that gender is a project that has cultural survival as its end, because gender performance is pressured and always occurring. Gender performance is a strategy of survival, because the construction of gender is what "humanizes" individuals to fulfill the social norm and those who don't follow are constantly punished. These findings explain why men continue to represent their masculinity through performances on the streets as a survival strategy, due to the construction gender roles. The act of gender is what leads to the ideology of gender, because without those acts gender wouldn't exist. This work will be applied to my research because Butler's argument describes how gender performance is a tool that individuals adapt to represent their masculinity through the repeated social actions committed. Salih's (2006) work explains how Butler discusses that when it comes to the expressions of gender there is no gender identity, because that identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results. Salih also mentions about Butler explain that gender identities are constructed and constituted by language, which concludes that there isn't a gender identity that precedes language, therefore gender identity is performative. This evidence shows that language is another tool used by males in schools to keep other males active in producing their masculinity identity as well. The evidence provided will help understand how gang members use

language as well to regulate and dominate over others when masculinity isn't performed or just to prove their masculine persona.

Adolescence use language to reproduce masculinity

In this section, I discuss the changes that occur when language and behavior are used as a tool to regulate masculine roles in our institutions. The research explains why language and behavior easily influences masculinity in a school setting. Not only does it influence, but this performance also develops in school sports. It is important to understand how language in schools produces alternative modes for masculinity. The language and behavior is also used in the criminal justice system to regulate those young men who don't fulfill the masculine role. With the literature provided of adolescence in school correlates back to my thesis explaining that language and behavior are characteristics used when the performance of masculinity is performed within gangs.

The performance of masculinity isn't only being performed due to gender norms, but also because of the fear of homophobia. Pascoe's (2005) work highlights that feminist scholars of masculinity have documented the centrality of homophobic insults to the production of masculinity occurring in the educational system. These feminist scholars argue that homophobic teasing shapes masculinity in adolescence and early adulthood. As such, anti-gay slurs tend to primarily be directed at other gay boys. This homophobia, however, is often directed toward heterosexual males to keep them in line. As West and Fenstermaker (1995) suggests, homophobic language is often deployed to keep young men accountable to narrow definitions of what it means to be a man. Therefore, homophobia is one of the key elements as to why masculinity exists in American adolescence at an early age in our schools. Young men must be aware of their behavior

because any behavior they commit not under the gender norm, language will be used to hold them accountable to regulate their actions. West and Fenstermaker (1995) work argues that activities can be described in variety of ways, which creates the possibility of demeaning them with an eye to how they might be judged, due to the constructed “womanly” or “manly” behaviors performed. Pascoe’s work (1995) shows that boys fear they will commit an error that will get them the “fag discourse,” which leads them to monitor their behavior to conform to the boy’s role correctly. The fear of homophobia continues to occur in our society, which is why masculinity is enforced and strongly constructed on males to perform traditional gender roles. Behavior plays an important role when dealing with gangs, because the behavior must be masculine and not a feminine behavior. The research presented can explain as to what types of behaviors gang members use to prove they are masculine and the benefits they achieve from it.

Language is used as a tool in our schools to continue the traditional masculine performance by making sure young men fulfill the social norm. If the masculine performance is not followed language develops into an oppressive environment towards individuals. Mora’s (2013) article explains how and why a group of low-income of Dominican and Puerto Rican middle school boys constructed masculine identities and rejected homosexuality through the performance of their bodies and language. Language is a powerful tool used to shape boys identities and boys take advantage of it to influence others to follow these traditional roles, calling others “fags” if this specific masculinity isn’t performed. For example, in school, I was standing a certain way and someone was like “dude you’re a fag for standing like that”, which this led to me to monitor every move I made by making sure I acted “like a male” and not get called a “fag,” as such a

label would lead to bullying. In schools masculinity is acted through dominant heterosexual identities and boys learn to teach others to follow this role and those who don't perform the heterosexual characteristics are held accountable by their peers and labeled as being "gay" (Mora 2013). I deploy this framework to show how language used as a tool in schools, can filter out to the streets for the hegemonic masculinity performance to continue within gangs. Pascoe's (2005) article argues that at the adolescent stage, boys begin to present their masculinity to avoid to the continuous oppression that accompanies a "fag" identity. C.J. Pascoe conducted ethnographic research at River High School, where he explains how the term "fag" was a power tool to guard against the charge of homosexuality. The boys performed their heterosexuality to prove their masculinity and reject being called a "fag". Similar to Pascoe's research, my research explains how the term "fag" continues to be used by men to prove their masculinity, which is why this ideology continues to be tested on the streets. Back to Pascoe's study, the results also showed the boys using the phrase "I am not a faggot" as a tool to demonstrate their toughness and to be recognized as a masculine. When boys perform this characteristic they develop a masculine status privilege, which prevents them from being picked on compared to those not performing their masculinity (Mora 2013). I remember when people would call me "faggot," I would fight back with language such as saying "Fuck you fool" as a way to show that I was a man and prevent that stigmatization placed on me. Analyzing the evidence and the examples I provided show that in schools, language is used in alternative ways towards youth by regulating their behavior through masculinity.

The regulation of masculinity is not only monitored during student interactions at school, but it is also being performed within classroom settings and school sports. Smith's research consisted of collecting data through ethnographic research from a secondary school to show how school environment affects working class boys' through the peer regulated "hegemonic masculinity". Smith's (2007) research also argues that in schools there's a culture of persistent homophobia where teachers paradoxically acted as 'cultural accomplices', naturalizing compulsory heterosexuality in engaging alienated and disruptive young men. Smith's ethnographic work shows that boys use physicality of manly assertion to collectively inhabit a stylized form of working class masculinity to clear an informal space in the socially regulated classroom. This collective performance allowed the boys to dominate the classroom environment with put downs when gendered subjects are brought up, which shows peer culture is highly significant. For example, Smith observed a boy regulating another boy for having an opinion on a makeover show he had watched and told the boy not to be so gay and why was he watching that. An example that I experienced in high school was when I mentioned that I had watched the "Power Puff Girls" cartoon the previous night and I got bashed with comments such as "that show is for girls not for boys". The comment said to me was a way to hold me accountable to normative conceptions of what it means to be a man. This evidence highlights why school is a key factor in showing that gender subjects creates another tool for young men to acquire in regulating other individuals to fulfill the masculine role. This supports my argument is showing the type of action that boys use in class settings towards other boys when opinions on gender subjects is brought up, which is another way the cycle of masculinity continues to happen.

Switching from the classroom setting and focusing on playing sports like football, masculinity is a characteristic that must be performed. Research done in schools indicates that football is another key element towards forming masculinity towards young men. Football creates a masculine identity by influencing men to represent masculinity characteristics through model of fitness, strength, and competition (Smith 2007). The evidence gathered helps explain in my research that masculinity is filtered from the class setting into sports, which is another type of action boys will take advantage of to build up their masculinity identity. The evidence provided also helps explain that masculinity is influenced in our educational institutions is another root problem as to why it continues to be reproduced on boys at a young age. These findings support my research in showing that through sports males learn how to be competitive with other males, which this is the type of masculinity performed in the streets by gangs.

Not only is this idea being constructed, but also masculinity is passed on by institutions. Rios's (2009) work highlights how the youth control complex theory is a systematic criminalization is shaped by policies developed by schools and the criminal justice system. These institutions main goal is to gain as much control on these marginalized populations. Rios's (2009) work also discusses how policies, incarceration, and probation provide youth of color, specifically Blacks and Latinos, ideas on how to develop their masculinity to prove their manhood. The way these young men are given approval to earn their title of "manhood" is through the completion of multiple tasks. Juveniles are tested by the probation officers who teach them how to act and look like men. Instead of showing these juveniles a positive message of how to do better in society, they are taught the wrong advice. This theory explains why some of the gang members

decided to join the gang, due being marginalized by the institutions. This helps explain that the youth complex theory is still in effect by targeting youth who live in the inner city by pushing them towards the edge to be failures in life. This framework describes that institutions continue to marginalize populations and this marginalization deeply shapes the construction of masculinity within gangs. Growing up in my neighborhood I witnessed the youth control complex being practiced by the schools that I attended and can say that most of the people I knew ended up joining gangs, because of this systematic criminalization.

Race and Class

In this section I introduce how masculinity is performed differently depending on social class. I analyze how street masculinity functions through everyday interactions and how this behavior can be heavily influenced by street gangs. The research explained highlights how lower class street masculinity is developed and the type of performances it consists of. These findings help explain how masculinity is produced within race, since I am studying masculinity of Latino men.

Masculinity shown through the media relating to upper classes includes more at the individual level by men being in suits, leaving/entering vehicles, and making public statements. When dealing with working class men their masculinity is influenced by the masculine roles political leaders present on them and political leaders as a group pressure these working class men if the masculine role isn't fulfilled (Kimmel, Hearn, & Connell 2004). Kimmel, Hearn and Connell clarifies that in upper classes, masculine performance is completely different due to the different power dynamics they obtain in the social class.

The lifestyle of living in an upper class and those in the lower class are completely different not just economically, but also in the way masculinity is performed. For urban men living in poverty conditions, hyper masculine gang behavior, dress codes, and language serve as a compensatory response to the absence of stable employment and education (Flores Orozco and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013). Males in low-income communities adapt to the ideology of “bad ass” as a way to represent their masculinity (Mullins and Cardwell-Mullins 2006). They also represent their masculinity through the ideology of committing street crimes and physical violence (Beckely 2008). I want to be clear, however, that it’s not only the lower classes committing crimes. The middle class are doing it as well. Gray’s (2014) research focuses on analyzing crime committed by upper class, which in this case Fraternities in college campuses. Gray’s work shows that fraternities are viewed as a positive organization, but their role within the organization can create a climate for sexual assault. Besides a school organization it is also a center for the binge drinking and codified social structures that experts say fuel the assault problem. Fraternity men are three times as likely to commit sexual assault. Crimes committed by Fraternities on universities are covert, which is why they’re less likely to be reported compared to lower class street crimes which are more open to the public. This evidence shows that middle classes have more privilege in getting away with crime, due to the belief that crimes only occur in lower class. This creates inequality when it comes to lower and middle class crimes committed by men, which shows that the criminal justice just focuses in monitoring lower income communities.

Men use situational scripts quite consciously to entice or coerce others to join them in criminal adventures and to enhance the value of their own actions in maintaining

a desired social and self-image (Copes & Hochstetler 2003). This evidence shows that men use language to force others to join them in the adventures of committing crimes, which is why crimes continue to occur in both lower and middle class. Language isn't just used, but it's a tactic the men use towards others to prove their ability of representing their masculinity.

When it comes to street masculinity displayed in communities of color, the performance is the same. Chicano men have sought masculine dominance in alternative spheres, namely the streets. The streets become the community living room, the sports arena, the recreation hall," the key setting for drug deals, swagger, boasts, dares, fights, and sexual conquests (Flores Orozco and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013). Young men in these communities perform their manhood through their bodies as weapons to get recognition (Mora 2013). Young men who can "act crazy" or be violent creates a street reputation that generates masculine capital. Lower class men having less opportunities in resources to mobilize is an issue as to how street reputation generates into a masculine capital, which is how the creation of offending behaviors is born (Mullins and Cardwell-Mullins 2006). This type of survival masculine behavior causes men to pressure others to join them in the street adventures and to enhance the value of their own actions in maintaining a desired social and self-image (Copes & Hochstetler 2003). Not only is pressure placed on them to test their masculinity, but regulation is placed if they don't follow through. If they aren't able to keep up they are quickly labeled punks, pussies, and bitches (Copes & Hochstetler 2003).

Street masculinity is developed through many factors as to why it is an identity that men carry to represent their patriarchy. One important key element Mullins and

Cardwell-Mullins work (2006) shows that street masculinity develops through independence, due to lack of trust men have towards other men on the street corner which leads to them build up strength to stand up for themselves. The lack of trust is due to the development of snitching, double-crossing, and people setting them up for victimization. This independence leads men to reject their peers and family members in helping out to retaliate against those who have harmed them. The independence shows they can handle their problems on their own and prove their masculinity. Committing activities like robberies in the streets boosts up their masculinity and independence because they are able to enforce one's will on someone else (Kimmel, Hearn & Connell 2004). The evidence gathered shows independence how men perform their masculinity in a way that protects them on the street, especially when such protection rarely comes from law enforcement.

The hidden truth about gangs

In this section I introduce the historical notion of how gangs came about, due to the social group formation creating marginalization towards individuals. I discuss what gangs are identified as in our society. I focus on the Latino gangs, and how they perform and demonstrate their masculinity within gang culture. I discuss what the gang membership consists and what leads them to join gangs. Since I am focused on Latinos joining gangs I present the achievements they obtain from the gang banging lifestyle. The issue of gang banging within the school and off school campus will also be presented when dealing with Latino gangs. The evidence gathered explained how masculinity is performed in a Latino gang and how much of an impact it makes on individuals pursuing this identity.

Origins of gangs

Why do gangs form in inner city neighborhoods? Nwalozie's (2015) work analyzes the subculture theory, which is an invention of the Anglo-American sociologists and criminologists of the 1960's and 1970's. Nwalozie discusses how the Anglo-American sociologists and criminologists refer to men urban working class as youths whose behaviors are contrary to the dominant society. These individuals are identified with music, dress code, tattoo, and language. Nwalozie discusses subculture refers to subordinate or deviant status of social groups labeled, which are known through their class, ethnicity, language, poor and working class situations. The principle of subculture is the struggle of the membership to aim to solving the issue created by the dominant culture, which is why subculture is formed. Nwalozie mentions Newburn's work by claiming the author argues that subculture isn't due to the respond to human material conditions, but because it represents a symbolic judgment of the parent culture in which "style" was considered a form of resistance. Nwalozie mentions Jones's similar work to Newburns's, and stresses that Jones stated that subculture activity of youths is a manifestation of political reaction to the dominant culture from which such youths consider themselves excluded. Analyzing the work Nwalozie mentions about subculture theory relates to my research in explaining the historical notion of gangs, due to limited mainstream opportunities for men to develop their sense of self, and form their own opportunities since they have become marginalized. Understanding this perspective I show that the formation of gangs is developed when youth subculture forms and in reaction to the marginalization opposed on them, which is why young men join gangs for self belonging since they are disenfranchised from the mainstream culture. Not only is

marginalization an issue created towards these individuals, but the marginalization continues by the creation of gang injunction to keep controlling them.

How was gang injunctions created? The origin of gang injunction was established when prosecutors and police targeted Cadillac-Corning, a neighborhood located in the City of Los Angeles, because the neighborhood had undergone demographic change, which threatened geographic racial, class separation and control. Another reason to the establishment was due to the fear of black men and the stereotypes about black families. Ultimately it was designed to control the movement of black youth by criminalizing activities and behavior (Muñiz 2014). Gang injunctions can be described as a policy that relied heavily towards controlling the lives of people of color in lower class neighborhoods. Those members that are assigned this policy no longer have freedom like the rest of people, because they must now obey the rules or will get punished for breaking the policy.

How does our society identify and define gangs? Goldman, Giles, & Hogg (2014) examines the role social identity and identity-related communication play in promoting affiliation with gangs among youth who confront uncertainties and strive for family-like protection. Gangs are identified as a group of associating individuals with identifiable leadership that show they are able to take control of territory in a community and will participate in violent and other types of illegal behavior. Flores Orozco and Hondagneu-Sotelo's (2013) examines the ritualized forms of verbal communication used in two Chicano gang recovery programs; Homeboy Industries and Victory Outreach. The rehabilitation programs facilitate recovery from gangs through distinct models of communication anchored in religion and therapeutic rehabilitation. Flores Orozco and

Hondagneu-Sotelo's work shows that Latino gang masculinity is a type of marginalized masculinity, because Latino men have been marginalized and excluded from beneficial resources such as education and jobs. Garot's (2015) article examines the alienation gang members experience in school and on the streets, which leads them to manage the risks in presenting a tough masculine identity. The cultural form of gangs is established through the ways that inner city teenagers have been disenfranchised from mainstream culture. Garot's work relates to Flores work by making a connection in showing that due to the disenfranchisement from main stream culture the marginalization and exclusion leads to Latino males seeing gangs as a survival lifestyle. Gang survival relies on issues such as consumerism, due to the lack of economic opportunities that their neighborhoods develop. These individuals turn to gangs for companionship, a sense of family, and an identity (Goldman, Giles, & Hogg 2014). This applies to my research because it shows why Latinos might fall into the path of joining gangs, which is my argument in showing that gangs are developed not just because of marginalization, but the production of masculinity done through activities.

Young people who join gangs tend to be adolescents, from low-income neighborhoods, and from families that are gang-related. Latino Gang membership can range from the ages 13 through 25, which forms a large portion of the Latino population combined especially in the inner cities. Goldman, Giles, and Hogg's (2014) work shows children as young as seven years old being documented as gang members, but it's doubtful they are fully true members and are just associates. Vigil's (2013) work suggests that about 10% of youth in most low-income neighborhoods join gangs. Arfaniarromo's (2001) article examines development theories consisting of psychosocial

and sociocultural on the subject of Latino gang members in the United States.

Arfaniarromo work informs that external influence whether it is ones family or community can be at fault for the development of Latinos joining gangs and in the motivational achievement of the delinquency behavior they have caused. Adler, Hocevar, and Ovando (1984) studied the impact of familial influences on Latino involvement in gangs. The study involved 30 lower class Latina mothers (36 to 56 years of age), which 15 were mothers of gang members. All of the mothers participating in the study lived in the East Los Angeles area and had at least one child of at least fifteen years of age. The outcome of this study revealed the differences between gang related families and non-gang related families. In gang related families there tends to be less of unity in the family, because sometimes there is a lack of supervision on the children and limited affection. Low income families and families that lack structure are more likely to experience gang involvement (Goldman, Giles, & Hogg 2014). This factor contributes as another reason why Latinos ended up joining the gang banging lifestyle and motivates them to continue engaging in delinquency (Arfaniarromo 2001). Gang membership provides gang members with resources on the streets, loyalty within the gang, and a sense of belonging (Flores Orozco & Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013). Having a gang membership is an honorable moment for Latinos, but they must develop and present their masculinity persona to represent their gang. These findings demonstrate the different aspects of family structure when gangs are involved and how it affects the individual. Not only is the individual affected, but evidence shows that due to family structures individuals pursue other ways to find that self-belonging. This self-belonging is found in gangs, which relates to my argument of the masculinity development in the streets.

When it comes to masculinity within gangs it develops through different types of performances. Masculinity is mastered through aggressive behaviors of physical force or control over women as a way to represent their masculinity and dominance. This behavior presented by Latino gang members is considered as self-destructive and part of the “Machismo syndrome” (Flores Orozco and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013). This correlates with my research because since I am studying Latinos, the evidence provided shows behaviors committed within the gang is connected to machismo. This machismo ideology influences these individuals to perform through these types of activities to prove that dominance and show no weakness. Becoming involved in the drug business is a way for Latino gang members to achieve masculinity and in return get recognition through honor, income, status and protection (Flores Orozco and Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013). This evidence also correlates to my argument, because it shows that the drug business influences these individuals to pursue this position as another way to build up their masculinity reputation. When it comes to expressing the machismo characteristic it can build up their masculinity. Masculinity and self-esteem in a gang is considered the definition of manhood, but dishonor is seen as a loss of manhood (Flores Orozco & Hondagneu-Sotelo 2013). The findings apply to my research because it correlates to my argument of street masculinity being a cycle that never ends. This evidence highlights the type of actions committed by these individuals to continue the masculinity characteristic active. Masculinity is also developed in the streets by gang members physically being involved in activities and making sure their presence is acknowledged.

In summary I have discussed how masculinity is accomplished in the everyday interactions that gang affiliated men come across and how masculinity continues to be a

constructed ideology affecting our society. I have discussed what gangs are identified as and how they perform and demonstrate their masculinity on the streets and on school grounds. Language was discussed as a tool to regulate the masculine role that continues to be used in our institutions, which is why this constructed characteristic never ends influencing males to pursue this identity. Race and class was discussed about the different types of performances occurring between upper and lower class community. Lastly, the historic background as to why gangs developed and how gang members performed and demonstrated their masculinity within in the gang to pursue an identity.

Street Ethnography: A Methodological Discussion

In this section I discuss the setting of my research site and the people living in this setting. The origin of gang injunctions is discussed and how it applies to my setting. I discuss the type of methodology I used to gather data for my research and how the participants' identity was protected. I also discuss the advantages and disadvantages of my methodological approach. Finally, I discuss how my social status shaped the research process, paying particular attention to my race, gender and language identity.

Before introducing my findings a history background of my research setting is discussed. My research location was in Marvel County, Los Aztecas, but I specifically targeted the population living in the City of Emiliano Zapata. The location of the neighborhoods where I gathered my research was located in the center of Emiliano Zapata. The population of Emiliano Zapata is 93,834; the Latino/a population consist of 45,380 (Population Demographics 2016). Other ethnicities in this city consisted of Whites with a population of 38,287, Blacks 2,753, American Indians 336, and Asians 3,806. The median household income from the 2010 and 2000 census is estimated at

\$60,223 (Fast Facts 2011). Catrina, which is the neighboring city, has a median household income of \$62,375 a \$2,375 difference from Emiliano Zapata, which shows that the population of this city makes more income (Fast Facts 2011). The poverty rate of Catrina consists of 17.8%, and 78.3% had a high school diploma or higher (QuickFacts 2015). When it comes to the population of Emiliano Zapata there's an issue of the high percentage of people living in poverty and 10% of the students in the educational system (k-12) are homeless. Not only is poverty an issue, but the success of achieving a college degree after high school decreases by a large amount. The education of success decreases because only 22.89% earned a BA and 8.7% earned a Masters or a Professional career.. Latino/a students have the lowest graduation rate in North County, but when it comes to the City of Emiliano Zapata the graduating rate is at 47% for Latino/as. This is due to the school to prison pipeline targeting youth of color and low-income students and/or students of color who are pushed out (Clark-Ibañez 2015). The information provided fits in my research, because there is an issue of marginalization occurring on the people of this community. Overall, Emiliano Zapata is a city that consists of many issues affecting its population, yet there is no discussion of gang injunctions affects the population as well which will be discussed later in the research.

My research location is often labeled as the “ghettos” within the city, because it is a low income community and these neighborhoods are part of the gang injunction safety zone. A gang injunction safety zone means that under this policy it restricts the movements of those labeled gang members (Muñiz 2014). These neighborhoods are surrounded by an elementary school and two parks separated within a mile. They are also surrounded by businesses such as restaurants and markets, but also have a liquor store on

every other corner. At night some of these neighborhoods are pitch black because the street does not have a street light or the street lights need repair. In these safety zones, which are rest active or non-active members of the neighborhood gang “Emiliano Zapata Gang” still live in the neighborhood regardless of the gang injunction. These safety zones imply that these communities are dangerous. It’s often described as dangerous, but in reality these neighborhoods consist of hard working individuals and children who happily walk to their school and play outside with the other children from the neighborhood. The people who live in these neighborhoods consist of mostly a Latino/a population, which makes it a dominant Spanish speaking community.

I interviewed Latino men who had been involved in gangs in the city of Emiliano Zapata. My sample size consisted of seven participants Carlitos (affiliate), Juanito (affiliate), Hugo (affiliate), Joaquin (affiliate), Ramon (affiliate), Salomon (hard core), and Jaime (affiliate), whose ages consisted of 19-27. All of my participant’s involvement and affiliation in the gang consisted differently, due to the amount of time they spent with the gang and the age difference. Some of the individuals still live in Emiliano Zapata, while others had moved away to another community. I found my participants by asking those who that I knew who had affiliated with the gang if they wanted to participate in my research. I used the snowball sampling method. This sampling method was useful for my research, because my participants were hard to reach. This sample works for my research because this method has been used to sample members who belong to groups, which in my case are gangs (Engel & Schutt 2014). The limitation of this approach is that I didn’t get a diverse sample, which made it easier for me to find participants that fit my research instead of me going to each person and asking them if they identify themselves

as a Latino gang member. Through this approach snowball sampling can reify the idea of the group and speak to the difficulties of representation. By not having a diverse sample means that I must acknowledge my sample, because it may be recreating a certain experience or characteristic that is not represented. This strategy made it safer on my end, because without this strategy I never knew if I would get a person who dislikes the fact that I am an outsider coming into their neighborhood to get information. There are advantages and disadvantages to snowball sampling. An advantage of a snowball sample is that it allows me as the researcher to reach populations who are difficult to sample if other sampling methods are used. This sample helped me discover characteristics about the population that I was not aware of (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981). The advantage of using this method is that I gathered valuable information, but also had to recognize the disadvantage side. A disadvantage was that I had little control over the sampling method and the representativeness of the sample wasn't guaranteed. When it came to interviewing, the participants were cautious in providing names of peers and aware of ethical concerns (Biernacki and Waldorf 1981).

My interviews took place far away from the neighborhood so my participants felt safe. Whether my participants were active gang members or non active gang members gathering data in their community can be somewhat dangerous, because many things can be misinterpreted and cause harm to my participants. It is important to highlight that outsiders such as police often try to use people to gather information, which led me to walk a fine line to not be viewed as an informant. This option kept my participants and me from being questioned as to why I am in their neighborhood conducting research. Going to different locations made the interview process less stressful for the participants;

because they were more relaxed knowing nobody would recognize them. My participants felt safer knowing their identity was protected and not exposed.

Phenomenology involves trying to understand people's subjective experiences and interpretations of the world. Gathering rich information and perceptions is accessed through inductive, qualitative methods (interviews, discussions) and representing it from the perspective of the research participant(s) (Lester 1999). Since I am studying Latino gangs I wanted to understand their perspective of masculinity and how it influences them. Through this method I was able to have a conversation with my participants. My first step towards this process was creating informative questions that related to my interest of masculinity. I asked structured questions like the following: "What do you think it means to be a man?" "Tell me about the last time you were disrespected. What did you do? Or tell me about the last time you saw someone disrespected, what did they do? Did you agree with how they handled it?" "What does it mean to be a man within EZG?" "How do you take care of each other in EZG?" "What does it mean to have somebody's back?" "What is it like growing up as a young man in EZG?" "How do you think the lives of young men who are involved in EZG different from others in the community?" "In EZG what activities did you do to show that you were a man?" These types of designed questions fall under the semi-structured interview, because they are interacting questions to gather my information. These types of questions were created for my participants, so they could turn into in-depth interviews depending on how much information the participants provided me. When conducting this research I was aware that I was there to learn and not there to treat the participant. I was cautious about approaching areas of participants' private lives and personal complexities. If participants began to become

emotional the interviews I, myself may become upset and not to know what to do (Seidman 2013). None of participants became emotional during the interviews, but I did offer resources such Emiliano Zapata Center whose mission is to build self-reliance among youth, individuals and families through problem solving, skill-building and accessible community-based services. Before beginning the process of gathering my data with my participants I notified them in advance that they would be in control at all times. My participants decided where the interview took place and concluded if it would be recorded. I allowed them to turn off the recorder at any given point, stop the interview, or destroy the tapes at any time.

I attempted to build a rapport with my participants, as without a working rapport, my participants would be hesitant to talk truthfully with me. This relationship was also respectful, a valued characteristic in the community. Following these guidelines when it comes to developing a rapport created a positive space for both me and the participants where mutual respect was established.

In my research, I was aware of the questions I asked during the interview. I avoided harming my participants as I interviewed them by making sure they didn't feel any anxiety or distress during the interview or after the interview was over (Schutt 2012). I was not offended when possible candidates chose not to participate, but those who did were voluntary given a verbal consent. I informed them completely about the research and made sure they understood what I had told them (Schutt 2012). Maintaining privacy and confidentiality was necessary to protect my participants. Protecting them consisted of locking their records and creating new identity codes to minimize the risks of my participants being known by unauthorized people (Schutt 2012). My research project was

a delicate study because I interviewed active and ex gang members and protecting their identity was important, because if someone recognized them in the interview script the participant could experience harm.

A dilemma I faced using the snowball sampling was getting participants to actually agree to set up a date and time for the interview. When I approached the possible participants and explained my research they were excited and interested in learning more about the purpose of my research project. The downfall is that some possible participants didn't want to be part of the research, because their voices were going to be recorded. Others rejected the invitation, because my research topic was too sensitive and chose not to speak about it. I was not offended when possible candidates chose not to participate, but I was upset towards those who had agreed to be part of the research and never came through. Overall, I understand as to why these individuals chose not to participate even though they had agreed and I respected their ultimate decision.

Reflexivity

As I conducted research in the field, I wanted to be reflexive about how my identity shaped my research. When it came to race and gender it helped shape my research because I was a Latino male, which helped me blend in the neighborhood, because it was a heavily dominated Latino/a community. My participants saw me as an insider, because I grew up in this neighborhood and knew some of the participants from childhood. As a Latino male coming into this space, I had an advantage, as my identity helped me gain entry into this community. This provided easy access for my research, because if I knew nothing about the neighborhood or the community gaining access would be a struggle. I know if I identified under a different race or gender I would have

had a hard time gaining access into this space, because I would be seen as an outsider that had no knowledge about how masculinity is acted in the streets. Speaking both Spanish and English gained me access into this space, because some of the participants spoke both. By being fluent in Spanish established a connection with my participant, because I understood them when they chose to talk in Spanish.

Despite my insider status, I was also aware that I was an outsider, because even though I had grown up in the neighborhood, and known some of participants, they didn't have full trust at first in sharing their personal information. I was also an outsider because I didn't go into the neighborhood the same as before, because I went into this setting as an academic. I was aware as an outsider that I knew information of how masculinity is performed in gangs, but I let them guide me into their world of how they saw masculinity and what it meant to them. In the next sections I examine and discuss my findings.

Mi Familia

In the following sections I explore how gang members navigate their masculinity within in the gang. I first begin by analyzing the several themes I gathered as common answers that my participants gave when they were asked "What does it mean to be a man" The following are the answers the participants had in common

Carlitos, a 26 year Latino male who affiliated with EZG, had short hair, slim body, and always had a serious facial expression. He has lived in Emiliano Zapata since he was a young boy and knows the surroundings of community. I asked him to describe what it meant to be a man. Carlitos calmly began to express his response of what he believed a role of a man consisted, "A man is someone who provides for their family, someone who's a role model for their kids and other people in the community that's what

I think a man is; being a hard worker, respectful to others. I saw my dad as a hard worker.”

Juanito, a 25 year old Latino male, who was tall, short hair, and had a bulky look also used to affiliate with EZG. He is a humorous person, who was highly informed and passionate on the topic of entrepreneurship. Clark as well lived in the community as a young boy with his family and made a lot of friends in the neighborhood also correlated with Carlitos response:

I feel like being a man is like first of all loving yourself, taking care of your body, your thoughts, and your mind...My father was a hard worker and I feel like it takes a man to be a hard worker like not just any person who works like gives out their blood, sweat and their effort for the family.

These answers provided by Carlitos and Juanito demonstrate the normative conceptions of what it means to be a man. One of West and Zimmerman's (1995) findings is that we often hold people accountable to their gender. We develop normative conceptions of what it means to be a man or female, and then hold each other accountable when they break these expectations. Carlitos highlights an important point on how being a man consists of being respectful to others and being a hard worker just how his father was. Juanito as well highlighted an important point that a man consists of being a hard worker and supporting the family just like his father. Both Carlitos and Juanito knew the normative conceptions of what it meant to be a man by making sure they followed the same path in becoming like their fathers respectful figure. It's important to highlight that Carlitos and Juanito were heavily inspired to be like their father, because they saw their father as a strong and independent individual and that's the role men are supposed to follow. Through these normative conception interactions is how both Carlitos and Juanito learned about the notions of masculinities and how gender roles heavily influence

males to fulfill the constructed norm. These types interactions as a whole is what continues to keep gender inequality thriving because it develops males to pursue the hegemonic masculinity, which is why males continue to dominate over women through everyday interactions (Connell 2005). Masculinity constructed over and over leads young males to develop this role, which gains them hierarchy power.

Nosotros somos respetados

Switching from the general question of what it consists of being a man; I focus on the questions that deal with masculinity within the “Emiliano Zapata Gang” at a macro-level. In the following section, I explore, not what it means to be a man within the family, but rather I ask, “What does it mean to be a man within the EZG?” The following are the several themes were gathered as common answers, which were different responses from the previous question they were asked “what does it mean to be man.”

Ramon, a 25 year old former affiliate from EZG lived in Emiliano Zapata as a young child, but eventually had to move away to another community. Ramon had short hair, a black T- shirt, blue jeans, and white shoes when he showed up to the interview and looked very relaxed. As we talked before the interview started, his language consisted of a scholar by the type of words he used in his sentences. Ramon had no problem answering what it meant to be a man within in EZG and this is what he highlighted in his response, “Yeah you can say somewhat of protection, people are not going to want to mess with you, because you’re part of that group. You get respect and others respect you and you feel better than those who aren’t related in the gang.” Carlitos highlighted this important factor as well in his response by stating the following: “Don’t let anyone disrespect you, don’t let no one disrespect your gang, your homeboys your neighborhood

and show no fear. You're always walking around like you own the whole thing. So show no fear no mercy towards nobody.”

Analyzing the answers the participants gave when asked “How was it being a man within Emiliano Zapata Gang?” consisted of more aggressive answers of what manhood consisted within the gang compared to the previous question “what does it mean to be a man,” where they gave a more of a non aggressive response. This correlates to Cheng’s (1999) work in arguing that characteristics developed by masculinity includes domination, competitiveness, and aggressiveness, which shows they are in control. This occurs because they are aware that there is a larger hyper notion of hyper surveillance when affiliating with gangs. This leads to Wetherell & Eldy’s (2014) work explaining that masculinities come from an ideology that serves to maintain and reinforce power relations between men and women or different groups of men. One of West and Fenstermaker’s (1995) findings is that the production of gender divisions also involves the visible decisions and procedures that control, segregate, exclude and construct hierarchies’ based on gender and race. Being a man within in “EZG” gave them empowerment, because they are receiving respect by their peers and others and have protection from the gang, but are conditioned to believe they are better than other groups such as gangs and must be dominant towards those groups. Dominance meant controlling and excluding those who didn’t fall under their race, which is why segregation in gangs continues to happen. This highlights West and Zimmerman findings in holding people accountable to their gender, because there is a different level of accountability when it comes to family besides looking out for each other and being a hard worker like their father. This is why there is a major difference between these two social spheres of what it

consists of being a man in general and what it consists of being a man in a gang as Ramon and Carlitos answered that to be a man within the Emiliano Zapata Gang consisted of gaining respect, never letting anyone disrespect you, and having no mercy and absolutely no fear. These findings highlight the key answers as to why there is more empowerment in establishing control and power through gang membership, when it comes to an all males circle in this case gangs.

Running the Streets

In this section I gathered data to explore how gang members navigate their masculinity on the streets. I demonstrate evidence that led these individuals to prove their masculinity to the gang.

Hugo explains how he made sure those who affiliated with the gang presented their masculinity and were not scared to show it.

You have to be down to prove yourself and it's like the more you want to I would tell people I think you're a bitch if feel that if we get jumped your ass will be the first one to run. I would make them prove them to see if they could fight and have my back. This was done by "testing nuts", which meant fighting each other to test their masculinity and if it wasn't presented then they would be kicked out from the gang.

Hugo's statement is important in understanding how accountability functions within in a gang. John Heritage's (1995) literature review framework on accountability work shows that members in society characterize activities in ways that take notice of those activities (e.g., naming, describing, blaming, and excusing) and place them in a social framework. Heritage mentions that "activities is what leads the possibility of conducting them with an eye to how they might be assessed (e.g., as "womanly" or "manly" behaviors)" (West and Fenstermaker 1995). As Hugo stated that one of the ways one could master the power

tool of masculinity was by “testing nuts” by calling them a “bitch” to provoke them, which meant fighting each other to see how their masculine performance was and to see if they had the gangs back whenever they got involved in gang fights. Heritage work correlates with how individuals master masculinity by helping understand why gang members commit activities to get recognized and honored for their behavior being masculine and not looked as a feminine one. Heritage mentions that when it comes to the notion of accountability its relevant to possible evaluation of action in relation to normative conceptions and that evaluation leading to subsequent evaluation. The accountability creates gang members to be consciously aware of their behavior, because any behavior they commit not under the gender norm, language will be used to hold them accountable. This shows that there’s a difference when it comes to holding one accountable in their actions within a gang, because there is a more flexible form of masculinity being pressured that leads into more violence. It creates gang members to become consciously aware of their behavior because any behavior they commit not under the gender norm, language will be used to hold them accountable.

Analyzing the data presented besides the gang members being held accountable for their normative conceptions of a man within EZG led them to represent their hegemonic masculinity even further. Hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2005) refers to men engaging in toxic practices such as physical violence—that stabilizes gender dominance in a particular setting. In my study these individuals engaged in toxic practices through the gang by establishing physical violence as a way to obtain dominance in their community. Once the individuals master the power tool of

masculinity, it becomes a game of survival because these individuals must follow that ideology and not express any signs of weakness.

Carlitos highlighted an important factor when the structure of gender performance was discussed in detail, which correlated with Butler's work.

Sometimes we would come across rivals at their kicking spots and we would get off the car and yell Emiliano Zapata gang and whatever you had at the moment you used that as your weapon, you start getting down. Sometimes things happen people get beat up, stabbed and then we get on the car and leave. And the next day you expect them to come and that's when you see who is really down because we will be at the park all day.

Here Carlitos highlights the importance of never backing down, and showing your commitment to the gang. Judith Butler's work (1998) argues gender is a project that has cultural survival as its end, because gender performance is pressured and always occurring. As Carlitos stated that they had to get off and ambush their enemies once spotted, which correlates to Butler's argument in showing how gender performance is a tool that individuals adapt to represent their masculinity through the repeated social actions committed among them. Carlitos statement highlights how their performance lead to represent their hegemonic masculinity performed on the streets as a survival strategy, due to the construction gender roles. Goldman, Giles, & Hogg (2014) work discusses that being motivated to engage in violence is a way to earn respect from the gangs and their actions of violence signals a message they are not to be messed with. Carlitos comments relate to Kimmel and Hearn's work on enforcing one's will on someone else, because there was no choice if one wanted to get in the car or off when it came to gang banging in rival neighborhoods, because it was mandatory. There is no backing out and at an individual level because they are willing to do anything to prove they are a man and tough especially because they are surrounded by their homies. This explains that when

gang members commit activities its due to performing actions that will be acknowledged as an interactional accomplishment by demonstrating through their actions that they are a man worthy of respect.

13 Seconds

In this section I gathered data to explain how gang members face consequences when their masculinity isn't presented within in the gang. These consequences are purposely done to continue enforcing masculinity in the gang. Jaime and Ramon's response highlights in depth of what the consequences consist of.

Jaime, a 25 year old Latino male, a former affiliate from EZG still resides in the City of Emiliano since childhood. Jaime was tall and slim and the day of the interview he showed up dressed nice by wearing some white shoes, blue jeans, and a burgundy flannel. Also Jaime was an individual who always had a good sense humor, because throughout the interview we both laughed at the remarks he or I stated about certain topics. He began explaining the consequences that would occur when one's masculinity wasn't performed and this was his response:

If you didn't want to then you would be dropped. The only reason they will ask you to do something is if you're the new guy and you're trying to put in work, you're trying to be from the hood. They're trying to test you. There are rules you have to follow and if you don't you get checked for 13 seconds it can be 3 or 4 guys.

Ramon states:

Never back down from a fight, especially in those rumbles, you weren't allowed to show weakness. If they backed down they aren't loyal. There are people who handle it different if you don't do what was told you get beat. They will check those individuals and it happens out of nowhere.

Butler's (1998) work highlights that gender performance is a strategy of survival, because the construction of gender is what "humanizes" individuals to fulfill the social norm and those who don't follow are constantly punished. Copes & Hochstetler (2003) work highlights that the punishment consists of being labeled punks, pussies, and bitches. Not only are they labeled but as Ramon stated they are physically punished for not performing their masculinity, which correlates with Flores Orozco and Hondagneu-Sotelo (2013) work where dishonor is considered a loss of manhood. Ramon highlighted that loyalty is important in identifying who has their back, because there were times when people who they associated with said they were down, but when the time came they ran away from the incident, leaving others in danger. Hugo describes that one of the ways punishment is applied for those who didn't perform their masculinity or succeeded the mission assigned was by getting beating up by the homies, which consisted of 13 seconds to demonstrate to the individual that the gang didn't tolerate weakness. Depending on the situation one could get dropped meaning they could no longer associate with the gang and were considered weak or get beat up as a way to give them a reality check. Being dropped also represented that the individual's status was a dishonor and no longer had manhood within the gang, and the protection it provided. When it comes to activities the most important rule is that one must never ask questions and obey what is told to do, which is a tactic Emiliano Zapata uses to continue the cycle gender performance.

If you feel some type of way go somewhere else

In this section I highlight that beyond the definition of the participant's answers of what it consisted of being a man within the gang also meant that emotions were not

allowed. That meant that under no circumstances any type of emotions was to be shown in the gang or else one would get regulated.

Hugo, a 23 year old Latino male former affiliate from EZG was a friendly individual, who lived on his own and had a soft voice when he spoke. Hugo greeted me with respect and comfort as we introduced ourselves. Hugo was relaxed and not nervous about the interview at all, by the way he placed his hands on the bench, sitting up straight, and not looking around to see if he recognized anyone. He began explaining his story of when he had to regulate those showing their emotions. He stated that they would tell their homies “hey homie why are you coming around with that shit, don’t come with that if you feel some type of way go somewhere else and figure it out. It’s not a group setting it’s a one on one.”

West and Fernstermaker (1995) highlight Goffman’s work by explaining that when it comes to interactions with others we already have constructed the idea of what types of signs we give off based on our sex. Scheff (2006) discusses that boys at an early age learn that feelings such as love, grief, fear and shame is unacceptable because it consists of representing weakness. In Western cultures most boys learn to hide their feelings through different tactics such talking emotionless, withdrawing, or simply staying silent. After hiding their intense feelings for so long, their behavior changes to anger, because that’s the only behavior that is acceptable in demonstrating how they feel. Goffman’s and Scheff’s work correlates to Hugo’s explanation, because when it comes to being a man within the Emiliano Zapata Gang emotions such as crying or feeling any type of sensitivity towards something was not allowed to be expressed out in the open, because it is seen as a sign of weakness and not a natural sign that men show. Such emotions can

be dangerous in the lifestyle, as they show weakness that others could exploit. When it comes to hyper-masculinity, Hugo's response explained that emotions were accepted unless there is a strong one on one bond connection; otherwise they would be asked to leave and go express it somewhere else. Hugo's response also correlates to Scheff's discussion of how boys learn to hide their emotions at a young age, which is occurring in the young men in the Emiliano Zapata gang because anyone who touches that topic is right away bashed with negative comments. Hiding their emotions is what leads the individuals to disassociate with their emotions and express their emotions through anger to prove they are a man within the gang, which is a way to keep one's masculinity reputation in the high ranks.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the purpose of this thesis was to study and explain how masculinity is used as a tool to shape the development of street gangs. The significance outcome of this research was through the help and participation my participants delivered. With the help of my participants, I found out that there is a messier understanding of masculinity than expected. This is important because the significance of these findings highlighted how masculinity functions within gangs at a larger scale. Before entering the gang my participants' answers helped analyze that they had an idea of how to present their hegemonic masculinity, through the concept of gender roles within the family. They adapted to this ideology by looking up to their fathers of how they took care of the family, because that is a normative conception a man must demonstrate. Not only did they look up to their fathers, but they learned that to be a man consisted of being respectful towards others. They also learned that being a man is always the leader and the

head of the household. Through this ideology is what creates inequality towards other groups, because they become part of the systems of patriarchy.

Once entering the gang their ideology of what masculinity changed in a dramatic way, because their manhood definitions within the gang showed that the ideology of masculinity is passed onto the streets where gangs adapt from it to continue the masculinity persona. The significance of this is important because once in the gang occurs their definition of being a man within the gang meant getting respected compared to what they had said previously that a man meant being respectful to others. It's important to understand that in gangs getting respect from others is valued and they are taught to become violent to obtain this respect and acknowledgement.

Since gangs are often all male spaces, and there is no regulation in stopping the violent displays of masculinity, especially when young men are trying to constantly prove themselves. Through accountability language was the tool used in how the navigation of masculinity was tested on these young men to prove themselves in the gang.

Accountability allowed them to enforce ones will onto others by seeing if they were a man and not tolerate anything that was asked to do, because the normative conception of man meant taking action upon those who tested their masculinity. When it came to gender performance within in the gang it consisted of activities to present their hegemonic masculinity and it was a performance that consisted of a survival strategy, due to ideology of gender roles. This happened a lot in the gang, because when it comes to gender performance it is always pressured and occurring (Butler 1998). But gender performance also consisted of regulations over others if masculinity was not performed. The regulation consisted of physically beating up those who didn't perform their

masculinity for a certain time as a way to keep them in line and making sure that didn't happen again. This beating is done to let all the gang members to see that the gang wasn't made of weakness and when one is asked to perform their masculinity it must be completed.

Not only did they know what the normative conceptions of a man meant, but under no circumstances emotions weren't allowed in the gang. This happens as Scheff (2006) discussed because boys at an early age learn that feelings such as love, grief, fear, and shame is unacceptable because it represents weakness. When emotions were expressed in the gang the individual would be regulated by another gang member. The regulation consisted of letting them know that they had to leave and express how they felt somewhere. By learning this at young age is another tool that gangs take advantage of to continue enforcing the masculine role. This tool then impacts the individual by reminding him that he must avoid those feelings and find another way to cope with it. The way gang individuals coped with was through violence because that was an acceptable and respectful choice in the gang.

I began by highlighting masculinity at a macro level in showing how masculinity is born and transitioned into males, which creates the ideology of constructed gender roles. Not only does this ideology become constructed, but I showed how gender roles create boys to monitor their actions by learning to become tough and show no weakness. Through this ideology boys look for other ways to increase their masculinity. It's important to highlight that settings matter, because a gang is one of the types of masculinities that men can engage in to increase their masculinities. Transitioning into the streets males find gangs as a way to represent their hegemonic masculinity, which is

why we continue to see gang violence in our lower class communities and how it influences individuals to pursue this lifestyle.

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