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This article explores the solidary relationships constructed between urban drivers as they take risks and experience dangers associated with pizza delivery. After one of the authors completed working as a driver and participating in drivers' backstage activities, we analyzed their arcane culture as composed of risk takers who receive minimal rewards. In this context, the world of drivers is "hypermasculine," with racist and sexist nuances, and composed of five identifiable types—the comedian, the adventurer, the denier, the fatalist, and the pro. In conclusion, we locate the driver in the context of urban associations where group membership is perceived as or more valuable than monetary rewards and control of time.

THE DRIVER

Adaptations and Identities in the Urban Worlds of Pizza Delivery Employees

**PATRICK T. KINKADE
MICHAEL A. KATOVICH**

EVEN THOUGH SIMMEL (1950) was not the first sociologist to recognize the urban existential crises characterized by the struggle between self-worth and self-diminishment, he dramatized most provocatively how this struggle involves the basic contrast between freedom and loneliness. Urban citizens who navigate the city are free to do so on their own but also must confront suspicious and hostile forms of disorganization. To Simmel, urban dwellers and workers faced a unique challenge not experienced by their preurban counterparts: to recognize that which was hostile to the social as somehow composed of the social itself.

Late twentieth-century sociologists have taken issue with Simmel's pessimism in regard to urban life. While acknowledging the particular urban dangers that Simmel described, these sociologists also have viewed the urban scene in terms of opportunities to create prosocial tie signs (Goffman 1971) as distinguished and separate from antisocial activity. Melbin (1978), for instance, discussed nighttime urban dwellers as explicitly

motivated to engage in sociality as a way of celebrating their bravado in a dangerous urban world. Further, Karp, Stone, and Yoels (1991) note that the city is more known for purposive social ventures that emphasize belonging rituals and routines than for enclaves inhabited by isolated denizens who are strangers to each other. In effect, the metropolis and its diverse population not only allow for intimacy but inspire it (cf. Bellah et al. 1985).

Simmel (1950) also viewed impersonal economic transactions, involving what Cooley ([1902] 1964) later called secondary associations, as the *raison d'être* of the urban marketplace and its inhabitants. However, sociologists also have challenged this view in their studies of urban togetherness, from indoor barrooms (Cavan 1966; Katovich and Reese 1987) to outdoor street life (Whyte 1943; Anderson 1990). Urban actors who create forms of association in urban worlds assign significance to factors beyond material gain, even in conjunction with careers and duties. Factors such as “solidarity rewards” (Smith 1989), camaraderie (Perkins 1987), and the “mutually supportive” signals (Ulmer 1994, 145) inspire commitments that have few economic and long-term career incentives. Thus particular activities that require the performance of obligations serve as a means for some to engage in *nomos building*—or the social construction of meaningful encounters—with others as they form tight and emotionally charged social bonds (for descriptions of bonds between military veterans, see Abadinsky 1990, 215; Stouffer et al. 1949).

Even so, Simmel has inspired sociologists to grapple with the seemingly contradictory lifestyles that urban citizens embrace and take for granted. Urban worlds are riddled with danger, hostility, loneliness, and fragmentation, and people flock there to be together, have fun, belong to others, and fall in love. The urban world is where the money is, and people who work within its boundaries barely subsist. One area of urban life where such contradictions appear is in the fast-food delivery business. In this world, drivers navigate through dangerous territory, create insulated webs of togetherness, and confront and create hostile environments while obtaining few tangible rewards.

In this article, we explore how pizza delivery drivers resolve definitions of their job as promoting sociability and self-worth, on one hand, and as involving ventures into hostile worlds for little economic reward, on the other hand. In this vein, we locate pizza drivers in a social context that is analogous to the worlds of other occupational groups who experience danger on the job. In his study of cab drivers, for instance, Davis (1959) noted that some occupations are defined explicitly by how well employees can navigate their environments as they make adaptations and adjustments to emergent problematic dangers.

We ask how pizza drivers reconcile the dilemma of participating in worlds where the economic benefits are often less than the perceived costs of involving themselves in high-risk activities. To answer this question, one of the coauthors (heretofore known as "Crash") spent eighteen months as a pizza delivery person at three different locales. Written recollections of interactions with drivers will serve as the basis of our understanding how these drivers perceived, adjusted to, and adapted to the urban world of transactions and interactions.

We first describe the procedures by which Crash gained entry into the worlds of pizza drivers, the study sites associated with this entry, and the other drivers with whom Crash interacted. Second, we iterate a sociology of risk taking and explore some of the social conditions associated within a "risk-taking culture." Third, we examine the drivers' risk-taking culture in regard to institutional responses (on the part of pizza chains) and to how drivers employ vocabularies of motive to justify risk taking. Fourth, we locate a risk-taking culture in the context of situated adaptations that involve a series of identity displays. These displays not only insulate pizza delivery personnel and promote solidarity but also differentiate the drivers from others outside of their risk-taking worlds. In this vein, we provide a sociological description of this risk-taking culture as a hyper-masculine social world. Fifth, we distinguish some of the individual adaptations employed by drivers in the risk-taking culture and provide descriptions of the social types that characterize these adaptations. Finally, we compare the solidarity associ-

ated with this particular risk-taking culture with other occupational groups who also incorporate risks into their sociological community.

PERSPECTIVES AND PROCEDURES

Crash became a participant observer at three pizza delivery establishments in Fort Worth, Texas, over an eighteen-month period, from September 1992 to March 1994. During this time, Crash spent an average of fifteen hours a week working as a driver. The hours were divided up as shift work, generally three a week, spread across all days of the week and all time periods of operation. Although Crash worked at three different pizza delivery services, his primary place of employment was at Mister Gadfly's, where he worked for thirteen months. Crash used two other delivery services, Mah Jong's (for three months) and Pizza House (for four months) to evaluate his primary observations in terms of generalizability.

As the one generating and collecting data, Crash employed the ethnographic strategy of positioning himself as a "fellow traveler researcher" (see Snow and Anderson's [1993] notion of the "buddy researcher"). The fellow traveler establishes an "active membership role" (Adler and Adler 1987, 35) and participates in the central and routine activities of the group targeted for study. The fellow traveler, however, does not necessarily commit himself or herself to the normative order of the group or embrace its values or beliefs. The primary requirement of the traveler is to "walk the walk" or, in this case, demonstrate competence and bravado in the face of performing a seemingly dangerous task.

"Gaining entry" (for a general discussion of this process, see Hessler 1992, 207-21) into this particular group required both formal and informal application and admission. In that collectives of delivery personnel are organized through a formal authority structure, Crash applied to these agencies as a first step to group entrance. Defining the groups to study, then, became based on Crash's acceptability as an employee. After

securing employment, Crash worked at informal acceptance into the core group of “regulars” working at a given establishment (see Katovich and Reese [1987] for a full discussion of this concept). In the course of gaining acceptance, Crash observed ongoing interactions at the scenes, interviewed drivers, and later made written recordings of his observations and drivers’ statements.

Crash made no attempt to conceal his professorial identity to the management or workers at any of the establishments. His status as “somebody else” with other “going concerns” was not unusual in this environment. Most drivers had primary employment elsewhere, and their positions were of higher social status than pizza driver (e.g., fire department lieutenant, air force pilot, high school teacher). While Crash did mention his research interest in delivery and types of people making the delivery to the other drivers, he maintained a low profile as a researcher. Other drivers facilitated Crash “playing down” his identity as researcher. When Crash told them about his research interests, most regarded the idea that their activities and selves might be of academic interest as implausible. Thus a sort of built-in “pre-tense awareness context” afforded Crash the luxury of being openly observant and curious about drivers’ activities without causing reactivity.

CONTEXTUAL FEATURES OF THE RESEARCH SITES

All three pizza delivery agencies were take-out or pickup stores. Although Mister Gadget’s did offer a small seating area, customers rarely used it, except as a place to wait for an order to be completed for take out. The gender breakdown and management makeup for larger pizza restaurants in the study site areas were distinctly different from these take-out restaurant hubs. A survey of all the other known pizza restaurants in these delivery areas revealed a far greater percentage of female employees (primarily as waiters or chefs), with greater numbers within their respective management teams.

Each study site encompassed the same delivery area, approximately sixteen square miles, and operated under the same general rules of delivery, a ten-minute out-the-door time and a thirty-minute delivery expectation. The employee roster size for each establishment varied according to hiring and resignation ratios but had an average of eighteen workers across institutions and the research period at any given time. Approximately 75 percent to 80 percent of these worked as drivers.

Crash observed a total of 106 drivers across the study period and the three study sites. This population does not include management or "inside" help (those employees who did nothing but take orders or prepare food). Demographically, four characteristics of this group broadly defined the driver community: (1) race, (2) gender, (3) outside employment, and (4) length of time employed as a driver. The outside employment for the drivers is broken into three categories. The "masculine" category includes such occupations as policing, fire department personnel, military service, and security personnel. The time employed is broken into two categories: long term and short term. Although this specific schism might be generally divided around the three-month mark of employment, it conceptually occurred when the new driver (called the "fish") became accepted into the community and became a driver. Table 1 provides a statistical summary of the drivers' demographic characteristics.

DANGEROUS WORLDS OF DELIVERY

While attacks on pizza delivery drivers are publicized, they remain undocumented statistically and systematically.¹ Even so, pizza deliverers often recount their circumstances and define the possibility of reoccurrence as not only real but potentially imminent. A common exit dialogue that occurred between drivers as one left the restaurant would begin when the exiting driver asked, "Hey, does everyone remember where my next of kin can be reached?" At this cue, a "down" (not delivering) driver would respond, "Don't worry, if you're not back

Table 1: Demographic Breakdown of Driver Sample

	<i>Number</i>
Race	
Caucasian	95
Black	8
Other	3
Gender	
Male	95
Female	11
Outside employment	
Masculine	28
Other	44
None	34
Time employed	
Long term	63
Short term	43

in an hour, we'll come lookin'." Such exchanges validate the perceived risks shared by those working as drivers. Further, intermittent attacks (Steckner 1993; O'Brien 1993; Sullivan 1993) are enough evidence from the point of view of pizza deliverers to suggest a violent world and invite perceptions of their jobs as "high risk." Such perceived risks are not restricted to assault. Delivery vehicle theft, traffic accidents, and store robbery remind pizza deliverers that the possibility of emergent and significant disturbances continually cloud their work.

Drivers regarded themselves as risk takers who perform tasks in dangerous situations. As one driver stated when asked why he continued driving despite some highly publicized attacks on delivery personnel, "I'm badass and I like the juice!" He seemed exhilarated by the perception of himself as an individual capable of handling danger. In this light, drivers see the delivery routes as not only part of their job but as problematic, or a type of "action" that involves taking chances and putting one's life in danger for purposes of testing one's skill to get out of danger (see Goffman 1967, 185). The "juice" allows drivers to appreciate just how consequential their jobs can be.

Several broad-based factors and specific incidents contributed to these perceptions. First, among all pizza drivers in the city, near-fatal violent, criminal, and accidental events occurred

during the eighteen months of observation.² Among the three sites we investigated in particular, two drivers were robbed, one with a gun and the other with a knife. Eight known "car tailings" occurred. These involved unknown followers of delivery persons for unknown reasons. Two of these evolved into full car chases. Further, four auto accidents occurred between drivers and the public, including one involving Crash, which explains his nickname. In each case, drivers prided themselves on exhibiting what Goffman (1967, 217) called character in the process of maintaining their cool.

Second, while crime in Fort Worth had been dropping overall during the study period,³ two negative realities concerning criminality in this city remained apparent. One, irrespective of the drops in measured criminality, the perceptions of crime as a threat to individual safety in Fort Worth worsened over the time interval in question (Smith 1994).⁴ Two, in a national assessment of citizenry safety among the hundred largest cities in the nation (those with more than 175,000 residents), Fort Worth ranks 68 (Stebbins 1995). Thus, although the city's crime problem has improved, citizens, including the drivers studied, regarded the threat of violence as a major problem and its actuality as a probability.

According to Lyng (1990), risk-taking cultures celebrate activity that removes individuals from day-to-day comfort zones and forces them to confront life-threatening danger "head on." Such activity, or edgework, involves sequences of confronting danger that include "planning, purposive and flexible action, [and] concentration" (Lyng 1990, 415). Risk taking in the form of edgework provides "daredevils" with specialized identities that become interpreted as definitions of the self. Edgeworkers see themselves as people of and within the action who discover the "truth" about themselves as they confront danger and survive.

Edgework becomes all the more interesting in the context of a "payoff." While some occupations link risk taking to economic consequences (e.g., traders in stock exchanges), other, more working-class, occupations associate risk taking with interpersonal badges of courage rather than with economic or career

opportunities. Part of the working-class logic described by Willis (1977) contains a contradiction between striving to excel on the job and being able to engage in behavior that has nonconventional rewards (i.e., nonmonetary) in the context of the job. The pizza drivers in our study displayed pride in their ability to confront danger in emergent and sometimes unpredictable ways, without giving much thought to how such an ability could result in an economic payoff. This pride in the emergent accomplishment of survival bolstered the formation of a risk-taking culture among the drivers.

Actors in such cultures share histories as people who have survived dangerous experiences and acknowledge narratives of survival. Such narratives range from exchanging stories about brushes with danger to projecting future scenarios about what any given person would do when confronted with a life-threatening experience. Within such cultures, then, participants understand that they not only share an orientation or attitude to confront danger but that they exist and act amid danger and thus share experiences as actors in dangerous situations (cf. Melbin 1978).

As noted earlier, confronting danger in seemingly hostile worlds can be used as sources of solidary activities and as focal points for conversations, get-togethers, and relationship building (see Lucas 1969). At Mister Gadfly's, for example, it was a common occurrence to remain after-hours or return after-hours to drink beer (or hard liquor) and talk about the job. Almost every driver had some personal incident to recount, whether it would be a robbery, chase, or accident. Each person involved would join in these narrative experiences, adding his own embellishments. In these contexts, drivers also would give accounts of personal bravado outside of their delivery activity and encourage others to participate. Often drivers would say things such as, "I just ran the outskirts" (drove a perimeter road outside of the Fort Worth city limits at exceptionally high speeds) and then offer invitations or challenges to those listening to come along "next time." Such histories become the solidary rewards, mentioned earlier, that add social meaning to their personal risk taking.

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE TO DANGER

All three study sites offered safety training to their employees. This practice seems to be an industry norm for pizza delivery companies and a standard practice across all delivery agencies (Stavish 1994). The type of training offered was, however, minimal at best. In one company, a "Rules of Safety" video was loaned for the driver to watch at home; in two of the three agencies, the new driver was given a safety manual to read; and in all three companies, crew meetings were held in which in-service discussions were held concerning customer service and driver safety. The rules that were imposed concerning driver safety at all three establishments were fundamentally commonsense suggestions, as opposed to specific operating procedures. Examples include such dictums as, "Do not deliver to houses where 'suspicious activity is evident'"; "Always light the 'shell' when on deliveries" (lighted signs that are attached to the vehicle of a delivery driver); and "Leave headlights on when completing deliveries in dark areas" (*Mister Gadfly's Safety Manual* 1990). Overall, the management and the manuals of all of the different companies created a sense that the driver's discretion ultimately determined whether a delivery would be completed to a given location or in an emergent circumstance.⁵ Irrespective of this claim of driver discretion, management communicated formal and informal expectations to attempt delivery and strongly implied that they would levy sanctions in cases of incomplete deliveries.⁶

Drivers understood management's position and felt accountable for any incident that occurred on delivery. They viewed delivery as their "choice" and defined consequences as a result of *their* action. Thus drivers appeared to internalize management's victim-blaming ideology (see, e.g., Von Hentig 1941) to the extent that they accepted the "burden of accountability" (Sheley 1995, 155). In adopting this perspective, the drivers cooperated to shift the responsibility for a mishap from a store policy that puts the driver at risk to the driver's decision to ignore store policy when taking a risk (see Karmen 1981).

Indications of this shift in responsibility often occurred after major accidents, when the "driver-victim" typically faced a variety of taunts from his peers. The general sense of this barrage is best encapsulated by a statement made to a driver who had just been robbed. "Man," the coworker/critic suggested, "you really fucked up!" To this the driver/victim sheepishly said, "Yeah, it sucks to be me." But then another would quickly divert attention from the responsible driver to joke about how other drivers "lost it" in similar situations. As one driver told another critic, "If that would have happened to you, you would have released the 'brown mist.'" This and other comments like it inspire group laughter and enjoin the critic and victim as apparent equals. In this way, humor, jocularly, and sarcasm became the source of mutually supportive signals that we mentioned earlier and contributed to participants' commitment to solidary associations in a seemingly impersonal and hostile environment (see Seckman and Couch 1989).

While those avoiding trouble sympathized with contrite victims and shared a "there but for the grace of God . . ." perspective, they also demonstrated pride in being "victimization free" for as long as they drove. In this vein, accepting a victim-blaming ideology allowed for consonance between the risk that incurred and the reward for incurring it. Independent of any tangible gain, drivers felt that one key reward for driving involved completing deliveries "without a hitch." They could correlate completed "missions" with self-worth. As one driver put it when talking about his record of no assaults on the job and his peer-acknowledged speed in delivery, "I'm just too sexy for my green stripes." Green stripes is a reference to the driver's uniform, and, in this case, being sexy referred to his superior achievements.

The above correlation ties victim blaming to both "attribution error" (Jones and Nisbett 1972; Ross 1977) and "just world" hypotheses (cf. Lerner 1965) in that nonvictimized drivers saw their worlds as populated by people who get what they deserve and deserve what they get (Karmen 1990, 122). However, drivers created a parataxic mode of perceiving such events (Vaught and Smith 1980, 168) by assigning identities to those who were

assaulted. Such identities became part of the argot of the place. These nicknames became a basis for symbolically transforming impersonal attacks into personal monikers. Drivers who experienced trouble on a "run" became "dinks" or "screwups." When two or more drivers experienced some kind of assault, they noted each other as "fellow dinks" who now shared a common past.

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS OF REWARDS IN RISK-TAKING CULTURES

In the face of concerns with safety and definitions of risk, Crash asked all drivers why they had accepted the position. The new drivers would answer, "for the money" or "because the hours are convenient in relation to my other job." These answers seemed to be consistent with newspaper reports of how overqualified workers responded to an economic downturn in Fort Worth by accepting minimum-wage jobs and taking on secondary positions in the workforce.

Drivers' vocabularies of motives (Mills 1940), however, do not adequately explain a continuance in the job. The money advertised as a potential income for a newly hired driver is "up to \$10 an hour." This amount is the total of a \$4.25 minimum wage, an allowance for gas (this ranged from \$.35 to \$.50 per run), and any tips received. Except during times of extreme rush, the money made was significantly less than the outward limit suggested in the recruitment advertisements. Over the course of the study period and across the three establishments, Crash earned an average of \$5.86 an hour. Although this is higher than minimum wage, several other fast-food restaurants in the study areas were advertising starting salaries of up to \$6 an hour, without associated risks.

In regard to convenience of the working schedule, management assigned very nonspecific hours to an individual driver in each of the three study establishments. A driver would be asked to work "rush," "late," or "close." The actual logged hours were determined at the time of the shift in relation to the sales of the day. Although this system maximized the efficiency of the labor

utilization for the establishment, it was at the expense of the individual driver. Workers coming in for shifts could be sent home without having worked at all or after working only minutes because of lack of orders. The “convenience in work hours” is not substantiated when one arranges personal schedules to include work when none, in fact, is available or when shift salary money is counted on when one is not being allowed to earn any.⁷

Approximately three of every five hires stayed long enough to be adopted into the driver community, to become “long-term employees.” The views of these drivers were distinctly different on this issue than the employees just hired. In discussing the reasons why one might continue working in the adverse conditions that drivers routinely face, the dominant line of reasoning taken by the long-term employee was that they were enjoying themselves. For some, the loose supervisory circumstances allowed the individual a great deal of freedom in the way the job was completed. As one driver put it:

Where else could I get paid to drive around listening to music with a joint hangin' out of my mouth?

Another individual suggested that his feelings toward his co-workers kept him driving. As he put it:

This place is a zoo, but no one would believe the people working here. . . . I mean I love the animals. . . . Even “Crazy Mike” [a nickname given to one driver] has grown on me.

Again, in reference to Simmel's (1950) view of urban life, long-term drivers also expressed the importance of accumulating experiences common to others' experiences and being able to create a shared social world on the basis of these commonalities. They saw their jobs as a way of solving the problem of loneliness in an urban environment while maximizing their freedom to engage in nonconventional activity and relationships on the job. Long-term drivers drive because of the action and the solidary associations they can create in their urban worlds. Rather than treat seemingly impersonal urban environments as sources of isolation, urban actors close to the action create cooperative adjustments to build solidary associations.

BONDING EXPERIENCES: INVIDIOUS COMPARISONS

Taking pride in transcending the comfortable and ordinary allowed drivers to establish camaraderie from such pursuits. They also engaged in ritualistic ceremonies that alluded to the risks they took. Subsequent to sharing histories as edgeworkers and acknowledging the legitimacy of edgework identities, drivers enacted repeated and ritualistic behaviors to remind each other that risks are imminent. Ceremonial reminders of risks also involved targeting or scapegoating others whom drivers perceived as responsible for the dangers. Among these drivers, many of the ceremonies enforced a "we versus they" ethic, often bounded by the lines of sexism and racism. Similar to other locales that support, almost exclusively, male bonding, the male pizza drivers created some solidarity alignments by denigrating members of different races, ethnicities, and gender. They created a solidarity that required ritualistic put-downs of self, other, and symbolic types on the basis of negative attitudes toward others.

Edgeworking does tend to promote an insulated environment wherein negative attitudes toward others can be announced, validated, and ultimately expected. Those not accustomed to such ritualistic put-downs or not accepting of them faced the dilemma of either "going along to get along" (see Asch's [1951] discussion of "distorting judgment") or leaving the environment. Some, such as Crash, did manage to maintain role distance from such rituals but at the expense of not being treated as a full-fledged member of the risk-taking culture.

Owing to these conditions for solidary associations, drivers adapted to situational identities of racists and sexists as they fit into the driver community. Such identities, which were particular announcements in the work environment, provided the groundwork on which negative attitudes and prejudices toward others could be voiced and accepted. As this culture was primarily White and working class, it was not surprising that frequent targets of such prejudice were Blacks and females.

In regard to Blacks, drivers exhibited stereotypes of the violent perpetrator that corresponded to the public's image of

“the criminal” as a young, unemployed, Black male (Graber 1980). This male served as the “threatening other” who creates “the risk” in the drivers’ world and became the focus of ritualistic and racist expression. When a driver’s “run” (delivery address) took him to a neighborhood with a high concentration of minority residence, the down drivers would call out the address and suggest the driver leaving had better go “undercover.” The driver taking the run in question would make a show of “flashing gang signs” and “sagging his pants” (pulling them down in the fashion contemporary with urban youth) and stating in a Hispanic or Black dialect:

Yo, Homie, goin’ to showdog’s house to drink a forty ounce.

In addition to such group displays, conversations with many of the individual drivers, especially surrounding the issues of crime and criminality, would typically be punctuated with derogatory racial references. For example, when the driver groups discussed the two most high-profile delivery attacks of the time, the Tucker assault (Council 1993) and the Carson killing (Blow 1992), most of the drivers, without any knowledge of the facts, assigned the race of the perpetrators as Black. Even when the perpetrators became known as Caucasian, the racist commentary continued. As one driver put it:

Jigs are always doing shit like that.

Such racism seemed to become intensified through contact with this group (e.g., see Allport [1958] for a discussion of racism as a result of group learning) and thus served a variety of group-related functions. Similar to Quinney’s (1970) notion of mythic images used to create a “social reality of crime,” drivers used racism to make their uncertain world understandable and controllable. Perpetuating the racist image of the “typical criminal” allowed drivers to identify threats while empowering them in relation to that confrontation. Sheley and Ashkins (1981) developed a similar argument in regard to White middle-class news consumers who fill in the image of the young Black male when reading about those who perpetrate threatening acts. In this regard, collective expression of stereotypes allowed for

charismatic transactions, or "shared gripe sessions" (Couch 1989), and identified real and imagined villains on which to blame circumstances. Such identification allowed drivers to vent personal frustrations and feelings in a supportive collective (cf. Dollard 1939; Kappeler, Blumberg, and Potter 1993, 3).

In regard to sexism, the drivers' world is "hypermasculine" (Surette 1992, 143) and sexist (Neubeck 1991, 282) in that it reinforces traditionally held perceptions of the male personae as strong, nonexpressive, aggressive, and dominant in relation to women. While often contradicted in their everyday talk and behaviors (the drivers expressed fears, revealed weaknesses, emoted frequently), maintenance of the aforementioned perceptions counteracted obvious insecurities and fears about their occupational risks. Further, enactment of perceptions became manifest in group rituals and displays of machismo.

For instance, one common ritual display of sexism involved the telling of the "delivery person sex myth." Many drivers across all three study sites told this misogynistic story that suggested the teller had a personal experience of wanton sex with a flirtatious customer. As the story is typically related, a female customer, either dressed provocatively or completely nude, meets the unsuspecting driver at her doorway and invites him in to receive a "special tip." As described generally, the tip consists of a sex act in which the female supplicates herself to the driver. These stories are generally met with a great deal of skepticism on the part of the other drivers but they will, nevertheless, be told repeatedly with conviction. Invariably, this will lead into more talk of individual sexual prowess. Overall, the created social environment alienated women drivers to the point that most left quickly.

Of the eleven female drivers, four are known to the investigator to have left because they specifically felt harassed. Of the three female drivers who became long-term employees, all recognized the sexist environment but dealt with it in ways that specifically suited their own ends and needs. One responded by adopting a male attitude and demeanor, using abusive language and misogynistic "hacks" or insults in response to other drivers. She also made claims of typically masculine

prowess in relation to sports and fighting. The other two adopted a sexually submissive role in relation to the other drivers, playing off jokes about their "bedroom" desires and preferences and becoming sexually involved with some of the other drivers.

Although this hypermasculine mythology supports male cultural hegemony, it is not intended to degrade females as much as it works to bolster males' sense of belonging to each other. Lyman (1987) discusses the functions of fraternity jokes in much the same manner. These jokes, often told in mixed company by college fraternity members, clearly offend female listeners. Yet the male tellers of these jokes, beyond suggesting they are harmless, also assert they work to reinforce male solidarity and a masculine environment. Further, it has been suggested that such rituals are apparent in other traditionally male workplaces (e.g., among lumberjacks [Haynes 1945], in the military [Smith 1989], and on sports teams [Bryson 1987]). The rituals function to allow for a sense of togetherness within the masculine collective.

Drivers used other hypermasculine behaviors and rituals to bolster and solidify membership in an emergent culture. As Willis (1977) noted, working-class cultures are prone to create extensions of their solidary associations outside the workplace. In effect, the culture moves outside, from a small group within a specified workplace to a group that navigates through other male-oriented places within the community at large.

Probably the most easily recognizable of these behaviors is the emphasis in general conversation on traditionally masculine interests. Two groups of drivers from different establishments would, for example, get together regularly to attend gun shows, and three of the drivers were known to hold their own licenses for gun sales. These and other enthusiasts would discuss weaponry, often as it specifically related to urban street survival. Sporting endeavors of various sorts were also a regular topic of discussion. In addition to the typical discussions of the popular team sports, however, individual martial sports also were heavily emphasized. On several occasions, groups of drivers could be found in the back room reenacting or demonstrating fighting techniques. Several drivers professed to be practitioners of various forms of martial arts. Cars were also a

regular topic of discussion. Drivers would not only talk of their exploits behind the wheel but would typically work on their automobiles in their off-hours with other drivers or at the restaurant to solicit help and insight. All of these overt community interests created a strongly masculine arena for the individual driver to assert his own prowess and, perhaps more important, gain confidence in it.

Again, drivers used a parataxic vocabulary (Vaught and Smith 1980) to create "an encapsulated enclave" for the purpose of building solidarity through flattering and pejorative labels. For instance, *hack* and *dog* are commonly used terms to reinforce masculinity and establish one's place among his driving peers. Most simply described, drivers are "hacking" when they are insulting or tormenting each other in front of an audience of peers. The general idea is to gain the most audience approval at the expense of the opponent. More often than not, the contest will involve questioning other drivers' masculinity and sexual orientation. In other words, the purpose of the contest is to bolster one's own sense of masculinity (and those characteristics that go with it) by symbolically denying it to another.

Precedence for these types of contests are not uncommon. Katovich and Reese (1987, 319) make reference to the "character contests" that will erupt between "regulars" or between regulars and others in an urban bar. Goffman (1961) describes an analogous phenomenon as a "status bloodbath," Labov (1972) as a "dozens game" within Black subculture, and Kottack (1975, 140) as a "song contest" in nomadic Eskimo society. Although there is variation in how such a contest would unfold across the study sites involved in this research, in all driver communities studied, these contests would have a ritualized opening. At Mister Gadfly's, for example, the aggressor would generally walk up to his target opponent, pretend as if this individual were whispering something, and then loudly exclaim in a horrified voice to any others around, "You'd do what for a dollar!" The dollar is the minimum hoped for tip amount given to a driver on a run, and the implication of the statement is to

suggest that the target has offered oral sex to the aggressor for that amount. The contest would evolve from there, until one or the other contestants disengaged.

IDENTITY ASSIGNMENTS AND ADAPTATIONS

Assignments are personalized nicknames given by the group to “tag” individual characteristics manifested by a particular driver. Drivers continually proffer unique identities to accompany the job. While such identities contribute to the driver community, they do not serve to specifically mediate between the driver and the larger social environment. The ascription of an identity acts to serve as a signifier of one’s acceptance into a community (Katovich and Reese 1987), gives status definition, and works toward the implicit goal of strength through solidarity. The same phenomenon can be observed in other traditionally masculine collectives, such as fighter pilot squads and sports teams. Whereas the air is full of pilots using the call signs of “Maverick,” “Iceman,” and “Viper,” the streets are filled with drivers called “Catfish,” “Psycho,” and “Chief.” The names, understood by those within the collective, create a boundary with those who are not a part of the group.

On the other hand, adaptations occur in response to a stressful environment and allow workers to justify their participation in such an environment. As Sykes (1958) noted, such adaptations allow participants of any world to understand and contend with their circumstances. Adaptations define the parameters of behaviors in relation to ambiguous circumstance. In regard to drivers, specific adaptations inform their responses to any perceived threat or personal conflict that they might be experiencing. When a driver receives a run with an address in a known problem area, the driver will activate an adaptation to guide the presentation of his personal anticipation of the run and deal with the other drivers’ reactions to his assignment.

In this context, five adaptations have been identified. Each will be discussed specifically.

The comedian. The individual who has adopted this role will use humor to neutralize or trivialize the personal and group anxiety that is felt over suspicious runs or runs into perceptibly high-risk neighborhoods. When the comedian is leaving on a problematic run, he might, for example, begin a ritual group singing of "Deliverin' a Pizza." The beginning lyrics of this song are as follows (sung to the tune of "Going to the Chapel"):

Deliverin' a pizza
and I'm gonna get murdered.
Deliverin' a pizza
and I'm gonna get murdered.
Deliverin' a pizza
and I'm gonna get murdered.
Gotta' deliver to hell.

Another example of a ritualistic response to the undesirable run for the comedian would be for him to announce the address of the delivery and ask the rest of the collective "if any one can give me [the driver] directions?" The responses given will invariably suggest something about the undesirable nature of the neighborhood. "Yeah, I know that place, turn left at the first burning trash can you come to" or "It's next door to the chalk outline." The comedian will both direct this form of black humor toward other drivers and cause others to direct it back toward himself.

The adventurer. This individual will claim to invite problems and look forward to testing himself in dangerous situations. This particular group is most easily identified by their tendency to carry weapons on delivery. Several drivers claimed to carry bats or nightsticks in their cars to deal with any problem that might emerge. And, although this is specifically against the company policy of all chains involved, several drivers also alluded to the fact that they occasionally do carry handguns. One driver made this claim specifically and suggested he did so on a regular basis. Another identifiable characteristic of the adventurer is his willingness to explain "what he woulda' done"

in a given dangerous situation. An incident experienced by someone in the store or heard about through a secondary source would immediately draw their comment. When discussing violence against pizza drivers, for example, one adventurer states,

I hope they try that shit on me, I would blow their fuckin' heads off.

The denier. This individual attempts to neutralize anxiety by suggesting that the problem does not exist or that, minimally, it is overexaggerated. When these drivers are "hacked" about their ill fortune in drawing a potentially problematic run, they will respond that "it's [the area to which they are being sent] not so bad" or "that nothing is going to happen." When confronted with specific examples of problems that have occurred to others in their circumstance, they will invariably blame the incident on the person involved as opposed to risk in the environment. A denier, when commenting on a robbery that had occurred to another driver on a different shift, suggested, for example, that

he [the other driver] should have been more careful. I woulda' never delivered it.

Interestingly, the address and area in which this particular incident took place were commonly delivered to and, to the knowledge of the observer, never refused by the management or any particular driver.

The fatalist. This individual recognizes and admits the risk and simply accepts it without any effort to neutralize it either within the context of the delivery or in relation to the group. Neutralization would, however, occur on the individual level in that the fatalist disavows personal responsibility for what happens to him. Any outcome, positive or negative, for a given run is out of his hands and therefore should not be a source of anxiety. When this type of individual was hacked, a typical response was, "Why worry, life sucks, and then you die."

The pro. This type of individual generally has a long history with the delivery business, has worked for several pizza services, and, most commonly, has worked as at least an assistant

manager, if not a manager, at one of these other stores. The pro will take a commonsense approach to the issue of risk during job performance, not attempting to minimize its reality but neither allowing it to disempower nor evoke any sort of extreme attempt at self-empowerment. The pro who is hacked will generally shrug off the attack by adopting any of the responses that may be more typical of a different role, but only as it suits him and never consistently. The pro may joke with the comedian, cross words with the adventurer, support the denier, or empathize with the fatalist, but, in truth, he is none of these. The pro is doing his job within the management's set parameters and with the least amount of personal risk possible.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Yoels and Clair (1995, 39) noted that while "to be or not to be" remains the key existential question, "to belong or not to belong" is the social question. Simmel (1950) and later thinkers such as Goffman (1961) recognized the important tensions between the existential and the social as they wrestled with how an independent self can be maintained by and through participation in the social. Drivers' urban experiences and associations allowed for personalized conceptions of the self as they became situated in reference to organizational and social identities. Their combined conceptions of themselves as existential risk takers who belong to a community of others derived from, in part, their high-risk and low-pay occupation and solidarity from hypermasculine bonding.

In this light, drivers resemble other types of workers who acquire situated identities in enclosed and predominantly masculine occupations, including pipeline construction workers (Graves 1958), coal miners (Lucas 1969), voluntary firefighters (Lozier 1976), and sailors (Zurcher 1965). Drivers also resemble a wide range of male social types, from those who occupy regular status in specialized third places (see Duneier 1992; Oldenburg 1991) to edgeworkers who routinely face "the most dreaded and unpredictable forces" (Perkins 1987, 343). Each

of these groups and occupations create prosocial ties on the basis of common and shared pasts and derive solidary rewards on the basis of constructing pejorative labels that could be considered racist and sexist (see Abadinsky 1990, 227).

Recognizing these similarities, the central focus of this work—specifically, why an individual would enter into and maintain commitment to a high-risk, low-paid occupation—might now be readdressed. Drivers participate in their work for the “thrill of the edge” and because of the empowerment that the group circumstance offers in relation to a relatively lonely and impersonal urban world. These, however, are not the sole reasons that might explain how these organizations retain stability in their membership. Two others, the provision of fraternity and the opportunity for play, might be viewed as equally important.

Drivers seem to regard fraternity as more important than monetary reward or control of one’s time. As with other male-oriented occupations, fraternity inspires commitment to both accountability and “delights in deviance” on the job (see Haas 1977). Members of all these collectives not only create play out of work through ritualized risk but also use the fraternity of the group to organize play through work (Henderson 1984). For instance, Perkins (1987, 343) has observed that in the context of work, voluntary firefighters spend their time “telling jokes, constructing stereotypes about other departments, practicing for competitions, gearing up for fund raisers, entering parades, and generally creating organizational folklore.” Similarly, “binging” by steelworkers (Haas 1972) or “razzing” by coal miners (Vaught and Smith 1980) offers participants a way to ease into fraternal associations while keeping surface realities light and flexible.

Sociologists who have studied urban society in general agree that, for better or worse, people form small social groups to “carve out a niche” in the context of an impersonal milieu. Individuals assign significance to such smaller collectives, even if they promote personal dysfunctions (Banton and Sills 1968). While negative sentiments, such as racist and sexist attitudes, do not serve as stable grounds for enduring collectivities, the need to belong, play, and be identified within the safety of a

collective supersedes this negative for the participant. The quest for the social does not always produce politically correct results, but it continues to define urban dwellers as they seek to enfranchise themselves within collectivities.

NOTES

1. Statistics on attacks on retail delivery personnel are difficult to acquire. Most retail corporations that offer delivery also franchise their stores and therefore do not keep centralized data on these incidents (Stavish 1994). Pizza delivery is no different. Law enforcement records of robbery, assault, and murder, moreover, do not break down these criminal events by this particular situational characteristic. Nonetheless, some evidence does exist that these types of attacks are becoming the norm for delivery jobs. As an index of this phenomenon, attacks on civil service delivery agents—specifically, post office personnel—increased more than 213 percent between 1989 and 1994 (Stavish 1994). Moreover, anecdotal evidence suggests that many of the large metropolitan areas, particularly Chicago, Miami, and New York, have severe problems with assaults involving retail delivery personnel (Stavish 1994).

2. On June 4, 1993, four teenagers attacked David Tucker as he entered an apartment complex to deliver a pizza. As one of the teens shot hairspray into his eyes, the other three tied his hands and forced him into the back of his own pickup truck. The teens then drove Tucker to an isolated field where they beat him, stabbed him repeatedly, slit his throat, and left him for dead. Tucker survived the attack and lived to see the teens sentenced for their assault (Council 1993).

3. In 1994, crime had reached a post-1979 low (Dilanian 1994). This included a 35 percent decrease in major crimes since 1991. The numbers of crimes of violence in Fort Worth across the years of concern were as follows (Baker 1995):

<i>Offense</i>	<i>Number of Crimes</i>			<i>Change (%)</i>
	<i>1992</i>	<i>1993</i>	<i>1994</i>	
Homicide	154	135	132	-2
Rape	525	507	132	-19
Robbery	3,488	2,750	2,379	-13
Aggravated assault	5,226	3,589	3,111	-13

4. An annual city survey in 1994 suggested that more than 40 percent of the Fort Worth population “did not feel safe walking alone in their neighborhood at night.” This was almost three times the rate of concern as expressed in 1992 through the same survey and question (the actual percentage jump was from 15.5 percent in 1992 to 43.1 percent in 1994).

5. Such discretion was, to the researcher’s knowledge or experience, never used in the study period, despite stories of delivery circumstance that certainly could be described as suspicious, if not dangerous.

6. At two of the study sites, management told Crash that should a driver be involved in an accident or robbery, immediate suspension and possible termination could result. The postal service has a similar policy concerning dog bites for their personnel; the individual involved will be suspended. The stated management justification for these policies centers on the need to determine whether the employee exercised the proper discretion as opposed to putting himself or herself needlessly at risk.

7. Employee turnover is then relatively high in these establishments. Over the study period and across the three establishments, approximately 41 percent of the new hires quit before three months had passed; 6 percent quit during or immediately after a single shift.

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