

1 Article

2 **Violence as an Environmentally Warranted Norm amongst**
3 **Working-Class Teenage Boys in Glasgow.**

4
5 *'If some cunt tried tae attack me...I'd severely fuck the faggot up and he'd no be*
6 *trying it again' – (Derek)*

7
8 *'I stayed in (Glasgow area) and knew everybody, but this place is junkies,*
9 *immigrants, and that sort of people. I always keep a chib (Weapon) [in case*
10 *confronted by a would-be assailant]' – (Bob)*

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14 **Abstract:** This study aims to contribute to our knowledge about contexts of violent
15 assault perpetrated by white working-class teenage boys in Scotland. Despite
16 studies exploring Scotland's adolescent street gangs, there remains a gap in
17 research where the collateral damage caused by gangs to others of the same class,
18 age and gender has gone unrecognized. Drawing upon insights from qualitative
19 interviews with young, male, former offenders in Scotland we found that violence
20 contains a strategic logic designed to foster bonding to a delinquent group, whilst
21 offering a celebrity status and manliness. The co-presence of a violent culture
22 worsens the likelihood of ameliorating mentalities associated with anti-social
23 behaviors which appear endemic to masculinity. That context of violence is
24 associated with the criminal offending of boys who, though they may not be gang
25 members, are nevertheless 'contaminated' by the aggressive shadow cast by the
26 protest masculinity of gang-conflicted territories in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

27 **Keywords:** gangs; violence; Scotland; sub-culture; Glasgow

28
29 **Context**

30 The functionality of violence can be glimpsed in the quotations above; it serves a
31 retaliatory role and is required for personal protection. Whilst these functions are
32 examples of its warrant, the verbal idiom crafts a deeper narrative concerning
33 hegemonic masculinity. Adolescence is not necessarily a period of storm and stress:
34 there may be a smooth transition from childhood into adulthood depending upon
35 the culture through which this 'rite of passage' articulates (Zhang 2008). For the
36 working-class teenage Glaswegian boys who participated in the current study it is,
37 however, a process of 'edge work' required for survival in potentially emasculating
38 material and political conditions. If Bauman (2004) is correct in arguing that we
39 inhabit a 'liquid modernity' characterized by the demise of tradition, rapid pace of

40 social change and instability, then we would expect the 'rite of passage' for
41 adolescents in excluded areas to be tortuous. Neither 'Bob' or 'Derek' seem to know
42 those around them, and so personify the anomie associated with 'liquid modernity'
43 and resonate with Walker's (2006) emphasis on an anomic form of 'protest
44 masculinity'. Our study's focus upon the societal perceptions of marginalized youth
45 offers a micro-sociological examination of Bauman's thesis. Our research question
46 asks what resources do teenage boys draw upon to construct the social realities in
47 chronically poor criminogenic neighborhoods? How does their 'protest masculinity'
48 connect with a sense of place? In liquid modernity, welfare provision, so important
49 to the well-being of those marginalized by globalization, is a financial burden on the
50 community, and the excluded are re-cast as lazy and indulgent (Best 2016). Laslett
51 describes how status in the pre-industrial world accompanied occupation. In the
52 post-industrial landscape, the material condition behind the lives of this study's
53 participants, that status opportunity is often missing from the places they encounter.

54

55 Peer pressure to conform is especially significant in affecting behavior and attitudes
56 during adolescence. The presence of others, including their support or otherwise,
57 such as anti-social peer affiliation, strongly impacts behavior (Quin et al. 2018).
58 Adversity and tension are negatively experienced and often problematic aspects of
59 life: sometimes they nevertheless result in outcomes which are beneficial to society
60 and individuals, but sometimes they change lives for the worse by promoting a
61 criminogenic coping strategy. Poverty and violence are associated throughout the
62 world, creating conditions where anxiety and stress are indicators of the liquid
63 modern. Glasgow, like other Scottish cities, includes socially deprived housing
64 estates characterized by the enduring presence of street gangs (Bartie 2010;
65 Bradshaw 2005; Davies 2013). Glasgow is arguably an 'ideal-type' for studies of
66 adversity in terms of its especially intractable subculture of violence and celebrity
67 criminals. Statistics for knife crime, rather than gun crime, are evidence of its
68 distinctiveness; hands, feet and head, and opportunistic weapons such as bottles
69 are notable assault tools, often used to catastrophic effect (Davies 2013; Deuchar
70 and Holligan 2010; Holligan and Deuchar 2014; Deuchar et al. 2014; Patrick 1973).
71 Glasgow has more street gangs composed of mainly white teenage boys than
72 anywhere else in the UK. The following graph offers official data and depicts
73 Glasgow's significantly higher crime statistics in a Scottish context.¹

74

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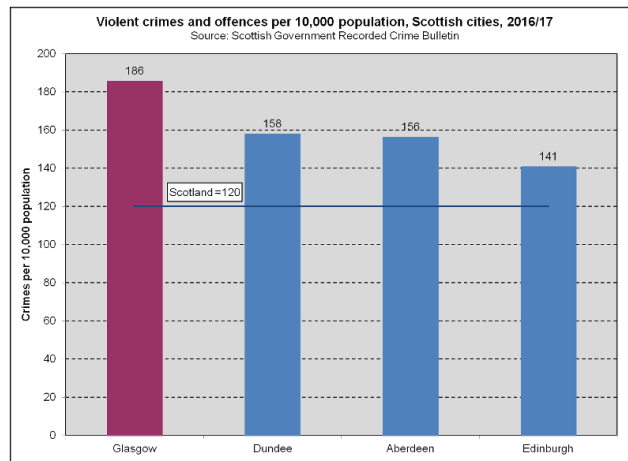
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¹ www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice;
www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/TrendPercCrime;

80
81**Graph 1 – Violent crime and offences in Scottish Cities 2016/17**82
83

84 Tension impacts upon agency and informs cognitive scripts. The nature of the social
85 ecology in which young people live cannot be understood in isolation from the norms
86 of a wider society (Ellis et al. 1978). While interpreting group dynamics in the article,
87 external factors, the urban environment, provide a necessary tension for group
88 unification, and must therefore be acknowledged. (Ellis et al. 1978). Tension may
89 'achieve' a confrontational effect by injecting fear and anxiety into the social fabric
90 of areas' and yet without tensions groups struggle to exist (Klein 1956). Tension in
91 this way is a social balm giving the cement that adds duration to a group such as a
92 youth gang, or less identifiable adolescent peer groupings. Similarly, Glasgow's
93 violent street gangs cannot be examined without investigating subcultural settings
94 which precondition gang emergence, and, as a corollary, cast a negative shadow
95 upon teenagers living within territories claimed by gangs.

96

97 Tension, as a productive psychological capital, arguably gives rise to social
98 formations whose identities are inflected by entrenched environmental adversity.
99 Violence is undoubtedly productive of tension, but paradoxically violence can
100 mobilize social cohesion, such as when delinquent youths develop their sense of
101 togetherness and belonging through acts of violence towards property or persons.
102 By assaulting those outside their group the identity of the group is strengthened in
103 tandem with processes of othering. A shared history of collective enterprise fosters
104 interpersonal ties and violence capital. Adolescence is classically a volatile period
105 associated with 'storm and stress' according to Stanley Hall's (1842-1924)
106 psychological account. If turmoil lies at the core of adolescence, then it is to be
107 expected that individual adaptation to threat or tension may entail recourse to a
108 protective aggressive impulse.

109

110 Violence is understandably common in the academic portrayal of Glasgow (Davies
111 2013). Gray (1989) argues the city's reputation for volatility and aggression can be
112 traced back to late Victorian period where mortality rates among infants were high,

113 criminal justice tariffs retributively biased, diseases severely reduced life chances
114 and the law permitted men to use violence to exercise control over their wives and
115 children. Moving into the twentieth century Glasgow would controversially be coined
116 '*The Scottish Chicago*' as disproportionately high levels of criminal violence
117 proliferated (Davies 2013). Urbanization and industrialization throughout late 19th
118 and early 20th century saw an inwards migration of highlanders, rural countrymen,
119 and Irish settlers (Holligan and Deuchar 2014). Such an accelerated expansion in
120 population and immense pressure on housing arguably weakened protective kinship
121 networks, a loss that engenders vulnerability. The violence typifying 'protest
122 masculinity' is prevalent in post-industrial areas where intergenerational
123 unemployment, particularly amongst the adult male workforce, is the norm. Violence
124 can become a form of capital connected with reputation and self-esteem which is
125 known to exist in the vectors of urban landscapes with fragile social capital and the
126 anxieties associated with feelings of insecurity (Holligan 2015; Davies 2013; Holligan
127 and Deuchar 2014; King 2011). Protest masculinity whilst originating in marginalizing
128 political and material conditions refers to the adoption of a type of aggressive agency
129 to challenge a sense of injustice. As its name implies protest masculinity is gendered
130 and typifies a class status where aggression is not taboo.

131

132 Aggressive male identities are prevalent, especially within working-class
133 heterosexual male socialization in Glasgow, a city that still valorizes its footballing
134 culture (Whitehead 2002). Mainstream society's cultural acceptance of a hegemonic
135 value system (Connell 2005) incorporating aggressive elements contributes to the
136 emergence of subcultures that exist in parallel to mainstream norms among some
137 socially excluded populations (Holligan and Deuchar 2014). Such distortions of the
138 widely accepted social norms which rely upon the law to address and resolve
139 disputes, adapt and exploit in ingenuous ways pre-existing value systems to promote
140 an anti-social masculine identity: Kupers (2005) calls it 'toxic masculinity'. This kind
141 of toxic identity is often also misogynistic, rejecting anything perceived to be
142 feminine, and together with the passivity and decorative style that accompany this
143 myth of the feminine that includes certain colors, physical and mental postures,
144 leisure interests and speech styles. Instead the agency of the toxic masculine
145 identity thrives on seeking confrontation rather than de-escalation and compromise;
146 the latter are attributes of a contested notion of femininity (Mullins 2006). For
147 working-class adolescent's 'doing crime' or simply being anti-social is a requirement
148 of 'doing masculinity' (Messerschmidt 1993). In this sense their masculinity is a
149 performance, and, we suggest, compensates for the demise of manly occupational
150 opportunities. To understand this notion of masculine performance and its
151 underpinning in violence capital it is necessary to examine the 'stage' on which it
152 presents itself which nurtures oppositional dispositions. In the next section of the
153 literature review we analyze sources and drivers of a resilient 'protest masculinity'.

154 **Emergent Subcultural Violence**

155 Mainstream culture unwittingly accepts an aggressive adolescent subculture. Such a
156 valorization of a 'protest masculine' performance is explicable in terms of blocked
157 opportunities for social and employment mobilities; there are restrictions on access
158 to legitimate outlets for the expression of a traditional working-class masculine
159 identity. That type of hegemonic identity depends upon the abundance and
160 circulation of physical capital (Johnston and McIvor 2004). Previously, heavy industry
161 in the Glasgow played a pivotal role in the development and maintenance of the
162 British Empire (Devine 1999). In eighteenth century Scotland patriotic masculinities
163 characterized the gentleman soldier whose martial manhood was characterized by
164 courage, loyalty and sacrifice (Carr 2008), a type of masculinity exported from the
165 Highlands of Scotland throughout the British Empire. Opportunities to engage with
166 risk and dangerous situations overseas offered social mobility to working-class men
167 and rewarding sources for their propensity for masculine identification and the
168 esteem it conferred.

169

170 Following the demise of colonialism and the shift overseas to Asia and the Far East
171 of many Scottish industries later in the twentieth century, coupled with the hostility
172 experienced through neo-liberalism's privileging of the commercial market over
173 collective welfare, subcultural violence become an outlet for a new generation
174 seeking to achieve a traditionalist heterosexual masculine identity suited to
175 patriarchy (Deuchar 2009; Holligan and Deuchar 2014; Johnston and McIvor 2004).
176 The esteem associated with the violent contact sports such as boxing (Cooley, 2010;
177 Garcia, 2013; Gennaro, 2016; Wacquant, 2004; Woodward, 2014) in areas of
178 deprivation is symbolic of the continuation of the Glaswegian 'hard man' social
179 norms. The latter was forged through heavy industry labor, certain forms of sport
180 and a canon of criminal biographical literature by notoriously violent Glaswegian men
181 such as Jimmy Boyle (Boyle 1984; Fraser 2015; Jeffrey 2002).

182

183 Throughout industrialization manly identities were forged in collective all male labor-
184 forces undertaking physically dangerous and demanding tasks, long days and night-
185 shifts down the coal mines or in the shipbuilding industry. Johnston et al. (2004)
186 identified the association of dangerous work, hard men and masculinity in the heavy
187 industries of Glasgow's Clydeside from the 1930s to the 1970s. Even the morning
188 walk to work provided opportunity for togetherness and supportive male banter.
189 Social and family capital was produced through these climates of togetherness and
190 male bonding to collective endeavor. The construction industry remains one of the
191 most gender segregated labor forces where male construction workers' masculine
192 identity is defined in relation to the conditions of this tough job; Ness (2012) argues
193 that industry sustains existing power relations; Lacuone (2005) found real men are
194 perceived to be tough guys in the construction industry. Opportunities in the
195 increasingly liquid structure of the 21st century rely upon the very different service
196 economy, where performance is individualized and subject to intense human
197 resource management oversight. Service economies expect subservience and

198 deference towards customers, qualities that many might classify as feminine virtues.
199 Youths within marginalized populations in isolated communities on the outskirts of
200 the city pursue recreational opportunities to satisfy an intergenerationally
201 transmitted class identity of manliness. Peripheral housing estates lack bonding
202 mechanisms that attach individuals to the norms of mainstream society and the
203 isolation of these geographic liminal zones has been further exacerbated by the re-
204 drawing of urban boundaries (Mullen et al. 2007).

205

206 Correlations between delinquency and socially disadvantaged communities are well
207 established (Davis 2013; Deuchar 2009; Deuchar 2013; Holligan and Deuchar 2014;
208 Gray 1989; King 2011; Mullen et al. 2007; Rodger 2008; Sutherland 1947; Thrasher
209 1927) and yet comparatively little is known about whether or not community
210 tensions, and tensions connected with exclusion, play a role in how violence is
211 perceived and utilized by working-class lads, including those who are believed to be
212 gang-associated. Sutherland (1947) suggests a key indicator for increased risk of
213 delinquent participation to be disproportionate delinquent association, and this view
214 is supported by drift theory. Underestimation of the efficacy of social influence can
215 lead us to overlook the importance of social bonds, both to wellbeing and to
216 perceptions of normal behavior: exposure to delinquency relaxes notions of law-
217 breaking as unacceptable behavior and legitimates an oppositional mentality (Smith
218 2006).

219

220 The texture of micro-social interactions is colored by an individual's construction of
221 social externalities impacting their routine activities and perception of place; non-
222 delinquent teenage lads in socially disadvantaged neighborhoods, we propose, are
223 more likely to associate with delinquent peers who are also possibly local celebrities
224 due to their possession of violent street capital. In this way these youths often
225 become co-offenders through a process of intermittent criminogenic cultural drift
226 (Matza 1964; Metcalfe et al. 2014). Adolescent members of deviant sub-cultures or
227 those with a machismo attitude are more likely to engage in violence (Austin 1980).
228 The need for recognition for peer status intensifies during adolescent transition
229 whilst pro-social role models are often discarded temporarily as too tame and
230 inappropriate (Sutherland 1947). Individuals surrounded by delinquency, given
231 certain neighborhood characteristics in primary (family), secondary (schools)
232 institutions, and 'the street', are even more at risk of displaying a delinquent habitus
233 (De Costar and Heimer 2001). Pathways for deviancy are also influenced by
234 structural positions in a class hierarchy (Link and Phelan 1995) and projected onto
235 other places and persons that are believed to be similar, and thus companionable.

236

237 The communities characterized in this article have shared histories and sociology
238 which enable localized aspects of offending occurring within just one community to
239 be projected as generalizations valid regarding the social texture of different
240 communities (Innes and Fielding 2004). Thus, subcultures existing in one community

241 can quickly become projected and believed to be identifiable in other neighborhoods
242 (Rodger 2008). Historically, Glasgow has housed a predominantly Scottish and Irish
243 immigrant population, and during the early twentieth century had some of the worst
244 overcrowding in Britain. Crime historians of Glasgow (Davies 2013) have
245 documented sectarian gangs and razor gangs. It is unsurprising that a volatile
246 subculture simmers underneath these historical processes as generations now
247 encounter an unappealing post-industrial space where gaining secure and rewarding
248 employment is a remote prospect. That disabling cultural heritage, we propose,
249 impacts youth agency and their social construction of reality. Our over-arching
250 argument is that tension and violence inter-link with the biographies lying within
251 local cultural history. Urban 'regeneration' and re-modelled urban geographies of
252 neo-liberalism are, we suggest, likely to intensify the predicament of our participants.

253

254 **Methodology and Participants**

255 The qualitative data was gathered during 2013-2016 by the authors. The sample
256 forming the basis of this article consists of thirty-four males aged between 16-21,
257 from working-class backgrounds as defined by parental occupation, status and
258 income. They are domiciled in former council housing estates whose stock was
259 transferred to the private sector. This urban conurbation belongs to Scotland's most
260 socially deprived areas within the larger Glasgow conurbation. Participants, to merit
261 selection, had to have experience of being involved with a gang and/or street
262 violence, or other forms of offending and be over 16 years of age. Gatekeepers were
263 used for initial access to a sample. Christian-operated organizations based in the
264 areas where the sample lived helped in the identification of offenders for the study.
265 Once participants had been accessed, a snowball sampling method was applied thus
266 widening the scope of the research sample background. Our interview schedule was
267 semi-structured to create consistency and to give scope to the expression of
268 difference. In designing it we aimed at the following: to explore subcultural values
269 among young males and adolescents in Glasgow, giving them opportunities to
270 control the research process and to foreground their own narratives about their lives,
271 as males, living in disadvantaged areas. An inductive approach to data analysis and
272 the identification of three interconnected themes described below was adopted (Flick
273 2014; Silverman 2011). Pseudonyms are used throughout.

274

275 **Thematic fields**

276 **Hegemonic Masculinity as Entrapment**

277 The social bonding mechanisms required for full integration into mainstream culture
278 is restricted, Deano explains:

279

280 *'Nae cunt employs guys fae my bit in good jobs. I want tae work in a decent*
281 *job but when you're up against people fae like Giffnock, The Mearns, and that,*
282 *then who they [The employer] going to pick?'* – (Deano).

283

284 *'I attended school...but let's be honest mate when you're at school you think*
285 *it's only gays that study (Laughs)'* – (Tom)

286

287 Deano crafts exclusion from employment as based upon the relative prestige of area
288 post codes, and Tom argues that commitment to school symbolizes femininity, coded
289 as "only gays". This perception supports an established body of literature identifying
290 ties between class and hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2005) combining aggression
291 (Whitehead 2002). Schooling is perceived as hopeless in terms of its providing access
292 to the labor market. With shaky logic Michael justifies his hostile rejection of school
293 on the basis that it made no difference to him finding a job:

294

295 *'I thought school was a pure waste of time mate... I didn't like it that much.*
296 *Dogged it quite a bit, when I could. [Big sister A] would leave to go to work*
297 *about quarter past 8 or round about then... I had to leave at same time so*
298 *my mum knew I wasn't dogging it in house... [but] I would take the patio*
299 *keys from the patio... and sneak back in after [sister A] got the bus... [friends*
300 *B and C] always skipped reggie [registration] and would come to mine...*
301 *suppose we never seen the point in school... It hasn't made a difference to*
302 *me getting a job mate.'* – (Michael)

303

304 His "dogging it quite a bit" suggests the experience may have clashed with his
305 identity as a hegemonically oriented young working-class man. In the sociology of
306 education, school tends to be classified through a feminine lens. Heterosexual
307 masculinity within this class nexus of Glasgow is accompanied by a concept of
308 women as status symbols to mark a man's success. One participant, Grant, for
309 instance, argued that he needed to work in order to gain access to female partners:
310 *'Need to work...no burd's (female) gonna want a bum'* (unemployed with no
311 money). The vernacular is also prevalent in the expression of value and a tacit
312 capitalist orientation, indicating that whilst exclusion affects many, the material
313 aspirations continue to be mainstream capitalist goods and enjoyments (Davies
314 2013; Deuchar 2009). Grant articulates the Presbyterian wisdom of an earlier
315 generation, shared significantly by his grandfather:

316

317 *'Ma Granddad use to always tell me Glasgow boys are hard as nails... "stop*
318 *greeting 'n' bitching". My family expect their boys [to be] like that.'* – (Grant)

319

320 The phrase "hard as nails" conveys the aspirational resilient hegemonic masculine
321 self which families "expect their boys" to fit. Earlier in the article reference was made
322 to male cultures of work and allegiance: Grant's grandfather communicates a similar
323 memorable wisdom. Through the labor process as presented in this paper males
324 earn their manly status that includes material possessions and the capacity to protect

325 their own family. His construction of masculinity was utilized not only to inspire
326 Grant, but also suggest an appropriate role model for young men:

327

328 *'Ma old man would be on ma back telling me all the time, all yer family's*
329 *grafters so you've the grafting gene in yae...he was right enough...how can*
330 *ye call yourself a man, if you've no job, no money, car, or canny even defend*
331 *yer family.'* – (Grant)

332

333 Our sample of participants expended vast amounts of effort and energy on obtaining
334 those identifiable features and material goods perceivable by older male mentors as
335 symbolic of the possession of masculine traits (Connell 2005). This ambition led
336 some to the gym, taking regular exercise to build large muscles, playing sports in an
337 aggressive manner whilst working extra hours to obtain branded clothing, jewellery,
338 and other material goods. These young men attributed much importance to
339 accessing and ultimately cementing these capitalistic treasures that signaled material
340 success in terms of its symbolic resonance for the projection of a hegemonic
341 masculine identity (Connell 2005; Deuchar 2009). Musculature and competitive
342 contact sports communicate hegemonic status to peers:

343

344 *'I probably hit the gym about four, five times a week. Plus, I've been boxing*
345 *twice. Football on Saturdays as well if ah'm picked.'* – (Don)

346

347 The pursuit of masculinity generally coincided with the expectation that the more
348 masculinity gained, the more easily socially ascribed goals would be achieved. Their
349 social construction of reality is highly conventional rather than deviant or toxic, yet
350 it is precisely the holding of these mainstream ambitions which appear to impact
351 their anger. A man's social status and thus peer recognition from other males are
352 interpreted in term of these markers of accomplishment:

353

354 *'Of course, ah'm better than him (speaking of a perceived rival), ah'm the one*
355 *way the GTI (reference to a car type) and front door house...what's he got?*
356 *Some shitty dug and a skank burd (undesirable female partner)!'* – (Stan)

357

358 The car type, housing type, the breed of dog and attractiveness of female partner
359 are the criteria used to measure worth and achievement: for this participant, coming
360 out well from life-style comparisons requires both the possession of these desirables,
361 but also the denigration of those without them. However, when these sources are
362 unavailable or restricted due to poverty, the strain influences social norms favorable
363 to illegal activities to bolster a faltering hegemonic male status. Lenny argues his
364 recourse to criminal drug dealing was forced upon him by restrictions of age, criminal
365 record and education. His ambition is to belong by fitting into a comfortable life. His
366 entrapment is two-fold: on the one hand his past excludes him from the mainstream

367 but on the other hand he can achieve conventional markers of success by recourse
368 to a criminal career:

369

370 *'Ah had no other option really when you think about it mate.... I sell drugs*
371 *but ah'm no happy way it, course ah'm no. Would prefer to be legit... My*
372 *criminal record holds be back man...All I want is to live a comfortable...you*
373 *know what ah'm saying.'* – (Lenny)

374

375 *'I didn't have an education and couldn't get a job. My [criminal] record was*
376 *bad. I had no choice but to sell [illegal commodities]. [I] only want what*
377 *everyone else has! Be [financially secure] and provide for [my children].'* –
378 (Wolfe)

379

380 Pessimism and determinism are characteristics of Wolfe's discourse about the
381 reasons, educational and criminal, for his unenviable predicament. His construction
382 of "no choice" implies he had no option but to become a criminal. His analysis shares
383 biographical claims also presented by other voices within this theme. It would appear
384 each is entrapped by a folklore narrative which 'speaks' through them and helps
385 justify their construction of exclusion and criminality. Michel Foucault is renowned
386 for his determinism about the human condition arguing that discourses 'speak'
387 through us and control us accordingly. Many young people sampled considered
388 themselves living on the peripheries of society with structural impacts' such as
389 educational failure or a criminal record, controlling their agency and opportunity.
390 That pattern of analysis within this theme references cultural causes, not individual
391 psychology and echoes beyond contemporary Glasgow (Deuchar 2009, 2013;
392 Deuchar et al. 2014; Patrick 1973). Their aspiration for hegemonic masculine status
393 is a factor implicit in the unhappy circumstance they report.

394

395

396

Boys' constructions as 'protest masculinity'

397 This study identifies an aggressive undercurrent throughout the literature and
398 sample narratives justifying attributing a hegemonic masculine identity to areas of
399 Glasgow (Whitehead 2002). Walker (2006: 5) describes 'protest masculinity' as "a
400 gendered identity oriented toward a protest of the relations of production and the
401 ideal type of hegemonic masculinity". When confronted by stigmatizing work and
402 economic marginality, working-class men emphasize their masculinity. In our
403 participants' words we can recognise what Walker calls 'anomic protest masculinity'.
404 Our terminological use of 'toxic' is intended to convey the disruptive dimension of
405 the protest masculine form. There is proliferating "face-work" and sense of self-and-
406 other destructiveness in the protest enterprise (Walker 2006: 7).

407

408 For Connell (1995) protest masculinity involves claims to power without the
409 resources to support them. This subcultural value system is in opposition to that

410 considered feminine; demonstrated through narcissistic masculine displays of
 411 denigrating linguistics (typically considered homophobic or sexist), body language,
 412 beliefs, and behavior. Kupers (2005) refers to the rejection of all things perceived as
 413 feminine by the incorporation of overtly and often violent masculinity as toxic.
 414 Participants openly spoke about being extremely volatile if confronted by would-be-
 415 opponents attempting to assault them or insult their manhood:

416

417 *Having a [penis] does not make you a man. Might make you look like one,*
 418 *but you earn manhood, know what ah'm saying mate. Guys are meant to be*
 419 *tough, y'know, you don't act like a woman, irrational and shit. [In]stead you*
 420 *think things through, do what needs to be done. You protect your family....*
 421 *when in school I would get into fights thinking it made me the big man, know*
 422 *aye. And it probably did in my mate's eyes, but there's always somebody out*
 423 *there harder than you.... don't learn that till it's too late. Acting that way,*
 424 *being a man [through gang violence] seen me end up missing 6 months of*
 425 *my life [by being imprisoned]. I know now you can be a man, tough and shit,*
 426 *without having to get into trouble, [but] you don't think of that when you're*
 427 *young. – (Lugs)*

428

429 Lugs has learnt the limitations of a protest masculinity. He experienced time in prison
 430 then grew out of a view of guydom as necessarily violent. Now his construction of
 431 manliness is without "getting into trouble" which means not fighting. Despite older
 432 participants being less likely to display toxic attitudes and partake in violent behavior,
 433 they nonetheless considered toxic behavior an acceptable social practice for
 434 adolescents and young adults. This was justified by favorably reminiscing about their
 435 own behavior during adolescence. Protest masculinity was accepted as typical male
 436 behavior by both older and younger generations:

437

438 *'Of course [young males in Glasgow] get into trouble. What boy doesn't,*
 439 *growing up? Boys fight. That's what they do... Boys will be boys... if my [own*
 440 *son] wasn't getting into trouble I'd probably be worried to tell the truth.'* –
 441 (Shrug)

442

443 Shrug tacitly endorses that his son is not an embarrassment on condition that he
 444 gets into trouble. The saying '*boys will be boys*' frequently arose in interviews as
 445 males justified their own and their children's recourse to violence. Protest masculinity
 446 has a toxic component which legitimates violence (King 2011; Whitehead 2002).
 447 Delinquency and fighting are seen as attributes of the biology of male development
 448 which enables male youths to participate in the inevitability of volatile behavior
 449 (Messerschmidt 1993). Mitch argues:

450

451 *I hung about way a lot of boys in school. It was a good laugh, but too many*
 452 *thought they [had more status] ... and get cheeky... they would say "you*

453 *scared, poof?" ... Got me into a lot of fights because I had to prove myself.*
 454 *We don't all hang about now. I say [hello] if I see them but couldn't hang*
 455 *about with them. They're alright in small doses.'* – (Mitch)

456
 457 Homophobia is associated in Mitch's biography with the protest masculine male
 458 which assumes that a homosexual is necessarily cowardly. Peer hierarchic status
 459 was based upon the possession of fighting capital. Toxic masculinity is significantly
 460 heightened when youths 'hang out' with peers (Adelson 1980). Typically, it is
 461 expressed through playful camaraderie and apparently idle banter, but this morphs
 462 into volatile interchanges (Messerschmidt 1993). Labelling themselves and fighting
 463 with other groups of youths is a way to demonstrate gang affiliated status (Klein
 464 1975). It is around this peer group from their 'scheme' (housing area) that they find
 465 a sense of belonging, particularly when gathering together to create larger structures
 466 for fighting those deemed outgroups (Matza and Sykes 1961). Geoff explains
 467 territorial conflict as follows:

468
 469 *'I stayed in [scheme A]. Was quite a big place I know, [because] it was like*
 470 *the whole town. No like [scheme B] down the road in [town C]... that had like*
 471 *three [young street gangs] in [the one scheme]. We only had us, so we*
 472 *always outnumbered them. They were full of [bravado however], always*
 473 *scrapped, much as I hate them. Credit where its due. [There were] more of*
 474 *us than them.... [this included] about [list of censored names], and [list of*
 475 *censored names]. Probably around 35 boys aye, we could pull together about*
 476 *that... when going to gang fight... no joke. Most of the boys weren't fighters*
 477 *really mate. [Gang member A] always said but 'no[body] runs'. If [anyone did*
 478 *then] they would have to answer to [YSG member A]. So you'd prefer no to*
 479 *run. - (Geoff)*

480
 481 Fighting in packs is a rite of passage within the scheme world of perpetual rivalry
 482 and gang fighting. Geoff's place of domicile was his social world - it was a "whole
 483 town", suggesting he may have lived mostly within the scheme boundaries. Some boys
 484 may have been disinclined to fight, but the collective was ready to punish their
 485 'femininity' if they ran away. Protest masculinity involves bullying others.

486

487 **Celebrity masculinity: benefits and costs**

488 In this section we explore the nature of celebrity status within the world of Glasgow's
 489 marginalized young men. Celebrity culture is associated with the commodification of
 490 everyday life where new media forms have made celebrity status a potentially
 491 achievable goal (Stearns 2008). Celebrity provides a source of validation. Citing Max
 492 Weber, Furedi (2010) argues that the celebration of charismatic individuals is a
 493 response to the demise of tradition and the need for role models as a point of
 494 reference. Its impact was apparent in the lives of several participants: Robert's
 495 status, for example, is stigmatized because he lives in 'Feegie', an infamously

496 deprived area. The self-fulfilling prophecy of labelling means Robert attempts to
497 conceal his home area by revealing only his street name. Ross, in the second extract
498 below, confronts celebrity status: his fighting capacity is an attraction he shares with
499 Henry.

500

501 *'Because am from Feegie, well basically Feegie mate, other boys in my school*
502 *would, you know, like think I am pure automatically going to be like this. A*
503 *troublemaker, know what I mean. People do tar people being from there...*
504 *[Secondary school] teachers [also] treated the Fegs like we weren't as good*
505 *as the other boys in the school. Cause they came from [more prosperous*
506 *area] ... I don't think they meant it. It is just the stereotypes people have*
507 *about Fegs... I don't say am from Feggie if ah'm out. I say ah'm from [street*
508 *name] know, cause I do stay there. It is outside Feegie really, but people*
509 *think it's all the same.'* - (Robert)

510

511 *'I go to parties or that sometimes, somebody might be like "av heard of you*
512 *cause some fight you were in or your name (As in reputation gained for*
513 *fighting), depends man'* - (Ross)

514

515 *'Folk didn't always [like] me when I was young. I know that, can be a bit hard*
516 *to accept (laughs), but most probably talked away and hung out with me*
517 *because I could fight.... usually I could make folk do what I wanted'* - (Henry)

518

519 The violence capital they hold benefits them through its affordance of control over
520 others. This celebrity masculinity has on the other hand the cost of the pressure to
521 maintain that reputation, which could easily be challenged. Social status in street
522 gangs is determined by the ability to deliver violence. Individuals perceived by their
523 peers to be able to deliver the greatest amount of violence, either through the self
524 or extended networks, acquired high social status among the group. Arguably this
525 could be attributed to the existence of an established or more pervasive hegemonic
526 value system within mainstream society valuing risk, danger and excitement.

527

528 Group dynamics, it is clear, centred on toxic masculinity and the acquisition of
529 violence as a source of capital and therefore power (Bourdieu 1986, 1992).
530 Consequently, this contributed to status being based upon the ability to deliver
531 increasing levels of violence both for status recognition and status mobility within
532 the group. The orientation we discover under the current theme pervades the two
533 previous themes. The social world is crafted towards a privileging of brute physicality
534 over reason, which fuels the continuation of violence and narcissistic posturing.
535 Conformity to the group in these tightly knit face-to-face communities is important
536 to personal wellbeing; as String explains, violence is a given from an early age:

537

538 *'Ma mates fought so I'd just get involved.... nobody really though anything of*
 539 *it....me dad used to fight when he was wee, he knows what it's like, so never*
 540 *bothered when I got into trouble from it... [I think] people from where I grew*
 541 *up as a wee guy just kind of thought cunts fight and that's that.'* - (String)

542

543 To help achieve status, groups would actively mark out a territory and seek out
 544 confrontations with groups from outside that territory. Although fights could occur
 545 spontaneously should accidental meetings occur, often they would be organized in
 546 advance; typically, through social networking, mobile phones, text messaging, pirate
 547 radios (though the latter was applicable to older generations). The police force
 548 coined the judgmental term 'recreational violence' to refer to these violent group
 549 practices. That analysis ignores the importance of respect, recognition and
 550 achievement that commitment to inter-scheme conflict might provide: celebrity
 551 status is rooted in violence. Even without notice groups were aware that on certain
 552 nights such as Fridays and Saturdays it was likely rival gangs would actively seek
 553 violent confrontations by entering territorial boundaries or 'hanging out' at certain
 554 places. The danger of this point of reference for celebrity lies in the possibility of
 555 being a victim of serious injury. In anticipation of battle, arming himself with a variety
 556 of weaponry, Boab lives in fear of his life once outdoors. Jamesy, in the second
 557 extract, suggests some heroism was involved in running his mother's food errands,
 558 but his voice foregrounds with force is the perceptions of place. The environment
 559 contains sites where he might be ambushed. His choice of weapon carrying, and
 560 aggression was less connected with a violent disposition, but the need to protect
 561 himself in spaces he perceives pregnant with threat. The warrant for violence lay in
 562 self-protection, drug addicts are one threatening group to face outdoors, and the
 563 garage and pub, places of social mingling, held dangers:

564

565 *'I don't leave the house without being tooled up (carrying a weapon), it's too*
 566 *dangerous man. Ye never know who you're going bump in to' – (Boab)*

567

568 *'It could be kind of pure edgy [in scheme A]. You been there, aye?... [well*
 569 *will you] know what I mean (laughs)... Is a tad intimidating... because you*
 570 *got the junkie flats along the Main street... [and the] old pub, I never liked*
 571 *walking to the garage at night, but my mum would always send me for fucking*
 572 *milk, or fucking bread (laughs). Pure knowing, I could get attacked as well,*
 573 *[but] still sending me for a fucking loaf man (laughs)... I always pocketed a*
 574 *blade wi' me [when I was sent] ... Nothing ever happened, [but] in case. I*
 575 *felt on the edge, know, cause you hear shit... Fact, once a guy acted wide,*
 576 *but nuttin' came of it. Think he was just out [the pub], mad wi' it. I was ready*
 577 *for plugging the cunt.'* – (Jamesy)

578

579 In anticipation of battle, arming himself with a variety of weaponry, Boab lives in
 580 fear of his life once outdoors. Jamesy suggests some heroism was involved in

581 running his mother's food errands, but his voice foregrounds the perceptions of
582 place. The environment contains sites where he might be ambushed. His choice of
583 weapo- carrying and aggression was less connected with a violent disposition, but
584 rather with the need to protect himself in spaces he perceives pregnant with threat.
585 Pre-arming themselves is also recognised as a source of gaining status recognition
586 among peers. Those producing the most imaginative or dangerous weaponry forms
587 are often given 'street credit' by peers, becoming brief celebrities. This would
588 encourage an escalation of this type of practice. However, even though weaponry
589 was often simply for show, sometimes during fights these weapons would be used,
590 even if reluctantly; often out of fear of being assaulted or for fear of stigmatization
591 by peers as being a 'poof', 'gay', or a 'bitch' should the weapon not be used if the
592 opportunity arose. This protest masculinity distances itself from passive femininity,
593 with denigrating linguistics expressive of belonging to a hegemonic code producing
594 hate speech directed at human difference. William rationalizes his knife attack by his
595 need to avoid, at all costs, being identified as a "bitch":

596

597 *'When I fought...never really know them (the opponents)..when I stabbed*
598 *one o' their top boys a while back, I thought fuck sake man when the blade*
599 *went in, but then I was pure like fuck it man, afterwards....wid have been*
600 *him or me' – (Dean). If you didn't do it (Use weapon) then you'd be*
601 *considered a bitch'– (William)*

602

603 Showing a willingness to assault an opponent is perceived as a demonstration of
604 bravery, it gives "top guy" status, as Billy describes below. Delivering violence is
605 typically only perceived to be worthwhile if done so in front of an audience, to gain
606 a celebrity status. However, should the opportunity arise to commit assault on a rival
607 and then not be taken in front of an admiring audience, status could plummet:

608

609 *'Was probably about 15 of us who always hung about with each other. Me*
610 *and my 3 best pals then the rest of the team.... I was probably the top guy*
611 *in the team....so obviously I had all them (best friends who were also*
612 *considered to be leaders or have a similar degree of social status) behind me*
613 *fur support. Could do what I wanted.'*– (Billy)

614

615 Collective rather than individualistic effort characterizes these boys lives on the
616 estates. Backing by the peer group legitimates offending practices, but it encourages
617 the narcissism of self-indulgence - Billy talks of doing what "I wanted". The
618 verbalizing of strength and insult were initial drivers for settling group confrontations
619 or imposing emotional sanctions (Rafanell 2013). Utterances contained expletives
620 expressing bravado, or derogatory language was annexed to deny the manhood of
621 opponents. In this case the hate speech was homophobic and misogynist. The
622 resulting shame from negative utterances either segregates the individual who could
623 accept the newly imposed role or (as in most cases) leads to an overwhelming

624 rejection of the subaltern role. To regain lost or dwindling status and retrieve a
625 vanishing manhood, violence was required. The target of this victimization had no
626 choice but to “stand their ground”. Ben explains:

627
628 *'I don't think I could respect somebody that wouldn't stand their ground.*
629 *aye, I would think they were a bitch for it...they'd need to prove themselves*
630 *before I'd hang about wi' them honestly.'* – (Ben)

631
632 Being ostracized and bringing dishonor upon self and family, as Ti argues, arises
633 from making the ‘wrong’ decision. It is exorcised by “stabbing fuck out the guy”.
634 Despite damaging mental health, the assault is perceived as being determined:

635
636 *'Don't like saying it cause it still hurts but I did bitch it from this guy man.....ma*
637 *pals lost a lot of respect for me, fuck, even my mam (Mother) was shamed,*
638 *she seen it.....ended up stabbing fuck out the guy over pure fuck all years*
639 *later man.....no proud of myself mate.....had to get that monkey off my back*
640 *though'* – (Ti)

641
642 This cyclical process - a display of toxic masculinity and ensuing violence - is
643 associated with the belief that without regularly affirming status through producing
644 violence not only would they become ostracized and possibly victimized, having been
645 othured in homophobic terms. Violent acts, valorized by peers, undermine
646 commitment and respect for conventional social norms by replacing them with
647 delinquent ones. Once criminogenic drift occurs a criminal record grows and criminal
648 friendships flourish, whilst recognition and labelling as deviant cements that status,
649 so re-integration into conventional worlds becomes extremely difficult. There are
650 massive costs incurred by acceptance of a morally questionable celebrity status,
651 recognized only after the events. Societal memory in the form of the criminal record
652 keeps the offender ensconced within that troubled life history where celebrity status
653 is not only transitory, but destructive of their wellbeing in the longer-term.

654 **Conclusion**

655 The social life of the participants in this study is constructed around networks of
656 interaction, so group dynamics are vital for understanding their behavior (Blumer
657 1966). Ellis et al. (1978) present group models of informational processes within
658 internal and external environments, two of which are particularly relevant for this
659 study. Firstly, displaying the *defensive group* model, Glasgow's marginalized youths
660 receive information from constraining external forces which results in reactive
661 procedures. Overbearing tension in the form of adversity, marginalization,
662 stigmatization, isolation, and the imposed values of higher classes (Willis 1977) can
663 also cause groups to erect barriers and turn inwards (Ellis et al. 1978). This proceeds
664 towards an adoption of the *intensive group* model whereby youths recede from
665 external influences and refocus informational processes inwards among peers.

666 Validation of behavior no longer comes from outside, but rather from within this
667 social-psychological dynamic (Rafanell 2013). As external exchanges become ever
668 more limited for tension reduction, the goal ultimately becomes divorced from the
669 external, in turn increasing investment in intrapersonal aspects of inter-member
670 communication designed primarily to serve the self which in this context must be
671 constantly vigilant (Ellis et al. 1978).

672

673 The purpose of this study was to identify the formation of violence and its association
674 with supporting street capital of an aggressive nature. Street gangs exist in almost
675 every housing estate within Glasgow, even among those perceived to be suffering
676 relatively low deprivation, and they also exist in Paisley, Greenock, Edinburgh, and
677 other Scottish cities (Bradshaw 2005). It follows that the considerable differences
678 between Glasgow and the rest of Scotland relating to levels of violence cannot simply
679 be attributed to structural factors, deprivation, or even street gang existence.
680 Rather, culture within local areas which articulates with notions of a wider
681 masculinity and materialism provides the cohesive bond for variables while
682 simultaneously adding an extra dimension to increasing levels of violence.
683 Mainstream culture, for instance the aggression apparent in many sports, offers
684 unintended support to violent participation, effectively making it acceptable,
685 accessible, and ultimately an attribute of a certain male identity, with the added lure
686 of celebrity status. (Patrick 1973; Whitehead 2002). Coupled with social and
687 structural constraints hindering marginalized members from fully integrating into
688 mainstream society, young adolescent males have adopted those easily available
689 aspects of mainstream culture connected with hegemonic values pertaining to
690 manliness. This process leads to peer groups erecting barriers, turning inwards, and
691 continually reinforcing a subcultural value system advocating the expression of
692 hegemonic masculinity through a monopolized yet toxic or protest demeanor. Once
693 set in train through the daily activities of estate life these face-to-face micro-
694 interactions perpetuate volatile peer practice.

695

696 A key feature of both the Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (Deuchar 2013),
697 and the *No More Knives, Better Lives* initiative (Deuchar et al. 2014), was changing
698 existing perspectives of a hegemonic masculinity mentality.² Both projects aimed to
699 make aware the negative consequences that violent behavior has on the victim and
700 upon the victim's wider social networks of family, friends, and community. Results
701 arguably suggest the approach has led to significant reductions of serious violence.
702 However, both projects failed to incorporate notions of femininity or a non-violent
703 kind of masculinity containing pro-social values of citizenship; male identity remains
704 associated with patriarchal notions where power interconnects with aggression.
705 Unless a wider patriarchal domination is also critically examined, protest masculinity

²www.cjscotland.co.uk/

706 may remain a prominent identity for working-class youths living in Glasgow's estates
707 whose conformity to an interpretation of hegemonic masculinity is palpable.

708

709 Although teenage street gangs were typically defined by invisible and porous
710 territorial boundaries somewhat recognizable by postcode references, they did not
711 fight simply because of postcode differences. Rather, postcode differences became
712 an available mechanism enabling masculine identity to be gained through violence.
713 The group dynamics we describe in our themes strengthens a subcultural ideology.
714 The intensified masculinity becomes toxic. Individuals who did not adhere to
715 perpetuating a heterosexual masculine persona are othered and subjected to
716 emotional sanctioning, typically using femininized or homophobic utterances aimed
717 to weaken them through de-masculinizing a self-image. Once sedimented into this
718 social construction of merit, group ideology is particularly hard to break down,
719 particularly without the availability and accessibility of other resources, such as
720 leisure opportunities or meaningful employment, to sustain a non-violent
721 masculinity.

722

723

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