

Revisiting Youthful Muslim masculinities

Masculinities, roles and transitions: exploring diversity and well-being in the unfolding of men's lives, University of Leeds, 10th May 2016

Peter Hopkins

School of Geography, Politics and Sociology

Newcastle University

Newcastle upon Tyne

England NE1 7RU

peter.hopkins@ncl.ac.uk

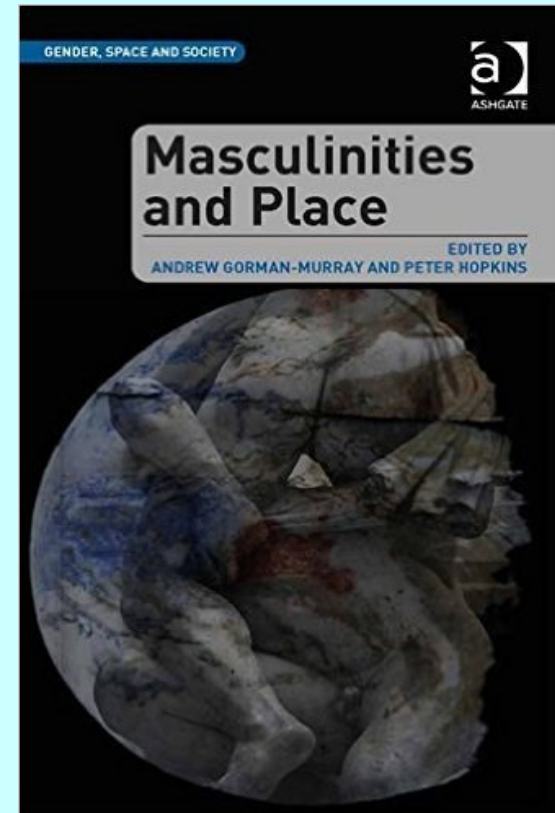


Social geographies of/and masculinities

- Masculinities in place (Hopkins and Noble 2009):

- Unpacking masculinities
- Spaces of masculinities
- Relational masculinities
- The experiences of men
- Researching masculinities

'Masculinities ... are highly contingent, unstable, contested spaces within gender relations' (Berg and Longhurst 2003: 552).



Framework

- Social geographies of masculinities:
 - Scaling social life: local, national and global
 - Frameworks of local life: home; mosque; school/work; leisure and sport
 - Intersectionalities of socio-spatial identities
- Feminist geographies - sensitivity to gendered power relations and the gendered production of knowledge
- Interdisciplinary scholarship about the construction and contestation of youthful Muslim masculinities

Researching youthful Muslim masculinities

- Earlier work involving 11 focus groups and 22 interviews with over seventy young Muslim men aged 16-25.
- Contacted through schools, colleges, universities, community and voluntary organisations and mosques.
- Focus on two contrasting urban communities: Pollokshields in Glasgow and South Edinburgh.
- More recent research about religious youth in Scotland and about everyday geopolitics, with some interviews with Muslim youth.

Patriarchy and aggression

- **Young Muslim men represented as:**
 - violently patriarchal, unemployed and involved in crime (Archer and Yamashita, 2003)
 - part of the rise of the Asian youth folk devil (Alexander, 2000)
 - in conflict with their parents generation (Alexander, 2004)
 - triple pathology of race, gender and generation

Effeminacy and academicism

- Young Muslim men represented as:
 - effeminate, more 'middle-class' and 'behavers and achievers' in school (Archer, 2001)
 - fed by the 'apparent stereotype of Asian boys to be physically smaller' (O'Donnell and Sharpe, 2000: 79)
 - 'failing masculinities' (Alexander, 2000: 236)
 - higher rates of racism at school (Archer, 2001)

Key themes

- Sexist equality
- Women as the 'height of respect'
- Markers of social difference
- The importance of locality
- Heightened signifiers
- Negotiating local life



The Scottish context

- Different patterns of migration compared to England.
- Asian migrants arrived in Scotland 'to become part of an already materially and culturally fractionalised class structure' (Miles and Dunlop, 1987: 132) - issue of sectarianism
- Questions about the differences in socio-economic status and profile of ethnic minority groups in Scotland

Similarities

- Intensification of racism following global terrorist incidents
- Negative representation of 'Muslims' in the media
- Diverse factors shaping Muslim masculinities (including sexuality, disability, nationality, place and so on)
- Importance of family, home and local lived and material culture
- Adoption of contradictory masculine subject positions

So, has anything changed and if so, in what ways?

- Emboldening and reinforcement of problematic counter-terrorism policy initiatives
- Diversification of the 'ethnic minority' community
 - Jostling for position on a racialised hierarchy
- Suburbanisation and transition (for some) to the middle-class
- Resilience and resistance to racism
- Growth of success of Scottish National Party and its (apparent) embrace of civic nationalism

Revisiting Youthful Muslim masculinities

Masculinities, roles and transitions: exploring diversity and well-being in the unfolding of men's lives, University of Leeds, 10th May 2016

Peter Hopkins

School of Geography, Politics and Sociology

Newcastle University

Newcastle upon Tyne

England NE1 7RU

peter.hopkins@ncl.ac.uk

