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Work, Play and Performance: Masculinity and Popular Culture in Central Scotland, c1930-c1950

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of PhD Economic and Social History.

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to begin to fill the gaps in the historiography surrounding the constructions of masculinity performed by young Scottish men in the mid-twentieth century. Much of the current research on British masculinity focuses on the English experience. Where historians have studied Scottish masculinity it has often been in the context of 'deviant' forms such as gang membership and domestic violence. In contrast to this, this thesis investigates the masculinities lived by the mass of young working-class men in Scotland. Throughout the thesis masculinity is conceptualized as performative and situational social construct that can be considered both as an identity and as a behaviour.

The investigation of masculinity is conducted through examination of oral histories, newspapers and the documents of both employers and voluntary organizations. The use of this range of sources facilitates an assessment of the dominant discourses concerning masculinity, as well as the experiences of the men who constructed their gender, and social identities in the environment these discourses shaped. It is argued that economic context was a fundamental factor in determining the types of masculinity that were acceptable at work and within the greater community. Working-class youths were also able to renegotiate and reshape the discourses of masculinity presented by both commercial and 'reforming' sources in order to perform masculine identities that were congruent to their own community norms. This allowed them to practice an agency in their social identities constrained by socioeconomic environment that, while not radical, constituted an active construction of masculinity.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this thesis is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signature:

Oliver Stockman

'You sign your name with the last act every time, don't erase yourself by asking why'¹

¹ Oneida, 'The Last Act Every Time', *Secret Wars* (Jagjaguar, 2004).

Introduction

This thesis will endeavour to fill a gap in the current historical literature relating to the masculinities of Scottish youth in the mid-twentieth century. Much of the literature relating to masculinity and leisure in Britain focuses on the English, rather than the Scottish experience, for example the work of Brad Beaven, Andrew Davies and David Fowler.² Where Scottish masculinities have been studied it has often been with a focus on work, for example in the work of Arthur McIvor and Ronnie Johnston and of Alison Gilmour.³ Where work on Scottish masculinity has been concerned with the non-work parts of life the focus has often been on deviant aspects of masculine activity, such as Andrew Davies' work on Glasgow gangs, or Annmarie Hughes' work on domestic violence.⁴ This thesis will attempt to address the gap in the literature by focusing on the leisure activities of the majority of working-class youths rather than on the smaller proportion whose deviant behavior made them highly socially visible. In this way it is intended to construct an inclusive history of working-class masculinities in mid-twentieth century Scotland and the context in which they existed. In order to undertake this study the city of Glasgow, and its environs will be used as a focus. The reason for this is that Glasgow could be seen as the industrial and population centre of Scotland, with 22.4% of the

² See Brad Beaven *Leisure, Citizenship and Working Class Men* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), Andrew Davies, *Leisure, Gender and Poverty: Working-Class Culture in Salford and Manchester, 1900-1939* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1992) and David Fowler, *Youth Culture in Modern Britain, c.1920-c.1970: From Ivory Tower to Global Movement - A New History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

³ See Ronald Johnston and Arthur McIvor, *Lethal Work: A History Of The Asbestos Tragedy In Scotland* (East Linton : Tuckwell, 2000), Ronnie Johnston & Arthur McIvor, 'Dangerous Work, Hard Men and Broken Bodies: Masculinity in the Clydeside Heavy Industries, c1930-1970s', *Labour History Review* 69:2 (2004), pp.135-151 and Alison Gilmour, 'The Trouble with Linwood: Compliance and Coercion in the Car Plant, 1963-1981', *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies* 27:1 (2007), pp.75-93.

⁴ See Andrew Davies, 'Street Gangs, Crime And Policing In Glasgow In The 1930s: The Case Of The Beehive Boys', *Social History*, 23:3 (1998), pp.251-68, Annmarie Hughes, 'Representations and Counter Representations of Domestic Violence on Clydeside Between the Two World Wars', *Labour History Review*, 69:2 (2004), p.172 and 'The 'Non-Criminal' Class Wife-Beating in Scotland, c1800-1949', *Crime, History and Societies*, 14:2 (2010), pp.31-54.

Scottish population living in the city in 1931.⁵ In addition to this, the growth of commercial leisure in Scotland, in terms of the building of cinemas and dancehalls, could be said to have had its greatest expression in the city in the period under review.⁶ Indeed Paul Maloney, writing about the development of music hall in Scotland has suggested that the socioeconomic situation in Glasgow meant that the city could be considered representative of the 'general industrial experience' in the country.⁷ For this reason Glasgow provides an ideal opportunity to investigate the development of commercial leisure in a changing economic context.

However, while much of the oral history evidence to be used will be from interviewees who lived in Glasgow, this thesis will include sources from other areas of Scotland in order to gain a greater understanding of Scottish leisure and masculinity as a whole. To this end *The Scotsman*, a newspaper published in Edinburgh, will be consulted in addition to the *Daily Record* and the *Evening Times*, which were both local to Glasgow. The case study of the Singer sewing machine factory in Clydebank will also provide an example of a town that was close to the city but existed largely as a self-contained community. In the context of the voluntary organisations investigated in Chapter five, study of the Glasgow Boys' Brigade will be augmented by an examination of the Young Mens' Christian Association (YMCA) branches in Dundee and Kirkintilloch. The records of the Scottish Association of Boys' Clubs (SABC) will also be studied, sources of this type providing a window onto the way in which establishment reforming groups used their privileged socioeconomic status to attempt to alter behaviour at a national level. Taken together these sources will allow conclusions to be drawn regarding masculinity and popular culture in urban, central Scotland, as opposed to merely the city of Glasgow itself.

⁵ Source: Report on the Census of Scotland 1931 (HMSO).

⁶ See Chapter four for a discussion of the growth of commercial leisure in Glasgow.

⁷ Paul Maloney, *Scotland and the Music Hall* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p.8.

Aims of thesis

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the forms of masculinity that were available to Scottish men in the mid-twentieth century and the ways in which these masculine forms were negotiated and performed. At the heart of this investigation is the idea that the study of masculinities cannot be divorced from the social, economic and cultural context in which men live and perform their gendered social identities. The reason for this is that, since it is a social construct, gender cannot be studied as a discrete 'thing' outside of the social context in which it is experienced and negotiated.⁸

Following chapters will focus on economic changes and the impact they had on masculinities at work; the autonomous culture that developed around the consumption of commercial leisure; and the attempts made by elites to reform and direct the culture and social identities available to young men in particular. While each chapter will focus on a single arena for the construction of masculine identity it should be kept in mind that none of these influences were acting in isolation. For example, as will become clear in Chapter three the homosocial aspects of work cultures often spilled out into the sphere of leisure and home life. Similarly, the availability of resources with which to engage in commercial culture was directly related to wage levels and the familial responsibilities of individual men. With this in mind, any attempt to address the effect of one of these areas on the construction of masculine identities without reference to the others would arguably be unproductive. The areas of work and leisure studied in this thesis are rather considered as potential sources of competing, or for that matter complementary, gendered discourses that shaped the acceptable masculine forms available to men. This holistic approach aims to create a picture of masculine identity that is based on all

⁸ A full discussion of the way gender is conceptualised in this study will be undertaken in the following chapter.

aspects of the community rather than assuming that a singular 'cause' can be ascribed to the way men perform their social identities in various social situations.

Breakdown of chapters

As suggested above this thesis will use subsequent chapters to explore the sources of discourses related to masculinity available to mid-twentieth-century young men and how these discourses shaped experiences. The historiography will set out the way in which 'masculinity' is conceptualised in this thesis and place the concept in the historical context in which it is to be studied. Central to this discussion will be an understanding of gender identity that emphasises its socially constructed and dynamic nature. In addition to this the situational nature, in both an historical and in a local sense, of masculinity will be discussed. Together with the performative aspects of gender, these concepts will be used as the foundation of the theoretical approach to gender taken throughout the study.

Chapter two deals with the economic context in which conceptions of masculinity were played out in mid-twentieth century Scotland. The industrial base of Scotland's economy will be examined with special reference to the situation in Glasgow, as the primary focus of the study. The changes in employment opportunities available to young men will be emphasised here in order to provide an economic background to the subsequent chapters and, in particular, to serve as an introduction to the work cultures discussed in Chapter three.

The chapter on work cultures will address the issue of employment, and its influence on constructions of masculinity from a bottom-up perspective. Central to this investigation will be the connections between male work cultures and consumer culture in the west of Scotland and the ways in which work cultures were associated and linked to working-class culture as a whole. This chapter will rely predominantly on oral history evidence in order to discover the ways in which masculine cultures were inhabited by men. In addition to this, the ways in which

men carried their workplace identity into other areas of their lives will be examined and it will be argued that this overlap could be seen as a key formative factor in the shape taken by working-class culture in the first half of the twentieth century.

The final part of this chapter consists of a case study of the working environment of the Singer sewing machine factory in Clydebank, explored largely through the records of the factory's welfare provision. This section will evaluate how this provision constituted an attempt by the management to project an idealised gender discourse for both sexes and therefore create a social environment that was geared towards the needs of the company.

Chapter four moves onto the experience of, and reaction to, the growth of the commercial leisure sector in Scotland. A central theme of this chapter will be an investigation into the extent to which the appropriation of cultural ideas coming from commercial leisure sources allowed young men to construct new masculine identities, or to reinforce traditional masculine forms through new channels. The impact of commercial leisure on popular discourses will be examined both from the effect it was perceived to have by contemporary commentators, particularly in the print media, and from the perspective of the young people that experienced it. The main focus of this chapter will be on the use of dancehalls by the young men of Glasgow due to the youth-orientated nature of these venues. In addition to this the importance of active participation, and of interaction between the sexes, make dancehalls ideal venues to study the performative aspects of gender identity. The way that this expanding area of recreation became a part of everyday life for many young people between 1930 and 1960 will be a central consideration.

Once Chapter four has examined the ways in which young people utilised commercial leisure, the final chapter of the thesis will focus on the ways in which some establishment groups attempted to shape the leisure time of the young through the auspices of rational recreation. This chapter will discuss the discourse of 'rational recreation' and the way in which

three key organisations, the Boys' Brigade, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and the Scottish Association of Boys' Clubs (SABC), used recreational provision in order to shape youth culture and identities. An important issue addressed by this chapter is the steps taken by these three organisations to try to remain relevant to youths in the face of growing opportunities to engage in commercial leisure in the period. The way that young men negotiated their usage of rational recreation will also be examined in terms of their reaction to the discourses transmitted to them through the auspices of the various organisations'. The final part of this chapter will focus on the shifting attitudes these originally male organisations held towards the inclusion of female members in their activities and the potential effects this had on their popularity and sense of their social purpose.

Historical sources and the study of gender

The focus on several different areas of social and economic life within this thesis means that a wide variety of sources were consulted throughout. This will allow a certain level of triangulation, where the competing discourses coming from various sources can be compared and contrasted in order to create a fuller, and more accurate, picture of both masculine identity and the activities that were associated with its performance and construction. This section will explore some of the issues regarding the use of historical sources in the study of gender and then go on to briefly consider the major sources used in each section of the thesis.

The study of gender requires the consultation of a wide array of sources and a preparedness to read these critically and for their implicit meaning as much as for what they actually say. A key reason for this is that, in many cases, gender issues are not spoken about in an open manner; but due to their assumed natural nature can be seen as a part of the assumptions and social norms inherent in many writings. One effect of this is that it is often necessary to extract gender norms from the implications of what is recounted by sources. A

further result of the implicit nature of gender is that it is something that could be seen as inherent in many sources, which do not, on the surface, appear to have any connection to the subject. This is especially true of those sources that relate to work cultures or debates about the use of leisure which often contain assumptions about the 'proper' expression of masculinity or femininity that the writer wishes to be part of those cultures.

An example of this 'hidden' tendency of gender issues within wider sources can be seen in the Singer factory activities books. An account of a managers' society trip undertaken in 1954 to a dam and its connected power station makes reference to the fact that there were several women accompanying the trip; but makes it clear that they were excluded from visiting the station itself. In addition to this, the only description of these women is the statement that 'we were very pleased to have with us on this occasion a number of attractive ladies'.⁹ While this account of a factory trip could be read as simply descriptive; it actually tells the reader a number of things about the gender relations present in the group. Firstly the fact that only the male members of the party were shown around the control room of the power station suggests that the women present were assumed to have no interest in the technical side of the operation, or would even have been incapable of appreciating it. Considered in the context of the work of Cynthia Cockburn this could be interpreted as a result of the male coding of technology, which itself can be seen as a product of the gender system.¹⁰ Secondly the description of the women on the outing quoted above would seem to suggest that they were 'along for the ride' in what was an essentially male-oriented trip. This is just one example of a seemingly gender-neutral source which can be interpreted and understood in the context of the gender norms and assumptions which it contains; thereby indicating the way in which this area of identity can be extracted from a variety of sources.

⁹ *Singer Activities*, July 1954, p2.

¹⁰ Cynthia Cockburn, *Machinery of Dominance: Women, Men and Technical Know-How* (London: Pluto, 1985).

While the implicit nature of gender norms within common discourses can be seen as contributing an additional level of difficulty to the study of gender it also affords the gender researcher the ability to use a wide variety of sources to investigate this area. For this reason it is potentially possible to make use of most forms of mass media and official publications to study gender as they can be seen as carriers of popular discourses which are inherently gendered.¹¹ The use of such sources requires the researcher to search for what is implied by the words of the writer as much as for what is actually written. With this in mind this thesis will make extensive use of contemporary newspapers in order to identify popular expressions of gender norms.

Sources used throughout the thesis

While specific sources will be examined relating to each area of study there are several forms that will be consulted throughout. One major source that will be drawn from throughout the thesis is contemporary media in the form of newspaper articles. These will largely be used to access contemporary commentary on changes in recreation, and to explore the public expression of discourses related to youth, work and recreation. These sources will be considered in a similar way to the official sources consulted in that they will be treated as texts that have been shaped by the social reality in which they were produced.

It is worth noting at this point that this method of interpretation goes against a typical postmodernist reading that sees the text as independent of its production. I would argue that a more useful way of approaching textual meaning is reached through C. Behan McCullagh's concept of three levels of meaning, manifest content, social context and authorial intent.¹²

¹¹ Note that in this case 'popular' is used in the sense of common experience rather than that of popularity.

¹² C. Behan McCullagh, 'Can Our Understanding of Old Texts be Objective?' *History and Theory*, 30:3 (1991), p.304.

These three levels of analysis are intended to obtain an interpretation of historical sources which is both historically correct and unambiguous, something that would be more problematic if a source were to be examined without these meanings in mind.

An important aspect of studying gender is an attempt to obtain information concerning the lived experience of gender, as well as the discourses that helped shape the identities of men and women. To this end, oral history transcripts will be used throughout the thesis as a way of tapping into this experiential aspect of gender identities and of the situations in which they were played out. The results of an oral history interview can be seen as an historical text in a similar way to official records, or mass media sources, as described above and it is clear that similar questions need to be asked of oral evidence to those that are asked of traditional historical sources. A key advantage of using oral history as a source in a study of this kind is that it gives access to the subjective experiences of those that lived through the period in question.

Despite these advantages using this kind of evidence does come with some additional complications pertaining to the functioning of memory and its interaction with popular discourses that can affect the content of the final transcript. The first of these is the idea of composure discussed by Graham Dawson.¹³ Dawson argues that narratives are both composed in a traditional sense, the teller selecting information and pertinent details to relate and require a space to be created for the teller in which he or she can be comfortable with his or her own actions and self-image. The fact that these narratives are composed in the present each time an interview (or simply a reminiscence) takes place raises the problem of interpretation. It is often not clear whether what is being narrated is true memories of the past brought to the present or a representation of the present overlaid onto the past. A significant

¹³ Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the imagining of Masculinities* (London: Routledge, 1994), p.22.

factor here is the role of the ideas and discourses the interviewee has been exposed to in the period between the events occurring and being recalled. Penny Summerfield has used the concept of the 'cultural circuit' to describe the way in which private experiences can enter public discourse and are then appropriated by others to be told as private stories.¹⁴ This is not a case of fabrication as a narrator often sees these stories as part of their 'composed' self image. Selma Leyersdorff has seen this use of stories as a way of communicating experiences in an allegorical way where direct description is too emotionally distressing.¹⁵

In cases such as these the line between an idea of the past and a recollection of the past is potentially blurred. However, while these issues could result in a distortion of the precise events that are being recollected it is reasonable to suggest that the central meanings and emotional qualities present are in line with a person's experience. With careful interpretation the result of this is that an oral history transcript can be seen as a highly useful historical source which gives the historian unparalleled access to lived experience.

Sources used in each chapter

As previously stated the first chapter of the thesis explores the economic and demographic condition of Scotland in the 1930-1960 period and gets much of its statistical data from the censuses of Scotland for 1931, 1951 and 1961. The quantitative nature of this source would suggest that it could be seen as a fairly neutral document but, like any form of situated language it needs to be evaluated in terms of its method of production and contemporary role.¹⁶

¹⁴ Penny Summerfield 'Culture and Composure: Creating Narratives of the Gendered Self in Oral History Interviews', *Cultural and Social History* 1:1 (2004), pp.65-93.

¹⁵ Selma Leyersdorff 'A Shattered Silence: The Life Stories of Survivors of the Jewish Proletariat of Amsterdam' in *Memory and Totalitarianism: International Yearbook of Oral History 1* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p.146.

¹⁶ The term 'situated language' has been used by Dominick Lacapra to refer to any form of recorded text, the concept allows the historian to consider a wide-range of cultural artifacts as the result of a

An example of the constructed nature of census data, despite its seemingly empirical nature, is illustrated for the nineteenth century by the work of George K. Behlmer. Behlmer has observed that in 1871 the instruction was given to enumerators that a 'natural family' consisted of a nuclear family despite the fact that only 37% of households were structured in this way in the middle of the nineteenth century.¹⁷ The implication of this definition is that it privileged the familial form that was considered ideal as 'natural' rather than using the data collected to determine what was the most common, or 'natural' form of family construction in the period. This example shows the way in which discourses can shape the production of official historical records and distort them through the shaping of data collection and representation. The analysis of employment patterns in Chapter two will be prefaced with a discussion of the other practical difficulties of using census sources comparatively in order to assess changes over time.

In addition to the media and oral history sources described above, Chapter three, on work cultures, will also draw from the records of the Singer sewing machine factory in Clydebank. The focus here will be on the *Singer Activities* booklets that provided workers with information about the welfare activities of the company and on the circulars periodically sent from the management to staff on the same subject. These sources will be examined from two perspectives. Firstly, the manifest content of the booklets will be used as a way of discovering what recreational activities were provided by the company, this will give an indication of the types of activities that were engaged in by workers and were felt culturally appropriate by the management. Secondly, these communications issued from the management of the factory give the reader an indication of the way that this group wished to be viewed by the workers, and the types of discourses they were attempting to communicate both through their writing

motivated producer and therefore open to historical interpretation. See Dominick Lacapra, 'Rethinking Intellectual History and Reading Texts' *History and Theory* 19:3 (1980), pp.245-276.

¹⁷ George K. Behlmer, *Friends of the Family: the English Home and its Guardians* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998), p.26.

style and content. In this sense then, the written communication between management and workers in the factory can be read as carriers of discourse relating to authority, gender and recreation in addition to simple information.

Chapter four, on commercial leisure, will introduce Glasgow City Council records in order to ascertain figures for licensed premises such as dancehalls and public houses and the provision of public events such as concerts. It should be noted that while these figures can be regarded as reasonably accurate in terms of the events and the number of licences issued by the council, they should not be seen as representing the complete picture when it comes to the popularity of, for example, dancing and drinking. This is because such activities were also undertaken in places that were outside the purview of official agencies. A key example here, that will be expanded on below is the way in which working-class men would use private 'clubs' as venues for drinking rather than as the places of education for which they were intended by the establishment groups that had encouraged their growth.¹⁸

In terms of dancing the alternatives to the officially licensed halls should be seen less as attempts to circumvent strict licensing regulations, as was the case in reference to drinking, and more as a result of the autonomous community culture that was an significant part of working-class culture in the inter-war period. An example of this is given by a Paisley woman who recalls that in the 1930s 'On a Summer's night, some folk would come out their houses with an accordion maybe, and everybody would dance. If you had children and couldn't get out, it was great just dancing on the clabber [back-court].'¹⁹

These examples illustrate the idea that, while commercial leisure was an important part of the recreational life of people in the mid-twentieth century it was only one of many sources for activities undertaken in non-working time. With this in mind, the use of the official sources cited above can only give a partial picture of the recreational activities of the people in the

¹⁸ See Chapter four, p.221.

¹⁹ Ferguslie Elderly Forum, *History on Your Doorstep: Reminiscences of the Ferguslie Elderly Forum* (WEA: West of Scotland District, 1995), p.35.

period in question and should therefore be seen as indicative of the business-related potential of various activities rather than as a simple indicator of their popularity. As will become clear in the subsequent chapter, a person's economic situation would be likely to have a significant effect on their ability to engage with commercial culture, or even rational recreation, whilst potentially cementing their relationship with autonomous community culture. For this reason Chapter four will consider the use of commercial culture in the context of the pre-existing cultures of the working-class communities the young men being studied would have experienced as a critical part of their socialisation.

The final chapter of the thesis, on rational recreation, will largely focus on the activities of the Boys' Brigade, Scottish Association of Boys' Clubs (SABC), and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and working-class youths' relationship to them. In the case of the Boys' Brigade and the SABC the main sources referred to will be the annual reports of the organisations, which provide membership figures and detail the activities of the organisations. In addition to this, various internal documentation and reports from the SABC will be consulted; these give insights into the more ideological goals of the association and the way its organisers thought about their purposes. In the case of the YMCA the minute books of the Dundee and Kirkintilloch associations will be a key source. These books cover the monthly meetings of the local organisers and are highly valuable as they illustrate the concerns of the organisers on a day to day basis as well as their reactions to the behaviour of the members. The examination of these sources will also expand the area of analysis outside of Glasgow, thereby giving a wider picture of the way Scottish men engaged with rational recreations.

It is important to note that the attitudes and ideas expressed in these types of document represent the hopes of the organisers rather than the reality of the effects of their efforts. This is a key point in terms of the goals of socialisation that were so often expressed by rational recreation advocates. Chapter five will show that youths' attitudes towards, and

adoption of, the values that rational recreationists were propagating were far from simplistic and that there was scope for both renegotiation and resistance. In order to assess the way young men viewed these three organisations, either as members or observers, a variety of oral history sources will be consulted. This will give both a 'top down' and a 'bottom up' perspective of the organisations and their place in Scottish society.

The use of this wide range of sources is necessary in order to fully contextualise ideas concerning masculinity in contemporary society. A key concern is that of triangulation, using multiple historical sources that address the same subject so that they act as mutual corroboration, thereby limiting the potential for the distortions in any particular source to lead to a skewing of the analysis. This technique also exposes the complexity of multiple masculinities in terms of how they are constructed and performed in a variety of situations, and the ways in which these performances were perceived by other social groups. For example, by examining both the records of voluntary organisations and oral histories and autobiographies of those that were members it is possible to assess the intentions of the organisers and the extent to which these intentions were successfully communicated to the members. In addition to the success voluntary organisations had in shaping the social identities of the members can be determined. This form of analysis gives the historian an opportunity to observe the conflict between social discourses that were occurring in contemporary society rather than seeing the mentality of one particular group as indicative of the social whole.

Terminology: Use of class and discourse as concepts

An important concept in the analysis present in this thesis is that of class. This term has been widely debated by many historians and sociologists so it is necessary to define the way that it

will be handled in the study.²⁰ In the first instance a broadly Marxist interpretation of the term that emphasises a group's relationship to the means of production will be used as a way of approaching the term class in the economic sense. Therefore the 'working class' could be economically defined by their reliance on the exchange of labour power for wages, customarily on a strict piece or time-rate system of payment as opposed to a fixed salary. However, this definition should not be taken as absolute. There were clearly groups in the inter-war period and beyond who could be seen as transcending this divide between a 'working-class' and 'middle-class' identity.

The definition of 'middle class' in this context is similarly amorphous as it could contain salaried non-manual workers who are economically less prosperous than their skilled manual counterparts with the result that a measure of relative wealth is inadequate to provide a distinction.²¹ It is also noteworthy that, in many cases the salary of the middle-class individual could be considered as a labour for wages exchange in the same way as is the case for the working class. Indeed, George Orwell made this observation in 1937, when he asked 'How many of the wretched shivering army of clerks and shopwalkers, who in some ways are actually worse off than a miner or a dockhand, think of themselves as proletarians?'²² This indistinctness of class position worked both upwards and downwards. A shipyard foreman, whilst considered a part of the 'staff' rather than a tradesman, would often have been promoted from a skilled manual position and would therefore be in an ambiguous class position, having a middle-class wage structure but potentially a working-class background and identity.

For this reason a cultural element needs to be included in a definition of class that fully describes both a person's relationship to the economic structure and, critically, their perception of their place in society. The use of oral history alluded to earlier will be invaluable in this

²⁰ For a discussion of the historiographical debate on the use of class as a concept see David Cannadine, *Class in Britain* (London: Penguin Books, 2000).

²¹ See Chapter three, p.117 for an example of the disconnect between social position and earnings in the self-perception of non-manual workers.

²² George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (London: Penguin Books, 1989), p.209.

context, as it will allow access to the ways in which contemporaries viewed the class system and their role within it. While an interviewee's description of their class position in a historical sense would be likely to have been influenced by subsequent experience it is reasonable to suggest that the relative nature of class perception would be somewhat retained. In terms of defining a class, essential to its definition is the collective culture to which members of that class participated in and/or aspired to varying degrees. The following chapter will discuss the outline of what could be described as a middle-class culture that was distinct from that of the working class or the upper class.

For example, as will be shown in Chapter five, rational recreation could be seen as an outgrowth of this middle-class culture. The point where considering this form of 'improvement' a strictly middle-class phenomenon becomes problematic is the involvement of the government in the development of organisations such as the SABC. This complication was magnified in the late 1940s when the government was formed by the Labour party, a party with strong ties to working-class culture. What this suggests is that the view of rational recreation as a positive, transformative influence was a part of concepts of 'respectability' across classes leading to a situation in which this discourse was espoused by those in positions of social power irrespective of their political leanings. Similarly, the criticism that was often levelled at youths and their recreational choices (to be explored in Chapter four) came from both middle-class and elite sources and even from the parents of working-class youths themselves. It is likely that, in the case of working-class parents, the negative attitudes displayed towards some forms of commercial leisure were due to a fear of having their families labelled as 'rough' as opposed to 'respectable' rather than due to the internalisation of, or investment in, middle-class values. While concepts of respectability were dynamic and situational, the fact that the mass media often based its commentary on middle-class cultural norms meant that this form of respectability could be said to have constituted an important one for the shaping of working-

class concepts of respectability in areas not directly related to cultural norms *within* communities.

For these reasons the term 'establishment' will be used in cases where social attitudes can be said to have been shared between the ruling elite and the middle classes. This will serve to differentiate between social discourses that can be specifically attributed to a middle-class source and those that could be said to be shared between the controllers of capital and their adherents, whether elite, middle-class, or even the more aspirant element of the working class. It is especially important to maintain this distinction when attempts to control the culture of working-class youths are being considered as it allows elite attempts to uphold economic control and middle-class attempts to construct cultural hegemony to be seen as parallel, often complementary but not synonymous processes.

A further important term used in the analysis presented throughout this thesis, is that of 'discourse'. This term will be used in line with Michel Foucault's conception of it, and refers to 'ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and the relations between them.'²³ This concept is important as it provides a mechanism for the production of social meaning, a fundamental aspect of the construction of gender roles and the identities that are established around them.

While this definition of discourse may seem to imply a top-down process for the creation of social meaning, due to its reference to 'power relations', this was not necessarily always the case. As will be discussed below, in relation to gender identities, it is possible for competing discourses to be present within a social system.²⁴ While establishment groups sought to have the discourses they perpetuated dominate social norms and attitudes, it is possible for these discourses to be resisted and renegotiated. One example of this

²³ This interpretation of Foucault presented in Chris Weedon, *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), p.105.

²⁴ See Section 1.3 below.

renegotiation is the 'hard man' masculinity that was common to the Glasgow heavy industry worker in the mid-twentieth century.²⁵ While this identity had traits in common with dominant discourses of masculinity, such as strength and hard work, its connection to violence and 'rough' culture was in opposition to establishment discourses of 'respectability'. The existence of this identity as a discursive structure amongst working-class men, then, meant that men were somewhat required to adhere to key aspects of it in order to claim social prestige. This suggests that the 'hard man' discourse was able to exert a certain amount of social control over people, despite its largely proletarian source.

²⁵ See Section 1.5 below.

Chapter 1 - Historiography

This section of the thesis will provide a discussion of the historiography relevant to the study of masculinities. Discussion of the historiography concerning the areas of work, popular culture and voluntary organisations will be undertaken in the relevant chapters in order for this chapter to concentrate on the theoretical basis of the work to follow. The first section will discuss masculinity on a conceptual level whilst subsequent sections will introduce the various themes surrounding modern masculinities in Scotland. The final sections of this historiography will examine issues relating to the ways in which masculinity, economics and popular culture interact. This will provide a theoretical basis for the examination of masculinities in various social settings that make up the main chapters of the thesis.

1.1 - Masculinity As A Social Identity

The first task of any discussion of masculinity as a social identity is to define what is meant by the term itself. In this thesis the starting point for the examination of masculinity will be taken from Joan Scott's conception that gender can be conceived of as the 'social organisation of the relationship between the sexes'.¹ Further to this, it is important to note that gender is, in the words of Robert Connell, 'inherently dialectical'. Without a concept of femininity there can be no reasonable definition of masculinity or, indeed, any real meaning for the term.² The key point that these statements brings up is that gender is relational and therefore non-essential. Both masculinity and femininity are constructed socially and in opposition to each other and so cannot reasonably be said to be essential characteristics of a person based on their biological

¹ Joan Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis' *The American Historical Review* 91:5 (1986), p.1053.

² Robert W. Connell, *Masculinities* (2nd Ed.) (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005), p.68.

sex. If biological sex were the primary determinant of individual gender identity then gender would be a largely ahistorical category and would not be likely to be so variable across time period, geography or socioeconomic situation.

For this reason the concept of patriarchy will not be used in the analysis of gender presented in this thesis. Patriarchy has been used by many gender historians and has been defined as 'the male need to dominate the female'.³ As will become clear in the discussion below, the concept is arguably too monolithic and simplistic to take account of variations in gender power between men as well as between men and women. One of the most important things that the idea of patriarchy obscures is the fact that masculinity can be used to control men in a similar way to the ways in which chauvinist forms of masculinity can be used to control women. An analysis that uses patriarchy as a central concept would be in danger of endorsing an essentialist position of the construction of gender, which would be unable to take into account the importance of the social construction of gender norms. If the need to dominate is seen as a male characteristic, rather than an aspect of post-enlightenment masculinity, then it becomes independent of any socioeconomic system and simultaneously has to be seen as exclusively heterosexual. The result of this would be that constructions of masculinity that excluded domination as a central factor would seem to be counter to basic biological imperatives.

It should be noted that a rejection of patriarchy is not intended to downplay or trivialise the oppression of women inherent in the majority of hegemonic masculine forms but rather to suggest that 'masculinity' can be seen as a form of social control in itself. Hegemonic masculinity has the potential to determine what is considered the acceptable social position of women and also to dictate forms of acceptable social identity, and therefore the social role, of men. If a dominant form of masculinity, independent of biological sex, is assumed then the

³ Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', p.1058.

question of individual men's gender power is raised. This is an important question when the connection between male dominance and capitalism, and therefore socioeconomic power is considered. The patriarchal model would suggest that all men gained from the modernist/capitalist programme of technical progress but it could be argued that this was not always the case. It has been shown by Ane-Jorunn Berg and Merete Lie that both men and women can be the victims of technology.⁴

Arguably a more useful concept for studying forms of masculinity in their social and economic context is that of hegemonic masculinity. This concept was developed from a series of studies undertaken by Robert Connell and Suzanne Kessler in the early 1980s and later formalised by Tim Carrigan, Robert Connell and John Lee in the 1985 article 'Towards a New Sociology of Masculinity'.⁵ Hegemonic masculinity can be described as the form of masculinity that is treated as most privileged in any particular socioeconomic context. The most useful aspect of this model is the fact that it recognises that there will, at any historical point, be a form of masculinity which is considered ideal, and, simultaneously, the scope for alternative forms which may be more or less accepted depending on how far they diverge from, or challenge, that ideal. One potential pitfall of this model is the idea that hegemonic masculinity suggests that the ideal masculine form present in society is one that is recognised across the social spectrum as being ideal. While it is not essential in order for this model to be valid that every person take on this idealised role it is implied that the idealised role, or at least some central aspect of it, is seen as somewhat desirable by the majority in order for it to be considered truly 'hegemonic'. However, it could be argued that this is an overly simplistic way

⁴ Anne-Jorunn Berg and Merete Lie, 'Feminism and Constructivism: Do Artifacts Have Gender?' *Science, Technology and Human Values*, 20:3 (1995), p.341.

⁵ Early 1980s work by Connell: Robert Connell, 'Class, patriarchy, and Sartre's Theory of Practice' *Theory and Society*, 11, (1982), pp.305-20 and *Which Way Is Up? Essays on Sex, Class And Culture* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1983). Also Kessler: S.J. Kessler, D.J. Ashenden, R.W. Connell, and G.W. Dowsett, *Ockers And Disco-Maniacs* (Sydney, Australia: Inner City Education Center, 1982). Tim Carrigan, Robert Connell, and John Lee, 'Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity', *Theory and Society* 14:5 (1985), pp.551-604. All cited in R.W. Connell and James Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept', *Gender and Society*, 19:6 (2005), pp.829-859.

of considering the concept of hegemony in terms of social identities. Robert Connell has pointed out that hegemonic masculinity is the masculinity 'that occupies the hegemonic position in a *given pattern of gender relations*'.⁶ The significance of this statement is in its relation of hegemony to specific gender relations. It is possible for these to vary across a range of variables, such as socioeconomic class, race, geographic region and historical period. The practical result of this variance is that there is the potential for the existence of various discourses of masculinity that are idealised by particular social groups. The identity of the 'respectable' man, based on the ideals portrayed by rational recreationists for example, could be said to be the dominant form in terms of much contemporary media of the inter-war period. Despite this, it will be argued later in the thesis that many youths did not display, or even appear to aspire to, this form of masculinity. I would suggest that this illustrates the contested nature of the masculine role, with those of different social status idealising different traits in order to produce an identity which was relevant to their own social and economic situation.

The key consideration here is that each social group had to negotiate its own version of idealised masculinity, albeit in relation to the wider society. These localised masculine forms were constructed at the intersection between what was possible for men to carry out given the social and economic constraints they were faced with in their day to day lives; and the expectations of both their communities and establishment discourses. Moreover this does not necessarily require that the central *concepts* of the hegemonic form were rejected, rather it bends these concepts into forms that are less universal and more locally applicable.

This brief introduction gives an initial impression of the way the concept of masculinity will be constructed. The following discussion will consist of an exploration of these opening assumptions in terms of the historiography of particular forms of masculinity and give a more

⁶ Connell, *Masculinities* (2005), p.76. My emphasis.

detailed account of the way masculinity will be constructed and considered throughout the thesis.

1.2 - Hegemonic Masculinity and its Implications

An example of the way in which 'localised' hegemonic masculine forms can be seen to act between social groups is the idea of the breadwinner role in the early twentieth century. For middle-class men this meant economically providing for a dependent family, and, significantly in terms of gender, supporting a non-working wife, and any children the couple had. For much of the manual working class this arrangement was simply not possible due to the low wages paid to the vast majority of unskilled workers and the cyclical nature of the economy. Indeed, even skilled workers could find their ability to provide for a family disrupted by economic cycles over which they had no control.⁷ Chapters two and three below shows how these economic cycles could decimate whole industries, for example in the context of the shipyard town Clydebanks in the 1930s. The result of the socially distinct, and historically dynamic nature of male economic power was that symbolically similar but materially different criteria for 'breadwinner' status were used across classes as well as within classes over time.

One such indicator of working-class male respectability, observed by Elizabeth Roberts, was the phenomenon of a working husband giving his weekly wage packet to his wife unopened, rather than taking personal spending money out first.⁸ This can be seen as a symbolic attempt to live up to the hegemonic role of the provider or the 'good husband' on the part of men. His wages may not have been adequate to cover all the household expenses for

⁷ See, for example, Noel Whiteside, *Bad Times: Unemployment in British Social and Political History* (London: Faber and Faber, 1991), pp.51-54 on skilled workers as the 'deserving poor', and Annmarie Hughes, *Gender and Political Identities in Scotland 1919-1939* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), p.20 for a discussion of unemployment among skilled workers in Scotland in the inter-war period.

⁸ Elizabeth Roberts *A Woman's Place: An Oral History Of Working-Class Women 1890-1940* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1984).

the week but by handing over his full wages he could be seen to be acting in accordance with his masculine duties. While this was, in many ways, a private act it would be likely to be one that was communicated to the rest of the community through the sociability of wives, or simply through workmates noticing the husband's absence from the public house. In this example the hegemonic form of masculinity can be seen as being pervasive across social contexts even where the way that it is manifested is outwardly different.

However the handing over of a full wage packet was not a universal practice among working-class men. Andrew Davies, Pat Ayers and Jan Lambertz, and Annmarie Hughes have shown that a certain reticence concerning finances existed within many working-class marriages that could result in a husband handing over a set amount of 'housekeeping' money to his wife irrespective of his actual wages.⁹ Significantly this practice had the effect of essentially placing financial responsibility for household management in the hands of wives, cementing the division between husbands as providers and wives as managers. Ayers and Lambertz have suggested that this resulted in a situation where a husband could avoid confronting the fact that the wages he commanded were inadequate to support his family and therefore blame his wife for failure to create an idealised domestic environment.¹⁰

In addition to this distancing of husbands from the economic realities faced by their wives Andrew Davies has shown that an acceptance of the provider role as an economic priority was far from universal among working-class men, and could even be seen as un-masculine. An interviewee in Davies' study of inter-war Manchester states, in relation to drinking habits, that, 'if a man handed his wages over [unopened] in them days he wasn't a man'.¹¹ What this dichotomy suggests is that, for the working-class men of Manchester there

⁹ See Davies, *Leisure, Gender And Poverty*, Pat Ayers and Jan Lambertz 'Marriage Relations, Money and Domestic Violence in Working-Class Liverpool, 1919-1939' in *Labour and Love: Women's Experience of Home and Family, 1850-1940* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), p.200 and Hughes, *Gender and Political Identities in Scotland*, p.134.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p.201.

¹¹ Davies, *Leisure, Gender And Poverty*, p.50.

was an alternative to the 'good husband' and provider role in terms of masculine identity. The statement of the interviewee implies that there was potential for a more homosocial form of masculine identity to be exhibited that would be seen as a positive model for a 'real man' among peers. Annmarie Hughes has identified a similar male recourse to the 'masculine republic' of the public house among men and noted that this was even the case in the early 1930s, in Dundee, which has been described as a 'woman's town' due to high levels of female employment in the textile industry there.¹² It seems that there were similar behaviours occurring in the shipbuilding regions as well. In response to a question regarding his wife's knowledge of his earnings one Clydebank man responded that 'Oh No! That would have been terrible, yer wife knowing it!', as it would reduce a husband's ability to remove money from the pay packet for personal spending.¹³ The way these ideas were played out in the west of Scotland will be further explored below.

The denigration of what would be considered the 'hegemonic' status of 'good husband', and therefore man, in the above accounts could be seen as an example of a competing local form of masculine identity having developed among a specific group of men. It is important to note in this context that this construction does not imply an outright rejection of the provider role, and therefore the hegemonic masculine form, but rather a reinterpretation of the priorities associated with it. In an economic context where many men who were fully employed often faced financial difficulty it may have been that emphasising the 'toughness' and independence inherent in the masculinity of the manual workplace would have been a more effective way of claiming the status of manhood than attempting to live up to a role which was beyond their financial means. Indeed, where opportunities to provide were limited by economic conditions it may have been that a fuller engagement with the homosocial aspects of work

¹² Hughes, *Gender and Political Identities in Scotland 1919-1939*, p.130.

¹³ Ibid, p.144.

culture, rather than with the domestic sphere of home, was a strategy used by men in order to conspicuously display a 'hard' masculinity.

1.3 - Masculinity as Power Between Men

The above discussion has focused on the ways in which forms of masculinity can be seen as a way for men to exert gender power over women. However, there is also a sense in which certain masculine forms can be used by groups of men to exert power over other, less socially privileged men. Indeed, Mike Donaldson has suggested that a primary way of distinguishing between hegemonic and non-hegemonic forms of masculinity for any particular set of social circumstances is to ascertain which form affords a group of men control over other men rather than control over women alone. Donaldson borrows from the ideas of Antonio Gramsci and states that the hegemonic group will tend to represent this level of control as a part of 'universal social advancement' rather than as the mechanism for sectional advantage that it actually embodies.¹⁴

The idea that strict gender roles can be detrimental to *all* people has been explored by E. Antony Rotundo, who has suggested that 'we value toughness as an end in itself. We are disabled in choosing the wise risk from the unwise, and tend to value risk as its own form of good. In this manner we are all hurt by the cultural configuration of manhood.'¹⁵ While this statement was made in the context of political consciousness rather than economic logic, Rotundo's observation serves to identify the self-justifying trait present in hegemonic cultural constructs such as masculinity. Essentially both Donaldson and Rotundo are addressing the ways in which the hegemonic masculine form has the tendency to view the interests of the group that exhibit it as inherently positive and valid in comparison to the needs or desires of others. In a sense then, this tendency could be said to be an essential feature of hegemony in

¹⁴ Mike Donaldson, 'What is Hegemonic Masculinity?', *Theory and Society*, 22:5 (1993), p.655.

¹⁵ E. Antony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), p.291.

gender terms as it both seeks to gain control over others and naturalise itself to a point where its logic becomes an unconscious assumption.

An example of the way in which hegemonic masculinity can affect gender power between men can be seen in the changes that occurred in work practices in the early twentieth century and resulted in a changing power relationship between skilled workers and employers. It is worth noting at this juncture that the way in which these changes manifested themselves was different in Scotland than in England. The English experience was largely of a move to mechanisation of industry and the introduction of mass production techniques. In Scotland W.W.Knox has suggested that the experience of modernisation of work practices should be understood as a process of increased industrial discipline along with a 'levelling of skill' rather than the outright 'deskilling' that was occurring south of the border at the same time.¹⁶ While processes such as those introduced in Scotland and England may have increased potential profits, and therefore social prestige, for the almost exclusively male owners of businesses they could be said to have had an opposite effect for the male workers in these companies.

In this way modern mass production can be seen as an expression of the desire for control implicit in hegemonic masculinity and capitalism. Moreover, it seems that this was not merely an economic trend, but was accompanied by changes in dominant discourses surrounding the value of worker skill itself. From this perspective mass production had an ideological impact on society as a whole: its effects were not limited to workers employed in the specific industries that adopted them. Industrial changes were seen by some as a sign of modern progress. For example, the 1934 film *Sing As We Go*, scripted by J.B. Priestley, presented the introduction of new machinery into cotton spinning as the saviour of the workers

¹⁶ W.W. Knox, *Industrial Nation: Work, Culture and Society in Scotland, 1800-Present* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), pp.203-209.

who had been laid off due to the effects of the depression.¹⁷ While this film is given a 'happy' ending its story obscures the changes that such an outcome would be likely to have on workers, such as lower wages and the replacement of established skilled workers with younger, cheaper labour. It is worth noting in this context that Jessie Bernard has made the conceptual connection between the growth of industrialisation and the good provider role, the latter being a major part of the hegemonic masculinity of the first half of the twentieth century.¹⁸ If a link between the social phenomena of industrial capitalism and provider-based masculinity is accepted then it is clear that both the social relations that exist between men and between men and women will be similarly affected by the ways in which dominant social groups compose masculinity and femininity.

Cynthia Cockburn has undertaken a study of the relative gender power of different groups of men in the context of men in the lower tiers of the engineering trade. The men in the study saw the erosion of the apprenticeship system, and therefore in the value accorded to their skills as workers, as a manifestation of the deterioration of their position in the labour market.¹⁹ Clearly they were in the dominated group rather than in the group that was wielding power. The masculine identity of these men as skilled workers was subordinate to the needs of capital for a deskilled workforce, with the result that they lost the privileges of dominant masculinity in this sphere of their lives. In a post-World War Two context Goldthorpe et al. have suggested that this form of deskilling and loss of workplace control led to the intrinsic value of work as a marker of masculinity being reduced, leading workers to adopt a more

¹⁷ Tony Aldgate, 'Comedy, Class and Containment: The British Domestic Cinema of the 1930s' in James Curran and Vincent Porter (Eds.) *British Cinema History* (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1983), p.270.

¹⁸ Jessie Bernard, 'The Good-Provider Role, Its Rise And Fall', *American Psychologist*, 36:1 (1981), pp.1-12

¹⁹ Cockburn, *Machinery of Dominance*, p.177.

'instrumental' attitude to their work.²⁰ The result of this was likely to be that consumption became a more significant part of masculine identity construction than was previously the case.

In addition to this loss of masculine prestige, the men affected by these changes in industrial structures were in a much more precarious economic position as they no longer wielded the bargaining power their position as skilled workers had previously afforded them. The potential for lowered wages opened up by this loss would also have affected men's ability to fulfil their role as provider which would be likely to reduce their social as well as economic prestige. For this reason the changes made in the production process in order to further the interests of business owners could be seen as a way in which the logic of 'progress' was used to marginalise the importance of the masculine traits of those in less elevated socioeconomic positions.

Another way of viewing the ways in which hegemonic masculinity can be used to grant privilege to certain groups of men over others is through its tendency to 'other', or denigrate alternative masculine forms in an attempt to make them less desirable social identities. While the forms of masculinity to be discussed below share a common trait of defining women as subordinate to men, they also have the tendency of defining men who will not, or cannot, fulfil the idealised masculine role as subordinate to those that do. Perhaps an obvious example of this principle is the treatment of homosexual men in terms of discourse throughout the twentieth century. Sean Brady has suggested that, by the late nineteenth century, sex between men had begun to be seen as a fundamentally 'un-British' due to the fact that the hegemonic masculine form which emphasised the husband's role in the family had become 'one of the cornerstones of British society'.²¹ The result of this connection between British identity and heterosexual masculinity was that homosexuality was marginalised and, by the late

²⁰ J. Goldthorpe, D. Lockwood, M. Bechhofer, J. Platt, *The Affluent Worker: Industrial Attitudes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), p.38.

²¹ Sean Brady, *Masculinity And Male Homosexuality In Britain 1861-1913* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.214.

nineteenth century, reporting of 'unnatural crime' in Britain disappeared, perhaps in order to deny that the phenomenon occurred in the country.²² The result of this silence was that, in terms of the media, homosexuality was not something that had a legitimate place in public discourses surrounding masculinity. This would make it harder for men to express a homosexual masculinity, as it would be seen as completely aberrant in a context where the husband and father was seen as the ideal masculine form in many ways.

Matt Houlbrook has explored ways in which homosexual men were perceived and portrayed among members of the Brigade of Guards in the first half of the twentieth century. He has argued that homosexual men were stigmatised as 'effeminate' by this group despite the fact that prostitution among guardsmen was not uncommon.²³ The significance of this observation for this thesis is that, by using this discursive tactic, the guardsmen were redefining homosexual acts undertaken by straight men as a part of their military masculinity. This occurs due to the way in which the homosexual man involved is feminised and can therefore be seen as having been dominated by the guardsman, rather than the encounter being one of equals. Houlbrook's analysis of this group points towards the concept of 'hegemonic masculinity' as an alternative to that of patriarchy in the study of masculine identity. Lynne Segal has described hegemonic masculinity as obtaining its power from what it can subordinate, a definition which would allow the apparently dissonant gender position of guardsmen to be composed as one that was in line with a hegemonic military masculinity.²⁴

²² Ibid, p.216.

²³ Matt Houlbrook, 'Soldier Heroes and Rent Boys: Homosex, Masculinities, and Britishness in the Brigade of Guards, circa 1900-1960', *Journal of British Studies*, 42:3 (2003), p.362.

²⁴ Lynne Segal, 'Changing Men: Masculinities in Context' *Theory and Society*, 22:5 (1993), p.635.

1.4 - Dominant Discourses of Masculinity: Middle-Class Masculinity

In an English context Michael Roper and John Tosh have examined social identities among middle-class men in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and identified a form of masculinity based on ideas of 'muscular Christianity'.²⁵ Tosh also highlights that there were alternative forms of masculinity available to middle-class men.²⁶ A key component of this multiple masculinity was the conceptual distinction made between the 'public' and 'private' or domestic spheres of life in contemporary discourse. The area in which middle-class men were most strongly conditioned to assert a manly identity was that of the business world. In this sphere men were supposed to be highly rational, strong, ruthless and independent, and to exclude emotional considerations from their decision-making as much as possible.

It is highly significant that the form this public manly identity took was tailored to the requirements of middle-class men's economic position in a way that was analogous to the need for physical toughness among working-class men. Indeed, the way in which the concept of the 'ruthless' businessman was idealised could be seen as requiring a form of interpersonal toughness that was in step with the physical toughness expected from working-class men. That this was the case into the inter-war period is exemplified in a *Daily Record* article published in 1934 that suggested that 'the ruthless spirit is becoming part of the philosophy used in the ordinary daily struggle for a livelihood', and went on to suggest that the 'ferocity of the jungle' was entering the economic climate.²⁷ With this in mind both working-class and middle-class men needed to have a way of legitimising the traits necessary for the carrying out of their economic role; and it seems that the fact that the economic sphere was a largely male one in terms of discourse in the nineteenth century had the result of connecting this with masculine identity. Indeed, the fact that women were often confined to the non-economic

²⁵ John Tosh and Michael Roper, *Manful Assertions* (London: Routledge, 1991).

²⁶ John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity And The Middle-Class Home In Victorian England* (London: Yale University Press, 1999).

²⁷ *Daily Record*, 30/01/34, p.12.

'domestic' sphere, ideologically speaking, at this point in time meant that the conflation of masculine role and economic role was perhaps inevitable in some senses.

Despite the importance of a man's economic role in terms of his social standing, the kinds of masculinity required by the public sphere were not always relevant to the domestic sphere. Indeed traits such as rationality and ruthlessness could be seen as diametrically opposed to the values of family and Christian piety that were expected of middle-class men in their home lives. What this suggests is that, for some men, economic success was simply not enough to guarantee their status as a good man or, more importantly, a good husband. Tosh has suggested that, in order to be seen as an exemplar of ideal middle-class masculinity the fulfilment of the good provider/breadwinner role now had to be supplemented by the display of the correct level of attention to his domestic role; failure to do this could lead to a loss of prestige.²⁸ This is an important observation as it goes further than suggesting that there were alternative forms of masculinity simply available for men at any one point. Thus it was often necessary for men to be able to, outwardly at least, display contradictory masculine traits depending on the social situation within which they found themselves.

However, Martin Francis has suggested that this trend towards 'domesticity' may not have been as internalised as the work of Tosh suggests. Indeed, while men in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries may have felt they needed to be present in the domestic sphere to a certain extent, for most men their primary identification still came from their public role.²⁹ Whilst the work of Tosh and Davidoff and Hall focuses on the nineteenth century, its significance in terms of this thesis is in the principles it reveals in relation to the influences that can shape the formation of gender identities. The desire to create a social distinction between one social group and another through the use of gender identity is one that was not restricted to the nineteenth century. This exposes one of the ways in which the

²⁸ Tosh, *A Man's Place*, p.31.

²⁹ Martin Francis, 'The Domestication of the Male? Recent Research on Nineteenth and Twentieth Century British Masculinity', *The Historical Journal*, 45:3 (2002), p.640.

formation of gender ideals is a two-way process. Gender discourses can be redefined to make them fit with the social needs of their performers as well as having the ability to delineate acceptable performances. One of the themes of this study will be the extent to which this redefinition occurred in the specific historical context faced by working-class youths from 1930 into the post-World War Two period.

1.5 - Masculinity Within the Scottish Working Class

The concept of masculinity as a social identity in the twentieth century has been studied in a Scottish context by historians such as Andrew Davies, Annmarie Hughes and Ronnie Johnston and Arthur McIvor.³⁰ These writers, among others, have identified an aggressive, 'hard man' image, that differs widely from the English middle-class identity described above, as the dominant discourse in forming Scottish working-class masculinities. Scottish masculinity often manifested as a hard-working, hard-drinking culture which, with its basis in the workshop and the public house, tended to exclude women and cement the 'bread winner' role assumed by male workers. The workshop/public house link seems to have been a highly significant one. George Blake, in his realist novel *The Shipbuilders*, describes the importance of the public house as an extension of the workplace: standing the foreman a drink is presented in this, albeit fictional, account as an important part of securing future employment.³¹ Andrew Davies' study of Manchester and Salford corroborates this idea, suggesting that public houses could act as 'channels of labour market information'.³² This would make the relationship between work and drinking more symbiotic than might be expected, given the contemporary media discourses that a connection between drink and dissolution rather than drink and productivity.

³⁰ See Davies, 'Street Gangs, Crime and Policing in Glasgow in the 1930s', Hughes, 'Representations and Counter Representations of Domestic Violence on Clydeside' and 'The "Non-Criminal" Class', and Johnston & McIvor 'Dangerous work, Hard Men and Broken Bodies'.

³¹ George Blake, *The Shipbuilders* (1935; repr. London: Collins, 1970), p17.

³² Davies, *Leisure, Gender and Poverty*, p44.

More significantly for the purposes of this thesis it would imply that the work and recreational lives of heavy industry workers were fundamentally connected. Therefore it would be likely that men would carry similar gender identities into both situations given the need for gender performances to be consistent across time to be considered valid.

Johnston and McIvor's work largely focus on the relationship between work and masculinity and the way in which work in areas such as the shipyards could be a source for working-class masculinity and also had the potential to deprive men of the same. In *Lethal Work* McIvor and Johnston examine the legacy of industrial disease on the lives and masculine identities of Scottish heavy industry workers.³³ Key to this work is the idea that, while men often asserted their possession of a privileged masculinity through their position in the workplace, the poor safety regulations and physical danger of the work had the potential to cause serious injury or disease. In these cases the affected men would be denied the 'hard/tough' masculinity that they would have previously exhibited and be forced to find another way of asserting a socially recognised masculine identity. The significance of this observation in relation to the focus of this thesis is that it shows the instability of masculine identity and the ways in which it can be compromised by the circumstances which are its very source. While it would be inappropriate to conflate the physical body and gender identity, it may have been that a man's physical state was a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for exhibiting the typical masculinity of the heavy industry worker.

The cases cited by Johnston and McIvor indicate occasions where physical strength was a necessary part of the economic role of the men in question. The consequence of this is that it is impossible to examine the masculinities performed by these men and their socioeconomic position in isolation from each other. As Robert Connell has suggested, masculinity and femininity should be viewed as processes rather than objects; they are 'part of

³³ Johnston and McIvor, *Lethal Work*.

the relations of production and [have] always...been so'.³⁴ Connell's statement here brings into question the direction of causality surrounding social role and gender. With this in mind the 'hard bodies' of heavy industry workers, and their associated masculinities could perhaps be seen as an effect of the socioeconomic environment rather than identities chosen from a position based on personal feelings and beliefs.

The work of Annmarie Hughes is relevant in this context. Hughes' study of domestic violence in the inter-war period suggests that domestic violence that involved men's violence against women was a part of particular formations of masculinity which 'depended on physical rather than moral control'.³⁵ A distinction is made in this work between these formations of masculinity and working-class culture as a whole, with the need of the middle classes to demonise working-class culture being forwarded as the reason for this identification being made in contemporary discourse. In light of the observations made above it could be argued that this need for 'physical power' in the domestic scene was due to some of these men's failure to fully embody the provider role, and therefore gain 'moral authority' in this social setting. It would be overstating the case to suggest that a lack of economic status was the *cause* of domestic violence of this type. However, it seems reasonable to propose that some men used the physical aspects of workplace masculinity as a way of asserting their gender power in other areas of their lives.

Hughes' work also complicates the idea that the provider/good husband role and the aggressive 'hard man' were mutually exclusive identities for Scottish men. In a study of court proceedings relating to domestic violence in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Hughes shows that some defendants were able to use their record as a 'good worker' as a way of reducing their sentences, indicating that if a man could be seen to be fulfilling his economic role

³⁴ Robert Connell cited in Donaldson, 'What is Hegemonic Masculinity?', p.653.

³⁵ Hughes, 'Representations and Counter Representations of Domestic Violence on Clydeside', p.172.

then deviant behaviour that did not threaten private property was tolerated by the courts.³⁶ Indeed, it was often drink that was blamed, rather than a man's psychology, for men's perpetration of domestic violence, thereby further indicating that establishment figures saw working-class cultural practices as a social problem rather than the 'hard man' form of masculinity that was virtually a prerequisite for many men to endure working conditions as suggested above.³⁷ In addition to this, Hughes gives an example of a man's employer paying his fine for him, suggesting that the use of 'physical authority' rather than 'moral authority' by men in the home, was considered acceptable in some circumstances.³⁸

Andrew Davies has shown that some of the traits associated with the largely work based masculinity discussed by Johnston and McIvor and Hughes, especially those that involved toughness and independence, can also be seen as relevant to an interpretation of the activities of the various Glasgow gangs of the inter-war period.³⁹ What this suggests is that the 'working man' identity associated with heavy industry in the area was not confined to those times when a man was at his work. The implication of this is that the 'hard man' was a generally accepted ideal of manliness in working-class culture of the time, as opposed to one sought, and displayed, solely by heavy industry workers. The ways in which gangs, such as those Davies described, displayed their masculinities indicates that they were attempting to replicate the homosocial bonds of the workplace, and the prestige it could bring, in a new context. Indeed Hilary Young has suggested that manual work was used to 'reaffirm' masculinity by many men.⁴⁰ With this in mind, the increasing unemployment present in the inter-war period (see Chapter two below) could be seen as a catalyst for the need to display hard man masculinity in other contexts. In reference to the street gangs of the inter-war period

³⁶ Hughes, 'The "Non-Criminal" Class', p.38.

³⁷ Ibid. p.17.

³⁸ Ibid. p.20.

³⁹ Davies, 'Street Gangs, Crime And Policing In Glasgow In The 1930s' pp.251-268.

⁴⁰ Hilary Young, 'Hard man, new man: re/composing masculinities in Glasgow, c1950-2000' in *Oral History*, 35:1 (2007), p.71.

Davies' work supports the idea that violence was used as a way of claiming social status among young men. Davies explains that: 'Gang members sought to enhance their status and reputation, both collectively and as individuals, by taking part in street fighting and considerable peer-group prestige was at stake in clashes between rival gangs.'⁴¹ With this in mind it would be reasonable to suggest that street gangs, as a form of working-class masculine youth culture, were an important site for the formation of masculine identity for some young men and that, while their activities were usually considered deviant by contemporary commentators, the social functions they served were actually congruent with obtaining an acceptable socialisation.

A parallel example from literature is given by McArthur and Long's *No Mean City*, whose main protagonist Johnnie Stark could be seen as the epitome of the traditional 'hard man'.⁴² Stark is depicted as a heavy drinker and a ready fighter whose violence and misogyny are central traits of his highly masculinised character. While McArthur and Long's novel does contain characters who do not conform to this stereotype, the impression the writers portray is that violence and hyper-masculine manliness is a naturalised part of working-class culture. The Glasgow tenement dwellers are shown to have internalised the inevitability of these constructions so that they are part of the group's social identity rather than being an individual character trait possessed by Stark himself. This is reflected in the social status the authors give Stark, portraying him as the 'Razor King', implying that he is seen as an admirable individual within his community.⁴³ What is key here is that this commentary on violence and masculinity is presented in an almost anthropological manner. No doubt is left in the reader's mind that the values represented by Stark and his contemporaries are 'deviant' and that the

⁴¹ Andrew Davies, 'Glasgow's 'Reign of Terror': Street Gangs, Racketeering and Intimidation in the 1920s and 1930s', *Contemporary British History*, 21:4 (2007), p.409.

⁴² A. McArthur and H. Kingsley Long, *No Mean City* (London: Corgi Books, 1957).

⁴³ Ibid.

'respectable' strata of society would view this group as separate to, rather than a part of the socioeconomic culture of which they are a part.⁴⁴

1.6 - The Situational Nature of Masculinity

As has been suggested in the above discussion of masculinity in relation to economic systems, a man's socioeconomic or class position is important in terms of the masculine identity he is likely to display, or to wish to display. This idea has also been examined by Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, again in relation to the nineteenth century. These writers have suggested that the middle classes often referred to 'masculine chivalry' as an important part of the relationship between men and women; and go on to argue that this was an attempt to distinguish their identity from that of the aristocracy.⁴⁵ The aristocratic identity emphasised the concept of 'honour', so by rejecting this for a differently stressed formulation of the ideal relationship between the sexes the middle classes could be said to be distancing themselves from the upper class through gender discourses. When the 'working man' identity discussed above is taken into account it is clear that it is possible for ideal masculine types to co-exist and to be, broadly at least, delineated by class position while sharing some dominant traits.

The existence of the two discourses of masculinity described above, the 'respectable' and the 'rough', shows the dynamic, contested and changeable nature of the identity of masculinity. I would suggest that, while the 'respectable', largely middle-class approved form could be seen as the most culturally dominant in terms of its endorsement by the British establishment and civic society, as well as the mass media, the 'rough' form was equally important, and for some groups, much more prevalent in terms of its importance as a determinant of social behaviour. It is important to note here that the potentially pejorative term

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes* (London: Hutchinson, 1987), p.406.

'rough' is used to describe a form of masculinity in contrast with the establishment norm of 'respectability'. In this way the rough/respectable division should be seen as one that is relative to established norms rather than absolute. The relative disorder and potential for casual violence that could be seen as a key part of some forms of working-class street culture and masculine popular cultural forms should be seen as part of a wider socioeconomic environment.

Indeed, in the context of nineteenth-century England, Peter Bailey argues that the presence of 'a certain rawness and urgency in popular recreation which marked the reflex action to the rigours and privations of much working-class life', could be seen as part of a cultural context that required 'tough' men for its reproduction.⁴⁶ In addition to this Carolyn Conley and John Archer have shown that, for many men, male-on-male violence was often considered in terms of sport in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries rather than being used specifically as a way of causing injury.⁴⁷ Indeed Archer has suggested that, much casual violence among men should be seen as 'not so much men behaving badly as men behaving normally' since it was so ingrained in the socioeconomic environment in which they lived.⁴⁸

The essential consequence of the requirement for individual men to be capable of varying displays of masculinity depending on the social situation in which they found themselves is that the playing out of manly identities is a situational activity rather than one that necessarily illuminates a person's private self-image. This situational quality of masculinity has been discussed by Pat Ayers in her work on the masculinities of workers in inter-war Liverpool. Ayers has identified a series of aspects of masculinity that came from institutions such as

⁴⁶ Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), p.88.

⁴⁷ Carolyn Conley 'The Agreeable Recreation of Fighting', *Journal of Social History*, 33:1 (1999), pp.58-72 and John Archer, 'Men Behaving Badly'?: Masculinity and the Use of Violence, 1850-1900' in Shani D'Cruze (Ed.) *Everyday Violence in Britain, 1850-1950* (Edinburgh: Pearson Education, 2000).

⁴⁸ Archer, 'Men Behaving Badly' p.52.

workplace, church and 'the family' that come together in order to form a gender identity that could 'vary over time, spatially and within particular labour market contexts'.⁴⁹ While Ayers emphasises the unitary nature of the *idealised* masculinity in each of these contexts she makes it clear that this does not mean that this ideal is internalised and adhered to by each individual man. Peter Bailey's work raises an additional point in terms of understanding masculine performances as contextual rather than as strictly products of personality types.

Of particular interest is an article describing a daytrip made by 'Bill Banks', a nineteenth-century working-class man. In this article Bailey analyses a fictional account of a man's day out and suggests that, at each stage of his activities, it would be possible to ascribe a different form of masculine identity to Banks.⁵⁰ On this excursion Banks is seen to be dressed up in his 'Sunday best' and to visit Hampton Court, both activities that would put him within the bounds of 'respectability' and would qualify as 'rational recreation'. However, later on Banks is described as getting drunk and fighting with a companion, both activities that would identify him as a representative of the 'rough' element of the working class.⁵¹ Bailey's work makes a significant point about the importance of the role the observer plays in the definition of masculinity. If gender is to be viewed as a social relationship, as suggested above, then the way in which masculine performances are perceived by others is a primary factor in determining whether the particular performance is interpreted as an acceptable or a deviant form of identity.

An important detail here is that, despite the fact that Banks' various activities can be interpreted as representing a series of disparate identities, this does not necessarily imply a conscious 'acting out' of these particular roles. Rather it suggests that his actions at each point could be classified as those typical of different social 'types' in terms of their gender, class and

⁴⁹ Pat Ayers, 'The Making of Men: Masculinities in Inter-War Liverpool' in Margaret Walsh (Ed.), *Working Out Gender* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), p.79.

⁵⁰ Peter Bailey, 'Will the Real Bill Banks Stand Up? A Role Analysis of Mid-Victorian Working-Class Respectability', *Journal of Social History* 12:3 (1979), pp.336-353.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p.341.

respectability. This complicates the study of masculinity as it suggests that what gender historians are examining are discrete performances of gendered types and traits rather than internal personality types. In this construction then, it would be overly simplistic to ascribe a particular masculine type to a person based on their socioeconomic position. It could be argued that it would perhaps be more likely for a man of a certain class to display the dominant masculinity associated with that class but this would be the result of the social situations they were exposed to rather than dependent on their actual qualities. As Hilary Young has observed through the analysis of oral history testimony, 'masculinity is not just a personal identity, but also a blend of organised social relations, changing cultural constructions and personal consciousness'.⁵²

Taken together the work of Bailey and Young indicates that masculinity should not be simply understood as the way a man constructs his own masculine identity. The relational nature of gender means that the ways in which this masculine presentation was perceived and interpreted by those in social contact with the gendered subject is in some senses as important as the content of the performance itself. Indeed it could be argued that one of the primary purposes of performing a hegemonic gender identity is that it is recognised as such by others. These performances allow a person to assert themselves in terms of how they see their own social standing, an idea that will be discussed below in relation to the work of Erving Goffman. It should be noted that it is indicative of the importance, and pervasiveness, of gender roles that the majority of masculine performances that establish a man's social prestige involve his establishing his position within a gender hierarchy.

One of the most important considerations for the concept of masculinity as a social discourse that I will be using throughout this study is that it is essentially performative and

⁵² Young, 'Hard Man, New Man: Re/composing Masculinities in Glasgow', p.80.

therefore has much more to do with social conventions and needs than it does with individual biology. The basis of the concept of performativity in the context of gender history is the work of Judith Butler. Butler has claimed that 'there is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender...identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results'.⁵³ This idea could be seen as an expansion on the ideas raised by Ayers and Bailey above: gender is defined as the act of conforming or deviating. A further key to Butler's work is that she sees subjects as being 'enabled' by deeds rather than performing them. In this way she attempts to imply that there is not a pre-existing subject that then acts out gender, but rather that the subject is formed from its repeated exposure to gender. This is where the theoretical conception of masculinity used in this study will diverge from the formation advocated by Butler. As Chris Brickell has observed, the major problem with Butler's theorisation of masculinity is that the denial of the autonomous existence of the subject makes it difficult to account for agency in gender terms.⁵⁴

This study will work from the position that the subject does pre-exist the *act* of gender, and that gender identity is 'formed' through the interaction of the subject and his/her actions with the social pressures that are brought to bear upon it. These pressures are exerted through the strictures of the dominant discourses the subject interacts with and through the socioeconomic environment which he/she experiences. This means that subjects are able to exercise agency in their construction of gender but they do so in an environment that limits these choices through the imposition of social norms, many of which are explicitly or implicitly gendered. In the words of Karl Marx, 'Men [or women] make their own history but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances.'⁵⁵

⁵³ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), p.25

⁵⁴ Chris Brickell, 'Masculinities, Performativity, and Subversion: A Sociological Reappraisal', *Men and Masculinities*, 8:1 (2005), p.27

⁵⁵ Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York: International Publications, 1998), p15.

It is important to note here that this does not imply that the gender of a subject is pre-social; and in addition to this the above discussion does not suggest that there is no basis whatsoever within individual personality for the kinds of gendered behaviour that can be performed. However, it is reasonable to suggest that the ways in which personality is manifested and displayed is heavily determined by established social norms. In reference to the much cited 'Glasgow hard man', I would suggest that, quite apart from any natural inclination to this identity, many men would have felt the need to conform to this *image* in certain social situations whether it fitted their actual identity or not.

The need to display the 'correct' gender role would have been reinforced through the community with the result that any man who was unwilling or unable to perform this identity was seen as deviant and therefore as somehow apart from the community that he was geographically and/or economically a part of. In a context where employment could often be gained through informal networks (for example the pub, or being 'vouched for' to enter some engineering trades) this community control would be effective in making survival difficult for those that refused to, or were unable to, perform what was perceived as the 'correct' masculine role.

The influence of religious affiliation was also an important factor in defining a person's social identity and their place within the social hierarchy and came with its own definition of 'rough' and 'respectable'. W.W. Knox has shown that there was a large amount of anti-Catholic discrimination present in employment practices in the west of Scotland in the inter-war period which had the effect of concentrating Catholic workers in the unskilled and low paid sectors of the economy.⁵⁶ This economic situation, when combined with the sectarian tensions which were especially prevalent in working-class areas of Glasgow, led to a stereotyped image of Irish Catholics as representing the 'rough' element of working-class culture. Annmarie

⁵⁶ Knox, *Industrial Nation*, p142.

Hughes has demonstrated that drunkenness and 'rough' behaviour were seen as Catholic traits by both the Protestant church and some sectors of its membership.⁵⁷ What this implies is that the respectable/rough division was not merely a way to distinguish between the cultures of different classes but could be used to create stratification within classes. The use made of the term 'respectable' in this context was more a way of defining oneself against a demonised other than it was due to a desire to aspire to establishment social norms. Hughes shows that this worldview was exploited by the Unionist Party in Scotland in order to suggest that the parties of the Left represented deviant social groups with which many working-class people would have been loath to associate themselves, thereby making class solidarity more problematic.⁵⁸

The term 'role' is important in the context of gender identity as it emphasises the idea that the characteristics that make up gender are ones that are based on social relationships to a greater extent than they are personal attributes. This would allow men to perform the correct masculine role whilst in a social setting without it having to necessarily correspond to his own personal attributes or beliefs. In *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* Erving Goffman compares this social role performance to that of a theatrical actor. In this analogy the other participants in the social situation are portrayed as the audience for the gendered performer.⁵⁹ In a similar way to a theatrical performance this audience has a set of expectations regarding performance conditioned by their own experience and the social norms which are implied by each individual situation. However, social performances are further complicated by the fact that the audience of each participant in a social situation is also presenting their own performance which will interact with, and react to, the performances of the other participants.

It will become clear throughout this study that much of the evidence gathered from oral history transcripts and autobiographies implies a similar, performative relationship to masculine

⁵⁷ Hughes, *Gender and Political Identities in Scotland*, p.71.

⁵⁸ Ibid, pp.72-76.

⁵⁹ Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (London: Penguin, 1969).

identity among young men. This is particularly the case in regard to their use of rational recreation, where it seems that the masculinity which is presented during supervised activities was as divergent from the way respondents acted outwith the reach of voluntary organisations, and indeed of the way in which their biographical narrative is composed. In fact, the hegemonic masculine form, emphasising as it did both the importance of hard work and engagement with family life, could be said to recognise its own situational nature, at least tacitly. This is because the traits required by many heavy industry workers to simply survive at their jobs were in stark contrast to those required as a father/husband and as a citizen in many ways. This tension would have been even greater during the Second World War, when the identity of the soldier was idealised to an extent that would have further separated the public and private masculine roles, that could be considered hegemonic.

The consequence of masculinity being both a performed and a situational identity is that it is not actually as fundamental to a person's self-identity as it is often assumed to be by the essentialist view of gender. In this context it is clear that social and economic factors can be considered highly significant in determining the types of masculinity displayed in various social settings. The significance of this is that, rather than it being assumed that the inter-war 'Glasgow hard man' was the baseline identity which consumer, or more modern manly forms, are subversions of, it was merely another potential 'role' to be taken on by men when it was seen as appropriate or advantageous. This is one of the fundamental issues that this study will attempt to explore; to what extent is the subject and its gender identity separable?

The question to be addressed here is whether there is, in fact, any actual, fundamental quality of 'masculinity' that can be separated from conscious or unconscious performance for a specific social audience. Where this becomes problematic is in the need to understand how much of 'masculine' behaviour is an unconsciously learned set of conventions and how much is merely put on in the appropriate social setting. The level of internalisation is the key question

in this context. As will be demonstrated in later chapters, where evidence of direct experience is examined it often seems to suggest that, much of the time, maintaining a 'hard man' image was something that was done in order to fit in rather than being a representation of the individual's identity or values. This would suggest that the whole identity was a constructed one, perhaps developed in order to withstand the hard working and living environments that many endured. However, in a socioeconomic environment where social mobility was rare it may be that the long-term need to perform these situational masculinities would result in eventual internalisation to the point that these identities became a part of a man's fundamental worldview. The extent to which this was the case is difficult to assess but should be taken into account in consideration of these issues.

This raises issues around whether it is 'self-representation' or 'other-representation' which is the important determining factor in men's performance of their masculinity. Were men performing particular masculinities in order to live up to their own standards or was it merely to be socially accepted? It could be suggested that, in line with Pat Ayers' idea of situational masculinity, that the 'other-representation' was the most important factor in many situations. An example of this tendency is given by the autobiography of Robert Douglas where the author recounts having thoughts he felt he could not vocalise to his National Service colleagues for fear of ridicule.⁶⁰ In this situation Douglas' presentation of his masculine identity had much more to do with the way he wished to be perceived (in a negative sense) than it does with it being anything to do with his self-identity, and is in fact a denial of his self-expression.

In a sense, what is being described as a 'masculine identity' in this construction could be seen as much as a series of contextualised behaviours and actions as much as a fundamental part of a person's personality. As will be discussed in Chapter five, it could perhaps be argued that the rational recreationist's call to 'play the game' was in fact being

⁶⁰ Robert Douglas, *Somewhere to Lay my Head* (Hodder: London, 2007), p.281.

internalised in a way other than it was intended by its proponents. What the youths who joined, for example, the Dundee YMCA were actually learning was that there were advantages to letting philanthropists see what they wanted to see. Rather than internalising the values of the association many of the members seem to have been behaving in the 'appropriate' manner in order to get what they wanted from the opportunities provided. Peter Bailey has identified this process occurring in the Sunday School movement in the 1870s where the church failed to retain many of the Sunday School attenders into the adult membership of the church. A contemporary put this down to the fact that they had 'created in them an appetite for something else', but it would perhaps be more accurate to suggest that this 'something else' was the very thing that had attracted youths to Sunday Schools in the first place.⁶¹

This process appears to have been operating in the workplace as well. The work cultures that will be explored in Chapter three were all highly 'masculinised' in terms of their dominant values and practices to an extent that it would have been socially difficult for men to behave in ways which were out of keeping with the dominant values of the group. In this sense, gendered behaviour performed in workplaces can be seen as a part of the work culture as much as the other social practices present such as control of work-rate. The work group would, in this way, be responsible for policing gender as well as productive behaviour. The significance of this in terms of social and economic change is that it suggests that occupational structure would have a substantial influence in mediating the forms of masculinity which were prevalent in workshops, communities and popular culture in the wider sense.

Ross McKibbin's work on the recreational culture of the British working class is relevant here as it suggests that the non-working culture of workers was in fact related to

⁶¹ Bailey, *Leisure and Class*, p.101. Hugh Cunningham makes a similar point in relation to the Volunteer Force created in the 1870s, see: Hugh Cunningham, *The Volunteer Force: A Social and Political History* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1975), pp.153-154. For a twentieth century example see my MPhil dissertation on the Home Guard: Oliver Stockman, 'Competing Discourses Of Masculinity Among Non-Servicemen In The West Of Scotland, 1940-1944' (Unpublished MPhil dissertation, University of Glasgow, 2005), pp.50-59.

occupational patterns.⁶² As suggested by the work of Bailey cited above, this extended to the ways in which popular culture itself was both constructed and consumed. It is likely that this was also true for forms of masculinity, as gender roles should be considered as an integral part of the culture of any particular social group. In this sense, whilst a Marxist interpretation of culture that puts economic factors at the centre of cultural constructions may be too deterministic in its absolute form it does have some relevance in understanding the way gender discourses are formed, maintained and reproduced.

This section has shown that the adoption of a particular masculine identity can be influenced by situational needs on both a social and personal level as well as the values of individual men. These influences, such as living and working conditions, made the performance of certain masculinities essential for social acceptance and, in some cases, perhaps even psychological composure. It is important to keep in mind that, in many cases, the outward behaviour of manliness would have been as important as the actual internalisation of 'masculine' values. In these cases the need to conform to dominant masculine traits could be seen as a controlling influence on a person's actions as much as a display of control or social power.

1.7 - Masculinity, Modernity and Popular Culture

The above section of this historiographical review has largely focused on the connection between masculinities and the economic context in which they are played out. However, one of the key elements of this thesis will be the connection between forms of leisure, from various sources, and the social identities of those that participate in it. The next part of this introductory section will focus on the ways in which changes in popular culture were viewed by contemporary groups and the implications that their views had for the acceptance of modern

⁶² Ross McKibbin, *The Ideologies of Class: Social Relations in Britain, 1880-1950* (Oxford, New York: Clarendon, 1994), pp.139-166.

cultural forms, and the types of social identities that could be expressed and shaped through these sources.

Contemporary commentators often saw the speed of 'modern' life to be a potential problem, especially for the young. In a radio broadcast in 1934 the Archbishop of Canterbury stated that 'the ever increasing speed of physical movement' was 'imperilling the soul' through the 'the incessant pressure of distractions which hustle the mind from one sensation to another. The cinema, the popular press, the 'flood of books', and the radio were pinpointed as major causes of these distractions.'⁶³ While these developments were not portrayed as inherently negative, the worry expressed was that they had 'outstripped the capacity of man's character to adjust to them and control them'.⁶⁴ In addition to this, T.F. Coade, the headmaster of Bryanston, an English private school, described modern leisure in 1936 as consisting of a 'fantasy world of speed and physical sensation', leading to the presence of 'vast numbers of undisciplined and unreliable men and women, the prey of any passing allurements or craze' in society.⁶⁵ What both these commentaries imply is that the pace of development of technology within commercial leisure was seen as overtaking the ability of establishment groups to fully control it. Perhaps more significantly, the meanings associated with the use of these novel recreations were being established in a bottom-up manner with the result that the usual transmission of social values, from those in control to those subordinated, was potentially disrupted. If this was the case then social identities such as masculinity would be constructed in ways that were not necessarily in line with establishment needs.

In addition to this the above comments suggest that it was feared that full engagement with newer cultural forms among the young implied a rejection of the values of the parent generation. The parent generations in the 1930 to 1950s period would also have grown up

⁶³ Reported in *The Scotsman*, 31/12/34, p.17.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ T.F. Coade, 'Leisure and Creative Purpose' in William Boyd, *The Challenge of Leisure* (London: New Education Fellowship, 1936), pp.33-34.

with the cinema and dancehalls as a part of their youth leisure pursuits. However, due to their constantly evolving musical and dance styles, the dancehalls studied in Chapter four could be said to have challenged the primacy of the moral standards cherished by the parent generations at several points in their development.⁶⁶ Similarly the development of cinema and the constant battles between censorship and what film-makers wished to show, as exemplified in the debates surrounding the BBFC and the Hays Code, meant that this medium was often seen as challenging dominant views of propriety.⁶⁷ In this construction the morals of the younger generation are always seen to fall short of those of their parents. This is because, no matter what the actual moral make-up of the rising generation is, it is one that, potentially or actually, differs in form from that of the parent generation. David Fowler has suggested that the inter-war period was the first time that a distinctive youth culture based around consumption of mass cultural products appeared, ushering in the potential for a generation gap in terms of cultural experiences to a greater extent than for previous cohorts.⁶⁸

Taking into account the work of Kirsten Drotner, Eileen Yeo and John Springhall, it could even be argued that this is a fundamental trait of modernity, characterised as it is by the constant movement of technology along with the fetishisation of 'progress'.⁶⁹ The irony here is that it was the same group, socioeconomically speaking, that was encouraging the spread of these technologies for the purposes of economic gain that was largely responsible for much of the negative commentary surrounding them. The implication here is that the economically

⁶⁶ The move from ballroom dancing to jazz styles of dancing was considered to be significant moral issue in the 1930s and 1940s, see Section 4.2 below.

⁶⁷ For a discussion of this debate see Peter Stead, 'The People and the Pictures' in N. Pronay and D. Spring (Eds.), *Propaganda, Politics and Film, 1918-45* (London: Macmillan Press, 1982) and Nicholas Pronay, 'The Political censorship of films in Britain between the wars' in N. Pronay and D. Spring (eds) *Propaganda, Politics and Film, 1918-45* (London: Macmillan Press, 1982).

⁶⁸ David Fowler, 'Teenage Consumers?: Young wage earners and leisure in Manchester, 1919-1939' in Andrew Davies and Stephen Fielding (Eds) *Worker's Worlds: Cultures and Communities in Manchester and Salford, 1880-1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), p.148 and David Fowler, *The First Teenagers* (London: Woburn Press, 1995).

⁶⁹ See Eileen Yeo, 'The Boy Is The Father Of The Man?: Moral Panic Over Working Class Youth, 1850 To The Present', *Labour History Review*, 69:2 (2004), p.185, John Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics: Penny Gaffs to Gangster Rap* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998) and Kirsten Drotner, 'Modernity and Media Panics' in Michael Skovmand, Kim Schröder (Eds) *Media Cultures – Reappraising Transnational Media* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

dominant group feared losing control of cultural discourses due to its inability to control the meanings that commercial leisure was inscribed with by its consumers. Two concepts that have been used to evaluate the growth of mass leisure need to be introduced at this point. First is the idea that commercial leisure acted as a form of social control, that is, it was an attempt by one social group to alter the beliefs and/or behaviours of another group through the imposition of a specific form of popular culture.⁷⁰ This posits a view of commercial and rational recreation that leaves little room for agency among its consumers. Another way that commercial leisure has been characterized is as a 'culture of consolation'. Along these lines Gareth Stedman Jones has suggested that the popularity of the music hall and the cinema in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was a substitute for political action due to the acceptance by the working classes that the class and capital relations of the time were more than a 'temporary aberration' and were unchangeable.⁷¹

However, the above interpretation of moral panics makes the 'social control' and 'culture of consolation' arguments less than satisfactory. Arguably, what the fears embodied by the moral panics cited above suggest is that authority figures were *incapable* of retaining cultural control over the masses. While they may have been able to exert a certain amount of control over the content of cultural products and over the venues in which they were consumed, they were not able to control how the consumers used this content.

In this context it is important to distinguish the concepts of hegemony, as introduced in the first section of this chapter, and that of social control. Hegemony refers largely to the privileging of certain ideologies in order to create idealised social identities. The way that public discourses can be manipulated by those in positions of social power, and therefore shape behaviour, could be said to operate in a similar way. In fact, it is reasonable to suggest

⁷⁰ Definition from Stephen Jones, *Workers at Play: A Social and Economic History of Leisure, 1918-1939* (London: Routledge, 1986), p.6.

⁷¹ Gareth Stedman-Jones, 'Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics in London 1870-1914' in T. Bennett, B. Wailes and G. Martin (eds) *Popular Culture: Past and Present* (London: Croom Helm, 1982), p.117.

that the intended outcome of this 'ranking' of acceptable identities through discourse was the reshaping of an autonomous working-class culture. However, it will become clear during the course of this study that this was not necessarily the case. Dominant groups were capable of policing the presentation of identity in order to control access to certain recreational forms.⁷² Despite this, the users of such recreation were able to manipulate the presentation of identity they gave and therefore manipulate the discourses they were presented with to their own needs. The concept of social control through popular culture suggests that this level of autonomy on the part of the consumers of culture was not possible to the extent that the evidence suggests. In order for social control to be effective through this channel the ability of the consumer to renegotiate the content presented to them has to be denied. If the 'social control' model of popular culture is accepted then, rather than framing social discourse, as is the case in hegemony, establishment groups are seen as having the ability to actively shape, as opposed to simply marginalise, the culture of other groups through their control of popular culture. The weakness of this position will be exposed throughout later chapters on commercial and rational recreation.

It is worth making reference to the work of middle-class-run, Christian voluntary organisations in the inter-war period in this context. Much of the activity of these organisations could be seen as an attempt to naturalise the gender identity of the public school in those who had not grown up in that environment. These organisations could be said to be, at an official level at least, bastions of the kind of identity subscribed to by the middle classes and crucial to the project of diffusing this identity downwards, as explored by J.A. Mangan and Colm Hickey.⁷³ There is arguably a connection between the evangelical nature of these organisations and of the form of evangelical Christianity that had birthed them in their desire to

⁷² See Chapter five below.

⁷³ J.A. Mangan and Colm Hickey, 'Athleticism in the Service of the Proletariat: Preparation for the English Elementary School and the Extension of Middle Class Manliness' in J.A. Mangan (Ed.) *Making European Masculinities* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), p.114.

'improve' their target members. While the various voluntary organisations used religion as a tool to varying degrees, it is arguable that their philosophies were based on the same form of cultural elitism. The church in Scotland was attempting to save the souls of those it tried to reach whilst voluntary organisations such as the Scottish Association of Boys' Clubs or the Boy Scouts were seeking to reshape the 'character' and 'manliness' of the youths who were its constituency. The reformation of working-class culture that this implied was an example of the way in which establishment figures were attempting to influence working-class culture and remake it along more 'respectable' lines.

This cultural elitism was heavily influenced by the discourse of imperialism that was an important ideological element of establishment culture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Imperialism informed establishment attitudes to working-class culture in a number of ways. Firstly, it was felt by many that the inculcation of the correct form of manliness among the younger generation was an essential part of the future maintenance of the British empire. A critical aspect of this line of thinking was the fear of racial degeneration. Significantly, by the late 1890s the idea that the consumption of the products of popular culture could be partly to blame for this physical and mental degeneration was being raised in some quarters.⁷⁴

Chapter five below will explore the ways in which these ideas continued to be influential in establishment discourses surrounding popular culture and 'national fitness' in the first half of the twentieth century. These fears were magnified in light of the poor physical condition observed among recruits for the Boer War, 29.98% of whom were rejected on the grounds of lack of physical fitness between 1899 and 1901.⁷⁵ It is clear that the needs of the nation, and therefore the empire, were seen to be dependent on the ideals, both physical and mental, that were instilled in youths through establishment discourses surrounding manliness

⁷⁴ For example see Max Nordau, *Degeneration* (New York: Appleton and Company, 1895), p.viii.

⁷⁵ Matthew Hendley, 'Help us to secure a strong, healthy, prosperous and peaceful Britain': the social arguments of the campaign for compulsory military service in Britain, 1899-1914', *Canadian Journal of History*, 30:2 (1995), p.266.

and fitness. Anna Davin, examining the early twentieth century, has connected these discourses with fears that women were 'shirking from motherhood', leading to dangers of 'race suicide' if the birth rate amongst middle-class women continued to decline.⁷⁶ Crucially this idea was being propagated in a period in which other nations, such as Germany, were seen to be gaining ground on Britain in economic terms. The blaming of mothers for a perceived decline in racial health continued into the inter-war period: a report in the *Daily Record* in 1934 blamed the fact that, at a national level, 52% of army recruits were being rejected on the idea that 'women would not cook, but gave the men tinned food'.⁷⁷ In this construction of racial fitness it is the failure of women to fulfil their assigned gender role that appeared to be the root of a lack of ideal men rather than the fault of the men themselves, or of their socioeconomic environment. As Annmarie Hughes has observed, putting women's actions at the centre of social problems can be seen as a way of the establishment abdicating responsibility for those problems, hence reducing the perceived need to develop policies by which they could be ameliorated.⁷⁸

Secondly there was a desire to reform working-class culture from a moral standpoint as well as a physical one. An imperial discourse that emphasised 'duty, discipline and self-sacrifice' has been identified in the education provided by public schools in the years preceding the First World War by J.A. Mangan. Mangan goes on to suggest that these ideas had been given 'wider social sanction' by the 1920s, partly through their introduction to the provision of state education and voluntary organizations.⁷⁹ A key aspect of this ideology was that it was the duty of England (pointedly not Britain) to disseminate 'the knowledge of His [the Christian God's] will and for holding up before mankind the saving light of the gospel' due to 'racial

⁷⁶ Anna Davin, 'Imperialism and Motherhood', *History Workshop*, 5 (1978), pp.15-17.

⁷⁷ *Daily Record*, 20/01/34, p.3.

⁷⁸ Hughes, *Gender and Political Identities in Scotland*, p.166.

⁷⁹ J.A. Mangan, "'The Grit of Our Forefathers'" Invented Traditions, Propaganda and Imperialism', in John M. MacKenzie (Ed.), *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), p.126.

superiority'.⁸⁰ This 'missionary' mentality can be seen to be present in the work of those attempting to reform working-class culture in Britain as well as in the colonies. Indeed, many of the organizations set up by establishment groups as forms of disseminating rational recreation could be seen as taking an 'anthropological' approach to their assessments of working-class culture. Figures like Henry Solly, founder of the Working Men's Club and Institute Association, saw this culture as failing to allow the working-class man to 'reach his full potential'.⁸¹ This attitude implies that such reformers believed working-class culture to be fundamentally inferior to their own, and to be damaging to those engaging in it as much as it was to national and imperial interests.

One important caveat to this analysis is that the term 'working-class culture' needs to be interpreted as a non-monolithic concept. There was a widely-articulated distinction between the 'respectable' and the 'rough' within it. Eric Hobsbawm's idea of the aristocracy of labour is relevant here as it indicates the presence within the working class of differing levels of acceptance of socially dominant roles and identities within the class as a whole.⁸² This model suggests that the 'rough/respectable' distinction can be explained by a cultural difference between those who were part of the unskilled labour force and those who were in more skilled, or non-manual, positions. The latter group is said to be distinguished by a greater level of social aspiration which makes its members more likely to take on the values of the middle class.

However, while Hobsbawm's model is useful in drawing attention to potential lines of division within working-class culture, his analysis that the 'rough/respectable' distinction can be explained simply by the employment of the male 'head of the household' is too simplistic. David Cannadine, in his analysis of the class system in Britain, has observed that rather than

⁸⁰ Ibid, p.118.

⁸¹ Richard N. Price, 'The Working Men's Club Movement and Victorian Social Reform Ideology', *Victorian Studies*, 15:2 (1971), p.122.

⁸² See Eric Hobsbawm, *Labouring Men: Studies in The History of Labour* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson Ltd., 1964).

simply being a matter of a person's relationship to the means of production, class encompasses 'social description, social perception, social identities and political creation'.⁸³ With this in mind the relative nature of the rough/respectable divide needs to be taken into account. The way people viewed themselves and those in their community was as much a part of the way in which class and identity were formed as was the economic position they held. The dynamic nature of respectability also needs to be taken into account in this context. Robert Roberts has made a strong case for the potentially temporary nature of respectability in terms of a family's economic fortunes and place in the life cycle.⁸⁴ Roberts also highlights the extent to which the social prestige a family enjoyed was highly stratified and was dependent on the values of the specific community, with neighbourhoods themselves determining the boundaries between gradations in the face of dominant discourses.⁸⁵

This stratification of social standing is illustrated by the recollections of one Maryhill man who worked in a bakery in his youth in the 1950s. The bakery he and his father were employed in specialised in Vienna loaves that 'only the toffs would eat...with their soup'. When his father bought this bread home for the family this man claims that neighbours thought they were 'quite well off' despite this simply being a perk of his employment.⁸⁶ In this example the consumption of certain goods was coded as a class-bound activity which could be used as a way of partially defining another person's social identity quite outside of their economic role.

As suggested by the work of Roberts, cited above, life cycle issues were important in determining which side of the rough/respectable divide a person's living conditions fell under. Andrew Davies has identified the post-school to pre-marriage period of life as one where youths had the most disposable income. In addition to this there were significant gendered

⁸³ Cannadine, *Class in Britain*, p.171.

⁸⁴ Robert Roberts, *The Classic Slum* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973), pp.23-31.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Glasgow Collection, Mitchell Library, Maryhill Oral History Project, Tape LHP 2C, testimony of Mr Sam McIlvenna.

differences in the 'spends' available for married men and women.⁸⁷ Husbands would see a decrease in the amount of money that could be spent on personal items but for many women in the inter-war period marriage would mean a complete end to personal spending since, as discussed above, any income they obtained needed to be spent on the maintenance of the household.

As discussed in relation to the differences between the rough and respectable definitions of masculinity available to working-class men, it should be taken into account that class identity within classes was often perceived as relative to that of the observer. As Annmarie Hughes has observed, 'respectability was neither an overarching nor a fixed concept' in working-class communities.⁸⁸ Those perceived as the 'rough' or 'lower working class' in either economic, religious or cultural terms were judged thus through the prejudices of whatever discourses to which the individual subscribed. This should not be seen as an outright rejection of the concept of class, merely as a way of understanding the consequences of the ways in which it was constructed as a social descriptor, and as a mark of social identity by those living in communities that were largely homogenous from a socioeconomic standpoint.

Gender and age, as well as class, were significant factors in terms of access to, and reception of new opportunities for recreation and cultural consumption opened up by the development of mass commercial leisure. The preponderance of young people among the ranks of cinema goers has already been discussed and Sally Alexander has suggested, in a study of London, that this was actually a major feature of inter-war popular culture. Alexander notes that an important discourse surrounding consumption in the period emphasised the difference between the 'cloth cap and spare frame' of the unemployed man and the 'young

⁸⁷ Davies, *Leisure, Gender and Poverty*, p.82. See also Clare Langhamer, *Women's Leisure in England, 1920-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).

⁸⁸ Hughes, *Gender and Political Identities in Scotland*, p.65.

working girl – lipsticked, silk-stockinged, and dressed ‘like an actress’.⁸⁹ While this rather dramatic stereotype should perhaps be seen as more of a rhetorical construct than an expression of reality, it does point towards the way the ‘modern’ woman was seen by some groups and emphasizes the idea that the depression was often seen as largely an issue of loss of male occupational status.

In a Scottish context the idea that young men were at a disadvantage to their female contemporaries in terms of employment is less relevant. As will be discussed in the following chapter, the new industries that were employing increasing numbers of female workers in England were slow to develop in Scotland. In addition to this the drive from industrialists to reduce costs during the depression of the 1930s led to the employment of young men under the age where they were entitled to claim an adult wage. Alan McKinlay has recorded the way this practice affected the Clydebank shipyards in the 1930s, with workers often seeing the end of apprenticeship as the end of their employment rather than the point that they became able to command the wages of a time-served tradesman.⁹⁰ McKinlay observes that this practice was so prevalent in the John Brown’s shipyard in the 1930s that it earned the nickname ‘Boystown’ among unemployed adult shipbuilders.⁹¹ The result of such practices was that, while unemployment was certainly a huge problem for adult men, those in their teens were less likely to experience it to the same extent. This meant that they were more able to engage in new popular cultural forms than their elders.

Annmarie Hughes has shown that there were also extensive opportunities for young women to gain employment in this period, even if they were still barred from taking on many male jobs such as engineering, where the number of women employed actually fell in Scotland

⁸⁹ Sally Alexander, ‘Becoming a Woman in London in the 1920s and 1930s’ in Gareth Stedman Jones and David Feldman (Eds.), *Metropolis London: Histories And Representations Since 1800* (Routledge: London, 1989), p.245.

⁹⁰ Alan McKinlay, *Making Ships, Making Men* (Clydebank: Clydebank District Libraries, 1991), p.15.

⁹¹ Alan McKinlay, ‘Making Ships, Making Men: Working for John Brown’s Between the Wars’, *Oral History*, 19:1 (1991), p.24.

in the early 1930s.⁹² Despite this the employment prospects for young women in Scotland were increasing at this time, with the percentage employed in Glasgow in 1931, 76.9%, being reasonably comparable to the figure for young men, 82.0%.⁹³ A likely reason for this was the fact that, like their male counterparts of the same age, these women could be treated as cheap, expendable labour by employers. Despite their low wages, while the women represented in this figure were unmarried and largely living in the family home their income did allow them greater access to commercial leisure than was previously the case, even if their domestic workload was significantly higher than that of young men.

With this in mind, arguably the real reason that the conspicuous consumption of young women was seen as such an issue by contemporary commentators was that it was a product of this group's increasing involvement in the formal workforce. It may be that young men were not portrayed in the same way due to the fact that it was less of a novelty for young men to engage in leisure in this way, as they were assumed to be economically active in terms of both production and consumption. In this sense then, the access that young women had to new forms of consumption was one that had a more publicly controversial role than that of young men to a certain extent as it could be seen as a fundamental shift in gender discourses.

In an English context Selina Todd has suggested that male employment was constrained in the inter-war period in an environment of greater female employment.⁹⁴ The reaction to this in a cultural context that saw male employment as fundamental to established gender roles is likely to have been negative. Indeed at this stage the employment of women was still construed to be a form of family income which supplemented that of the male breadwinner. With this in mind conspicuous consumption by young women could be seen as threatening to the established gender order both from the point of view of the economic shift it

⁹² Hughes, *Gender and Political Identities in Scotland*, p.21.

⁹³ Ibid, p.25.

⁹⁴ Selina Todd, *Young Women, Work, and Family in England, 1918-1950* (Oxford University Press, 2005), p.198.

implied, and the way in which it gave these women a much more visible role in the public sphere. Clare Langhamer has examined this phenomenon among women who left school towards the end of the 1930s, describing the popular culture of this period, and in particular the trend for dancing, as providing young women with 'access to a world of comfort and glamour which many normally had little opportunity to experience'.⁹⁵

The expanded role for young women in discourses surrounding mass leisure also had implications for the discourses surrounding masculinity. There seems to have been concern that new leisure forms such as cinema and dancing were less 'masculine' than older forms such as sport. Indeed, some critics in the inter-war period went as far as to suggest that modern leisure was actively feminising young men, S.F. Hatton claiming in 1931 that: 'I deplore all attempts to effeminise young manhood, and I am ashamed of some of the youths of today who are more given to the softer delights of the cinema and dancehall, than the more vigorous and manly sporting instincts of boxing, football and such-like pastimes.'⁹⁶ Despite its alarmist tone this statement could be said to be in line with the concerns of many of the reformers especially those in the voluntary sector. Two possible lines of interpretation can be advanced for comments such as these. Firstly, it was felt by some that these newer recreations encouraged a passive reception.⁹⁷ It could be argued that this passive role for young men actually went against dominant conceptions of masculinity which were founded upon the idea that independent action was a central part of being a man.

A second way in which modern commercial recreations seem to have been a cause for concern among contemporary commentators was the fact that many of them were far less sex segregated than in previous times. This had implications in both practical and ideological

⁹⁵ Langhamer, *Women's Leisure in England*, p.65.

⁹⁶ S. F Hatton, *London's Bad Boys*, (London: Chapman & Hall, 1931), cited in Beaven, *Leisure, Citizenship And Working Class Men*, p.158.

⁹⁷ See Stephen Yeo, *Religion and Voluntary Organisations in Crisis* (London: Croom Helm, 1976), p.2, for evidence that voluntary organisations were seeking to engender an active attitude to leisure consumption in the context of England in the period immediately preceding World War One. Chapter five below will discuss the ways in which this desire was carried into the inter-war period and beyond.

terms. The obvious practical objection to recreations such as dancing was the fear of sexual impropriety. D.L. LeMahieu's study of the magazine *The Gramophone* indicates the way in which changes in musical forms seem to have accentuated these concerns: one correspondent to the publication in the 1920s claimed that 'jazz is sexually exhilarating and...essentially an aphrodisiac'.⁹⁸ In this way it was not only the venue dancing took place in, with its lack of parental control and opportunities for engaging in adolescent sexuality, that was at issue but the very content of the entertainment itself that was seen as dangerous.⁹⁹ Cinemas were similarly dangerous in the minds of contemporaries, the darkness of these venues being seen as a virtual invitation to sexual deviance. A Mass Observation report on cinema activities makes an explicit reference to the overt enactments of sexuality that were apparently common in inter-war cinemas.¹⁰⁰ In fact, in the inter-war period seemingly any activity that brought young men and women together could come under attack from establishment figures that saw unrestricted mixed-sex activities as morally questionable. In 1932 the Ex-Bailie of Rothesay criticised plans to build covered swimming baths on the grounds that 'Instead of swimming, they [the bathers] were exposing themselves...half the people who paid for admission did not go to see swimming, but to admire and criticise the limbs of the ladies'.¹⁰¹ This clearly indicates a fear that unsupervised mixing of the sexes would inevitably lead to sexual impropriety.

The ideological objections to the mixing of young men and women in venues such as cinemas and dancehalls went further than criticism of actual behaviour and suggested that spending significant amounts of time with those of the opposite sex would actually impede the development of appropriate gender identities. This fear was more directed at young men than

⁹⁸ D.L. LeMahieu, 'The Gramophone: Recorded Music and the Cultivated Mind in Britain Between the Wars', *Technology and Culture*, 23:3 (1982), p.377.

⁹⁹ See Section 4.2 for a discussion of jazz in terms of racial and national concerns.

¹⁰⁰ Gary Cross, *Worktowners at Blackpool: Mass Observation and Popular Leisure in the 1930s* (London: Routledge, 1990).

¹⁰¹ Reported in *The Scotsman*, 11/10/32, p.7.

it was at young women, presumably as it was felt to be necessary for these men to be engaging in activities that were entirely homosocial in order for them to identify with exclusively masculine qualities.¹⁰² Despite this there were also concerns regarding young women's recreational choices. Fiona Skillen has shown that women who participated in sports that were traditionally coded as masculine faced similar condemnation through the perception that they were transgressing gender boundaries.¹⁰³

¹⁰² See Chapter five for a full discussion of these issues in relation to the Scottish Association of Boys Clubs.

¹⁰³ Fiona Skillen, 'When Women Look Their Worst': Women and Sports Participation in Inter-War Scotland', (PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2008).

Conclusion

The aim of this section has been to introduce, through a review of the historiography, some of the major themes that this thesis will investigate in the context of Scotland in the 1930 to c.1950 period. As suggested in the introduction, this thesis will explore the relationship between masculinity, leisure and work with a focus on the youth of Scotland, an intersection that is under-represented in the currently available secondary literature. Key to this approach will be a focus on the experiences of the young people themselves, as opposed to a concentration on the ways in which the establishment viewed them. The intention of this focus is to examine the ways in which establishment discourses affected the construction of social identities amongst youths.

A common theme in the discussions of masculinity and leisure has been the fact that identities can be situational and that concepts of 'appropriate' gendered behaviour are relative to the social situation in which they are performed. The work of Peter Bailey has shown that it is possible for men to perform situationally appropriate, or for that matter inappropriate, roles both in terms of class and gender.¹⁰⁴ Further to this it should be kept in mind that gender and class identities should not be considered as monolithic concepts with no differentiation between individuals and situation. The intersection of gender, class and age is an important one as it creates fissures in the way the same socioeconomic environment is experienced by individuals and therefore in the identities and choices available to an individual at any particular time.

A critical aspect of the reception of changes in popular culture that has been identified is that there is a generational aspect to what is considered to be acceptable in terms of cultural production. Each new cultural form to emerge is simultaneously embraced by the young whilst being viewed with suspicion by their elders, in line with Kirsten Drotner's concept of 'historical

¹⁰⁴ Bailey, 'Will the Real Bill Banks Stand Up?'

amnesia'.¹⁰⁵ The growth of popular print media is important in this context as it provided a wide platform for these concerns to be expressed and discussed in a way that was not previously possible.

¹⁰⁵ Drotner, 'Modernity and Media Panics', p.52.

Chapter 2 - Occupational change in Scotland 1930-c1955

While the main focus of this thesis will be how changes in popular culture influenced masculine identity formation it is important to consider the economic background in which these cultural changes occurred. Work and leisure need to be considered as integral parts of life experience in the context of the twentieth century, and are therefore both important in shaping the gender identities of both men and women. It is also important to take into account the fact that a person's relationship to work and popular culture are to a certain extent linked. In a simplistic sense, a person's employment status will have an effect on their ability to participate in commercial forms of cultural consumption both in terms of their income and time available to them.

At a more conceptual level a person's socioeconomic status is likely to have had an influence on the way in which they engaged with popular culture. This is also the case in terms of gender identity. Work cultures could be seen as influential (an idea that will be explored in the following chapter) but the way that men were perceived by, and perceived themselves in relation to, social discourses was often tied to their employment. This is because masculine status in the capitalist society of early to mid-twentieth-century Scotland was linked to ideas of dominance and control, as suggested in the previous chapter. For this reason socioeconomic status could be seen as an important factor in determining the forms of masculine identity that were available to men, or at least in shaping the ways in which these identities were performed. In order to take these ideas into account, changes in the Scottish employment structure will be examined in this chapter in order to provide a context for the later assessment of the relative importance of work and popular culture in identity formation.

2.1 - The Scottish Economy in a British Context

The British economy in the inter-war period could be described as turbulent. An immediate post-World War One boom was followed in 1920-1921 by a slump caused partly by the exhaustion of pent-up wartime demand and the failure of British industrialists to achieve gains in productivity and also by a collapse in international demand for British export goods.¹ The 1920s have been described as a decade of industrial restructuring, with the previous dependency on export goods being replaced with a greater focus on consumer goods for the home market.² Significantly, for the purposes of this study, this transition was regionally based with these newer consumer goods industries often being established far from the sites of heavy industry.³ The result of this regional imbalance in economic development was that whole areas, such as Scotland, saw disproportionate levels of economic decline in the inter-war period.

The economic depression brought about by the international stock market crash in 1929 led to the collapse of international trade, with a particular impact on heavy industry. By 1932 seventeen percent of the British workforce was unemployed and industrial output had fallen by nine percent. The brunt of this economic downturn was felt by those involved in the export and heavy industry sectors which were over-represented in areas such as Scotland, Wales and northern England.⁴ However, for Britain as a whole, the growth of industries such

¹ Jon Lawrence, 'The First World War and its Aftermath' in Paul Johnson (Ed.), *20th Century Britain: Economic, Social and Cultural Change* (Harlow: Longman, 1994), p.163.

² Dudley Baines, 'The Onset of Depression', in Paul Johnson (Ed.), *20th Century Britain: Economic, Social and Cultural Change* (Harlow: Longman, 1994), p.172.

³ Nick Crafts, 'The British Economy' in Francesca Carnevali and Julie-Marie Strange (Eds.), *20th Century Britain: Economic, Social and Cultural Change, 2nd Edition* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2007), p.10.

⁴ Baines, 'Recovery from Depression', p.189.

as electronics, and car production, meant that industrial output had recovered to its pre-depression level by 1934.⁵

The idea that the Scottish economy had a different structure to that of England, leading to slower growth in the inter-war period is one that is present in much of the literature on the subject.⁶ However, it is important to take into account the highly regionalised nature of the Scottish economy when assessing the causes of decline relative to Britain as a whole. Kendrick, Bechhofer and McCrone have suggested that Scotland's economy was more similar to that of Britain as a whole than any other region of the country in the early part of the twentieth century.⁷ It is the continuing importance of heavy industry in the west of Scotland in particular, and the inability to successfully rationalise or diversify these industries that is likely to have been significant in the area's economic decline. There is evidence that this 'old industry' focus continued into the post-war period to a certain extent. In 1953 5.5% of insured workers were employed in marine engineering whilst the corresponding figure for Britain was 1.41%. Similarly locomotive manufacture employed 2.06% of the Glasgow workforce whilst only accounting for 0.4% in Britain as a whole. Conversely the electrical trades seem to have been slower to grow in the Glasgow area than they were in the rest of Britain, only accounting for 0.81% of the workforce, while the British figure was 2.86%.⁸ It seems that this trend was largely restricted to the areas of Scotland that relied on older industries such as the west, with its concentration on heavy engineering, and the Dundee and Perth area with a large textile production industry. R.L. Mackie has shown that newer industries which focused on consumer

⁵ Ibid, p.191.

⁶ For example see, Neil Buxton, 'Economic growth in Scotland in the inter-war period' in *Economic History Review*, 33:4 (1980), pp.538-555 and Knox, *Industrial Nation*.

⁷ Stephen Kendrick, Frank Bechhofer and David McCrone, 'Is Scotland Different' in H Newby (Ed.) *Restructuring Capital* (London: Macmillan Press, 1985).

⁸ J. Cunnison and J.B.S. Gilfillan, *3rd Statistical Account of Scotland: Vol. 5 – Glasgow* (Glasgow: Collins, 1958), p.139.

as opposed to capital goods were able to expand in the inter-war period in Fife, suggesting that the focus on heavy industry was not a Scotland-wide issue.⁹

Rather than follow the route of industrial restructuring that was occurring in the south of England, or even modernisation of prevalent industrial methods, employers in many regions of Scotland relied on techniques of greater worker control and intensification to maintain competitiveness. John Foster has gone as far as to suggest that the maintenance of a pool of unemployed labour was a key aspect of this approach, as it reduced the bargaining position of unions and meant that industrial relations had a coercive rather than a co-operative character. Keeping wages low was seen as the key to maintaining competitiveness rather than measures that would have increased productivity.¹⁰ The emphasis on intensification rather than mechanisation in central Scotland's industry has been explained by reference to the preferences of Scottish employers for production methods that were more labour intensive than capital intensive. This preference was combined with a propensity to invest extra capital abroad, principally in imperial economies rather than in domestic Scottish industry.¹¹ It is clear that, in the context of collapsed imperial economies and export markets for Scottish capital goods, the shift of emphasis shown by, for example, the Fife economy was a more effective reaction to circumstances than that of the Clyde area industrialists. The potential for sales in local markets that consumer goods make possible could be seen as initiating a positive cycle of employment and demand in the area. The reliance on the production of capital goods and materials in the Clyde area combined with a low wages policy had the opposite effect. In this region consumer demand remained relatively low and, in the absence of an imperial market for capital goods, the lack of local markets meant that there was no impetus for increased growth.

⁹ R.L. Mackie, 'Industry in Kirkcaldy: Mapping the Structure of Business in Twentieth Century Scotland' in *Scottish Social and Economic History*, 18:1 (1998), pp.61-85.

¹⁰ John Foster, 'A Proletarian Nation? – Occupation and Class since 1914' in *People and Society in Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1988).

¹¹ Lenman cited in Kendrick, Bechhofer and McCrone, 'Is Scotland Different', p.75.

An example of practices aiming to restrict investment whilst maintaining profitability can be seen in the mining industry. In a British context Howard Gospel has argued that employers used lower wages, longer hours and management prerogatives as an alternative to rationalisation and investment in mechanisation.¹² Within this framework expenditure that was seen as non-essential was often rejected as contrary to the needs of business, an attitude that also seems to have been present at government levels. In the context of debates concerning the introduction of industrial welfare the Conservative party treasurer declared in 1926 that 'statutory expenditure on the workforce was a drain on capital resources'.¹³ The expression of such sentiments in this historical context indicates the level of opposition that existed, at establishment levels, to such legislation in contemporary discourse. The following chapter will further examine the role of welfarist policies, or the lack of them, in shaping work cultures in the context of Singer's Clydebanks factory and the Clyde shipyards.

2.2 - Employer Strategies and Workplace Participation

In the above discussion of Scottish industry in a British context a number of employer strategies have already been identified. Employers lowered pay by exploiting a pool of unemployed labour, they focused on intensification rather than reinvestment and they fought the introduction of welfare facilities as an unnecessary cost. The purpose of these strategies was to protect profits, which tended to be invested outside of the Scottish economy. However, the suggested failure of Clyde industry to substantially modernise and rationalise production does not imply that there was no change in the experience of work in this area.

¹² Howard Gospel, 'Employers and Managers: Organisation and Strategy' in C. Wrigley (Ed.) *A History of British Industrial Relations, Vol. 2* (Brighton: Harvester, 1987), p.172.

¹³ Cited in: Helen Jones 'Employers' Welfare Schemes and Industrial Relations in Inter-War Britain' *Business History*, 25:1, (1983), p.65.

The issue of industrial welfare illustrates aspects of employer attitudes to workers in the inter-war period. In line with McIvor's ideas that intensification was an important factor Helen Jones sees the increase in welfare schemes as a way of increasing industrial discipline and reducing conflict between workers and employers. Some trades unions took this line, believing that welfare schemes were attempts to reduce workers' union loyalties and even as a first step in the introduction of U.S.-style management regimes.¹⁴ Indeed, as the following chapter will show, in the context of the U.S. owned Singer factory in Clydebank, there may have been some truth to this suggestion as Singer provided extensive employee welfare facilities whilst being highly anti-union.

Despite these reservations from a variety of sources the introduction of welfare does seem to have become less controversial as time went on. By the 1930s it was often seen more as a socio-political right as opposed to an employer gift.¹⁵ An example of this change in attitude at a government level was the introduction of the Holiday with Pay Act in 1938 which legislated for workers to have three consecutive days of paid holiday per year.¹⁶ However, the acceptance of welfare and leisure as a right was not the case in all industries, and industrialists in the Glasgow area seem to have been somewhat behind in the provision of such facilities to their workers. Oral history testimony from the Springburn area of Glasgow gives an example of these attitudes in relation to an incident during the 1940s where new factory regulations were introduced in which required employers to provide washing facilities for workers. One locomotive worker at the Hyde Park works recalls that, while the company did install 'wash-

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Nick Hayes, 'Did workers want industrial welfare? Canteens, latrines And masculinity On British building Sites', *Journal of Social History*, 35:3 (2002), p.641.

¹⁶ See Julie-Marie Strange, 'Leisure', in Francesca Carnevali & Julie-Marie Strange (Eds.) *Twentieth Century Britain: Economic, Cultural and Social Change* (2nd Ed.), (Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd, 2007), p.198.

hand basins', these basins were never connected to a water supply, he comments that 'they went as far as the law was asking them to go'.¹⁷

A further consequence of employers' drive to reduce labour costs was the increased employment of young female workers. These workers could be paid less than their male counterparts and there was the advantage to employers that many of them would leave the workforce once they married, often at the age at which they would begin to demand adult wages. Despite the fact that these young female workers were often seen as temporary members of the labour force their presence did have implications for gender relations both at work and in other social settings. Young working women were often seen as being in a better economic position than males in this period as they were employed more in the expanding new light industries than the older heavy industries with the result that they were often less likely to experience unemployment. Selina Todd has suggested that in the case of England this advantage in employment meant that young women had a greater access to commercial leisure and consumption than young male workers, providing a new level of independence that male workers of the same age were often denied in this period.¹⁸ The implication of this rise in economic independence for women was greater economic power as both consumers and producers that led to a corresponding decline in the authority that men could wield. Unemployed men were not able to fulfill the breadwinner role that their domestic authority was based on and, combined with greater employment opportunities for women, this had the potential to emasculate men whose masculine self-identity was tied to their status as a worker.

However, as suggested by the above discussion this situation was less prevalent in the west of Scotland due to the slow emergence of new industries in the area and high levels of

¹⁷ SRA, Springburn Oral History Project Transcripts, No. 92, p.4. (these transcripts are as yet un-archived).

¹⁸ Todd, *Young Women, Work and Family*, p.218.

female unemployment as described by Annmarie Hughes.¹⁹ Despite this, popular discourse did reflect the assumption that women were 'stealing' male employment opportunities. Sally Alexander has shown in an English context that in the 1930s the Trades Union Congress was attempting to 'organise women as wives not workers'.²⁰ In addition to this, Hughes has demonstrated that there was a concerted effort in the 1920s and early 1930s to 're-situate females into 'women's work', through the changing of benefit laws and the introduction of marriage bars, even among organisations such as the Co-operative movement.²¹ The presence of this anti-female discourse in the Co-operative movement is significant in the context of a study of working-class culture due to the close links the organisation had to the labour movement at large, and the fact that it was set-up in order to serve the working class. This suggests that the discourse of women's work contributing to male unemployment, and therefore the undermining of traditional gender roles, permeated the male-dominated labour movement and was important even where this was not the reality at the local level.

While it has been noted that intensification rather than deskilling was the most significant transformation in Scottish work experience in the period there was a move to the use of semi-skilled workers in some sectors.²² A levelling in skill rather than absolute deskilling is likely to be a more accurate picture of the experience of work for most inter-war workers with the introduction of semi-skilled machine minder jobs taking the place of journeymen in some areas. It seems that this move away from apprenticeship was one which was largely restricted to the economic depression of the 1930s.

An indication that this practice was being used in the Clyde area was that recruitment in declining industries was not significantly reduced despite the fact that the overall number of

¹⁹ Hughes, *Gender and Political Identity in Scotland*, p.18.

²⁰ Sally Alexander, 'Men's Fears and Women's Work: Responses to Unemployment in London Between the Wars', *Gender and History*, 12:2 (2000), p.420.

²¹ Hughes, *Gender and Political Identity in Scotland*, p.19.

²² Arthur McIvor, *A History of Work in Britain, 1880-1950*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p.44.

workers in these industries was falling.²³ While the replacement of older, skilled workers by younger and therefore cheaper ones did occur in the inter-war period as a method of reducing labour costs it was not a new technique. Michael Childs has identified this type of employer behaviour in the period prior to the First World War, the implication of which is that it was the renewed opportunities to resort to such tactics presented by widespread unemployment in the inter-war period that led to its adoption at this time.²⁴

The preference for workers who would not be able to claim the wage rate of skilled adult men had significant consequences for young workers. David Fowler, looking at England, has shown that the period between leaving school and marriage was the time where working-class youths were least likely to experience poverty.²⁵ This may not have been the case to the same extent in the west of Scotland, due to the prevalence of the custom of young workers handing over their wage packets to mothers and receiving spending money in return, as alluded to in the previous chapter.²⁶ However, even in families where this was the case there is evidence that youths' right to leisure was seen as important with the money allocated them for spending on leisure rarely being subject to reduction in times of familial economic difficulty according to Selina Todd.²⁷

In the industries where apprenticeship continued to be offered it seems that the position was being used by employers as a way of securing cheap labour, rather than as a way of training skilled workers. The Clyde shipbuilding industry serves as a key example of the use of this practice in the 1930s. Despite an 18% reduction in the total number of workers between 1930 and 1939 the number of apprentices engaged actually rose by 24%.²⁸ When these

²³ Geoff Payne and Judy Payne, 'Occupational and Industrial Transitions in Social Mobility', *British Journal of Sociology*, 34:1 (1983), p.79.

²⁴ Michael Childs, 'Boy labour in late Victorian and Edwardian England and the remaking of the Working Class', *Journal of Social History*, 23:4, (1990), pp.783-802.

²⁵ Fowler, *The First Teenagers*, p94.

²⁶ Roberts *A Woman's Place*.

²⁷ Todd, *Young Women, Work and Family*, p.209.

²⁸ Cunnison and Gilfillan, *3rd Statistical Account of Scotland: Vol. 5 – Glasgow*, Table 44, p.842.

figures are put into a context where, in the words of one Clydebank worker, 'some of them [the apprentices] worked seven years to get their, before they got their lines because they knew if they asked for their lines when the five years was up they'd get paid off', it is clear that an apprenticeship in the 1930s was not a reliable path to stable employment.²⁹

The widespread government direction of industry in support of the war effort during the Second World War meant that this 'throwaway' attitude to labour was no longer appropriate, as the need for skilled and semi-skilled workers was vastly increased. The removal of large proportions of the male workforce to the Armed Forces had the effect of increasing the economic importance of workers who had previously been considered as marginal to the labour force. This saw an increase in the number of female industrial workers from five million in 1939 to seven and a quarter million by 1943, but was also beneficial to young male workers who were not initially called up.³⁰

As the figures below will indicate, in this context there was no longer any opportunity to attempt to make use of young workers as cheap labour, or to use high unemployment figures as a way of depressing wages. The changes in wage figures cited below also bear this idea out. Indeed, there were already concerns being raised in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War that the increases in the wages available to young civilian workers were problematic from the point of view of 'spoiling' these workers into expecting a higher standard of living to that which they were entitled. This argument was, of course, problematic itself in that why, other than in terms of the commentator's elitism, high working-class wages in a market economy were in any way inappropriate was never clarified. This attitude is exemplified by a *Daily Record* editorial written in 1946 where the writer decried the 'poisonous system' of

²⁹ Clydebank District Libraries, Clydebank Oral History Project (COHP), testimony of Andrew McMillan.

³⁰ Harold Smith, 'The Effect of the War on the Status of Women' in H. Smith (ed.) *War and Social Change: British Society in the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), p.211.

'bribing youngsters with disproportionately high wages'.³¹ In addition to this, during the war itself, there was some commentary which decried the high wages available to civilian workers in contrast to those of serving soldiers. The *Daily Record's* editorial for the 7 January 1942 suggested that it was wrong for civilian workers to be earning wages which allowed them to save money for the future whilst returning soldiers would be forced to 'start civilian life from scratch'.³² One way in which comments such as those relating to youth wages could be interpreted is to see the concerns about the high wages of civilian workers (large numbers of whom were young workers or women) as concerns about the socioeconomic marginalisation of adult male workers. While there were a large number of skilled men who would not have been serving in the forces due to their status as reserved workers, in many cases jobs previously done by semi-skilled or unskilled men would have been taken over by female or young workers. That this state of affairs came into being through necessity rather than through prior shifts in dominant attitudes does not lessen its significance.

In 1940 the Extended Employment of Women Agreement allowed women into engineering jobs that were previously male only.³³ This agreement was intended to last only for the duration of the Second World War, implying that unions did not see the employment of women in these areas as a permanent change to their policies. A similar process of 'dilution', although initially opposed by unions and workers, had been introduced as an expedient during the First World War as identified by Iain McLean.³⁴ Indeed, the passing of the Pre-War Trade Practices Act in 1942 meant that the expulsion of female labour from engineering trades in the aftermath of the Second World War was official policy as well as the desire of unions who feared a reduction in pay and status for their workers if female employment continued in this

³¹ *Daily Record*, 19/01/46, p.2.

³² *Daily Record*, 07/01/42, p.2.

³³ Smith, 'The Effect of the War on the Status of Women', p.216.

³⁴ Iain McLean, *The Legend of Red Clydeside*, (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1983), pp.34-35.

area.³⁵ Despite this, the move to the conscription of women for the auxiliary forces and industry through the National Service (No. 2) Act of December 1941 could be seen as damaging to workplace masculinity; as the direction of women into industry implies, there was no longer any doubt that women were capable of doing jobs which had been traditionally male preserves. However, there were limits to the acceptance of women in industry. Angus Calder has suggested that new women workers were in the position of having their work directed by experienced male workers.³⁶ The opposition towards women workers did not stop at ensuring that most of them were in subordinate positions. Testimony collected by Penny Summerfield has shown that many of these workers were poorly treated.³⁷ It could be argued that this sort of behaviour was the result of insecurity in terms of both socioeconomic and gender status.

Despite this, it would be wrong to see these issues as simply invalidating the work-based masculinities available to men on the reserved occupation list. Whilst those that had joined the forces had access to the most prized form of wartime masculinity, that of the fighter, the ability of those who were civilian workers to embody the peacetime masculine ideal of the breadwinner was arguably increased during the war. This was due to the aforementioned increase in employment opportunities and the higher wages available, as well as the widespread availability of overtime for those who were employed in engineering work related to the war effort. It may have been that the so-called 'dilution' of workplace skill and relaxed union rules for entry to trades reduced the social prestige of some forms of work. However, higher wages and lower unemployment rates (see below) meant that, for many of the men that were not fighting, economic conditions were actually more favourable than in the 1930s.³⁸

³⁵ Hugh Murphy, 'From the Crinoline to the Boilersuit': Women Workers in British Shipbuilding During the Second World War, *Contemporary British History*, 13:4, (1999), p.83.

³⁶ Angus Calder, *The People's War*, (London: Panther Books, 1971), p.370.

³⁷ Penny Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).

³⁸ Stockman, 'Competing Discourses Of Masculinity Among Non-Servicemen In The West Of Scotland', p.10-12.

The conditions of the post-war period arguably contributed to the maintenance of the premium placed on young workers. A major reason for this is likely to be the reduction in the number of youths in the British population, as well as the loss of life; even for those that had survived the war, demobilisation was a fairly gradual process. In addition to this, Pat Thane has shown that large numbers of women left the workforce in the immediate aftermath of the war leading to a general shortage of labour.³⁹ This shortage seems to have continued into the 1950s, which saw a popular perception that there was a shortage of young workers possessing the skills required by the new economic circumstances of the time. For example, John Davis has shown that there was felt to be a need for 'trained and technical manpower' which the then current educational system was not providing. An important aspect of this discourse was the idea that the lack of appropriate workers was seen as a threat to modernisation of the country's manufacturing base and therefore the future prospects of Britain as an economic power.⁴⁰

This argument can be considered along with the ideas of 'skill levelling' described above. The inter-war period required a top tier of skilled tradesmen, trained through the apprenticeship system, at the expense of employers, and a pool of unskilled labour that could be hired and fired as required by economic conditions. In contrast to this it seemed that workers in the lower grade positions required a greater level of technical understanding. One consequence of this, as observed by Davis, was that workers were less likely to be laid off when production at a firm slowed due to employers' fears that they would be unable to replace them at a later date.⁴¹ The result of this was that many young workers would have found themselves in a better position to pick and choose employment opportunities in this period than was previously possible. It is likely that this improved economic position for young workers was a factor in the level of official and media concern about the conduct of youths in this period.

³⁹ Pat Thane, 'Women Since 1945' in Paul Johnson (Ed.), *Twentieth Century Britain: Economic, Social and Cultural Change* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 1994), p.394.

⁴⁰ John Davis, *Youth and the Condition of Britain* (London: The Athlone Press, 1990), p.99.

⁴¹ Ibid.

The government commitment to 'full employment' and the introduction of the welfare state would also have played a role here, as the fear of unemployment would be lessened by such policies. However, as later chapters will show, the way youths spent their time outside of work was as much of a social issue as their ability to conform to dominant expectations when a part of the workforce.

2.3 - British Wage Rates in the Mid-Twentieth Century

While the figures for the number of workers employed in various occupations are readily available in the census, as will be shown later in this chapter, figures for wages are less easily obtainable. Cunnison and Gilfillan have described the figures for the Glasgow area in the 1950s as 'extremely scanty' so this section will examine figures for the whole of Britain.⁴² Figure 2.1 below shows the year on year changes in total wage earnings for Great Britain for the first half of the twentieth century. It should be noted that these figures only include workers who were represented by collective bargaining or national wage agreements, so they do not record the experiences of all workers. In addition to this, these are absolute figures rather than real figures so do not take into account price inflation. However, when this information is correlated with the retail price index during these years, depicted by Figure 2.2, a fuller picture of the buying power of insured workers' wages can be constructed.

The most striking trend revealed by these figures is the large rises that occurred in the post-Second World War period. While the trend is not linear, it shows a clear expansion in earning power despite fluctuations. It can be seen that controls on prices and wages during the Second World War seem to have actually allowed wages to increase in relation to prices. However, by the late-1940s prices do seem to have been rising more steadily than the fluctuating levels of wage rises. Most critically, there was not a point in the 1945-1959 period where overall wages fell. In addition to this, Ministry of Labour figures show that none of the

⁴² Cunnison and Gilfillan, *3rd Statistical Account of Scotland: Vol. 5 – Glasgow*, p.588.

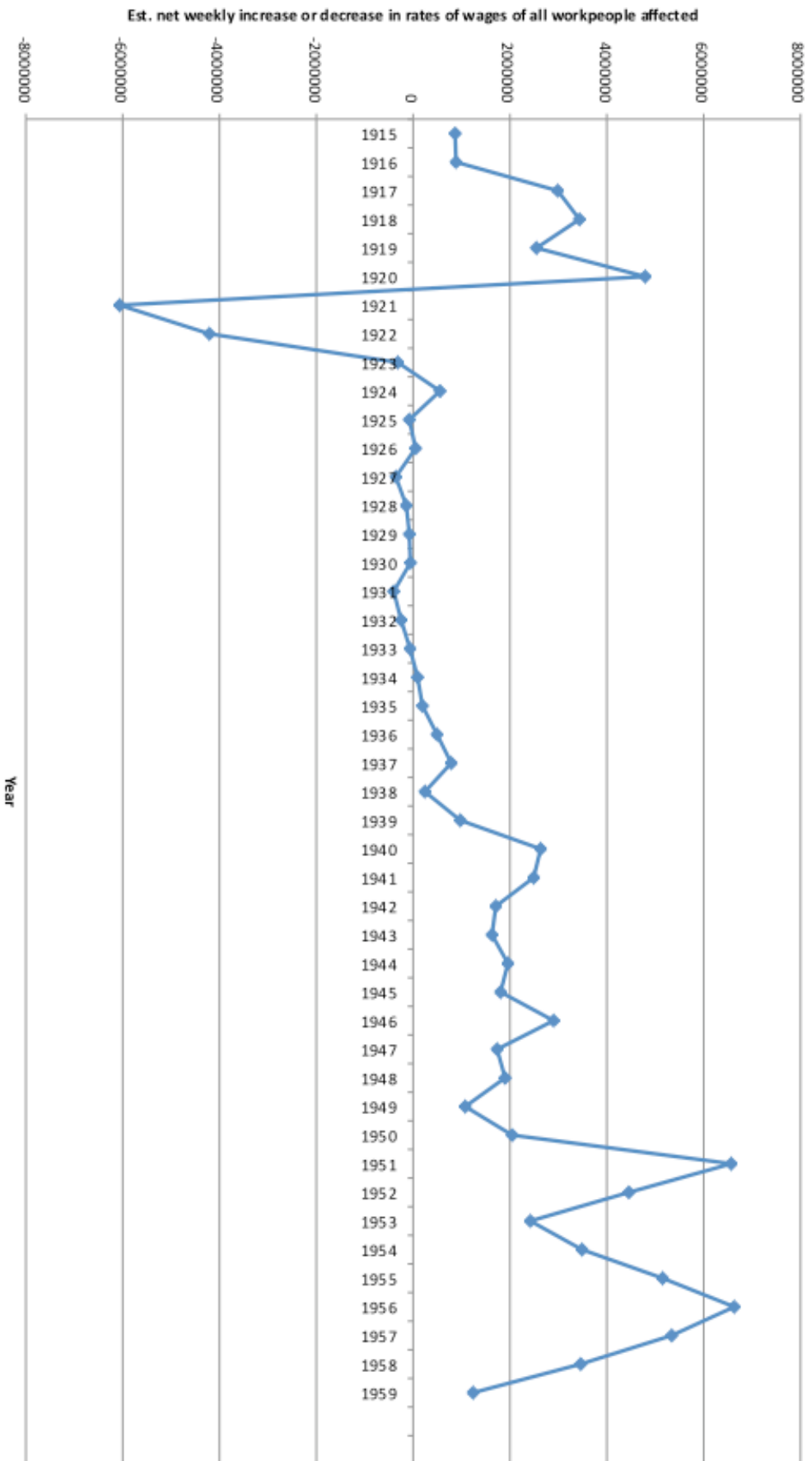
workers represented by the figures saw a reduction in their wages in the post-war period. Where there are dips in the graph below they represent reductions in the rate of increase of wages rather than absolute reductions.

Another important observation to be made is that, while wages did fall in the 1930s, this fall was relatively small, and by 1934 wages actually started to rise again for the majority of workers whereas prices merely increased to the pre-depression level by the eve of World War Two. With this in mind it is clear that many workers would actually be experiencing an increase in their buying power, provided they were able to remain in full time employment. This is the case at least until 1950 when the data becomes more complex, possibly explainable by the 'stop-go' policies of the governments of the decade.⁴³

⁴³ Peter Howlett, 'The 'Golden Age', 1955-1973' in Paul Johnson (Ed.), *Twentieth Century Britain: Economic, Social and Cultural Change*, (Harlow: Pearson Education, 1994), p.335.

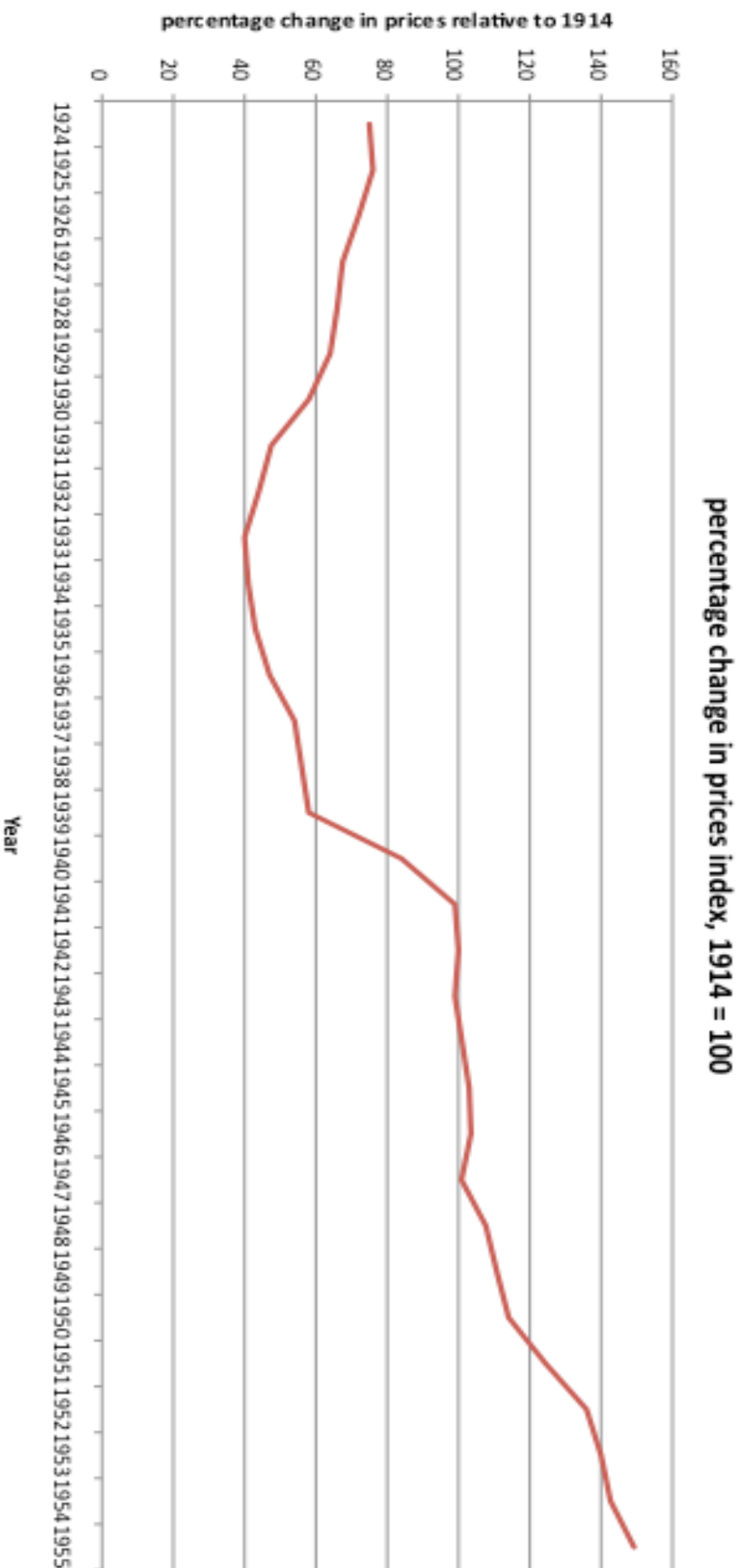
Figure 2.1: Wage Levels in Britain, 1915-1959

Estimated net increase or decrease in weekly rates of wages of all workpeople for Great Britain



Source: Ministry of Labour Gazettes Jan-Dec 1939, Vol. XLVII, p22, Jan. 1955, p3, Jan. 1960.

Figure 2. 1: Retail Price Index for Great Britain



Source: Ministry of Labour Gazette Jan. 1939, p5, Jan. 1946, p6, Jan. 1956, p4

The figures referred to include Scotland but due to their representation of the whole of Britain they obscure any differences between England, Scotland and Wales. Cunnison and Gilfillan, in the *Third Statistical Survey of Glasgow* have shown that the Scottish average wage was 5% below that obtainable in England. However, perhaps due to the concentration of industry in the Glasgow area, and the lack of agricultural occupation present, the Glasgow and Lanarkshire area had a slightly higher average than Scotland as a whole. In 1949-50 the average wage in Lanarkshire was £338 10s whereas for Scotland it was £326 2s. This was still below the English and Welsh figure of £343 12s.⁴⁴

The combination of relatively higher wages than previously for the young worker and their lack of economic responsibilities meant that this group had a higher disposable income than at any other time in their lives. The increase in wages that this group saw was due to a combination of factors. Firstly, whilst wages did not rise in absolute terms for most workers, prices did fall in relative terms leading to an increase in real terms: the same wage could buy more in the 1930s than it could in the previous decade. Additionally there were widespread changes in the way that apprenticeship system was used by employers at this point. Arthur McIvor has shown that only 16% of engineering firms were taking on apprentices by 1938. Employment practices in the mid-1930s meant that young workers were often taken on as 'learners', a position that corresponded with a semi-skilled status.⁴⁵ While these workers did not receive the same level of training that an apprentice would have experienced, the fact that they were essentially learning on the job meant that their pay was closer to that of adult workers. These young workers would essentially become semi-skilled workers rather than becoming time-served tradesmen but were actually in a more advantageous economic position than apprentices, at least in the short term, due to the higher wages they could obtain.

⁴⁴ Cunnison and Gilfillan, *3rd Statistical Account of Scotland: Vol. 5 – Glasgow*, p.590.

⁴⁵ McIvor, *A History of Work in Britain*, p.55.

2.4 - Skill as a socioeconomic concept

The introduction of the idea of semi-skilled work opens up an issue of what constituted skilled work in this period. The idea that skills were being eroded by the changing nature of industry both in terms of technological change and the introduction of new processes is often taken to be a fundamental aspect of twentieth-century work.⁴⁶ There is some disagreement with regards to the extent of deskilling that occurred. Some commentators have argued that there were many industries in which this concept is inappropriate as there was no historical craft tradition to erode: the newer electronic industries would be an important example here. However, there is a general principle in regard to the 'modernisation' of production processes that can potentially be applied to work with a long craft history. One way of characterising skilled work is that it consists of the application of knowledge of both materials and methods in order to accomplish a productive task, using a broad definition of 'productive'. For work to be considered truly skilled a worker must be able to both use this technical knowledge to carry out work tasks and exercise judgement in regards to how those tasks are carried out.

I would argue, in common with Georges Friedmann, that the essential aspect of change in work in the period 1930-1960 was the co-option of the knowledge of production by management through the process of specialisation that deprived workers of significant control over the work process to a greater extent than previously.⁴⁷ This was made possible by the high unemployment of the 1930s that gave employers latitude to impose higher levels of control over the labour process. Even where fully Taylorist techniques were not adopted their influence was certainly felt in many sectors.⁴⁸ T.T. Paterson recounts an incident in a Glasgow factory where the production manager's checking of his watch resulted in a complaint being

⁴⁶ For a statement of this argument in the context of post-war Britain see Goldthorpe et al., *The Affluent Worker: Industrial Attitudes*.

⁴⁷ Georges Friedmann, *The Anatomy of Work* (London: Heinemann, 1961).

⁴⁸ Paul Thompson and David McHugh, *Work Organisations: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

made to the shop steward that the workers would not accept the timing of any process.⁴⁹ While, in this case, the gesture of the manager was not part of any attempt to apply scientific management techniques, the reaction of the workers shows the level to which the introduction of these techniques was seen as a threat to the autonomy of the workforce.

In addition to this, an important comment made by contemporaries regarding semi-skilled work was that 'manual dexterity' was the only real skill that was required to perform it.⁵⁰ With this in mind it is clear that this work does not adhere to either of the prerequisites of 'skilled' work. On one hand management has taken the autonomy and judgement away from these workers through the introduction of new flow production techniques, on the other the actual tasks performed by these workers had been simplified to a point where the worker was reduced to the position of a dexterous machine. This is highlighted by one iron foundry worker who uses the term 'both human and inanimate machines' when describing the production process.⁵¹ Guy Standing, writing about the 1980s has described these changes as resulting in 'narrow, static jobs for which workers are interchangeable'.⁵² The result of these policies was that the level of skill required for manual, industrial jobs in many cases declined throughout the post-World War Two period.

With all this in mind it may be more accurate to describe the actual job tasks associated with these occupations as unskilled rather than semi-skilled. The extent of change in this period should not be overstated; perhaps less than a third of workers had a job that could be considered skilled at the start of the twentieth century, but it is likely that the principle of lessening workplace control is accurate for this period nevertheless.⁵³ The blurring of the line between craftsman and labourer is also evident in the relative wages of these groups with

⁴⁹ T.T. Paterson, *Glasgow Limited: A Case Study In Industrial War And Peace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), p.171.

⁵⁰ Wal Hannington, *The Problem of the Distressed Areas*, (London: Victor Gollanz Ltd., 1937).

⁵¹ Cited in McIvor, *A History of Work in Britain*, p.67.

⁵² Guy Standing, 'Labour Flexibility and Older Worker Marginalisation: The Need for a New Strategy' in *International Labour Review*, 125:3 (1986), p.336.

⁵³ McIvor, *A History of Work in Britain*.

the monopoly on high wages enjoyed by skilled workers being steadily eroded throughout the period.⁵⁴ Such an erosion of the skill-set of industrial workers also had the potential to reduce the masculine status men were able to claim from having these jobs. Once women and younger men had begun to become a significant part of the workforce, especially in light of women's war work during the Second World War, the status that adult men could claim was reduced in value as they no longer held a monopoly on it.

There is evidence that this trend of reduced pay differentials between skilled and unskilled workers continued into the 1950s. *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland* records that wages for unskilled shipbuilding workers in the Glasgow area got closer to parity with those of skilled workers throughout the first half of the twentieth century. In 1914 labourers earned 57% of their skilled counterparts, by 1932 it had become 68% and in the aftermath of the Second World War the 1954 figure was 85%.⁵⁵ This trend was used by some contemporaries in the inter-war period to praise the system as it meant there was less of a hierarchy of pay and status between the most and the least skilled worker in many areas.⁵⁶ From this point of view trades unions were seen as a negative influence as their interests in maintaining skill levels, restricting entry to trades and promoting worker participation in work organisation were antithetical to employers' goals of increasing the level of workplace control and exploitation. However, a more intangible result of the reduction of the monetary premium put on skilled work is likely to have been that the relative social status of the skilled man would be reduced. In a capitalistic society an important measure of the way a skill is valued is the amount of remuneration its holder is able to obtain through its exercise. For this reason, once the monetary premium for skilled work was reduced, so was the social prestige that surrounded it. In the context of an increasingly consumption-focused society, the aspects of conspicuous

⁵⁴ Knox, *Industrial Nation*, p.194.

⁵⁵ Cunnison and Gilfillan, *3rd Statistical Account of Scotland: Vol. 5 – Glasgow*, p.592.

⁵⁶ Howard Gospel, 'Employers and Managers: Organisation and Strategy'.

consumption that skilled workers previously used to differentiate themselves would become available to all and would therefore lose their cultural meanings as symbols of success.

The result of all these changes in skill levels and work practices was that there was likely to be a reduction in the homosocial aspects of work for many young male workers. With the traditional route into craft trades reduced and the growth of jobs that did not lead to a skilled trade, the connection with the workplace that led to solidaristic work communities in the traditional engineering trades would likely be lost for many young workers. If this was the case then the intrinsic value of work would have been reduced as well as the potential for work to act as the primary site of construction for masculine identities. In this context it would be reasonable to suggest that the non-work aspects of life would have a larger role in the construction of social identity through access to consumption and the discourses surrounding popular culture.

2.5 - Scottish Employment Trends 1930-c.1955

The Census as a Data Source – Issues and Implications

While the above section has discussed changes that were occurring within employment sectors in Scotland and Glasgow in the mid-twentieth century there were also changes occurring in the types of employment available to workers. In order to investigate changes in the Scottish occupational structure the reports on the census of Scotland for the years 1921-1961 will be used. These give figures for the numbers of people in various occupations at each census point giving an indication of how the Scottish economy changed over the period.

Direct comparison of the censuses of 1921, 1931, 1951 and 1961 is not possible at an employment category level due to the widespread changes in categorisation made between various censuses. Between 1931 and 1951 the way people were put into occupation classes

was substantially altered, a major change being the treatment of unskilled workers. Prior to 1951 unskilled workers who gave their occupations were included with skilled members of that occupation; for example, an unskilled foundry worker would be included in the metal engineering category. It seems from the census tables that the only unskilled workers kept separate were those who did not give full information on their occupation and were therefore included in the 'Other and undefined workers' category.

However, in 1951 unskilled workers were given their own category, 'Workers in unskilled occupations'. When this change is considered in the context of the above discussion of skill levelling and loss of occupational identity it becomes highly significant for the purposes of this thesis. The separation of these unskilled workers from their occupational group implies that they were no longer considered to be a part of the occupational structure of a particular trade or industry, and were rather seen as a flexible labour source in line with the analysis of Standing.⁵⁷ While some of these unskilled workers can be returned to the occupations they are taken from in order to compare the figures with pre-1951 censuses it is not possible to do so in all cases as the number of unskilled workers is not given for all employment categories listed in the census. As it is unreasonable to assume that there were no unskilled workers in these occupations comparison becomes difficult. For the purposes of this study it is necessary to assume that other unskilled workers have been included in their respective employment categories. In order to compare 1931 and 1951 it would be necessary to either work at the level of individual occupations or reconstruct the categories used in the earlier censuses with the 1951 data.

A further problem of the census is that those who were out of work but gave a specific occupation were included in the figures for people in those occupations in the 1931 tables. While there is some data for overall (i.e. Scotland-wide) unemployment, this data is not broken

⁵⁷ Guy Standing, 'Labour Flexibility and Older Worker Marginalisation'.

down by region and occupation for all years. However, as the focus of my research will be on men's identities, the fact that they identified themselves as belonging to certain occupations is in many ways as significant as their actual economic status. As many occupational groups have a specific 'occupational culture', a person's association with an occupational group implies that they identify with this culture and see it as part of their personal identity as much as their economic status. An example of this identification can be seen in Johnson and McIvor's work on west of Scotland heavy industry workers. It may have been that men who were out of work wanted to claim a masculine identity associated with their stated occupation rather than be associated with the negatively stereotyped identity of the unemployed worker. An additional problem is the fact that the official list of standard occupational definitions was revised in 1960, meaning that even where occupations appear to be comparable across census periods they may in fact refer to different jobs.

While it is problematic to directly compare the censuses for the years between 1921 and 1961, at the level of the broad occupation categories contained within each census report there is more common ground between years in the sub-categories. For this reason it is possible to reconstitute these sub-categories using the 1951 census as the standard for the preceding period. The analysis that follows uses sub-categories recalculated on this basis. The 1961 census introduces further problems by reducing the number of occupations individually listed. In many cases this has the effect of making disaggregation of some occupations impossible, thereby reducing how much of the work of the economically active population can be tracked throughout the period. This method cannot claim to be completely accurate at the level of individual occupations due to the fact that the same list of occupations was not used for each census and therefore not all occupations appear in the tables of every census report. However, this method should allow meaningful comparisons between occupational groups, even if individual occupations cannot be traced throughout the period in

question. These problems have been recognised by C. Lee in his *British Regional Employment Statistics* which uses the census to produce a series of employment statistics based on the census industrial classification.⁵⁸ While this series is a useful resource, its focus on broad industrial, as opposed to occupational, categories is problematic in the context of this study as it is the nature of work rather than the industry in which that work is done that is the important issue in terms of identity formation. For example, a person working in the mining industry could be either a coal hewer or an office clerk, activities that would imply very different occupational identities but would be collected together in industrial based classifications.

A further difficulty of comparing occupational structure over such a long period for the purposes of investigating social identity is, as Geoff Payne recognises, that both the social standing and the nature of certain occupations can change through time.⁵⁹ This means that it is, in many cases not possible to presume that certain jobs were socially static throughout the period. Changes in the social standing of occupations could occur through the introduction of new technology, which may lead to a process of deskilling and therefore a loss of prestige. Technological change may also alter the make up of the workforce in an industry. A significant example of this effect in the context of central Scotland is the introduction of new machinery in the mining industry. William Knox observes that the introduction of mechanised mining in the 1930s led to the prioritisation of strength over skill in coal hewing, which in turn allowed mine owners to replace older, skilled workers with younger ones who were physically stronger.⁶⁰ This shift to younger workers also had the effect of depressing mining wages as these new workers were not able to demand a premium for their labour due to possessing a high skill level. In this way miners lost out both in economic terms and in their social standing as they were no longer able to claim the status of being skilled workers to the same extent as was

⁵⁸ C. Lee, *British Regional Employment Statistics, 1841-1971*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

⁵⁹ Geoff Payne, 'Understanding Occupational Transition: A Comment on Jones', *Sociological Review*, 25:2, (1977), pp.409-427.

⁶⁰ W.W. Knox, *Industrial Nation*, p.204.

possible prior to mechanisation. Similarly the move from skilled work to semi-skilled process work that occurred in some industries in the 1930s led to the introduction of younger workers whose employment was far more precarious than that of the skilled workers who preceded them. The fact that these new processes did not have the same prestige associated with them is spelled out by Walter Greenwood in his novel *Love on the Dole*, where a character claims that: 'all this machinery's being more simplified year after year until all it wants is experienced machine feeders and watchers'.⁶¹ The relation of this statement to reality is illustrated by the 1951 census where 'machine minder' becomes a listed occupation in the unskilled category.

The changes in the occupations listed could be seen as an indicator of the social importance placed on them at each census point. At a basic level changes in industrial processes can lead to certain occupations disappearing and being replaced by others. An example of this is the aforementioned introduction of 'machine minders' into the 1951 census in the 'Workers in unskilled occupations' category. The placing of this occupation in the unskilled worker category indicates that this is a low skilled and therefore low status occupation. However, it is likely that this class of work was one which was previously enumerated under a different category, perhaps one that implied a higher place on the skill hierarchy. Whilst in some cases this job would have been introduced in new industries without a craft tradition, it is likely that some of these machine minders would have taken the place of skilled workers. In other words, changes in technology can be seen to be both changing the value placed on existing occupations and altering the composition of occupational structure and the workforce.

One further caveat with the use of the census in a comparative manner over the period in question is the relationship between residence and workplace. The census enumerated people in their place of residence, therefore providing a depiction of the occupations of those residents. However, during the 1930-1960 period there were widespread changes in residence

⁶¹ Walter Greenwood, *Love on the Dole* (London: Jonathon Cape Ltd., 1966), p.50.

patterns due to factors such as the developments of new housing schemes that, in some cases, geographically separated workplace and residence.⁶² The potential result of this is that some people who worked in Glasgow would no longer be enumerated in the census that covered the city itself if their new residences were outside the city. This would have the effect of under-estimating the number of active workers in some occupations. However, there were also changes in the city boundaries during the 1930s that resulted in the absorption of large areas of land, and also population.⁶³ In addition to this, some of the new housing estates, such as Easterhouse, were built on land that had been absorbed during this period.⁶⁴ This means that there was potential for a large number of workers who had moved to new housing areas to remain enumerated in the census reports for Glasgow, and for new workers to be enumerated as a part of the city's population. Taken together it is unlikely that these changes in residential patterns would have resulted in a shift in the occupational make-up of the city in any particular direction. Additionally, as the analysis of the census conducted in this chapter is concerned with broad trends in occupational change, these distortions of the absolute occupational figures are unlikely to fundamentally affect the conclusions drawn.

2.6 - Changes to Occupational Groups in Scotland and Glasgow

The above discussion has highlighted some of the issues present in using census reports in a comparative way. Despite these problems it is reasonable to use the reconstituted groups described above to investigate trends in employment structures at the level of employment sub-categories as opposed to individual occupations. Table 2.1 below shows the number of men in Scotland employed in each occupation that saw a continuous upward or downward trend in size in the whole period 1921 to 1961.

⁶² See pp.272-273 below for further discussion of these changes in the context of Sean Damer's work.

⁶³ J.B.S. Gillfillan, 'The Site and its Development' in J. Cunnison and J.B.S. Gillfillan (Eds), *Third Statistical Account of Scotland: The City of Glasgow* (Glasgow: Collins, 1958), p.45.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

Table 2.1 – Scottish Male Occupations 1921-1961

1951 occupation categories	1921	1931	1951	1961	% change 1931-1961
Typists	not listed	63	49	890	1312.70
Students	3491	10641	35363	52210	390.65
Electrical apparatus makers and fitters and electricians	16014	16864	33418	45120	167.24
Vehicle makers/repairers	1464	1530	2464	3850	151.63
Workers in chemical and allied trades	2189	3973	7652	9920	149.69
Professional and technical	42378	45580	74225	106390	133.41
Warehousemen, storekeepers, packers	21179	23069	30919	45580	97.58
Retired	53737	87592	146835	162370	85.37
Ents, sports and services combined	38034	52986	54258	80950	52.78
Clerks	57532	66510	69655	86760	30.45
Makers of coal gas and coke	342	1184	1309	1490	25.84
Road Transport workers	62749	75418	79115	84190	11.63
Workers in rubber	2917	3443	3626	3740	8.63
Engineering and allied trades	11981	6348	6224	5670	-10.68
Textile workers	34314	26309	22357	21380	-18.74
Agricultural and horticultural occupations	163476	156825	118113	112670	-28.16
Coal miners	144653	115606	77784	69160	-40.18
Fishermen	22517	18472	10950	9460	-48.79
Water transport workers	37815	36754	25710	16970	-53.83
Boot and shoe makers	9380	8263	5941	3790	-54.13
Makers of textile goods and articles of dress	12858	10020	4539	3900	-61.08
Shipwrights/ boat builders	19020	4939	4301	Not listed	-100.00

Source: Reports on the Census of Scotland 1921-1961

Occupations that exhibited a continuous trend across the period are likely to be the most significant in terms of transformations in identity as they indicate a long term change in the economic structure of Scotland as opposed to short term changes brought about by specific events. For example the number of men employed in building and construction saw a significant rise between 1931 and 1951 from 64664 to 101931. On the surface this may appear to be indicative of a huge expansion of the construction industry. However, when the figures for 1921 and 1961 are included in the analysis, 62127 and 56310 respectively, it becomes clear that the growth in the industry was likely due to the need for reconstruction following the Second World War and inter-war housing scheme construction rather than a change in Scottish occupation structures resulting in a greater demand and therefore perhaps an elevated social standing for construction workers.

With this in mind Table 2.1 gives an indication of how the Scottish economy changed over the period 1921-1961. As many writers have suggested, Scotland saw a decline in many of its staple industries such as coal mining, down by over 40%, and textiles, which declined by over 18%. Conversely, between 1921 and 1961 there was a large increase in employment in 'new' industries such as electrical/electronic engineering and chemical engineering. Employment in these industries was up by 167% and 150% respectively in the period whilst seeing little change in the 1920s. This observation is significant in the context of the historiography of the inter-war Scottish economy that identifies an inability to expand in these areas as a cause of the country's relative economic decline.⁶⁵ The discrepancy in these observations can be explained by noting that there is no census data available *between* 1931 and 1951 which means that it is not possible to determine whether this growth occurred in the 1931-39 period or later using census data alone. The implication of this is that the observed

⁶⁵ See for example Buxton, 'Economic Growth in Scotland in the Inter-War Period' and Knox, *Industrial Nation*.

growth in high technology industries, along with the 133% increase in professional and technical occupations, indicates an occupational landscape that was moving towards a more modern foundation during the immediate post-war period rather than in the years between 1931 and 1939.

Once again, these change in occupational structures would have led to new types of jobs for young workers. Much of the semi-skilled work that was created in these new industries were characterised by an increase in the division of labour, with jobs often consisting of the repetition of simple tasks and 'machine-minding' rather than the application of craft skill as will be explored in Chapter three. These changes had the potential to result in the construction of new forms of work culture that would be different from those in the established industries. In industries that lacked established traditions there was also the possibility that these cultures would have been weaker as they would have been divorced from the social norms of working-class culture. Such changes would have made the development of manly social identities outside of the workshop, either through community or consumption channels more important. However, it is important not to overstate the extent to which entirely new work cultures and social identities were formed in some of these industries. Alison Gilmour's work on the Linwood car factory in the post-war period indicates that workers were able to transfer previous work cultures into the factory, thereby retaining social identities into a new arena.⁶⁶ This idea will be explored further in the next chapter.

2.7 - The Occupational Structure of Glasgow

The Scottish economy had a highly regional nature so it is necessary to examine occupational figures for Glasgow itself in order to separate regional and national trends. A tendency to concentrate on industry in the central belt could be responsible for the prevalence of the

⁶⁶ Gilmour, 'The Trouble with Linwood: Compliance and Coercion in the Car Plant'.

stagnation thesis described above. This regionality is highlighted by Table 2.2 below. Table 2.2 shows how the industries identified as having a continuous upward or downward trend in number of workers in Scotland in Table 6 developed in the Glasgow area. Unfortunately the reports on the census for 1961 do not contain this data broken down by region so a more limited period is covered by this table.

Table 2.2 - Occupational Groups in Glasgow 1931-1951

Glasgow	1931		1951		% change 1931-1951	
	m	f	m	f	m	f
Typists	21	8479	120	12962	471.43	52.87
Workers in chemical and allied trades	824	278	2804	439	240.29	57.91
Students	2433	1967	7278	5229	199.14	165.84
Retired	14655	2440	28128	5784	91.93	137.05
Professional and technical	9602	10297	15655	13029	64.75	26.53
Electrical apparatus makers and fitters and electricians	5325	99	8426	300	58.23	203.03
Vehicle makers/repairers	287	6	442	3	54.01	-50.00
Makers of coal gas and coke	127	0	176	0	38.58	n/a
engineering and allied trades	1213	9	1603	37	32.15	311.11
Textile workers	1701	9111	2239	7466	31.63	-18.06
Ents, sports and services combined	13929	39134	20386	36763	46.36	-6.06
Warehousemen, storekeepers, packers	9028	6379	10161	6524	12.55	2.27
Fishermen	23	0	22	0	-4.35	n/a
Road Transport workers	21697	298	19763	2782	-8.91	833.56
Clerks	22120	16280	19361	23001	-12.47	41.28
Agricultural and horticultural occupations	2122	306	1685	146	-20.59	-52.29
Workers in rubber	1041	791	805	251	-22.67	-68.27
Water transport workers	11343	86	7832	41	-30.95	-52.33
Boot and shoe makers	2193	551	1514	374	-30.96	-32.12
Shipwrights/ boat builders	1791	0	1227	1	-31.49	
Makers of textile goods and articles of dress (not boots and shoes)	5550	16663	2700	16944	-51.35	1.69
Coal miners	4064	3	1011	0	-75.12	-100.00

Source: Reports on the Census of Scotland, 1931 and 1951.

It can be seen that there are many similarities between the data for Glasgow and that for the whole of Scotland. Firstly it is worth noting that the occupation with the largest percentage rise in numbers is typists. However, the numbers are, relatively speaking, too small to consider this change to be a significant occupational shift. The number of chemical and electrical workers increased, which gives the impression that the Glasgow area was not completely lacking in new industries. However, the idea that older industries remained important is borne out by the fact that while engineering and textile production were declining in the country as a whole they continued to be important and actually increased between 1931 and 1951 in Glasgow. Looking at the Glasgow data from a gendered perspective also brings out some interesting divergences from the Scottish picture. One key occupation that saw a drop in male workers along with an increase in female workers was that of clerks. The Scottish data indicates that there was roughly a 5% increase in the number of male clerks in the country whereas there was a drop of 12% in Glasgow between 1931 and 1951. What seems to be happening here is that the job was feminised in the period as the reduction of the number of men in the job was accompanied by a 40% rise in the number of women employed.

The disparity between the Scottish and Glasgow figures may be down to the occupational culture in Glasgow that had for so long been dependent on heavy industrial work. In this context there is a likelihood that the non-manual nature of office work would have been seen as unmanly by some men and therefore unattractive. This is important as it has been suggested that there was a certain amount of deskilling going on in clerical work during this period which meant that there was a shift from manual to non-manual employment among lower skilled workers.⁶⁷ It is important to note that this did not always imply a move upward in social standing as many non-manual jobs were of a junior kind that did not involve a great deal of skill. The suggestion of the census data is that it was largely women who were moving from

⁶⁷ Kendrick, Bechhofer and McCrone, 'Is Scotland Different', p.95.

factory work to office work in this period. This is supported by the fact that the textile production and electrical work in the area became more heavily male based in the period.

There seems to have been a disproportionately large increase of men in Glasgow employed in the service and entertainment sector between 1931-1951. By 1961 the increase in Scotland was comparable but Glasgow experienced this increase earlier. The decrease in the number of women in this sector can be explained by the decrease in women employed in domestic service in Glasgow in the period, with the number of women employed as such falling from 22739 to 13192.⁶⁸ Taking this fall into account, along with the relatively small drop in women working in the service sector as a whole, suggests that this sector outside of domestic service was employing many more women as well as men. With this in mind it is likely that the Glasgow economy was undergoing similar changes to those described by Geoff Payne as being typical of industry at the time. Payne argues that the fundamental change in employment structure that was occurring in Britain was an increase in the service sector and in the non-manual areas of the manufacturing sector.⁶⁹ This was connected to the growth of larger scale companies and so was as much influenced by industrial structure as it was by economic performance.

Payne's argument is especially important in the context of this study as it hinges on the idea that it was young workers who were most able to take advantage of these changes in the 1930s and 1940s. Older workers were often stuck in declining industries as their skills were highly specialised and in many cases the level of education they had received was not great enough to allow them to make a move to non-manual work. A Scottish Education Department report on the leisure of Edinburgh schoolchildren in 1938 demonstrates the latter point. It observed that by the time many children had reached the 12-14 age group 'the restricted

⁶⁸ Report on the Census of Scotland for 1931 and 1951.

⁶⁹ Payne and Payne, 'Occupational and Industrial Transitions in Social Mobility', p.78.

education of the parents' was making parental assistance in homework impossible.⁷⁰ An increase in the educational level could be seen as one cause of an ideological shift between generations, with greater education having the potential to raise aspirations for social mobility. The large increase in the number of students in Glasgow, an increase of 199% between 1931 and 1951, can be largely explained by the raising of the school leaving age across the period. This went from 12 to 14 in 1936, and from 14 to 15 in 1947, thereby increasing the number of young people who would have been enumerated as students.⁷¹ However, it may have been that when these heightened educational aspirations were met with an employment environment that lacked actual opportunities for social or economic mobility that there was a greater potential for disillusionment among school leavers. This idea will be explored further in the following chapter.

⁷⁰ NAS, HH60/419, S.R.O./S.E.D. No. 20531R/1A, 'Confidential report on the leisure of West Lothian School Children', p.19.

⁷¹ W.W. Knox, *A History of the Scottish People: The Scottish Educational System, 1840-1940* (http://www.scran.ac.uk/scotland/pdf/SP2_1Education.pdf) [05/09/11].

Table 2.3 – Occupations of Scottish Males aged 15-24 for 1931-1951

15-24 in Scotland			% change 1931-1951	as prop'n of all males in occ		
	m in 1931	m in 1951		1931	1951	Difference
Typists	34	21	-38.24	53.97%	42.86%	-11.11%
Students	9061	30509	236.71	85.15%	86.27%	1.12%
Electrical apparatus makers and fitters and electricians	5930	11717	97.59	35.12%	35.06%	-0.06%
Vehicle makers/repairers	265	513	93.58	17.32%	20.82%	3.50%
Workers in chemical and allied trades	483	639	32.30	12.16%	8.35%	-3.81%
Professional and technical	9615	12354	28.49	21.09%	16.64%	-4.45%
Warehousemen, storekeepers, packers	5818	4563	-21.57	25.22%	14.76%	-10.46%
Entertainments, sports and services combined	12994	6448	-50.38	24.49%	11.88%	-12.61
Clerks	22517	15583	-30.79	33.86%	22.37%	-11.48%
Makers of coal gas and coke	51	42	-17.65	4.31%	3.21%	-1.10%
Road Transport workers	18264	11617	-36.39	24.22%	14.68%	-9.53%
Workers in rubber	943	460	-51.22	27.39%	12.69%	-14.70%
engineering and allied trades	119	112	-5.88	1.87%	1.80%	-0.08%
Textile workers	8115	4211	-48.11	30.84%	18.84%	-12.01%
Agricultural and horticultural occupations	45687	22389	-50.99	29.13%	18.96%	-10.18%
Coal miners	30794	12281	-60.12	26.64%	15.79%	-10.85%
Fishermen	3569	1511	-57.66	19.32%	13.80%	-5.52%
Water transport workers	5113	3671	-28.20	13.91%	14.28%	0.37%
Boot and shoe makers	1790	1295	-27.65	21.66%	21.80%	0.13%
Makers of textile goods and articles of dress (not boots and shoes)	1798	1525	-15.18	17.94%	33.60%	15.65%
Shipwrights/ boat builders	701	849	21.11	14.19%	19.74%	5.55%

Source: Reports on the Census of Scotland 1931 and 1951.

2.8 - Youth Employment in Scotland

The primary focus of this thesis will be the ways in which the construction of masculinity was influenced and shaped by the work and leisure experiences of young men in the west of Scotland. The reason for this focus on youth is that the formation of gender identity is a process that is likely to be cemented in this period of life. While gender is, as discussed in the previous chapter, a dynamic identity socialisation is largely produced where a person is first exposed to certain social situations. In the context of this study this means that the way in which a man constructs his identity as a worker is likely to be shaped by his early experiences of work. Therefore, rather than concentrating on one particular cohort the thesis will examine the experiences of the generations of men who entered the workforce between 1931 and 1951.

Table 2.3 above shows the changes in employment for Scottish men between 15 and 24 in the period 1931 to 1951. The lack of a breakdown of employment by age and by region in the census necessitates taking Scotland-wide data in this case. The total number of males aged between 15 and 24 that were employed in Scotland decreased in this period in line with the decline of the number in this age group in the population. However, the proportion of youths enumerated as employed actually increased slightly from 50% to 54%.⁷² Another significant change was the increase in the number of young men enumerated as 'students'. This is likely to be as a result of the rise in the school leaving age as it was an increase in higher education opportunities. Interestingly the number of those involved with entertainment and services fell by half despite the overall rise in this sector in Scotland. From this evidence it would seem that there was not a growth in service job opportunities for young Scottish men in the 1930s and 1940s. The consolidation of commercial leisure venues in this period is likely to

⁷² Derived from the Reports on the Census of Scotland 1931 and 1951

have been significant in this regard, larger venues would have been able to take advantage of economies of scale in terms of staffing, even as their customer capacity increased.⁷³

In fact the area where there was the greatest rise in employment for this age group in Scotland was in the armed forces with an increase of over 400%.⁷⁴ This change was the result of the continuation of National Service in the post-war period which required 18 year old males to join the Forces for a year provided they met the physical standard required.⁷⁵ Significantly there were two groups that, while they could not avoid service indefinitely, were permitted to defer their entry to the forces, namely students and those engaged in apprenticeships. These groups were able to complete the education they were undertaking and were called to the Forces once they had graduated, or in the case of apprentices received their lines. The compulsion involved in National Service is likely to have had a number of consequences on the labour market activity of young men. Firstly, it is possible that it would have made further study more attractive to some, although economic constraints meant that this would not have been an option open to the vast majority of youths. The decline in the prevalence of apprenticeships, and the economic difficulties for working-class families described above means it was likely that this was not the case to the same extent for this social group.

Another consequence, perhaps more significant in the context of this study was that youths who were not able to get an apprenticeship found themselves in a kind of 'economic limbo' in the years between leaving school at 15 and performing their National Service at 18. These youths often found themselves in 'dead end' jobs, essentially marking time until they joined the forces with the result that they did not gain skills and experience which would allow them to have a career when they returned to the workforce. While many would gain trade training during National Service there was widespread concern that the time between school and service was disrupting the civilian life of young men and constituted a 'dangerous and

⁷³ See section 4.1 below.

⁷⁴ Derived from the reports on the Census of Scotland 1931 and 1951

⁷⁵ The requirement to undertake National Service continued until 1963 when it was abolished.

frustrating period' that was responsible for enabling a 'cult of gangsterism' among young working-class men.⁷⁶

However, it would be wrong to suggest that these concerns were a new feature of post-war public discourses, it has been shown, for example by Eileen Yeo and John Springhall, that similar moral panics were occurring in the nineteenth century and the inter-war period.⁷⁷ These often focused on what was termed the 'boy labour problem', a phenomenon concerned with the leisure activities of young men in dead end jobs. These boys were deemed a problem as they had few future prospects of moving into skilled work and were considered to be ignoring the problem in favour of conspicuous leisure consumption. Contemporaries feared that these men would constitute a problem in future years as they would not have the necessary skills or industrial discipline to allow Britain to remain an economic power. These fears persisted throughout the first half of the twentieth century and will be explored further later in this thesis in relation to establishment discourses surrounding autonomous youth cultures.

Other occupations also saw a large rise in their under-25 workforce, for example, occupations ancillary to agriculture also rose from around 700 to over 5000 and electrical engineering saw a doubling of its young workforce in line with the expansion of the industry as a whole. In the Glasgow context it is unlikely that agriculture would have played a significant part and so it is the increase in electrical engineering that is likely to be the most significant in terms of occupational transition. The growth of youth employment in the electrical sector confirms the idea that the expansion of new industries gave new opportunities for young workers, perhaps at the expense of their older counterparts who already possessed skills that

⁷⁶ Editorial from Brighton *Evening Argus*, 1954, cited in Bill Osgerby, "'Well, it's Saturday Night an' I Just Got Paid": Youth, Consumerism and Hegemony in Post-war Britain' in *Contemporary Record*, 6:2 (1992), p.291.

⁷⁷ Eileen Yeo, 'The Boy is the Father of the Man' and John Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics*.

were relevant to other industries. However, the form that these opportunities took was often far from ideal for the forming of a long-term identity as a skilled worker. Many of the jobs in these new industries would be of a 'semi-skilled' type with junior workers taking up positions within the process with the least possibility of autonomous action. In addition to this, as discussed above, employers often used young labour merely as a way of avoiding paying adult wages, with the result that these young workers were laid off as soon as they would be able to demand such wages.

2.9 - Unemployment in Glasgow

One aspect of the inter-war economy that allowed industrialists to reduce the status and autonomy in manual work through the process of skill levelling and dilution was unemployment. The depression during the 1930s saw whole communities in the west of Scotland lose work due to the collapse in markets for capital goods. Whilst there were large regional differences between areas of Scotland and between Scotland and England the average level of unemployment never fell below 20% of insured workers in Scotland in the 1930s. There was a large concentration of unemployment in the west of Scotland, especially among the young with 30% of the unemployed in Scotland being below the age of 30.⁷⁸ However, even these high figures are likely to be underestimates of youth unemployment as government figures encompass only insured workers. Many young workers would be outside of this scheme with the result that their unemployment would have been unrecorded. Whilst much unemployment could be put down to the effects of the depression there is evidence that contemporaries saw this problem as at least partly due to structural problems in the Scottish economy. A 1934 government report by Sir Arthur Rose stated that 'there was a definite surplus of something like

⁷⁸ Knox, *Industrial Nation*, pp.190-191.

60000 boys and men for whom work is never likely to be available in the industries now operating' in the central belt.⁷⁹

It seems that it was the heavy industry sector that was suffering to a disproportionate extent, and this is reflected in the oral history studies consulted in the course of this thesis. Young men who lived in Springburn and Clydebank, both areas dominated by heavy industry, appear to have found difficulty in finding work when work in the locomotive works or shipyards was not available. Those from Maryhill, an area which did not rely on local industrial works as a primary form of employment, seem to have been able to find work in a variety of sectors and to move between these to a greater extent.⁸⁰ However, by the end of the 1930s the situation in the region was no longer as bleak in the heavy industries as the above statement made by Rose would suggest: the move to rearmament in the years leading up to the Second World War vastly increased the level of employment in many heavy engineering sectors. An example of this is Springburn in Glasgow where some of the locomotive works had already been converted to war production by 1938.⁸¹ The Second World War, and the political commitment to 'full employment' that was a key part of the post-war landscape, had a large impact on employment prospects for Glasgow workers as indicated above. Significantly, by 1942 the *Daily Record* was able to publish headlines declaring that 'workless at rock bottom', with this statistic being related to the effects of conscription to the armed forces and direction to war work.⁸² An examination of unemployment figures for the Glasgow area is useful in this context, Figure 2.3 below shows these figures for the 1927-1954 period. The figures are based on returns from the ten employment exchanges in the city and Rutherglen. They refer to insured workers who registered as unemployed at one of these exchanges, with the result that they are likely to be underestimates to a certain extent. Note that there are no figures available for the

⁷⁹ Cited in Hannington, *The Problem of the Distressed Areas*, p18.

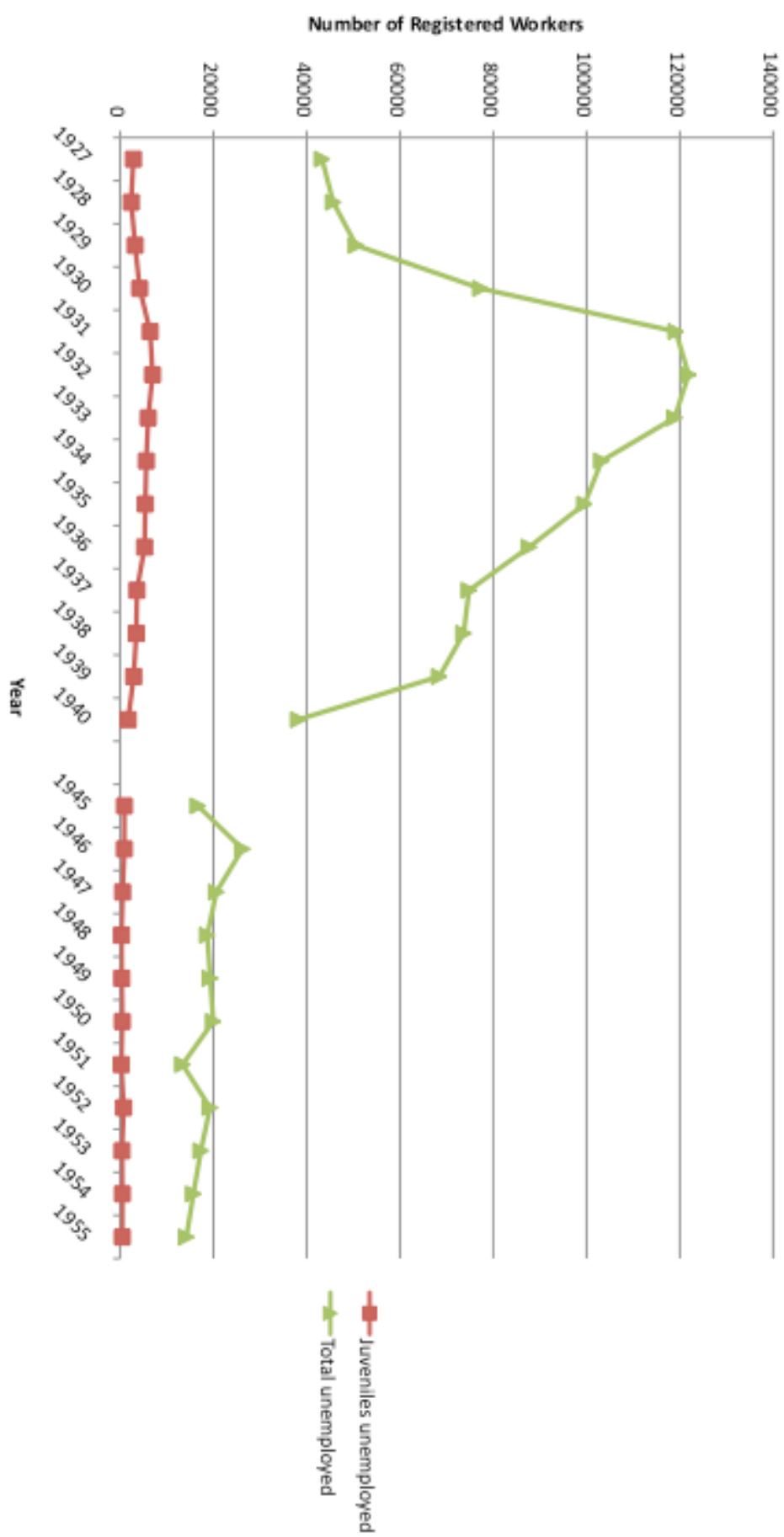
⁸⁰ See for example the testimony of one man regarding his work history on Mitchell Library, Glasgow Collection, AV941.443 MA, Interview LHP 12C.

⁸¹ SRA, Springburn Oral History Project Transcripts, No. 92, p1.

⁸² *Daily Record*, 09/02/42, p4.

war years, but the policy of government direction to industry is likely to mean that the 1945 figure can be seen as reasonably representative of the figure for this period.

Figure 2.3 - Number of unemployed workers in Glasgow 1927-1955



Source: J. Cunison and J.B.S. Gilfillan, *3rd Statistical Account of Scotland: Vol. 5 – Glasgow* (Glasgow: Collins, 1958), p923

It is clear from this graph that the Second World War saw the end of mass unemployment in the city of the scale that had been present during the depression of the 1930s, as described by Arthur Rose above, for both adult and juvenile workers.⁸³ What is also shown by these figures is that, while the number out of work had begun to fall strongly in the late 1930s it did not approach the pre-depression level until the war had actually begun, likely due to conscription and the volunteering of some of those unemployed as well as those in work in the lead up to war. As mentioned above this does not suggest that youth unemployment was as low as Figure 2.3 suggests, the uninsured nature of much youth employment hiding these workers from the figures. The result of this is that it is not possible to establish the number of youths unemployed across the period with the data available, meaning the figures for youth unemployment plotted in Figure 2.3 do not indicate the employment position for young workers.

It must also be borne in mind that the raising of the school-leaving age in 1944 through the Butler Act would have reduced the number of youths who would have been in this group, thus serving to reduce the appearance of unemployment due to their extended period of education. The significance of this low unemployment for the juvenile group is that it is likely that much of the contemporary concern for 'youth' unemployment was centred around the problems experienced by those in their late teens and early twenties. This would accord with the ideas around the 'boy labour problem', youths found employment easy to find once they had left school but faced more difficulty as they grew out of the phase of their life where they could take work that was paid at a juvenile rate. In the inter-war period the end of this phase of work was, ideally for contemporaries, the starting of an apprenticeship at age sixteen. The apprenticeship register of Lancefield Foundry indicates that this was the case: a large number of the apprentices are listed as having been previously employed in shops, or as messengers

⁸³ See quotation on pp.110-111.

as opposed to doing a job that would lead to later development.⁸⁴ In the decade following the Second World War it would be call-up to National Service which would signal an end to this phase of economic activity. As discussed on p.108 beginning an apprenticeship would allow a youth to defer his call-up, but for the majority of young men the compulsory nature of national service would have guaranteed that they were taken from their early employment positions at the age of 18. The social implications of this life-stage will be discussed further below.

Perhaps most significantly in the context of this study is the fact that the total number of unemployed workers in the city in the post-war period was half that of the late 1920s indicating a potentially lower level of structural unemployment than the previous period. This suggests a potentially more prosperous working-class population for the city in the post-war period, one which would be able to more fully engage in the ever-expanding consumer and commercial leisure markets of the time. Taken together these changes in wages and employment possibilities that largely occurred during the period of the Second World War could be said to have anticipated the discourse of youthful affluence, and the fears that surrounded it, that was to be so much a part of the post-war social landscape, especially in discussions of social and economic change in the 1950s.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to provide the economic context for the analysis of gender and popular culture that will follow. This context would have been important in shaping the experiences of Scottish men, through which social identities were formed. Starting an examination of masculinity from the viewpoint of economic activity is not to suggest that it is the

⁸⁴ See Glasgow City Archives, TD253, Apprenticeship Register, Lancefield Foundry.

fundamental driver of changes in gender relations but rather indicates the material framework within which forms of masculine performance were shaped and negotiated.

In this context the socioeconomic and political landscape the individual experiences throughout life should be seen as formative rather than determining factors in the development of self- and gender identity. In addition to this, as will become clear as this thesis develops, attempting to separate the social, economic and cultural aspects of a person's experience is a largely artificial exercise. For this reason the following chapters focus on work, commercial culture, and rational recreation is intended to examine the way in which these areas of social interaction acted as potential sites of gendered identity formation, rather than to suggest that they were independently creating different social 'types'.

Chapter 3 - Work Cultures and Social Identities

This chapter will examine the connections between male work cultures and consumer cultures in the west of Scotland and assess how changes in the nature of work and consumption patterns influenced, and were influenced by, changes in dominant forms of masculinity and associated social norms. As discussed in the previous chapter, there was a fairly large shift from manual occupations to non-manual ones among Scottish men in the period 1921-1961. The numbers of clerks, and workers in the service sector were increasing at the same time as occupations such as mining and textile production were declining. The significance of these occupational shifts in the context of this chapter is that the occupational cultures associated with manual and non-manual workers were quite different.

Manual workers, especially in the established industries, had long traditions of collective identity that had become central elements of male working-class culture, with the result that these forms of employment could be seen as a fundamental part of their self-identity. For those in newer industries, or who had entered non-manual work, such as office clerks, there were fewer cultural resources to be drawn from. Robert Gray has suggested that, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century those in the upper economic reaches of the working classes had a culture that could be seen as aspiring to that of the middle class somewhat.¹ Indeed, there does seem to have been a division between manual workers and their non-manual contemporaries in terms of self-perception of status. A Springburn man who attempted to unionise the clerks at the Hyde Park locomotive works in the late 1930s found that his co-workers were less than enthusiastic at the prospect despite their low pay. He recounts that

y'know the clerks tended to be a bit snobbish and although they were sometimes just getting half the pay of the tradesmen there were many of them thought themselves

¹ Robert Gray, *The Aristocracy of Labour in Nineteenth Century Britain, c1850-1914* (London: MacMillan Press Ltd, 1981).

socially superior to the tradesmen. So you had a lot of snobbery and of course a lot of ignorance.²

With this in mind it is likely that the relevance of this culture to those young men that would have been entering non-manual employment in the inter-war period is questionable, especially if they came from families or communities that had the values of the manual worker at their heart. For example, Roderick Wilkinson, who grew up in Maryhill in the 1930s, recalls of his early employment in the office of an engineering firm that 'Outside were the works. That was where the Men [sic] were', a comment that suggests an ambivalence to the masculine status of his own job in comparison.³ These ideas will be explored below through the examination of the oral history testimony of workers who lived in Clydebank and Springburn, where heavy industry continued to dominate the occupational landscape throughout the period and Maryhill, where there seems to have been a much more varied range of employment opportunities available and the working identity for young men was potentially more fluid.

The absence of a strong traditional work culture that rivalled that of the heavy industries, particularly that of shipbuilding in the Clyde area, is highly significant in terms of the consumption patterns engaged in by young men. It has been shown that places such as public houses were key venues for the playing out of masculine roles with the workplace at their centre. Alan McKinley has observed that it was common practice at John Brown's shipyard for work gangs to meet in a local pub to distribute wages between their skilled and unskilled members.⁴ The practice of using the pub as an unofficial 'workers' common room' in this way virtually made it an extension of the workplace. Notably McKinley also records that young apprentices, too young to drink in the pub, would have a similar post-work meeting at a nearby café: 'you got one pay line between two and you split it on a Friday night. Apprentices used to

² GCA, Springburn Oral History Project Transcripts, No. 107, Mr Sinclair.

³ Roderick Wilkinson, *Memories of Maryhill* (Edinburgh: Canongate Academics, 1993), p.78.

⁴ Alan McKinlay, *Making Ships, Making Men*, p.14.

meet at Hunter's Cafe and buy a double nougat to get a pound broken.⁵ The significance of these observations is that they suggest that the ways in which workers would meet after work were not merely examples of homosocial recreation: they actually maintained the status divisions within the group and could therefore be said to be reinforcing these men's sense of their masculine prestige. Andrew Davies has shown, in the case of Manchester, that the pub could even act as a 'channel of labour market information'.⁶ It seems that the pub was also an important venue among Clydeside shipyard workers, functioning as a 'counting house, a job centre, a bank and, occasionally, a kangaroo court where differences were settled'.⁷ In addition to this foremen would expect to be bought drinks in exchange for access to work, something that was especially important for groups such as boilermakers who were often employed on a short term, casual basis.⁸ The result of this was that, for adult men, spending a certain amount of leisure time in pubs was not merely a recreational choice, but was fundamentally important to workers' standing amongst their peers and their ability to remain in employment.

In addition to this, Mass Observation material investigating the place of the pub in late 1930s working-class culture suggests that the social aspect of attending the pub, and the communal bond of beer drinking, was a significant one for many men.⁹ For some groups of workers the pub could even be said to have been an extension of the workplace, one where there was less discipline imposed from outside the group. Nevertheless there was strong pressure to conform to group norms coming from within the group itself, which would have had the effect of regulating behaviour and requiring that men's performances as 'hard, working men' would need to be continued into the 'non-work' part of their lives.

⁵ Ibid, p.13.

⁶ Davies, *Leisure, gender and poverty*, p.44.

⁷ McKinlay, *Making Ships, Making Men*, p.31.

⁸ Ibid, p.31 and p.16.

⁹ Mass Observation (Tom Harrison), *The Pub and the People: A Worktown Study* (London: Victor Gollanz Ltd, 1943), pp.40-46.

3.1 - Work as a source of social identity

There are two situations where this aspect of male recreations becomes potentially problematic. Firstly, men who were unemployed for long periods of time would find themselves excluded from both the validation available in the performance of their work role and also their customary source of recreation. One Clydebank man recounts that when unemployed in the early 1930s he would simply 'walk over the moors and that...there wasnae much there, you didnae have money to go to the dancing'.¹⁰ Another man recalls that walking around Old Kilpatrick was a common activity when his friends were unable to procure a football, suggesting that the only activities that were open to many unemployed men in the area were ones which did not require money.¹¹

Testimony collected contemporarily by Mass Observation also support this idea, men interviewed in *The Pub and the People* survey stated that they were unable to go to pubs when unemployed as they would be unable to fully engage in the social rituals present, quite apart from the fact that they simply could not afford to buy drinks.¹² The testimony given to Mass Observation in this context should be interpreted cautiously due to the respondents' desire to appear respectable in the eyes of the investigator. Abstinence was not always the path chosen by unemployed men: one Springburn man recounts having to leave home during the depression as 'ma father being unemployed I would have got no benefit an he spent all his money on drink'.¹³ Despite this, it is worth noting that Andrew Davies has observed that poverty was often a barrier to drinking, rather than drinking being the cause of poverty.¹⁴ With this in mind, it would be reasonable to suggest that the lack of employment did curtail engagement in important aspects of masculine culture for many men. It is clear from this

¹⁰ COHP, testimony of Frank Gilmour.

¹¹ COHP, testimony of James McGhee.

¹² See Mass Observation, *The Pub and the People*, p.59.

¹³ GCA, Springburn Oral History Project transcript (un-catalogued), No. 37, Fred Holmes.

¹⁴ Davies, *Leisure, Gender and Poverty*, p.34.

testimony that the lack of a job in the 1930s would have been felt to be an emotional and psychological, as well as a simply economic problem.

The second group of men for whom the traditional route to a 'manly' social identity was complicated, and one which was growing throughout the period 1930-1960, as shown by the census analysis, was those men who were entering into occupational areas without a traditional masculine heritage. This second group could be said to be made up of two sets of people. Firstly there were those who were coming from a heavy industry type of occupation, perhaps leaving due to the instability of this area of employment, and had therefore been previously socialised into the highly masculinised culture of these workplaces. In his case study of a small Glasgow factory that operated a production line, Paterson suggests that these men actually brought similar attitudes and social customs regarding work from their previous experiences into this new environment.¹⁵ While this was a factory where semi-skilled manual workers made up the majority of the workforce and were therefore still within the manual sector, this example does show that it was possible for work cultures to be transplanted from one type of workplace to another.

A further example of this type of 'transferable' work identity is suggested by the Glasgow Labour History Group's analysis of the aftermath of the strike at the Singer factory in Clydebank in 1911. A key element of the Singer management's reaction to the strike was to dismiss any worker who had been involved in its organisation. The Labour History Group writers note that, following the strike, which had been preceded by the build up of a general union at the factory, dismissed workers took their pro-union stance into their next place of employment.¹⁶ The conclusion that could be drawn from both these examples is that identities and ideas about appropriate workplace behaviour and the values these implied were

¹⁵ Paterson, *Glasgow Limited*, p.12.

¹⁶ Glasgow Labour History Workshop, 'A Clash of Work Regimes: 'Americanisation' and the Strike at the Singer Sewing Machine Company, 1911', in William Kenefick and Arthur McIvor (Eds) *Roots of Red Clydeside, 1910-1914?* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1996), p.207.

internalised by the men for whom they were a daily reality. These values were not simply discarded once a worker's relationship with the workplace that had acted as their source was over.

The prevalent inter-war shipyard practice of dismissing young workers when they completed apprenticeships could also be said to have contributed to this retention of worker identity across occupations. McKinlay and Hampton record that one John Brown's worker, who had served his time as an apprentice and was due to be married, demanded his journeyman's papers before his wedding as 'there was no question of getting married as an apprentice [it would have been] an insult to one's manhood'.¹⁷ This man claimed his papers with the knowledge that it would be likely that he would be dismissed at the point his journeyman status was recognised. In fact he only retained his position at John Brown's for a further two months following his marriage. What this episode illustrates is the importance of the status as a skilled engineer, and the privations that had to be endured in order to claim this status even after the five-year period of apprenticeship was completed. With this in mind it would have been psychologically important for a man to internalise this identity to a certain extent, as it represented the culmination of several years' work and a culturally important milestone in a man's life that was likely to be both a source of individual pride and community prestige. It is instructive in this context that one Springburn man, recalling his colleagues at the Caledonian railway works in the 1940s, makes frequent reference to the fact that they were 'good tradesmen'.¹⁸ The implication of the way this phrase is used being that, in his mind, this conferred a compliment that needed no further elaboration in order to be a meaningful *moral* judgement of a person.

An extension of this point can be seen in T.T. Paterson's *Glasgow Ltd.*, a study of a Glasgow factory employing around 300 people in the early 1950s. A key finding of this study

¹⁷ Alan McKinlay and John Hampton, 'Making Ships, Making Men: Working for John Brown's Between the Wars', p.22.

¹⁸ GCA, Springburn Oral History Project Transcripts, No. 77 Joseph Docherty.

was that some of the men in the factory with a shipbuilding background did not see themselves as having permanently left the shipyards.¹⁹ The labour turnover in the *Glasgow Ltd.* factory was very high and, in the context of the instability of shipyard employment, it may have been that many of these men entered the factory as a stop-gap until they could find further employment on the building of a ship. Paterson notes that at certain points of time in the first half of the 1950s labour turnover in the 'weepart line' reached or exceeded 20% a month.²⁰ In this context it is unsurprising that these workers retained values from their previous employment as they would be expecting to return to an environment where they were relevant in the short to medium term.²¹ The implication of this is that the retention of a self-identity as an engineer would have been fairly unproblematic, even if they were not engaged in this type of work at a particular point in time. It should be noted in this context that what is being suggested here is not necessarily a 'retention of identity' at a conscious, active level. The display of workplace identities should not be seen so much as a series of 'masks' to be worn or discarded at will but rather as a set of assumptions about social situations and a subject's place within them. While there could certainly be a level of 'playing up' to an established stereotype, a workplace-based identity would be in many ways fundamentally connected to the overall socioeconomic position a worker held. The result of this would be that these identities were not ultimately flexible to the extent that a person's employment would have been in a period of economic change.

The second group for whom engagement in the traditional, pub-based form of male recreation could be seen as problematic was young men just leaving school and entering employment. In the first place there is the issue that those leaving school at the earliest

¹⁹ Paterson, *Glasgow Limited*, p.12.

²⁰ Paterson, *Glasgow Limited*, p.81.

²¹ This transference of worker identity has also been shown to be the case by Alison Gilmour in the context of the Linwood car plant, see: Gilmour, 'The Trouble with Linwood: Compliance and Coercion in the Car Plant'.

permitted age would have been too young to go into pubs and drink alcohol, as suggested by the Clydebank man quoted above in relation to wage distribution. For this reason they were required to create their own spaces for peer group sociability or to use those provided by either the voluntary or commercial sectors. Apart from this there was a further, structural reason many youths entering employment could be excluded from traditional masculine work cultures. These were the men most likely to go into the service sector, office work, or into the newer, light engineering jobs which lacked the strong entrenched traditions of older industries. The reason these sectors were lacking entrenched masculine cultures varied between occupations. Highly significant in terms of this study is the fact that these sectors often included far more female workers, with the result that the work cultures that existed did not have the same single gender character.

In addition to this, in the case of many service sector jobs the lack of a socialising work culture was at least partly due to the short-term employment prospects often associated with so called 'blind alley' or 'dead end' jobs. Indeed there was much establishment commentary on the negative social consequences of boys choosing these jobs over entry to a skilled trade. This type of job often required little skill, but could be initially relatively highly paid and allow a youth to eschew taking on any form of responsibility at work. However, it is important to note that not all young men who entered such employment did so as an alternative to skilled work.

A major reason many school leavers went into occupations such as delivery boy was that they were not able to begin an apprenticeship until they were sixteen. This meant that there was inevitably a period between leaving school and starting an apprenticeship that had to be filled with a 'stop gap' job in an economic context where earnings from household members other than the 'breadwinner' were often required for basic survival. An examination of the Lancefield Foundry's apprenticeship register for the 1930s shows that many of the apprentices had previously held occupations such as 'van boy', 'messenger', 'butcher's boy',

and 'elevator boy'.²² With this in mind it would be reasonable to suggest that many of the young men being criticised would have been merely biding their time in these unskilled jobs until they were able to start learning a trade. Of course, this progression would have been complicated by the decline of apprenticeship opportunities in the 1930s and 1940s and, as discussed in the previous chapter, these men would have found themselves in a difficult economic situation once they became too old to hold these stop-gap jobs. The picture is further complicated in the post-war years due to the introduction of national service as discussed in the previous chapter. One man who joined the army aged 18 in 1951 described his working life prior to this date as 'a kind of a rollercoaster', with a number of jobs being held between school and service.²³ The fact that many men had the opportunity to gain trades as part of their national service would also have contributed to some men's decision to undertake 'dead end' work in the time before joining the army rather than undertake a low-paid training position.

The young men that entered the growing semi-skilled sector of employment in the inter-war period were also deemed a problem. They were perceived as having few future prospects of moving into skilled work, and were considered to be ignoring this potential 'problem' in favour of conspicuous leisure consumption. Newspaper reports from the period clearly indicate the perceived link between the form of work a person performed and self-identity. For example, a Baptist minister claimed in a speech in 1930 that:

In the majority of our workshops today the minimum call was made upon a man's intelligence, upon his judgement and upon his reasoning powers. The result was that work had far less to do with a man's character today than at any time in the world's history.²⁴

This commentator went on to decry the use made of leisure by these same workers, implying that, in the absence of a character building working life, the fact that their leisure is 'a portion of

²² GCA, TD253, Apprenticeship Register, Lancefield Foundary, 1920-65.

²³ Oral History Interview conducted by Andrea Thomson 13/10/08, Mr Cavanagh.

²⁴ *The Scotsman*, 06/05/30, p.13.

life simply wasted' shows a decline in 'standards'.²⁵ Of course, in the eyes of this commentator, the correct use of leisure involved a reinstatement of Christian values at the heart of social life, but it is instructive that this writer made a direct connection between the perceived reduction of work identity and inability to be properly 'socialised'. Further to this, in a speech given to a conference on citizenship in 1938 a Glasgow University lecturer emphasised the need for an educational policy that not only developed 'responsible citizenship and increased sensibility' but also 'improved vocational proficiency'.²⁶ Once again, it seems that the speaker was making a direct connection between working identity and social identity. Indeed it would be reasonable to use the idea of 'character' to describe the kind of socialised identity writers of this type are describing, a concept that will be explored further in Chapter five in relation to rational recreation.

As already highlighted, the connection between occupation and moral worth was a recurrent concern. Yeo and Springhall have shown that these attitudes were present in establishment discourses stretching back to the nineteenth century.²⁷ The social stigma attached to the 'boy labour problem' suggests an ambiguous attitude within establishment circles to the kind of socialisation obtainable by young people from their working environment. Crucially, Springhall has characterised these concerns as 'the obsession of adults with the image of an undisciplined, free spending, potentially delinquent adolescence', a position that would suggest that this was largely a matter of social control rather than economic needs.²⁸ This conclusion can be supported through examination of employment patterns in Scotland in the early decades of the twentieth century. Knox has observed that between 1914 and 1937 the percentage of the engineering workforce that was classed as skilled fell from 60% to 32%,

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ *The Scotsman*, 03/02/38, p.16.

²⁷ See p.109 above, these ideas discussed by Yeo, 'The Boy is the Father of the Man' and Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics*.

²⁸ John Springhall, *Coming Of Age* (Dublin : Gill and Macmillan, 1985), p.105.

a decrease accompanied by an increase in semi-skilled workers from 20% to 57%.²⁹ With this in mind it would seem that it was employers themselves that were requiring a greater number of semi-skilled workers rather than young workers rejecting opportunities to enter skilled trades.

Despite the fact that it was industrialists and the owners of capital that were the source of changes in work opportunities it seems that establishment concerns surrounding the remuneration of young semi-skilled workers persisted into the years of the Second World War. One correspondent with *The Scotsman* in 1942 claimed that firms were paying boys of 16 or 17 'preposterous wages' which were leading to 'corruption'. Referring to a case where a highly paid young worker had been in court, the writer went on to suggest that the youth had 'probably upon that account, contrived to get himself into the hands of the police'. The letter concludes that the sentiments are shared by boys' clubs organisers of his acquaintance who consider high wages 'a real menace to youth at the present moment'.³⁰ The latter was the case presumably as the access to commercial leisure forms these wages provided made the provision of the boys' clubs relatively unappealing, therefore reducing the social influence that these institutions could hope to wield. It could be argued that attitudes such as these are representative of a discourse that sees the control of youth and the subordination of the working classes to capital and their 'social superiors' as a primary concern.

A major concern of social commentators such as those referred to above was that the easy availability of jobs such as unskilled, and semi-skilled factory jobs and work as message boys could be seen to discourage youths from gaining trade skills. One of the main causes of this concern was that these so called 'dead end' jobs often paid better than the early stages of apprenticeships. In his 1930s study of Glasgow youth Charles Cameron recounts the experience of one young man who started on an apprenticeship but didn't finish it due to the lure of better money doing a job with no prospects of gaining a skilled status later in life: 'When

²⁹ Knox, *Industrial Nation*, p.206.

³⁰ *The Scotsman*, 13/02/42, p.7, my emphasis.

I was working as an apprentice I got 12/- a week, I was suspended for want of work and took on a labouring job, and got 28/- a week. I couldn't think of going back to my apprenticeship at only 12/-'.³¹ Another man engaging in an apprenticeship in the early 1930s described it as 'slave labour' in terms of the wages and conditions he experienced, once again suggesting that completing an apprenticeship required the apprentice to sacrifice short-term economic gains for long-term social status.³²

However, the idea that 'blind alley' jobs were preferred by youths should not be overstated. While some, like the young man cited above, clearly saw unskilled work as more lucrative than apprenticeship, many 'blind alley' workers went into this field of employment due to their inability to find a more skilled position. One Shettleston man recalls his job as a message boy in the early 1930s with the statement that it 'was a dead end job which I detested'.³³ This man eventually found an apprenticeship as a joiner and it is significant that at this point the amount of money he earned was little more than he had previously made when working an unskilled job, suggesting that it was the form of the job rather than the financial remuneration that was most important to him in selecting an occupation. What this implies is that, despite the difficulties in securing apprenticeships, and the economic disadvantages of doing so in terms of youths' immediate economic needs the opportunity to gain trade skills was still a highly prized one among inter-war men.

Parliamentary reports show that, during the late 1930s, there was a shortage of young labour throughout Britain at this point. In 1937 a report by the Chief Inspector of Factories stated that this shortage had resulted in 'the lowering of the selection standard for employers, with intelligence tests being dropped completely by some employers and the physical

³¹ Charles Cameron, Glasgow Area: Report to the Carnegie Trust by the Social Survey Officer, of the First Year's Survey of the 18+ Age Group, in NAS, GD281/83/187 Carnegie Trust Disinherited Youth Survey: Glasgow File 1

³² Kirkintilloch WEA Retirement Class, 2 *Communities: Springburn and Kirkintilloch, a Chronicle of Glasgow Overspill* (Strathkelvin District Libraries and Workers' Educational Association), p.13.

³³ Shettleston Activity in Retirement Group, *Dolly Tints and Dabbities: Growing up Between the Wars*, (Workers Educational Association, 1985), p.17.

standards asked for being reduced'.³⁴ In a context that had seen widespread unemployment in the previous years it is likely that this shortage was down to the lack of availability of more *cheap* labour, as represented by unskilled youths, as it was about an absolute labour shortage. By 1937 an industrial recovery, fuelled by rearmament, was underway and it may have been that employers were loath to return to an economic situation where they were required to employ skilled adult men in place of young workers. An example of this practice is illustrated by McKinlay and Hampton who cite a John Brown's worker as stating that 'the Queen Mary was about 75% apprentice built'.³⁵ While this proportion may be considered hyperbole to a certain extent it does indicate the extent to which apprentices had begun to be considered cheap labour rather than merely journeymen in training. The key to the employment of young workers was that they were cheaper to employ and, critically, unable to organise in unions in the same way as their adult counterparts as they were unable to claim a skilled status.³⁶ The lack of unionisation among this group was not the only reason for the dismissal of young workers once they had reached the age of sixteen. One Partick man recalls that he was dismissed from his job as a barber's assistant when he reached the age where 'they had to pay a stamp for you and pay an increase in wages that you weren't going to get'.³⁷

As suggested above, the jobs that were available were often unlikely to lead to young worker gaining significant training and therefore later being able to claim the status of skilled worker. However, in the context of high demand for unskilled or semi-skilled cheap youth labour it is likely that young workers were in a strong position to pick and choose between employment opportunities at an unskilled, more casual level than that offered by apprenticeships. The fact that it was possible for young people to move between a multitude of

³⁴ Cmd. 5802, Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for the year 1937, p.43.

³⁵ Alan McKinlay and John Hampton, 'Making Ships, Making Men: Working for John Brown's Between the Wars', *Oral History*, 19:1 (1991), p.22.

³⁶ Hughes, *Gender and Political Identities in Scotland*, p.23.

³⁷ Partick History Group, *Mind These Days?: Partick Between the Wars* (1985), p.28.

these types of job rather than submitting to the discipline of a particular workplace meant that they would be able to simply leave if they didn't like the treatment they received or their superiors' attitudes towards them. Some of the men who lived in Maryhill in the inter-war and immediate post-war period describe an early work life that consisted of a variety of jobs in engineering, retail and office jobs, and imply that moving between jobs in this way was not unusual or particularly problematic at this point.³⁸ The further reduction in the population of young people aged 16-25 that occurred in the post-war years, along with the export drive that was such an important part of economic policy in this period, is likely to have exacerbated this trend.

However, it is important to note that this was a very regional phenomenon. In contrast to the above situation, when the Clydebank shipyards temporarily shut down in 1931 a large number of men were simply put out of work for the duration. One man describes Clydebank in this period as being 'an idle town', despite the presence of the Singer factory in the town.³⁹ It is likely that the identity of shipbuilder that many of the unemployed men subscribed to meant they did not consider finding work in another economic sector. Indeed, none of the men interviewed for the Clydebank Oral History Project seem to have looked for work outside of Clydebank itself when they were unemployed. This lack of exploration emphasises the importance of the local community in constructing a person's sense of belonging and the strong psychological connection between work and community.

What is implied here is that many young workers could be considered to have been outside the influence of any particular work culture and were taking an instrumental approach to employment where the financial rewards for their work was the primary motivation. It is important to note here that this attitude could be construed as being a response to the lack of available skilled jobs in this period. The above comments from men growing up in the 1930s

³⁸ Glasgow Collection, Mitchell Library, Maryhill Oral History Project, LHP 2C Sam MacIlvenna, LHP 12C Mr J Salt.

³⁹ COHP, testimony of James McGhee.

do suggest that skilled work was a preferred occupational area. With this in mind it would be reasonable to suggest that a more instrumental attitude to work was down to alienation as opposed to a lack of desire for work that could be considered 'meaningful'. An important contribution to the development of this attitude amongst young workers would be the fact that, even where apprenticeships were available they were often being used by employers as a way of obtaining cheap labour rather than as a way of training a future skilled workforce. The lack of training available at John Brown's between the wars is recalled by one man who states that 'you didnae get much tuition. You had to forage for yourself most of the time'.⁴⁰ In addition to this, the Lancefield Foundry Apprentice Register indicates that many of the young men who started apprenticeships in the 1930s and 1940s left the position of their own accord, indicating that they did not see completion as a worthwhile use of their time.⁴¹ While the reasons for leaving in each case can only be speculated, it would be reasonable to suggest that either a lack of real training or monetary remuneration were prime candidates in a context where a skilled status was culturally valued.

Criticism of an instrumental type of attitude to work tended to come in terms of a concern for a lack of discipline and regulation of young people at the time of writing. It is significant that this is usually presented as being a problem to a greater extent than in previous generations, either because of a breakdown in family discipline or changing employment patterns. Writers in this tradition see a stable working life as essential for the socialisation and process of role acceptance for young men, the absence of which has the potential to destabilise the social hierarchy if it continued unchecked.

In other criticisms of the conduct of youths some commentators were far from content with young men being socialised into the established work cultures of traditional industries. A striking example of this can be seen in a 1934 report on voluntary provision of recreation by the

⁴⁰ McKinlay and Hampton, 'Making Ships, Making Men', p.22.

⁴¹ GCA, TD253, Apprenticeship Register, Lancefield Foundry, 1920-65.

Scottish Association of Boys Clubs.⁴² In this report the lack of provision of separate facilities for young miners within the Miners' Welfare Institutes is discussed, the reporters making clear their disapproval of this state of affairs: 'It certainly keeps a great many of them off the streets, but they see and hear things which they should not, and become imbued with men's ideas too early in life'.⁴³ Essentially this criticism could be summed up as a fear that the young miners in this group were entering into adult working-class leisure patterns rather than the more 'rational' type that the SABC would prefer. These boys, who may have left school at an early stage, are seen to be being socialised into the highly masculinised, and in some areas, militant, culture of the older generation of miners, one that is far removed from the character forming goals of the Boys Club Movement which had much more in common with the public school ethos. What is suggested here is more than a disparity in the way that young people were spending their time outside of working hours, rather a clash of competing discourses concerning the ways in which young people were socialised and the conceptions of masculinity that went along with this socialisation.

The implication of the SABC report quoted above is that the reformers of the SABC saw autonomous forms of working-class culture itself as problematic, not merely the more deviant expressions of it as present in the potentially delinquent activity of those working in 'blind alley' jobs. In the context of the young miners commented on above the idea that the work itself could 'brutalise' their character never comes into the equation, perhaps because if it was a harsh working environment that created a 'rough' work culture then it could be said to be the responsibility of employers rather than the workers themselves. The SABC is clearly attempting to avoid the drawing of this conclusion by suggesting that the only negative influence on young miners is their older colleagues who have the potential to imbue them with values that are collective rather than corporate. The idea that miners as an occupational group

⁴² GD281/83/118 – Scottish Association of Boys Clubs, File 1, 1932-36, *Report of the Present Position Regarding Voluntary Organisations for Boys in Scotland*, p.9

⁴³ Ibid.

in particular could be said to have had an autonomous culture of their own, that was in opposition to that which contemporary reformers saw as ideal, has been noted by Callum Brown, who has suggested that the establishment of the Miners' Welfare Institutes was largely a ploy to reduce radicalism among this group.⁴⁴

In this construction the socialising purpose of the workplace is seen to be in making men accept the discipline of the hierarchy in their field of employment, and therefore their role within the social hierarchy as a whole. Critically this socialisation included the propagation of gender identity due to the fundamental link between the breadwinner role and hegemonic forms of masculinity. The fact that the working environments experienced by most working-class men also had the potential for identities and loyalties to be formed and developed horizontally was a problem for those simultaneously advocating the importance of both a strong working identity and the retention of existing social relations. Indeed, it has been argued that the move to piecework as opposed to time rates that occurred in many workplaces in the inter-war period was, at least partially, an attempt to weaken union influence and to encourage workers to emphasise loyalty to the firm over loyalty to their fellow workers.⁴⁵

However, arguably the most significant barrier to this re-orientation of worker loyalty to the needs of capital as opposed to the needs of their colleagues was the way many skilled occupations recruited and operated on a day-to-day basis. McKinlay has observed that the individual work gangs in John Brown's were often made up of family members or neighbourhood friends.⁴⁶ In addition to this it seems, from examination of oral history evidence, that nepotism was a highly important factor in obtaining jobs in the first place. One Clydebank man recalls that 'it was no a question of ability getting ye in, the biggest dullers could get jobs,

⁴⁴ Callum Brown, 'Popular Culture and the Continuing Struggle for Rational Recreation' in T.M. Devine and R.J. Findlay (Eds.) *Scotland in the Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), p.225.

⁴⁵ Alan McKinlay, 'Depression and Rank and File Activity: The Amalgamated Engineering Union, 1919-1939' in *Scottish Labour History Society Journal*, 22, (1987), p.24.

⁴⁶ McKinlay, 'Making Ships, Making Men', p.11.

but somebody got them in'.⁴⁷ The idea that some form of community support was required to secure work during the depression was also observed by Charles Cameron. Notes Cameron prepared for the City of Glasgow Society of Social Service record that many of the men in the survey were relying on friends to get them 'starts beside them' and that they were finding that 'you need influence nowadays to get a start'.⁴⁸ These observations highlight the importance of community networks, and therefore a man's social standing amongst his peers in gaining access to employment. As already discussed, the continued importance of the pub as an outgrowth of workshop culture and, simultaneously, a bastion of working-class masculinity meant that loyalty to class, as expressed through the community, was likely to continue to trump loyalty to the firm.

It seems that the importance of nepotism was not a phenomenon exclusive to the economic downturn of the inter-war period. Another Clydebank man states that 'it wasn't too hard to get in as an apprentice then [c.1906] if your father worked in the yard', suggesting a mid-twentieth-century continuation of a long tradition of parental influence in the occupational choices of young working-class men.⁴⁹ Indeed, it would seem from many of the interviews with men who started work both in the inter- and post-war period that it was almost a given that sons would follow their fathers into a trade, even if they were not to make that their whole life's work. Comments such as 'well my father was in publishing you know...I was there for a few years and didnae like it', from a man who started work in 1949 can be seen as fairly typical of young workers' attitudes to their choice of occupation in the 1930-1950 period.⁵⁰

When these early work histories are placed in a wider context of working-class culture their real significance becomes apparent. Andrew Davies has shown, for young workers in Manchester in the inter-war period, that in terms of freedom of action 'they were still bound by

⁴⁷ COHP, testimony of James McGhee

⁴⁸ NAS, GD281/83/187: Glasgow File 1, notes for City of Glasgow Society of Social Service 30/11/37.

⁴⁹ COHP, testimony of Alexander Crawford.

⁵⁰ Oral History interview conducted by Andrea Thomson, 13/10/08, Mr Cavanagh.

the financial and moral codes of working-class family life'.⁵¹ When considered in light of the discussion of the features of industrial employment above it would seem that the identity of worker, and its attendant masculine ideal was an important part of both work culture and working-class community culture. The result of this would be that, at least for men, the occupational and the social would be interdependent in contrast to the idea of 'separate spheres' of public and private advocated through middle-class discourse.

Essentially, many of the more 'rough' aspects of working identities could be seen as a reaction to the conditions of work that were present in industry and hence extrapolated into the social areas of working-class culture. With this in mind the reformers of the SABC quoted above were in something of a bind in regards to their desire for youths to take on middle-class social norms whilst engaging in typical manual occupations. In order for young men to fully invest in the work ethic demanded of them by establishment reformers they were required to internalise the work practices and cultures of workplaces that were, at least in part, predicated on working-class community norms. As will be discussed below in relation to welfare policies, the aspects of these work cultures related to physicality and 'hard man' masculinity were often fundamental to these workplaces, whilst being antithetical to the idealised middle-class form of manliness as epitomised by the rational recreation organisations investigated in Chapter five.

In fact, I would argue that an important distinction can be made between the gender identities promoted by working-class and middle-class discourses at this time based on the way they prioritised physical and mental attributes. The physical nature of the work of the men who embodied the 'hard man' image can be contrasted with the more mentally focused work of those who were most prominent in attempting to promulgate ideas of middle-class masculinity and rational recreation. What is important to note here is that, while these two gender identities

⁵¹ Davies, *Leisure, Gender and Poverty*, p.83.

were related to the moral and cultural outlooks of their holders, they seem to have been, in general, correlated to the socioeconomic position of the men that displayed them.

The work of Judith Rowbotham relating to violence in late nineteenth-century England is relevant in this context as one fundamental part of the identities experienced by many working-class men was the acceptance of physical risk and, by extension, a certain casual attitude to violence. Rowbotham has suggested that the public acceptability of violence at this time was often dependent on the age, gender and/or class of both the perpetrator and the victim.⁵² A critical part of Rowbotham's argument is that acts of violence perpetrated by women were considered to be more serious than those perpetrated by men. This was due to the fact that, while physical strength was seen as a desirable part of masculine identity, the dominant discourses surrounding femininity excluded such physical and mental characteristics. Rowbotham claims that this was due to the lack of economic imperative behind female violence.⁵³ I would agree with this interpretation and go as far as to say that whilst violent acts could be seen as, in some senses, a natural extension of 'hard man' masculinity, and therefore predicated on workplace survival and productivity, there simply was not a concomitant socioeconomic role for women. The result of this disparity was that male violence was seen as more socially acceptable insofar as it did not result in the injury of those of other social groups or the destruction of private property. The connection between economic role and the perpetration of violence is made still clearer in the work of Annmarie Hughes. Hughes has observed that men tried for domestic violence in Scotland in the 1930s were able to use a good reputation as a worker as a way to 'moderate the violent reputation being presented in court'.⁵⁴ This defence, along with the potential for alcohol to be seen as a cause, not just a facilitator, of

⁵² Judith Rowbotham, 'Only When Drunk': The Stereotyping of Violence in England, c.1850-1900' in Shani D'Cruze (Ed.) *Everyday Violence in Britain*, 1850-1900 (Harlow: Pearson Educational, 2000), p.156.

⁵³ Ibid., pp.159-163.

⁵⁴ Hughes, 'The "Non-Criminal" Class', p.51.

violence against women meant that a man could commit violent acts without these acts being seen as fundamentally detrimental to his 'character' or social standing, especially when such acts did not interfere with his functioning as a worker, or occur in the public sphere.

The significance of these observations is twofold. Firstly, it suggests that the economic situation of a person is likely to have a large influence on the gender identity they exhibit. Secondly the lack of success that many middle-class reformers found in attempting to 'improve' the attitudes of working-class youths was in a sense inevitable. These youths spent their time away from voluntary organisations and educational establishments, within a culture that prioritised fundamentally different values to those espoused by reformers.

3.2 - Occupations outside of heavy industry and the 'hard man'

In the case of office work the connection to the more 'respectable' non-manual sector meant that young men who entered this occupation were, in contrast to their manual worker contemporaries, unable to lay claim to a dominant 'hard' form of working-class masculinity through their employment status. In fact it is likely that the disparity between the identity of the 'hard man' and the 'clerk' could have discouraged many young men from entering this kind of work in the inter-war period. In *Love on the Dole*, Greenwood's main protagonist displays these sentiments, regarding office work as qualitatively inferior to the work of the engineer: 'how infinitely, ineffably superior these gods of the machine and the forge were to mere pushers of pens!'.⁵⁵ Greenwood leaves the reader in no doubt as to the deficiency of the working identity of the office worker in the context of a working-class community. The fact that

⁵⁵ Greenwood, *Love on the Dole*, p.23.

this was a peer group, rather than purely a self-criticism for the character is made clear, the attitudes of his friends described in a similarly hyperbolic manner: 'wasn't their contempt justifiable when their romantic work was compared with his own [job working at a pawnbroker's]'.⁵⁶ It seems as though Greenwood's character felt the need to become an engineer in order to be able to claim a positive masculine status among his peer group as much as for the occupation itself, or what he felt about the matter.

What these comments imply is that being outside a particular occupation meant exclusion from both the cultural cachet available from the work and also the opportunity to be considered a true part of a peer group. When it is taken into account that these young men were all friends from school, the importance of the workplace as a way of delineating social prestige, if not identity, among a group of men who were of the same socioeconomic background becomes highly significant. While Greenwood's account of a young man's desire to enter the engineering trade in a Lancashire town is a fictional one, its close resemblance to his autobiographical account suggest that this is a legitimate expression of the social attitudes of the time in relation to working identities.⁵⁷ A similar sentiment is displayed by one Clydebank shipbuilder who was active in the 1930-1960 period. His description of the time keepers at his place of employment portrays them as 'these pushers of pens' who wielded 'more power than god in his heaven' over the tradesmen.⁵⁸ A further example of these attitudes is shown by one man from Maryhill who recounts his decision to continue searching for work despite the offer of an office job in Barr and Stroud. This man makes the statement that 'pushing a pen wasn't for me' as an explanation for his action.⁵⁹ When these comments are considered in the context of the inter-war period, where finding work was far from an easy task it is clear that his desire to find work of an 'appropriate' type was more than a matter of simple preference.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Suggested by Davies in *Leisure, Gender and Poverty*.

⁵⁸ Interview with J. McGhee, COHP.

⁵⁹ Maryhill Oral History Project, Tape LHP 12C, Mr J. Salt, 16/10/87

It is significant that the same image of a sedentary figure is used as a way of denigrating this non-manual group in both these cases as it suggests that, for the men in question, the role of engineer was the one most coveted. Both these references show the continued importance of the concept of the 'hard man' heavy industry worker as an identity to be aspired to by young men in the 1930s and beyond. The implication is that, for men outside this employment sector, claiming a masculine identity that was congruent with the dominant cultural norms of their community could be problematic thereby diminishing their social standing amongst peers. These comments suggest that a fundamental aspect of the identity aspired to by these workers was its level of physicality. This quality is emphasised by men in the late 1930s sent to the social surveyor Charles Cameron. One man states that the light, indoor 'handy man' work he is doing is not to his liking and that he would 'prefer outdoor life and work of a more manly kind', emphasising the desire to engage in more physical tasks.⁶⁰ This attitude can also be seen in a man who 'got fed up' with street corner life while unemployed so agreed to be sent to do forestry work by the labour exchange, he wrote that: 'I am getting along alright we are doing pick and shovel work'.⁶¹ While this work was not skilled, the fact that it gave the man an opportunity to engage in physical activity seems to have been an important motivation for his taking up the job.

In contrast to this, the mental focus of office work, and its correspondingly high social status in middle-class values was simply not seen as something to be aspired to by many working-class men. Those working in clerical positions could therefore be seen by their contemporaries to be lacking in terms of their gendered identity. This is important in the case of the shipbuilder/timekeeper relationship referred to above. It is clear that, in terms of their respective posts within the shipyard, the timekeepers had significant powers over the manual workers, however, this did not translate into their having access to a more respected form of

⁶⁰ NAS, GD281/83/187, letter from H.A.H. to C. Cameron, undated.

⁶¹ NAS, GD281/83/187, letter from R.G. to C. Cameron, 22/10/37.

masculinity as far as the shipbuilders themselves were concerned. Rather the safe and office-based work of the timekeepers led to their denigration by the manual workers due to its perceived lack of skill and the absence of 'manly' qualities. While it is possible to interpret this reaction as a defence mechanism on the part of the manual workers to an economic situation in which they were increasingly vulnerable during the inter-war period, the fact that it was so often stated in highly gendered terms suggests that this manual/clerical distinction was one fundamental to the manliness of the workers themselves. The idea that physicality was central to the definition of working-class masculinity will be returned to below in relation to work-based welfare schemes.

Another group of workers whose relationship to dominant working-class masculine status was potentially complicated through changes in occupational structures were those employed in newer industrial sectors such as the manufacture of electrical goods.⁶² As discussed in the previous chapter, these industries were growing more slowly in Scotland than in other areas of Britain, yet despite this they did have increasing importance in the industrial landscape in the mid-twentieth century. Critically, these new industries were moving towards semi-skilled production line processes. This had the potential to disrupt established traditions relating to the skilled trades of workplaces such as the shipyards with the result that working identities were in a state of flux for both skilled and unskilled workers. Alison Gilmour has shown that, in the Linwood car plant in the 1960s the lack of job control experienced by many workers was a common source of industrial disputes.⁶³

When this idea is considered along with the Paterson study cited above in terms of the previous working histories of many factory workers in the 1940s and 1950s it is clear that some form of disconnection between the cultural expectations of workers entering this sector and the economic and managerial realities of these new industries. Paterson gives an example from

⁶² See Figure 2.3 above.

⁶³ Gilmour, 'The Trouble with Linwood: Compliance and Coercion in the Car Plant', p.91.

1952 of management attempting to perform a time study on a new production process with the result that the men 'threatened to down tools'.⁶⁴ Clearly, in this case, the workers had taken ideas about the importance of worker autonomy from more traditional industrial settings into the factory environment. I would suggest that this was not merely a case of taking previous working expectations into new industries but actually an example of taking established *masculine* norms into the workplace. With this in mind, young workers who had not been socialised into previous industrial settings could be seen as receiving similar idealisations of masculine identity from community members such as fathers and older friends rather than these identities only existing in the workplace.

However, as highlighted by both Gilmour and Paterson the relevance of these worker identities to the way in which industry was actually developing, particularly in the post-war period, was being reduced and this had the potential to create alienation in the worker. The result of this growing disparity between working-class cultural norms and dominant economic ones would be that the socialisation young men were receiving from their pre-working lives in highly localised working-class communities would begin to be problematic in terms of both individual men's ability to compose a consistent masculine identity and the needs of capital. The fact that the latter was feared to be the case can be seen in much of the contemporary writing concerning the attitudes and 'character' of youth in relation to work, throughout the middle of the twentieth century. The idea that the new forms of industrial organisation held little in terms of intrinsic rewards for workers was seen as a reason for stronger outside socialisation. One speaker at an Aberdeen conference on youth organisations, held in 1941 suggested that 'they [youth] must have some social system which would make them realise the value of work although they might never see its results'.⁶⁵ Here, the community-based socialisation youths received in relation to work was to be replaced by a Christian doctrine that

⁶⁴ Paterson, *Glasgow Ltd.*, p.52.

⁶⁵ *The Scotsman*, 16/06/41, p.3.

was imposed from an establishment perspective. In fact the desire to get young people, particularly boys, into the voluntary organisations could be seen as a symptom of this fear. This idea will be explored more fully in Chapter five, with regard to the work of the Boys' club movement in Scotland.

The above discussion should not be seen as suggesting that work cultures, or the identities associated with them, became irrelevant to young workers, but rather that the intrinsic link between work cultures and traditional forms of working-class culture was becoming less strong, leading to a potential dislocation between the economically required 'worker' identity and the one that had become a part of the Glasgow 'hard man'. The widespread expansion of new forms of commercial culture such as, for example, cinema and dancehalls that occurred throughout the 1930-c.1960 period, does suggest that the younger generation was open to recreations that were unconnected to the traditional confines of traditionally 'masculine' recreational activities. The older generation of workers of the 1930s and their predecessors seemed to exist in a recreational landscape that was focused largely on homosocial activities. A key venue in this respect was the public house with its connections to both work culture, as described above, and exclusively masculine leisure: one man, born in 1900 recalls that 'Ah think the wimmen were barred. They must've been barred because ah can never mind e' looking in a bar and seeing a woman standing'.⁶⁶ This observation illustrates the level to which the pub was a strictly male domain in the eyes of many men.

In contrast to this, the world of the cinema and the dancehall were mixed sex by design, indeed dancehalls in particular were used by young people of both sexes as a way of meeting romantic partners. One interviewee recalls the way meeting a future spouse at a dancehall was so common as to not require full explanation: 'That was an old saying, didnae need to ask them, "Oh, did you meet your wife at the dancing?" What you used to say to them,

⁶⁶ Oral history interview Alex Drummond, b1900, conducted by Annmarie Hughes,

“Where did you meeting your wife?”, you didnae say “Dancing?”, you said, “Was it at the Playhouse or was it Barrowland?”⁶⁷ The importance of this development is that it implies that the use of the commercial leisure of the 1930s onwards put more emphasis on environments that were not homosocial, a development that is likely to have implications for the way masculinity was constructed. This should not be seen as an abandonment of the traditional forms of masculine recreation but it does suggest a diminution of the dominance of these forms.

This would suggest that there were two parallel processes occurring in Scottish society between 1930 and 1960. Firstly, the automatic entry to an occupation that would provide access to the masculine pursuits enjoyed by their fathers was becoming more and more problematic for young men with the result that they needed to find another way of expressing their group identity outside of work. At the same time the commercial sector was expanding the recreational opportunities available to young people, particularly in the post-Second World War period, which saw a large rise in disposable income among this group and therefore a move to marketing aimed at a self-consciously ‘youth’ market.⁶⁸ Both of these factors brought the products of the commercial/consumer sector within the reach of a greater proportion of the population than had previously been the case and therefore had the potential to become a more significant part of daily life. Whether these new developments in a less community or workplace based culture had significant effects on the masculine identities of young people will be explored in the following chapter.

⁶⁷ Interview conducted by Andrea Thomson 10/10/08, Mr Sharkey.

⁶⁸ John Street, ‘Youth Culture’ in Paul Johnson (ed.), *20th Century Britain: Economic, Social and Cultural Change*, (London, 1994), p.460.

3.3 - Welfare and work

In addition to the processes discussed above in terms of altering young people's relationship to their workplace, the working environment itself was also involved in a process of change through the provision of various welfare measures by employers. Peter Bailey has suggested that the second half of the nineteenth century saw an intensification of fears surrounding 'appropriate leisure' for the masses as working hours in many sectors fell and the corresponding opportunities for working-class leisure increased. Bailey also sees this period as the birth of the idea that some form and amount of recreation was a necessary part of industrial life, citing the 1871 Bank Holidays Act as a significant development in this area. This Act legislated for public holidays which were, for the first time, unrelated to religious or agricultural events.⁶⁹ Indeed by the end of the nineteenth century some form of recreation for the mass of workers was seen as a 'basic overhead' of the industrial system.⁷⁰ While this recognition of the importance of recreation could be considered a new development in terms of the ideology of industrial society, it could almost be seen as having been reclaimed from the culture of the pre-industrial world.

Sharon Beder has suggested that, far from being the life of constant toil it is often portrayed as, rural life before the eighteenth century and before actually contained a greater proportion of leisure than that allowed by the discipline of the early factory system. Beder suggests that this rural work was actually carried out in a more leisurely fashion, without the level of supervision and control that existed in the later factory system.⁷¹ Indeed what was novel was the development of the separation of work and leisure. The work of E.P. Thompson supports this view but cites the growth of discipline required by the factory system itself as a reason for the breaking up of recreation and work, a process that was resisted throughout the

⁶⁹ Bailey, *Leisure and Class*, pp.80-81.

⁷⁰ Bailey, *Leisure and Class*, p.105.

⁷¹ Sharon Beder, *Selling the Work Ethic*, (London: Zed Books, 2000), p.14.

century.⁷² Robert D. Storch has shown that it was the move from indentured labour to 'free' labour - and its corollary, free leisure - in the early industrial period that resulted in increased middle-class concern surrounding the leisure of the working classes.⁷³ The survival of resistance to industrial discipline along factory lines into the inter-war period can be seen in the ritual of shipyard workers 'tossing the brick' to decide whether they would return to work following a holiday.⁷⁴ Although the practice faded in the 1930s due to mass unemployment in the sector, allowing employers to increase work discipline, this shows that a level of defiance to employer needs for regularity of labour still existed into the period under review.

The presentation of the spheres of work and leisure as separate could be seen as a way for industrialists to justify their disciplinary demands within the workplace. If the worker's time outside the workshop was 'his/her own' then it logically followed that time spent within was subject to the rule of the employer. In fact, while recreation and work were temporally separated, their separation in terms of social function was far less complete. Indeed, by 1936 the character of work and leisure were being conflated by contemporaries, the following quotation coming from a conference of the New Education Fellowship: 'The playtime activities come to have something of the character of satisfying work, just as satisfying work is closely akin to play'.⁷⁵ In this construction of the leisure/work divide it seems that the primary difference between the two activities was the source of its direction rather than its character. As the introduction to the proceedings to the conference went on to say: 'If they [young workers] are not to be dominated by organisation during the hours of their freedom as they are dominated by mechanical system during the hours of their toil, they must use their leisure to

⁷² E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, (London: Penguin Books, 1991), pp.443-444.

⁷³ See Robert D. Storch, 'The Problem of Working-Class Leisure. Some Roots of Middle-Class Moral Reform in the Industrial North: 1820-1850' in A.P. Donajrodzki (Ed.), *Social Control in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), p.142.

⁷⁴ McKinlay, *Making Ships, Making Men*, p.17.

⁷⁵ Boyd, *The Challenge of Leisure*, p.15.

make their own souls'.⁷⁶ The suggestion here is that any activity could be considered one of leisure if it is self directed. Clearly this is a largely academic discussion as it would be unlikely for any of those involved in, for example, the unskilled manual occupations to consider their work similar in character to any meaningful definition of leisure. However, statements of this kind do indicate that official attitudes to leisure placed it as a fundamental part of social life rather than an optional extra to be enjoyed only by the privileged.

The demand for leisure of all kinds could be said to have grown from the inter-war period onwards, and this growth was not confined to the realm of commercially provided leisure in Scotland. By the twentieth century a social discourse on the importance of recreation as a part of daily life for the health and happiness of the whole population existed. Before this point recreation was often seen as a privilege that should only be available to those in elevated socioeconomic groups. McIvor and Johnston have observed that, before the First World War, many employers believed that 'those furthest down the social scale did not require the same standards, or environmental conditions, or need the degree of regenerative recreation and rest necessary for those in the privileged, upper reaches of society'.⁷⁷ The prevalence of attitudes such as these prior to World War One would tend to suggest that it was the inter-war period that saw the adoption of the discourse of leisure as a social necessity across all social groups in Scotland.

However, many of those involved with the actual provision of leisure for the working class saw its major practical, as opposed to moral, benefit as being its importance as mentally and physically preparing the worker for further work. This sentiment was certainly still a motivating factor in establishment thinking in the inter-war period, as can be seen in the *Hansard* transcripts of debates surrounding the introduction of the 1937 Physical Training and Recreation Act. Labour MP Lees Smith stated that: 'I am saying that what is wanted for those

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Johnston and McIvor, *Lethal Work*, p.46.

who are hard driven in factories during the week is a form of restful occupation in the open air at the end of the week'.⁷⁸ In arguments of this kind the word 'recreation' is taken at its face value of 're-creating' the energies of the worker and therefore contributing to production. Discipline in the workplace was increasing between the wars, nonetheless there does seem to have been a recognition that the quality of the working environment was important in terms of productive output. The government's Chief Inspector of Factories stated, in his annual report for 1937-38, in relation to the use of gramophones and radios during working hours, that:

The music is found especially helpful where the work carried on is under-skilled, light and monotonous; and although it may have no direct effect in increasing output, it tends to create a cheerful atmosphere, and thereby to benefit the health, and consequently the efficiency of the workers.⁷⁹

These acknowledgments of the importance of good working conditions and leisure for workers made in the late-1930s should be seen in relation to the impending outbreak of the Second World War. While the war broke out in 1939 Peter Howlett has observed that the rearmament programme had 'started in earnest' by 1935.⁸⁰ The Miners' Welfare Fund reported in 1936 that the 'measures taken for rearmament' had had a negative impact on its ability to expand its canteen and pithead baths building programme, indicating that rearmament had already started to have economic significance by this point in the decade.⁸¹ In this context the endorsement of industrial welfare and recreation can be seen as an attempt to increase workplace output, with eyes on the potential benefits to a future war effort, rather than being centred on the benefits to the workers themselves. It is worth noting that the experiments with workplace radio that were undertaken in the inter-war period led to the widespread adoption of the amenity during the

⁷⁸ Quoted in NAS, DC/629 – Physical Training and Recreation Act 1937

⁷⁹ Cmd. 5802, Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Factories and Workshops for the year 1937 (HMSO Annual Report), p.80.

⁸⁰ Peter Howlett, 'The War Economy' in P. Johnson (Ed.), *Twentieth Century Britain: Economic, Social and Cultural Change*, (Harlow: Longman, 1994), p.289.

⁸¹ National Mining Museum, Miners Welfare Fund: 15th Annual Report of the Miners Welfare Committee for the year 1936 (HMO: London, 1937), p.20.

Second World War with the introduction of radio programmes such as 'Workers' Playtime', a comedy broadcast specifically created for workplace listening in 1941.⁸²

However the insight that much could be done for the general happiness of workers through the improvement of their conditions of work was not allowed to lead to the conclusion that a bad working environment was a significant factor in the perceived growth of the physical or mental deterioration that was felt to be one of the largest problems facing the future of British society. It is likely that this was due to unwillingness on the part of establishment figures to make claims that could be seen as blaming industrialists for social ills, especially in a context where the economy was only beginning to recover from the widespread unemployment caused by the early 1930s depression.

In order to counter this kind of claim, the idea that the correct leisure was fundamentally important, and a greater priority than workplace conditions was taken even further. Some commentators in the inter-war period denied the potential problems often associated with the mass production system altogether, leaving leisure as the sole cause of national degeneration. At the first Scottish Association of Boys' Clubs (SABC) conference to be held in Scotland in 1934, a delegate from the Carnegie Trust, during discussions concerning the relationship between boys' clubs and Juvenile Instruction Centres, went as far as to say that:

in these days of mechanisation they had to realise that 80 per cent of the boys leaving school had to get into a mass-production job, but that did not degrade them. It was what they did with their leisure time that might degrade them. One had to realise that what had to be done now was to train them for that leisure time.⁸³

This explanation for the perceived apathy and degeneration of youth removes ideas of alienation through unskilled work from the equation, and in so doing shifts the blame for these social problems from employers and industrialists to individual youths themselves. The above comment attacked working-class culture on two fronts. Firstly, it suggested that working

⁸² See Peter Lewis, *A People's War*, (London: Methuen, 1986), p.182.

⁸³ Reported in *The Scotsman*, 02/07/34, p.8.

cultures and skills that had been a central part of working-class manliness were simply irrelevant to the contemporary economy. If only 20% of working-class boys could hope to get a job outside mechanised mass production then the apprenticeship system, and the unions that used it as an entry requirement, could no longer be seen as a centrally important part of working-class experience.

Secondly, the tone and content of working-class leisure culture is derided as being fundamentally harmful, and in need of being reformed through the auspices of rational recreation. The class bias here is clear, and the argument of the speaker is weakened by his own admission that 80% of those that were involved with the Juvenile Instruction Centres had not continued with education beyond school and were not involved with any voluntary organisations. The assumption that this lack of follow-up education was due to a misuse of leisure removed the need for commentators to explore the socioeconomic impediments to access to education that existed. Once again this can be understood as an attempt to blame youths, rather than capitalists, for the results of economic policies that reduced opportunities to gain meaningful work. There is, in addition to this, also the issue of the discipline imposed by such institutions as the Juvenile Instruction Centre. These centres were created by the Ministry of Labour in order to provide educational classes for young unemployed people in the 1930s in order to maintain 'morale and employability by occupying those who were out of work'.⁸⁴ It may simply have been that continuation classes such as these were seen as just that by many young workers who were unwilling to submit to a school-type discipline in their 'free time'. As a writer for the SABC commented: 'The adolescent boy is no longer amenable to the dogmatic, externally imposed discipline of the school, and of arbitrary discipline he has all he wants at work.'⁸⁵ Coupled with this is the idea that moving from the school to the adult

⁸⁴ R. Pope, "'Dole Schools': The North-East Lancashire Experience, 1930-39", in *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 9:2, (1977), p.26.

⁸⁵ NAS, GD281/83/118 – Scottish Association of Boys Clubs, File 1, 1932-36, *Principles and Aims of the Boys' Club Movement* (Boys Club Handbook No.1) (London: NABC, 1930), p.8.

world of work was seen as a fundamental stage of development in terms of masculinity. In some social contexts, such as that of the Glasgow heavy industry worker, it may have been felt to be emasculating to return to an educational setting among this group, apart from the fact that it would have meant foregoing the homosocial enticements of the pub or the company of their peers through engaging in commercial leisure. Indeed, as will be explored in Chapter five, keeping young workers away from pubs could be seen as one of the motivations for the provision of so-called 'rational recreations' in the first place.

However, an explanation for the slow development of industrial welfare in Scotland also needs to take into account the attitudes and actions of trade unions and workers. It has been suggested that the lack of prioritisation of workplace welfare and safety measures in the heavy industrial and building sectors was a result of workers not having a great interest in their introduction.⁸⁶ One argument in support of this is that in union negotiations, increases in wages were always prioritised over the introduction of welfare facilities. This was also seen to be the case in a negative sense, with workers responding less strongly to the reduction of welfare measures than they did to potential decreases in wages. While these arguments seem reasonable, it could be argued that they are mistaking the way workers prioritised pay and conditions for indifference to the details of those conditions. In the words of Conrad Lodziak: 'It is the priority given to "the doing of what it takes" to satisfy survival needs that imposes a structure on our total range of activity.'⁸⁷ The implication of this is that workers operated from the premise that the presence or absence of welfare measures were, in a sense, irrelevant to their ability to earn their wages. The absence of measures aiming to increase safety or provide pastoral facilities may make their working environment less pleasant or more dangerous, but the fundamental reason for working, the earning of wages to satisfy survival needs, was largely unaffected either way. With this in mind, it is clear that, given a choice between better

⁸⁶ Nick Hayes, 'Did manual workers want industrial welfare?'

⁸⁷ Conrad Lodziak, *The Myth of Consumerism* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), p.96.

remuneration and something that to many was seen as superfluous, these largely low paid workers are likely to have chosen the option that would give them a better return for the sale of their labour.

One thing that this analysis suggests is that these workers may have been on the way to adopting certain elements of an instrumental approach to their employment. They could be described as sacrificing some aspects of the culture of their work in favour of a greater financial reward. This argument has been made by Goldthorpe et al. in the context of the post-war period and is seen as a result of alienation from work caused, at least in part, by the reduction of control over the work process which had its foundation in the progression of deskilling and the increasing reliance on production line methods.⁸⁸ Goldthorpe argues that the increase in semi-skilled work over skilled craft positions leads to jobs losing meaning for workers, which led them to concentrate on the economic rather than the psychological aspects of their work. Indeed, the move to payment by results and piece-rates, discussed on p.133 above, could be said to have contributed to this psychological shift as it encouraged faster working and individual achievement over conforming to group norms regarding work rates. This shift in attitudes is illustrated at the level of discourses regarding work in contemporary fiction. Greenwood's *Love on the Dole*, set in the inter-war period, describes the sense of pride that his protagonist gains from work and its fundamentally masculine character.⁸⁹ In contrast to this, in *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, Sillitoe presents his young post-war worker as day-dreaming through his working day and thinking of his employment only in terms of the opportunities for leisure and consumption the money he earned opened up for him.⁹⁰

Despite this, it is important not to overstate the extent to which workers were prepared to sacrifice their styles of work and workshop customs though, even in the post-war period where it is often assumed that the instrumental approach to work had become widespread.

⁸⁸ Goldthorpe, et al, *The Affluent Worker: Industrial Attitudes*, p.38.

⁸⁹ Greenwood, *Love on the Dole*, p.251.

⁹⁰ Arthur Sillitoe, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (London: Flamingo, 1990).

The aforementioned *Glasgow Ltd.* study by Paterson found that, while the operation of the bonus scheme was at the centre of many of the disputes between the workforce and management there were also issues surrounding the organisation of work that were equally contested. Paterson explained that the workers in his study 'showed themselves to be governed not alone by money, despite their obvious need for it, but by their conceptions of justice and fairness, and by their need for working companionship'.⁹¹ This would suggest that these workers had not completely adopted an instrumental mentality to their work as there were what could definitely be classed as social and psychological imperatives operating in their assessment of what made the job acceptable to them.

In addition to this, the appearance of a greater concern with wages and 'danger money' over increased safety may not be as simple as it first seems. In *Lethal Work*, an account of the legacy of the use of asbestos in Scottish industry, Johnston and McIvor suggest that unions' demands for danger money were actually an attempt to convince employers to improve conditions. The example given here is an agreement by the shipyard joiners' union in 1954 to work with asbestos in unventilated areas for a bonus of 2d per hour.⁹² The key to understanding this agreement is the fact that the bonus was only payable in workplaces where the correct dust extraction and ventilation systems were not in place. The agreement therefore had the effect of penalising employers financially for not taking the health risks associated with their workplaces into account. While this strategy was, as McIvor and Johnston show, ultimately ineffective due to the small sums of money involved, it does show a recognition on the part of the unions that they would have to use financial rather than moral arguments in order to have their members properly protected. Ironically, this interpretation would suggest that it was actually employers who were most strongly exhibiting an instrumental orientation to

⁹¹ Paterson, *Glasgow Limited*, (1960), p.X.

⁹² Johnston and McIvor, *Lethal Work*, p.90.

their businesses as it was only when the omission of welfare measures would result in their losing significant sums of money that they would be willing to make changes.

The relevance of this idea in the case of Clyde industry is highlighted in a Singer circular sent from the works manager to the head of each department in June 1952. This makes reference to recent court verdicts which have deemed employers to be responsible for workplace safety and makes the following request: 'I should like you to give this your personal attention and so avoid, as much as possible, claims which run into the thousands of pounds per year, and also to avoid hours of productive labour lost through accidents.'⁹³ Here, the management seem to be giving responsibility for the safety of workers to the heads of department and simultaneously treating accidents as an economic rather than a human issue. The Works Manger was concerned with the potential financial loss incurred by having to pay compensation or having a 'factor of production' out of use as opposed to the human cost of accidents that had the potential to result in serious injuries. While the above missive was circulated within the management structure, when it came to communication with the mass of workers extensive sporting and social facilities were combined with an emphasis on the workers', rather than the management's, responsibility for preventing accidents. One article in the *Singer Activities* booklet for September 1953 stated that 'statistics show that employers can prevent only 25% of accidents while only the employees themselves can prevent the remaining 75%'.⁹⁴ A subsequent safety notice, printed in March 1954, went further and blames worker mentality and preoccupation with leisure pursuits on lapses in safety:

It is usually only when people allow their minds to wander from the job they are performing that they do these careless or silly actions. Never mind thinking of what happened last night, or of how the game will go on Saturday, keep your mind on the job, or you might not be at the game!⁹⁵

⁹³ Internal Singer Circular, 2/6/52 in EDRA/GDC2/1/4 – Singer Management minutes, Circulars Dec 1946-June 1960 (Vol. 3), Clydebank library.

⁹⁴ *Singer Activities*, September 1953, p.2.

⁹⁵ *Singer Activities*, March 1953, p.2.

This dictatorial attitude to safety was clearly part of a larger regime of worker control at Singer in the mid-1950s, as can be seen by the fact that it was advertising internally for personnel for a time studies department in July 1955.⁹⁶ The introduction of scientific management to the factory, as a way of intensifying work and increasing output, without recourse to capital investment, is in line with a management style that demanded full control over the work process thereby reducing the need for a large number of skilled workers. It seems that the company gained its reputation as a 'welfarist' employer locally through its provision of sports clubs and other social activities rather than through the provision of a congenial working environment. With this caveat in mind the following section will examine the welfarist provision of the Singer factory at Clydebank in terms of what it implies about the work cultures the company was attempting to foster among its workforce.

While the circular above shows that Singer's concern with worker welfare may not have been entirely altruistic the fact that they were providing any welfare at all put them ahead of many other local employers. One man who worked in the shipyards in the inter-war period describes the attitudes to safety at John Brown's at this time: 'Your brain was your safety...you got the sack for being so stupid [if you were injured]!'.⁹⁷ As this attitude implies, the facilities for recreation, or even for such necessities as washing and eating at the shipyards, were distinctly lacking, as is shown by the colleagues of the man quoted above: one states that 'No there was no canteen in these days. It was only after the blitz they started the canteens. You just carried your piece wae you or if you could manage it, if you were near enough, you went home for your dinner.'⁹⁸ This statement hints at what could be regarded as a widespread change following the Second World War. Georges Friedmann has suggested that World War Two could be

⁹⁶ Internal Singer Circular, 26/11/57 in EDRA/GDC2/1/4 – Singer Management minutes, Circulars Dec 1946-June 1960 (Vol. 3), Clydebank library.

⁹⁷ COHP, Interview 0011-1, .

⁹⁸ COHP, Interview 002-1.

seen as a watershed in the acceptance of the importance of workforce morale in increasing productivity, and that before this time Taylorist methods of scientific management were seen as the best way to maximise productivity.⁹⁹ It could be said that this represents a greater recognition of the human needs of the worker, but such an interpretation is problematised in the context of post-war deskilling and reliance on production line methods. This seemingly contradictory position can be resolved by examining the source of the increase in welfare and the development of production line methods. During the Second World War, when many of these changes in welfare occurred the government was acting as the largest employer due to the need to supply the war effort. In the post-war period, as the economy moved back to private, civilian production it was industrialists who were at the centre of the adoption of increased reliance on semi-skilled work. However, they were operating in an environment where welfare measures had become, to a certain extent, an expected part of many workplaces with the result that it would have been difficult to remove them, especially in an economic context where full employment had become a government priority.

There were two further factors relating to worker attitudes that complicate the perhaps overly mechanistic construction of welfare provisions as a purely economic issue. One important point in the context of the industrial relations of the inter-war period is that this era saw the introduction of a wide range of new production methods which were often seen by workers, and by the unions that represented them, as undue interference in their rights to organise their own work. The attitudes of employers here can be seen as a precursor to the 'right to manage' ideology that would become important in later decades. Indeed, Ronald Johnston has suggested that Glasgow industrialists were especially authoritarian in regard to

⁹⁹ Friedmann, *The Anatomy of Work*, p.33.

their attempts to control working practices from the late nineteenth century onwards.¹⁰⁰ In this context it could be argued that *any* imposed alteration to working methods or environment would be treated with suspicion by workers, perhaps fearing they constituted the thin end of the wedge, or an attempt at *quid pro quo* in terms of further changes to production methods, leaving the way open to skill dilution and the drop in wages that would inevitably accompany it. With this in mind, the seeming ambivalence to welfare and safety legislation displayed by many workers, could be the result of this suspicion and an assertion of worker rights, although in a largely negative sense.

In addition to this, there is the issue of the workplace culture that had grown up in these high risk industries and the corresponding masculine identity that had developed in order to deal with the stresses and hardships of the daily environment. One Clydebank worker's comment illustrates the acceptance of poor conditions as inevitable in the job: 'The working life in the shipyard is one of the roughest lives in the world'.¹⁰¹ Hughes has shown that in the shipyards conditions of work actually intensified during the depression due to the weakness of unions and men's need retain employment in order to embody the role of provider, a situation that led to a 'reduction of men's capacity to resist employers'.¹⁰² This would make the endurance of harsh conditions necessary to a worker's sense of his own masculinity. There are two aspects of this more psychologically based interpretation. Firstly, an acceptance of measures that made the workplace a safer and more comfortable place could be seen as a threat to the highly masculinised identity of many of the workers. This is hinted at in one Clydebank oral history interview where the respondent associates the introduction of welfare provision such as canteens in the post-war period with the reduction in status of the new generation of workers. Once again, the war is seen as a watershed in creating changes in the

¹⁰⁰ Ronald Johnston, 'Clydeside Employers 1870-1920: Class Conscious or Individualistic?', *Journal of the Scottish Labour History Society*, 32, (1997), p.65.

¹⁰¹ Interview 009-1, COHP.

¹⁰² Hughes, *Gender and Political Identities in Scotland*, p.87.

culture of the yards, illustrated by the following statement that: 'all the changes came [then], that's when people stopped working, that's a fact...see a working man, by god he worked'.¹⁰³ This man seems to see the use of these facilities as a sign that younger men were not living up to the image of the hardy and, significantly, hard-working man. Their status as men was deprecated both in terms of their reliance on better working conditions, which could perhaps be seen as connecting them to ideas of comfort and femininity or domesticity, and their inability to do the harder work endured by the older men. The introduction of machinery, which could be said to have made the job of a shipbuilder relatively less arduous, would have been a major issue here, for example the move from riveting to welding.

A further complication of shipbuilding identities during the war was the presence of conscientious objectors and men who had used their social standing to get into these reserved jobs and therefore avoid service in the forces. One interviewee describes these new recruits to the workforce as 'personalities...football players, boxers and what not' as well as musicians.¹⁰⁴ The entry of this type of person, with no background in the local community, into the shipyards would have the potential to destabilise the fairly rigid identities that had been built up to withstand the difficult working conditions. As stated above, there seems to have been a feeling among the older workers that the men that entered the shipyards in the late 1930s and afterwards had a less valid claim to the tough masculinity of their older workmates. This makes more sense in the context of conscientious objectors and 'celebrities' entering the yards as these men could be seen as 'diluting' the manly identity of the shipbuilders. One John Brown's employee describes the way his attempts to get into the army at the outbreak of the Second World War were frustrated due to his status as a reserved worker.¹⁰⁵ The fact that there were men in this situation suggests that the presence of those who had entered the shipyards to avoid service would have been considered somewhat inflammatory.

¹⁰³ Interview 0014-1, COHP.

¹⁰⁴ Interview 0026-3, COHP.

¹⁰⁵ Interview 0026-3, COHP.

Secondly the seeming indifference to welfare could be seen as part of the masculinity of heavy industry workers. It is possible that a desire for these benefits could have been perceived as unmanly in the context of the work culture of heavy industry. The outcome of this could have been that it was seen as inappropriate for workers themselves to campaign for such changes, with the result that they were not considered to be an important issue in industrial relations in some sectors. This is clearly the case in the example of the Clydebanks shipbuilders who seemed to consider that the young workers who came into the shipyards in the post-war period had a less valid claim to the traditional masculine identity of the shipbuilder as their inter-war predecessors. The fact that where welfare facilities were implemented they seem to have been widely used suggests that there is some basis to this explanation of worker attitudes: it was not that there was no demand for facilities, merely that there was a lack of a legitimised language and discourse within which to demand them. The following section will explore how Singer used welfare provision as an attempt to shape the work culture present in their Clydebanks factory in the period under review.

3.4 - Work Cultures in a New Industry: Singer Case Study

The Singer sewing machine factory in Clydebanks was opened in 1885 as a way for the company to better compete in the European market. By the eve of the First World War there were 12000 employees in the factory, 3000 of whom were female.¹⁰⁶ Singer's U.S. origins had implications for both the character of industrial relations in the factory and the level of welfare provision. With the exception of the top tier of craft workers the workforce was not unionised and the company was considered to be a 'paternalistic' employer in the local area with a record of a peaceful, if dictatorial, attitude to its employees. One Clydebanks man recalls that, during

¹⁰⁶ West Dunbartonshire Council, Dept. of Education and Cultural Services, *Singer Factory* (Pamphlet).

the inter-war period, Singer would pay higher wages than other local employers, even to the extent that 'there were plenty o' labourers in Singer's could make more money than bein' an engineer at that particular time'.¹⁰⁷

Despite this a significant breakdown in the relationship between management and workers occurred in 1911 in a dispute around pay and working conditions that resulted in a mass strike with all employees walking out. This dispute has been examined in detail by the Glasgow Labour History Workshop, who have characterised the 1911 strike as the result of one of the earliest attempts to impose 'scientific management' on a Scottish workforce.¹⁰⁸ Singer's response to the walkout was systematic victimisation of all the union organisers and members in the workforce with the result that somewhere between 400 and 1000 employees were sacked.¹⁰⁹ Significantly, the same action was carried out in the aftermath of the General Strike in 1926 with the result that, at the start of the 1930s there was no industrial union representation in the factory.¹¹⁰ In fact, the company did not fully recognise unions in the factory until the National Engineers' Strike in 1957, implying a continued commitment to managerial control of working conditions throughout the mid-twentieth century.¹¹¹ In contrast to this draconian attitude to worker organization, the welfare provision at the Clydebank Singer factory was far more progressive than those of the local shipyards in both the inter- and post-war periods. Indeed it could be suggested that this welfare regime was a direct result of the strikes in 1911 and 1926 and was employed in an attempt to secure worker co-operation with the demands of management in the context of the 'harsh conditions and exploitation present in the workplace'.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ COHP, testimony of David Logan.

¹⁰⁸ Glasgow Labour History Workshop, 'A Clash of Work Regimes', p.193.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p.204.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, p.208.

¹¹¹ Iain Russell and Michael McDermott, 'The Singer Factory', in John Hood (Ed.), *History of Clydebank* (Carnforth: Lancs.: Parthenon Publishing, 1988), p.22.

¹¹² Glasgow Labour History Workshop, 'A Clash of Work Regimes', p.208.

In the late 1950s the management of the Singer factory in Clydebank were stating, in the pages of their 'Activities compendium', that 'Indirectly recreation refreshes and stimulates the mind and makes one fitter to carry on efficiently the daily job of work'.¹¹³ Note that in this conception of the purpose of leisure it is considered to be a facilitator of efficiency in work as opposed to an end in itself. However, this same article does go on to say that:

Recreation in your leisure hours is an essential part of your life and many people [in the company] devote much time and labour in looking after the interests of others. You will benefit not only by taking part in recreation but by having the opportunity to meet new people and make new friends.¹¹⁴

In this statement the way recreation can be used to cement a social grouping is the focus, so while the first half of the statement does seem to be encouraging leisure for its own sake there is still a definitely instrumental aspect to its promotion, both in terms of its inherent value and its value to the company. It is worth noting at this point that it is recreation *during* leisure hours that is being advocated, a phrasing that suggests that it is the appropriate use of leisure hours that was the critical issue rather than the provision of hours of leisure themselves. This is reinforced by the idea that there were people within the company spending time providing appropriate recreations for the employees. The work of Patrick Joyce provides historical antecedents for this attitude towards worker recreation. Joyce links the provision of welfare facilities with the discourse of paternalism that was present within factory culture from the second half of the nineteenth century.¹¹⁵ The central purpose of welfare provision by employers, according to Joyce was to cement a sense of community within the workforce and to act as a 'powerful antidote' to trade unions.¹¹⁶ As this section will show, these ideas were still relevant to the welfare provision at Singer Clydebank in the mid-twentieth century.

¹¹³ *Singer Activities*, May 1959, p.2.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ Patrick Joyce, *Work, Society and Politics: The Culture of the Factory in Later Victorian England*, (Aldershot: Gregg Revivals, 1991), p.134.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.145-149.

While the provision of factory leisure facilities is being presented as a positive, worker-centred, action by Singer, the implication is that without such assistance employees would be unable to adequately fill their leisure hours with worthwhile activities. 'Worthwhile' was defined in this case, of course, by management rather than by the expressed wishes of the employees themselves. The definition of recreation suggested by comments such as these could be loosely described as 'supervised leisure' rather than simply a period of freedom from work and its restrictive discipline. Indeed there is the suggestion from the previous quotation that some level of work-type discipline was seen as a legitimate part of a person's 'free time'.

Work at Singer was far from light: John Burnett, who was employed at Singer in the years leading up to the First World War, made the point that 'Your nose was to the grindstone.'¹¹⁷ However, the fact that much more of the work was mechanised, and that all of it was, in contrast to John Brown's, conducted indoors meant that there was less need for a highly masculinised work culture that emphasised physical toughness than there was in the shipyards. This is likely to have been emphasised due to the presence of a large number of female workers in the factory from the beginning. In contrast to this the shipyards were much more male-dominated. While women were recruited to the workforce during both World Wars, their presence was seen as a temporary expedient rather than a shift in occupational structure. In the case of the First World War there was an agreement in place between government and trade unions that women would be removed from the workforce at the close of hostilities.¹¹⁸ The result of this was that there were very few women employed in the Clyde shipyards in the inter-war period. Indeed, by 1931 there were only 9 women enumerated as working in the engineering and allied trades in Glasgow, according to the census of that year.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Glasgow Labour History Workshop, 'Working at Singer, Clydebank, 1911-1914: Testimony of David Burnett', *Scottish Labour History Society Journal*, 25 (1990), p.80.

¹¹⁸ See A W Kirkcaldy (Ed.), *Labour Finance and the War*, (London: Pitman Publishing, 1916).

¹¹⁹ H.M.S.O. Report on the Census of Scotland 1931.

It is important to observe that workplaces like Singer did not exist as a separate entity to the community, especially in the inter-war period when a large proportion of their workforce was drawn from the local area. One way in which Singer attempted to cement its role as a prime provider of employment and welfare for the residents of Clydebank locally was the 'Sports Gala' which was held annually from the First World War until the mid-1960s.¹²⁰ This event was portrayed as a day for the whole community to come together, described in 1934 as consisting of: 'Racing, football, hockey, pageantry, gymnastic, music etc. All the fun of the fair.'¹²¹ This was an opportunity for people outside the factory as well as within it either to compete in the sporting events or simply to attend as a spectator.

In addition to this, in the inter-war period, the normal activities of large employers could be said to have been of equal interest at a local level. One man describes the scenes in Clydebank when John Brown's shipyard restarted work on the *Queen Mary* in 1932 after a stoppage of almost two years: 'they had the pipe band out and oh yes that was a great thing'.¹²² Similarly, the launching of a ship was a very public event which drew large crowds from the local areas, not all of them necessarily directly connected to the yard. A Springburn man also recalls similar scenes of community interest when a newly constructed locomotive for export was driven out of the area: 'sometimes a locomotive left after midnight. There was a carnival atmosphere in the streets as the engine made its way to the Clyde...housewives looked from their tenement windows and children watched and wondered.'¹²³ The importance of local workshops for the identity and self-esteem of the community at this time is demonstrated by these statements which imply a close connection between an area and its primary employers. This relationship would be important in terms of identity formation for

¹²⁰ These dates from *The Clydebank Story*, (<http://theclydebankstory.com/image.php?inum=TCSA00087>), [29/09/07].

¹²¹ *Singer Activities*, May 1934, p.5.

¹²² Interview 0011-1, COHP.

¹²³ Testimony of Mr G. Scott in Kirkintilloch WEA Retirement class, *Two Communities: Springburn and Kirkintilloch*, p.12.

young people as events such as those described in the quotations above would have demonstrated the importance of the industrial worker to the local economy and therefore community. The implication is that the men who were responsible for the making of these goods represented the lifeblood of the community through their role as providers, both in terms of individual families and the community as a whole. In this way the provider role can be seen as moving out of the domestic sphere and into the public one, further blurring the relevance of a distinction between the two in terms of working-class culture. While the nature of the product made at Singer meant that there was not the same kind of public legitimisation for factory workers that was enjoyed by shipyard workers, the connotations of being part of a significant industrial project would be relevant.

In the 1930s there was a variety of societies and sports teams available to Singer employees. While the archived activities compendiums only date back to the 1930s the fact that the majority, if not all, of these were started in the inter-war period can be determined both from internal and external references. Several references to annual events date their origins to the 1920s, such as the 11th photographic exhibition being held in 1932 and the 18th Caledonian Ball being held in 1937.¹²⁴ External sources also suggest that the inter-war period was the first time that Singer had attempted to provide recreational facilities to its workers. The oral testimony of David Burnett, who worked at Singer's before the First World War, states that: 'I don't think there was even any club or organisation connected with them. Of course in those days you didn't get much leisure'.¹²⁵ When this is combined with Burnett's observations that 'I would say working conditions in Singer were very, very severe. You see you weren't allowed to have a cup of tea from seven in the morning until 12 and you couldn't even eat a piece', it appears that the idea of 'looking after' the workforce was not one that had been integral to the

¹²⁴ See *Singer Activities*, February 1932, p.12 and November 1937, p.2.

¹²⁵ Glasgow Labour History Workshop, 'Working at Singer', p.82.

company from the factory's opening.¹²⁶ Indeed the timing of the instigation of the sports gala is interesting in the context of the industrial history of the company. There was a three-week strike at the factory in 1911 which the management succeeded in breaking, resulting in the collapse of the union in the plant and the sacking of around 500 workers that the management considered the 'ringleaders' of the dispute.¹²⁷ What this suggests is that the initiation of a welfare programme in the post-World War One period was an attempt by the company to improve its relationship with the local community and, in the wake of the collapse of the union, restore some sense of community among the workforce itself.

By 1930 the sports provided by Singer for their workers included football, hockey (for both men and women), cricket, tennis, bowling, badminton and a boys' recreational association which seems to have been mostly concerned with football. There were also a number of clubs catering for various activities such as chess and horticulture, and both an operatic and an orchestral society.¹²⁸ These all continued until 1940 where they were largely abandoned for the duration of the Second World War. A significant reason for this reduction in activities was the widespread destruction in the area caused by the Clydebanks blitz in 1941. The Singer hall, which had been the venue for many of the activities undertaken at the factory, was destroyed in the Blitz.¹²⁹ It is difficult to know whether all recreational activities were discontinued throughout the 1940s as it is possible that some of the workers who remained could have continued their activities in an ad hoc manner. However, the destruction caused by the Clydebanks Blitz in 1941 would have had large repercussions for the work culture of the factory and the community networks of Clydebanks as a whole, as a large amount of the town's population had to be re-housed, often in distant areas. Hood notes that many of the sporting and recreational groups in the area ended up sharing premises and equipment, as there was a

¹²⁶ Ibid, p.78.

¹²⁷ Ibid, p.76.

¹²⁸ *Singer Activities*, May 1931, p.1.

¹²⁹ John Hood, 'Leisure and Recreation' in Hood, *History of Clydebanks*, p.103.

strong desire among local people to keep these activities alive despite the difficulties introduced by the war.¹³⁰ Oral testimony regarding this event indicates that the sense of community in Clydebank was destroyed along with so much of the physical fabric of the place, one man stating that: 'Well actually the social life finished, like the Holy City [Radnor Park] as a community – it was a remarkable community the holy city...But after the Blitz it scattered, it was never the same again. The whole intimacy of the area was lost.'¹³¹ Clearly the destruction of the blitz had a huge effect of the community life of Clydebank, which would have equally affected the sense of community at Singer and other major employers in the town.

An addition to the activities at Singer that appeared during the war was the factory choir. This was started up in response to a request from the BBC for a group to deliver a Sunday evening community hymn singing broadcast to be part of the Forces' general programme.¹³² Having its origins as part of a BBC broadcast seems to have given the factory choir more credibility than many of the clubs organised by Singer in the post-war period. The fact that it continued to obtain professional engagements and perform for broadcasts on radio, and later television, meant that there was more interest in this organisation than there was in other musical societies such as the perennially under-subscribed concert party. Indeed, with its genesis in wartime, the choir appears to have seen itself as an important part of the post-war Singer community despite its numerically small size in the context of the number of workers at the factory: 'Thus the choir is a very important part of the social side of the Singer factory. In it the members derive much enjoyment and are better fitted for the more serious side as a result.'¹³³ In fact, even the lunchtime practices of the choir became a spectator event, illustrating that, while there seems to have been little general appetite for making music among the workforce of the factory, it was still appreciated as a form of free entertainment. The

¹³⁰ Ibid., p.108.

¹³¹ COHP, Interview 001-1.

¹³² *Singer Activities*, March 1955, p.15.

¹³³ Ibid.

activities of the choir also reinforce the ideas explored earlier concerning the role of constructive recreations in life present in the 1950s. A later article on the work of the choir makes it clear that its members saw themselves as providing a significant benefit to its audience as well as to themselves:

The performance of the choir depends as much on the listener as on the singers themselves. The choir, by a combination of clear words, good phrasing and proper breath control with attention to the conductor's beat, should compel the audience by the standard of their performance to play their part, i.e. to listen intently and when this bond has been created, the choir and audience are at one artistically and everyone derives spiritual benefit by the performance¹³⁴

Note that those involved did not just enjoy the music as may be the case in popular musical forms but they derived 'spiritual benefit', indicating that there was seen to be a definite positive influence to the work of the choir, distinguishing it from, for example, the work of the concert party which, whilst still considered to be a rational pursuit, was there more to cheer people up than to affect them deeply. While it is certainly possible that the members of the choir themselves felt this way about their chosen pastime the fact that these sentiments were printed in the official *Singer Activities* book implies that it had some resonance with the 'moral character' that the management wished to instill in its workforce through the provision of rational types of recreation.

It appears then, that with the notable exception of the choir, that there was a fairly long period in the aftermath of the Second World War when there were, once again, no facilities for recreation provided by the company. The activities books are available from 1950 and these suggest that this marked the reinstatement of many of the activities. There is a reference in the November 1951 book to the cricket club having restarted the previous year, and one in July 1952 to the resumption of the badminton club, for example.¹³⁵ One reason for this is likely to be that the Singer Hall was destroyed in the blitz and it took time for the company to erect

¹³⁴ *Singer Activities*, July 1956, p.25.

¹³⁵ *Singer Activities*, November 1951, p8 and July 1952, p.10.

alternative accommodation in the form of two 'recreation huts'. It is worth noting that a new hall for recreational use was not completed until 1960. This is in line with the slow redevelopment of the town as a whole, one man who moved to Clydebank in 1958 stating that:

well one realized that it had suffered very badly during the Blitz, it certainly looked as if they hadn't done as much in the way of bringing the town back into some sort of normality as many other towns, even in Britain and certainly in Germany had done – there were still big gaps in housing where tenements had been blown apart and nothing had been built or done about them. There was no kind of town centre as we know it¹³⁶

The implication of this is that Clydebank was slow to recover from the war in terms of its social life. This was despite the good economic prospects afforded by expansion in demand for consumer goods that allowed Singer to produce 15000 machines and three million needles a week and employ close to 15000 people in 1952.¹³⁷ The local shipbuilding industry also received a boost in the immediate post-war period with the replacement of the shipping stock lost during the war providing John Brown's shipyard with a significant amount of work, according to interviewees.¹³⁸

It is likely that the slow pace of reconstruction of Clydebank in a physical sense had a large part in determining the kind of community life that was possible in the immediate post-war period both in the town itself and in the more limited environment of the Singer factory. The factory management does seem to have made an attempt to assist the rebuilding of the community in terms of its social networks though, perhaps in order to cement its place at the heart of social life in the town. A key part of this inclusion of the community in factory life was the continuation of the sports gala. This seems to have become more and more of a 'fair' as opposed to a sporting event as the years went on. Indeed by the post-war period it was the spectacle and the pageantry that seem to have become the most interesting part of the sports

¹³⁶ COHP, Interview 008-1.

¹³⁷ Figures reported in Clydebank and District Library and Museum Services, *The Singer Manufacturing Co.* (undated pamphlet).

¹³⁸ For example see COHP, Interview 016-1: 'You see they had quite a lot of work after the war, repairs too. They had 2 or 3 big Cunarders about 20-2500 tonnes up there getting engined and getting reconditioned over and above the yard work'.

gala for many, with the numbers taking part in the races falling while a strong interest was maintained in the crowning of the 'Singer Queen', which became the focal point of the afternoon. This is demonstrated in a July 1957 report on the previous month's sports day: 'The programme of events was again good value but the competitors were not so numerous as in former years. Both open and confined entries were well down'; despite this fall in the popularity of the sports 'the pageant attracted a lot of attention', indicating that this event, which was something unique to the day, was still enjoyed.¹³⁹ It could be that the appeal of amateur sports had become much more limited in a period where people were becoming more and more used to the commercialisation of this kind of entertainment. Stephen Jones has gone as far as to suggest that it was spectator sport, as opposed to participation in sport, that was one of the hallmarks of the inter-war period, and that this was happening concurrently with the 'professionalisation' of sports, especially of football.¹⁴⁰ This would have the effect of reducing the demand for amateur sports, as by the 1950s people could be said to have been 'consuming' the experience of sport rather than participating in creating it.

The pageant and the selection of the 'Singer Queen' for the annual sports gala, where 'she rides in her own carriage, moves about in regal splendour and virtually is mistress of all she surveys', shows the strength of traditional gender roles within the company.¹⁴¹ It is clear that this was essentially a beauty contest, with the entrants and their role in the day being described in flamboyant language: 'we must not forget the pageant and the crowning of the "Singer Queen", when the chosen good-looking young ladies from the factory will parade dressed in gowns of beauty and colour, the admiration and possible envy of their friends present'.¹⁴² The fact that this practice continued into the post-war period is certainly suggestive

¹³⁹ *Singer Activities*, July 1957, p.6.

¹⁴⁰ See Jones, *Workers at Play*, p.38, for growth of spectator sport and Stephen G. Jones, 'The Leisure Industry in Britain, 1918-1939' in *Service Industries Journal*, 5:1, (1985), p.99 for professionalisation in sports

¹⁴¹ *Singer Activities* April 1940, p.2.

¹⁴² *Singer Activities* May 1950, p.14.

of a fairly stable gendered culture in the factory. There are a number of elements to this, perhaps the most often emphasised being that she was always portrayed as sporting and athletic. Fiona Skillen has suggested that this positive view of women in sports was a new discourse that was being propagated from the 1930s onwards, at least in part through the Scottish Education Department's view that it was an important part of 'character forming' for schoolgirls.¹⁴³ The emphasis placed on the sporting prowess of the finalists for the Singer Queen award could be seen in the same light. In one sense there is the implication here that the Singer Queen is healthy, hence fit to be a mother at some point in the future. In addition to this, the fact that these women are all said to be a part of at least one factory sports team gives the impression that an important part of their nature is that they were prepared to fully join the social life of the factory, this perhaps used to encourage others to do the same. Related to this image of health is the fundamentally objectifying nature of the competition. The women who took part were, after all, being voted on and praised in terms of their appearance rather than their skills or achievements, either at work or elsewhere. This form of was not unique to Singer: Figure 3.1 below depicts the finalists of the 'Miss Imp Overalls Contest' held at the Rootes car factory in 1963, showing the prevalence of masculinist discourses in factory work cultures even after the period under review.

¹⁴³ Fiona Skillen, 'A Sound System of Physical Training': The Development of Girls' Physical Education in Inter-war Scotland', *History of Education*, 38:3, (2009), p.411.



Figure 3. 1 - Finalists of the Miss Imp Overalls Contest at Rootes factory 1963. Source: Paul Harris (Ed.) *Glasgow: The People's Story* (Edinburgh: Lomond Books, 1996), plate 113

Another key aspect of the presentation of these women is that they are all said to be fully prepared to enter into the traditional feminine domestic role. The impression that is being created is that they each wish to marry, have children and become housewives rather than having any particular desire to continue their work in the factory, or to aspire to any kind of 'career' goal or alternative identity. See for an example of this, part of the description of Patsy McCafferty the 'Queen' for 1955: 'and of course, great interest is shown in that essential feminine craft of housekeeping. You see, Patsy is also preparing for the future.'¹⁴⁴ So the future of the women of the factory is still seen as marriage and being a housewife. An interest in sport, or anything else outside of the domestic sphere for that matter, is therefore being presented as merely a distraction on the way to the inevitable path of marriage and child-bearing.

While this could be interpreted as a way of justifying discrimination against the hiring or keeping on of married women as employees within the factory, it could also be seen as having

¹⁴⁴ *Singer Activities*, February 1955, p.1.

an effect on the form of ideal masculine identity that the men of the factory were expected to embody. As Joan Scott has pointed out, gender is a relationship, with the consequence that the counterpoint to the traditional feminine role is the traditional masculine role.¹⁴⁵ The result of this, in the context of the 'Singer Queen' is that the effort to idealise a 'respectable' form of femininity implicitly points towards an idealised masculine role. This is because, in order for a woman to be able to carry out the domesticated wife and mother role it is essential for her partner to perform the breadwinning husband and father role. In this way the constraining of the feminine role to one which was socially acceptable to the company, and that justified their employment practices, could be said to similarly constrain masculine roles through men's sexuality, by determining the role they must perform in order to be romantically successful with an idealised, and therefore desirable, female.

It is worth noting at this point that the projection of roles described above should not necessarily be seen as an imposition of values that were alien to the discourses lived by the workers themselves. Ayers and Lambertz have shown, in an English context, that the provider/housekeeper division was one that was often accepted and to some extent idealised by some working-class men and women, at least at the level of discourse, in the inter-war period.¹⁴⁶ The result of this is that the values projected by the Singer factory management in their provision of recreation and welfare should be seen as a reinforcement of the gender roles already present in working-class culture. Once again, the way that these values were played out in an essentially public forum served to substantiate the link between the identity required for status in a working environment and in the community.

When recreational activities at Singer recommenced in the late 1940s and early 1950s it seems that many of the same opportunities were open to Singer employees as was the case

¹⁴⁵ Joan Scott, 'Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis', p.1053.

¹⁴⁶ Pat Ayers and Jan Lambertz, 'Marriage Relations, Money and Domestic Violence in Working-Class Liverpool', pp.195-210. Note that this division was not always accepted without conflict, see Hughes, *Gender and Political Identity*, Chapter six.

in the inter-war period. However, there does seem to have been less interest in many of the sporting activities than there had been in the inter-war period. The mid-1950s reports on the activities clearly show that some of the sports teams were struggling to recruit new, young members; for example, the cricket club stated that 'there is now one very important point, that is, we should like to see more Singer youngsters at the nets.'¹⁴⁷ The men's hockey club was having similar problems, recording in 1956 that 'Hockey seems to be a game which attracts very few newcomers, but once you have played the game and joined in the social side of the men's hockey club it is very difficult to give up, life would become so boring.'¹⁴⁸ This statement emphasised the social benefits of joining the club, quite apart from the enjoyment to be had from playing the sport itself. Interestingly, it may have been that it was this social side to the teams that younger employees were less keen to take part in. Both the tennis and the football clubs complained of having trouble finding people to run their clubs, while simultaneously retaining a reasonable number of members.¹⁴⁹ The implication of this is that, while young people were still happy to make use of the facilities provided by the company, they were doing this without engaging in the other social aspects of these organisations.

A significant addition to the available activities from the perspective of this study, and one that seemed to be fairly popular was the Apprentices' Association that seems to have replaced the Boys Recreational Association that was active before the war. The existence of this association could be partly responsible for the reduction of interest in the more social aspects of the sports clubs implied above, as it would have allowed the apprentices to socialise in a highly age-specific group. The Apprentices' Association was formed in late 1951, its stated aim being to 'unite apprentices to promote their welfare and to co-operate with management in furthering their training and education'.¹⁵⁰ It is significant that this organisation included co-

¹⁴⁷ *Singer Activities*, July 1953, p.25.

¹⁴⁸ *Singer Activities*, September 1956, p.20.

¹⁴⁹ *Singer Activities*, February 1954, p.23 and March 1954, p.12 respectively.

¹⁵⁰ *Singer Activities*, September 1951, p.6.

operation with the management as one of its aims and that it 'also extend[ed] a welcome to young clerks under the age of 21' as it implies that the association is being used to associate the interests of the apprentices with those of management, as opposed to the factory unions, with whom they would arguably have been more likely to share common cause. This would imply that there was an essentially non-confrontational culture between workers and management at the factory at this point, or at least a desire to foster one on the part of the welfare organisers. The clerks who became a part of the association were likely to be seen to be future managers, so the Apprentice Association could be seen as promoting understanding between the two groups from the point of their earliest industrial experience.

Given the social concerns with a 'generation gap' growing during the 1950s illustrated through the media panics surrounding 'Teddy Boys' and, later in the decade, rock and roll, it would perhaps be expected for such a society to have been initiated at an earlier date. In the 1930s the activities of the Boys Recreation Association, the precursor of the Apprentices' Association, seem to have been fairly unpopular with its target audience, with the notable exception of the 'Park Cup' inter-departmental football tournament. Indeed the welfare supervisor, A. McGregor, felt the need to make an 'appeal to the boys to support the other recreations that the association was open to provide for their benefit'.¹⁵¹ One potential reason for the lack of popularity of the non-football activities of the association is the fact that it was described as a 'boys' association. It may have been that the idea of identifying themselves as 'boys' would have been seen as a negative association for young workers aspiring to the role of adult male worker.

The other explanation for the lack of interest in the association is that these young men were simply employing their leisure in other ways. The fact that football was popular could be explained by the difficulty of finding spaces to play the game outside of this provision: there are

¹⁵¹ *Singer Activities*, February 1932, p.10.

many accounts of street football games being broken up by policemen. The use of public space in this way was seen as deviant, as indicated in chief constables' reports by the fact that 'playing football in the street' was one of the activities considered an aspect of 'juvenile delinquency'. This was made possible by councils' ability to make street football illegal through the creation of bye-laws sanctioned by the Burgh Police Act (Scotland) of 1892 and its subsequent revisions.¹⁵² In addition to this, the inherently masculine connotations of football would have meant that participating in 'boys' games of this sport would be less likely to lead to a feeling of weakened masculine identity. In terms of the other activities offered by the association, there were other potential sources for these in both the commercial and voluntary sector. These alternative sources would have allowed young workers to socialise within their peer group without this 'un-adult' recreation being associated with their working identities and therefore having the potential to compromise them.

There was a recognition in the post-war Apprentices' Association that many of its members might make use of alternative forms of recreation, particularly that provided by rational recreational groups. A notice concerning PT classes in the Activities book states that 'The numbers at the PT classes are improving, but all boys who do not attend the Boys' Brigade or Boy Scouts on a Friday night are invited to attend our class at Janet St. school'.¹⁵³ This suggests that the association was not attempting to compete with these voluntary organisations but trying to augment the recreational provision available to boys not interested in uniformed groups. The meeting at the school hall is a significant factor as it was suggested by contributors to the *Disinherited Youth* survey in the late 1930s that the reason that many of the evening classes for youths were perhaps unpopular was due to their school venue.¹⁵⁴ The implication was that the venue of these classes discouraged boys that had left school from

¹⁵² See Brown, 'Popular Culture and the Continuing Struggle for Rational Recreation', pp.218-219 for a discussion of the use of the Burgh Police Act by Scottish councils.

¹⁵³ *Singer Activities*, January 1952, p.3.

¹⁵⁴ Carnegie UK Trust *Disinherited Youth: A Survey, 1936-39* (Edinburgh, T+A Constable Ltd 1943), p.117.

attending, as they implied a continuing link with the discipline of the school system and therefore the schoolboy identity. In this case it may be that the connection of the activity to the boys' employment meant that they were more comfortable with using these facilities: they could unambiguously claim to be there as apprentices rather than as students with a questionable claim to manhood as was the case in the classes for the unemployed in the inter-war period.¹⁵⁵

Another point of note is that the activities that the Apprentices' Association undertook in the post-war period do not seem in any way qualitatively different to the activities that the societies for older workers provided. While these activities were being undertaken in an age-specific setting, there was no real fundamental split in the activities themselves. While training and management co-operation were the stated aims of the Association, the accounts of its actual activities were much more recreationally based and included various sports (in particular football and basketball) and the organisation of regular dances. In addition to this there were a number of visits to other local workplaces, ostensibly to 'explain to our apprentices how other boys serve their apprenticeships and their class of work'.¹⁵⁶ However, while this goal may have been achieved, the descriptions of many of these outings often read more like an account of a social club day trip than an educational visit to a factory. It is unlikely to be a coincidence that seemingly the most popular trip was one to a distillery, with apprentices putting their names forward for this outing months in advance of it happening.¹⁵⁷ These examples of Apprentices' Association activities would suggest that the boys that attended aspired to a version of working-class culture that had more in common with the 'rough' elements of mid-twentieth-century popular culture than it did with the culture of the employers who were facilitating them. In the accounts above sport, dancing and drink appear to have been the central foci of apprentice interests, with the stated aims of the association being paid lip service at best. The

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ *Singer Activities*, December 1954, p.12.

¹⁵⁷ *Singer Activities*, January 1955, p.8.

fact that Singer management were willing to support these activities suggests an understanding that the cultural needs of the workforce were not necessarily in line with their 'improving' ethos.

Conclusion

The preceding discussion has shown that work cultures and masculine identities among working-class men were closely linked, and to some extent interdependent. There were multiple forms of masculine working identity available to working-class men in Glasgow in this period. The 'hard man' associated with older forms of heavy industry was perhaps the dominant one within the class but it is important to take into account that this contained internal gradations between 'rough' and 'respectable'. It is clear that this 'traditional' masculine identity was not only relevant in the workplace itself, but had strong influence and cultural prestige throughout working-class communities.

I would argue that the desire to fulfil the dual roles of 'provider' and 'hard man' was critical to the development of the character of working-class culture as a whole in the years up to the inter-war period and that, by this point, they could be seen as the dominant working-class discourse of masculinity. In this way the distinction between the ways in which men were expected to perform their masculinity at work and at play was minimised. Men were required to subscribe to aspects of the 'hard man' identity, such as toughness and autonomy, both in the workplace and in their communities, indeed prestige in one area was often carried into the other due to the similarity of values contained in both social arenas.

The importance of homosocial recreation to the generation of men who entered the inter-war period as adults was an important part of this identity, which could be seen partly as a way of coping with tough working and living conditions in which they had been socialised. However, changes in working environments, through intensification and the stricter control of work processes, meant that the values of skill and strength that were central to this identity

were becoming less relevant due to the changing labour needs of industry. As discussed above, establishment groups were attempting to redefine both work cultures and working-class leisure patterns through the introduction of industrial welfare and rational recreation respectively. A key part of this redefinition was an attempt to fully separate work and leisure on both a practical and an ideological level in order to obtain maximum efficiency of production during the hours workers were employed. Selina Todd has suggested that the inter-war period in England was seeing a 'breakdown of traditional working-class identity'.¹⁵⁸ I would suggest that this process could be understood as a result of these economic changes that were changing the socioeconomic value of identities that were central to working-class culture thereby causing friction between long held community values and dominant establishment discourses surrounding work.

The next chapter will explore the ways in which young men reacted to these changes, and to the way in which they attempted to maintain the traditional elements of working-class culture through their engagement with autonomous popular culture and the offerings of the commercial leisure sector.

¹⁵⁸ Selina Todd 'Poverty and Aspiration: Young Women's Entry to Employment in Inter-war England', *Twentieth Century British History*, 15:2 (2004), pp.119-142.

Chapter 4 - Youth, Community and the Consumption of Commercial Leisure

This chapter will seek to examine changes in commercial leisure participation among working-class youths and assess the extent to which youths could be said to be constructing their social identities through the appropriation of cultural ideas coming from such sources. These ideas will be investigated from two directions: firstly through an exploration of contemporary attitudes to popular music and dancehall culture from the point of view of social commentators, as expressed in the mass media; and secondly through the experiences of the young dancehall attenders themselves. The implications these experiences had for the construction of new forms of masculine identity will also be examined.

Dancehalls will be drawn on as they represented both a site of commercial leisure and a space within which gender identities could be formed and enacted. Significantly dancehalls could be seen as places that were largely coded as youth spaces with the result that contemporary responses to their growth was arguably more focused on concerns about youth as opposed to commercial culture itself. The result of this, as will be demonstrated throughout this chapter, was that many of the social differences between the users of new commercial leisure and their critics should be seen as based on generational difference in addition to those caused by gender or class. The chapter will largely focus on the 1930 to c1950 period as the growth of rock and roll in the mid-1950s could be said to have constituted a further development in youth culture and its surrounding discourses which would require the extension of this study beyond the scope of this thesis.

4.1 - The Growth of Commercial Leisure in the First Half of the Twentieth Century

Chances for young workers to participate in popular culture were increasing in the first half of the twentieth century. The character of this popular culture was also changing to some extent. The music halls which had been so popular in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were being overtaken by the cinema as the main source of mass entertainment. In addition to this, while the other popular recreations of the pre-World War One period, football and public houses, were heavily coded as both male and working-class domains, the dancehalls of the inter-war period were much more heterogeneous in terms of both the class and gender of their patrons. Another way in which the further development of cinema and dancehalls in the inter-war period differed from their forebears was their primary association with youth in terms of the negative discourses surrounding them, even where, in the case of the cinema, it had become popular across multiple age and class groupings.

The inter-war period has been described as the time when 'mass commercial leisure came of age', a development that was made possible through technological advances that allowed cultural products to be distributed and reproduced for mass audiences to a greater extent than had been possible before.¹ The media that took advantage of these changes - sound cinema, gramophone records and the wireless - were largely commercial ones, a factor that meant that working-class youths were engaging with the market for their recreation to a much greater extent than was true for the more traditional street culture, and early commercial ventures, that were typical of previous historical periods. From this standpoint it could be argued that this period saw an increase in culture *for* the people rather than *of* the people.²

¹ Beaven, *Leisure, Citizenship and Working Class Men in Britain*, p.180.

² For some general discussion of the commercial leisure in the early twentieth century see, for example Jeffrey Richards, *The Age of the Dream Palaces: Cinema and Society in Britain, 1930-1939* (London: Routledge, 1984), T. Mason, 'Sport and Recreation', in P. Johnson (Ed.), *20th Century Britain*, (London, 1994), R. Stead, 'The People and the Pictures' in N. Pronay and D. Spring, (Eds), *Propaganda Politics and Film 1918-1945*, (London: Pallgrave Macmillan, 1982), Anette Kuhn, *An*

One of the most significant factors in the development of mass commercial leisure in the first half of the twentieth century was the progress made in the technology surrounding the production and reproduction of cultural goods. Two major areas of development in the pre-World War Two period were the transformation of the cinema from a novelty into a mass leisure form and the growth of broadcasting and jazz as part of the recreation of large portions of the working classes. The development of cinema was assisted by changes in technology and investment in the infrastructure necessary to make film accessible to the public. One significant aspect of the rise of cinema was the speed at which it occurred. The first use of film as a public entertainment was as part of variety bills, often in established music halls. Paul Maloney has attributed the first use of cinematograph equipment in Glasgow to the exhibitions of short films presented by Arthur Hubner in 1897.³ The popularity of film grew quickly, in 1910 the first purpose built cinema, the 'Electric Theatre' was built at the city's Charing Cross and in 1925 Britain's first four thousand seat cinema was opened in Glasgow.⁴

By 1930 Glasgow City Council had granted a total of 147 cinema licences for the year within the city alone, and this figure should be seen as an underestimate due to existence of unlicensed cinemas.⁵ One example from England of the prevalence of unlicensed cinemas is a court report from *The Scotsman* in 1934. The article reports that a thirteen-year-old boy was running a cinema show in a basement where up to 70 children between the age of 2 and 14 would pay a penny to view films in a 12 by 13 foot room.⁶ While this is an extreme example of underground cinemas, it does indicate the lengths that young people would go in order to see

Everyday Magic: Cinema and Cultural Memory, (London: Tauris, 2002), James Walvin, *Leisure and Society 1830-1950*, (London: Longman, 1978).

³ Paul Maloney, *Scotland and the Music Hall* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p.76.

⁴ Opening of first cinema stated in Irene Maver, *The Glasgow Story* (<http://www.glasgowcinemas.co.uk>) accessed 07/12/2006. Reference to the first 4000 seat cinema, see Philip Corrigan, 'Film Entertainment as ideology and pleasure: Towards a History of Audiences' in James Curran and Vincent Porter (Eds.), *British Cinema History* (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1983), p.27.

⁵ Glasgow City Archives, G352-20941435 COR, Glasgow Chief Constables Reports, Glasgow Police Criminal Returns, 1930.

⁶ *The Scotsman*, 02/01/34, p.5.

films. The cinema continued to develop technically throughout the period, with the introduction of sound film in the 1920s. The first of these, Al Jolson's *The Jazz Singer*, was shown for the first time in Britain in 1928. Trevor Griffiths has suggested that by the 1930s cinema was 'more popular than football' in Glasgow. This gives an impression of the popularity and social significance of the medium in the inter-war period even when the less gender and class-specific nature of the cinema in comparison to the football match is taken into account.⁷ The historiography shows that the trend for the expansion of this industry was not limited to Glasgow. Jeffrey Richards has observed that cinema accounted for around two-thirds of all entertainment admissions and expenditure in Britain by the early 1930s.⁸ Despite the widespread popularity of cinema by this point it had not become a completely uncontroversial recreation in the eyes of some culturally conservative groups. It should be noted, though, that it was often the content of films that was seen as an issue by the 1930s rather than the activity in itself.

Peter Stead has described the cinema as the first 'classless leisure activity' and while this may have been the case in terms of total audience by the late 1930s, the consumption of cinema still had class-related elements. Perhaps the most significant factor that stratified the cinema audience was the differential in pricing between cinemas depending on their location and facilities with the result that different socioeconomic groups would be likely to attend different cinemas for the most part, due to the local nature of much working-class culture. There was also an age-related component to cinema-going: one Springburn man recounted that, 'I can't remember as a kid ever going into the town to see a big film, it was only in your teens that you went into town'.⁹ This form of 'graduating' to the more expensive cinemas was

⁷ Trevor Griffiths, 'An Essential Social Habit? Patterns of Cinema-Going in Scotland, c.1900-39', research paper given at Economic and Social History Department, University of Glasgow, 08/12/05.

⁸ Jeffrey Richards, *The Unknown 1930s: An Alternative History Of The British Cinema* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2000), p.2.

⁹ Springburn Oral History Project, testimony of Andrew A Stuart.

likely to be due to parents wanting to keep children within the local community as well as the lack of financial means children would have whilst still at school.

In addition to this, even within cinemas the cost of different seats in the same venue would be based on a scale based on their desirability to the potential audience member. In relation to differential pricing within cinemas. Allen Eyles has observed that cinemas in the West End of London would charge between one shilling and sixpence to eight shillings and sixpence for a seat in 1934.¹⁰ This degree of difference was likely to attract audience members of a lower income level to different seats even if they could afford to attend the same showings as their more affluent contemporaries.

There was also a level of differentiation within the cheaper cinemas in working-class areas. A Maryhill man recalls that the prices in a St George's Cross cinema ranged from 4d to 9d in the 1930s. Critically he goes on to state that this cinema showed films 'about two years after they had been around the regular circuit', which gives the impression that, as well as seeing films in different environments, the films seen themselves at any particular time would be subject to an audience member's financial means.¹¹ It is clear that whilst the cinema certainly did become a popular recreation there were still economic factors at play that stopped it becoming a truly egalitarian one that brought those of different socioeconomic groups together.

Dancehall attendance in the inter-war period developed along comparable lines. While, by the 1930s, dancing had become an activity that was enjoyed by young people of all classes, there were still economic barriers that could determine which halls could be attended by those on limited incomes. The primary barriers were the entry prices to the individual halls. In 1936 a Friday night visit to the Locarno would cost 5/- and require the dancers to attend in

¹⁰ Allen Eyles, 'Exhibition and the Cinemagoing Experience' in Robert Murphy (Ed.), *The British Cinema Book* (London: BFI Publishing, 1997), p.218.

¹¹ Glasgow Collection, Mitchell Library, Maryhill Oral History Project, Tape LHP 13, testimony of Alex Maver.

full evening dress. In contrast, on the same night, the Dennistoun Palais de Danse charged 1/-, and admission to Green's Playhouse was 2/6 (with a discount for 'ladies' meaning female dancers would only pay 2/-).¹² It is worth noting that the prices of the more expensive halls would often be reduced during the week, potentially affording a wider clientele on these less popular nights. For example the aforementioned Locarno halved its admission fee to 2/6 on a Tuesday night.¹³ In addition to this, as will be discussed below, the location of dancehalls was a significant factor in their usage. Many youths used local community halls, rather than the large commercial halls during the week due to their low cost and ease of access. However, this does not necessarily mean that the city centre halls were considered to be best places to dance. One Springburn man recalls that 'we would go out there [miners' welfare hall] and it was packed and we had to go into the city'.¹⁴ In this case the city dancehalls are seen as just another place to go, rather than as preferred venues. It may even be that local halls were favoured by some due to their connection to the community, an idea that will be explored further below.

All this points towards a similar stratification to that observed among cinema audiences, with the more expensive city-centre halls being attended by more affluent youths or those willing to save a large proportion of their disposable income for the purpose while local halls situated in working-class communities were largely used by those with less financial means. It is important not to view this economic separation as absolute, though: as shown above, it was possible for young people to attend the more expensive dancehalls, even if it was a less frequent activity than patronising local halls.

A report on the leisure activities of West Lothian school children makes passing reference to the idea that increased freedom in the recreational sphere leads to parental

¹² Prices advertised in *Evening Times*, 06/03/36, p.11.

¹³ *Evening Times*, 03/03/36, p.7.

¹⁴ Glasgow Collection, Mitchell Library, *Dancing in Glasgow: Recollections of Dancehall Days from the Oral History Archive at Springburn Museum* testimony of Tommy Doyle.

neglect of socialising responsibilities with the result that 'children of what are called respectable families are figuring far too frequently in the law courts'.¹⁵ Similarly, the Glasgow Chief Constable's report for 1930 suggests that young people may come under the influence and leadership of a vicious boy or girl, and what otherwise might have been a bright and intelligent boy or girl, and eventually a good citizen, may become a vicious and depraved young man or woman'.¹⁶ It is worth noting that this concern surrounding the negative influence of 'a few bad boys over many other boys' is restated in the 1947 report, suggesting that there is continued fear that unsupervised access to commercial leisure (i.e. unsupervised social interaction) was a threat to the establishment of 'correct' character.¹⁷ What is implied here is that autonomous use of leisure, which may include access to commercial leisure, was replacing parental socialisation with peer group social norms at a young age. If this concept is accepted then it is not a significant leap to suggest that contemporaries saw the mixing of 'respectable' youths with those of a 'rough' socioeconomic status as a potential source of deviant social identities that would be carried into later life. The following chapter on rational recreation will explore the ways in which voluntary organisations were seen as a direct counter to this threat.

Despite these fears, music became a more ubiquitous experience during the inter-war period. Mechanical reproduction through radio, gramophones and the cinema meant that, more than ever before, music became an accompaniment to many recreational activities rather than its central focus. John Baxendale has observed that the period following the First World War saw an increase in the use of gramophones in such venues as fairs and shops, meaning that people were experiencing music without having to seek it out, or make a conscious decision to hear it.¹⁸

¹⁵ NAS, Confidential Report on the Leisure of West Lothian School Children, p.20.

¹⁶ GCA, Chief Constable of Glasgow's Report 1930, p.4.

¹⁷ GCA, Chief Constable of Glasgow's Report 1947, p.53.

¹⁸ Baxendale, 'Popular music and late modernity, 1910-1930', p.142.

In terms of musical reproduction there were several developments in the 1914-1939 period that made recorded, or broadcast, music a much larger part of the lives of the British population. In 1914 Decca introduced the first portable record player, named the Decca Dulcephone. This device gained significant popularity in the early years of its release, being taken overseas by servicemen in the First World War.¹⁹ Eleven years later in 1925 the invention of electrical recording vastly improved the ability to reproduce music, and could therefore be seen to increase the desirability of the gramophone among the public.²⁰ In addition to this, the BBC began the first radio broadcasts in the Glasgow area in 1923, this year also saw the introduction of the broadcasting of dance bands by the service.²¹

These technological developments in the field of musical reproduction also constituted a major source of establishment concern in the inter-war period. These changes afforded greater access to recorded and broadcast music and were occurring at a fast rate in the early twentieth century. For the first time, the experience of music became somewhat distinct from its performance for a wide audience. Broadcasting was a major factor in the increased consumption of music; the number of households that contained a wireless rose steadily throughout the 1930s. By 1939 they were present in 9 million households, or three quarters of the British total. Significantly, the growth of hire purchase schemes in the period meant that, even in the depression period, wireless ownership grew among the general population. For example in 1936 it was possible to obtain a 'reconditioned' radio on hire purchase for as little as 1/6 a week.²² In addition to this the popularity of 'crystal sets', that could be constructed in the home for very little money, meant that an even larger proportion had access to

¹⁹ Simon Frith, 'The Industrialisation of Music' in *Music For Pleasure: Essays in the Sociology of Pop* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988), p.14.

²⁰ Jones, 'The Leisure Industry in Britain, 1918-1939', p.100.

²¹ First Glasgow broadcasts noted by Irene Maver, *The Glasgow Story* (<http://www.theglasgowstory.com/storve.php>), [07/12/06]. For the introduction of dance bands to BBC broadcasts see Simon Frith, 'The Pleasures of the Hearth' in *Music For Pleasure: Essays in the Sociology of Pop* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988), p.36.

²² Price quoted in an advertisement in the *Glasgow Evening Times*, 17/03/36, p.7.

broadcasting in the home. However, even before this widening of wireless ownership it has been suggested that the wireless had become the 'aural centre of the community if not the household', meaning that the wireless was enjoyed in the homes of neighbours where people did not have the means to have one in their own homes.²³

There was contemporary comment on the potential effects of this shift to music becoming increasingly being consumed rather than produced by the general public. Perhaps the most often repeated criticism of mass commercial leisure made in this period was that it encouraged a passive worldview, especially among the young people of the working classes. The aforementioned survey of the leisure of West Lothian school children claimed that the 'lethargic proneness' and 'modern apathy' observable in young people could be traced back to the lack of effort demanded by modern cultural forms such as the cinema.²⁴ One writer in *The Scotsman* in 1938 suggested that the commercialisation of music was serving to 'encourage the passive reception of music', and feared that this would result in a 'decline of the amateur' in terms of musical performance.²⁵

This attitude prevailed into the post-Second World War period with one correspondent in *The Scotsman* claiming in a letter that the decline of choral singing among the young was lamentable: 'wireless broadcasts by virtuosos have brought about a slump in the number of amateur pianists and violinists'.²⁶ In fact, Frank Bruce has shown that the opposite was closer to reality, observing that the growth of dancing and cinema 'created a largely unprecedented labour market for working-class musicians'.²⁷ Critically in this context Bruce notes that there was no real dividing line between professional and amateur musicians in this period, with many

²³ Pegg cited in John Baxendale, "'...into another kind of life in which anything might happen...'" Popular music and late modernity, 1910-1930' in *Popular Music*, 14:2, (1995), p.142.

²⁴ NAS, Confidential Report on the Leisure of West Lothian School Children, p.6.

²⁵ *The Scotsman*, 20/01/1938, p.11.

²⁶ *The Scotsman*, 02/01/46, p.4.

²⁷ Frank Bruce, 'There were bands everywhere'; working in the leisure industry 1916-1950', *Journal of the Scottish Labour History Society*, 32 (1997), p.40.

performing on a part-time or semi-professional basis.²⁸ This is confirmed by the recollections of a dancing enthusiast from Springburn who states that many of the musicians that played the local halls in the period 'were just boys who'd learned to play in the Salvation Army...they worked during the day and they played for six shillings a night or something'.²⁹ In a context of thriving local dancehalls it is likely that there was a healthy number of these 'semi-pro' musicians playing for their peers in a way that allowed these dancehalls to become an extension of the communities they were physically situated within. While these players were being paid for their performances, it would be reasonable to suggest that they had more in common with the amateur tradition of community music than with professional musicians, as they were essentially fulfilling the same role in the local dancehalls. References to advertising for the more commercial halls will show below that the larger halls often hired a much more professional class of musician.

A late-1930s survey suggests that it may have been a lack of means rather than a lack of interest that was responsible for a relatively small proportion of working-class youths playing musical instruments. Cameron's 'Disinherited youth' survey suggests that the lack of musical creation among the young was not down to apathy, claiming that the youth of the survey didn't play 'due to a lack of opportunity to buy instruments and get instruction rather than a lack of desire or interest'.³⁰ This would suggest that, contrary to popular fears, the commercialisation of leisure was not creating an apathetic attitude towards culture amongst young workers. In fact, a person's economic position seems more likely to have influenced whether they were able to participate in musical culture than a passive view of their place in popular culture. A further example of the problematic nature of the passivity criticism is shown by a survey conducted amongst Coatbridge youths in 1944. This survey stated that '82% [of the youths in

²⁸ Ibid, p.52.

²⁹ Glasgow City Archives, *Dancing in Glasgow*, conversation with William M Brown.

³⁰ Cameron, *Disinherited Youth*, p.101.

the survey] could neither sing nor play an instrument'.³¹ However, the fact that 82% of the parents of the youths surveyed were said to have had money worries and the wartime context of the survey are both significant as these factors would have constrained opportunities both to acquire instruments and lessons due to financial pressures, rationing and extended working hours respectively. In this context the fact that nearly one fifth of the youths in the survey did undertake musical activities seems a fairly high number. Additionally, while 78% of those in the survey responded that they 'had no ambition to do anything', 6% of the survey wanted to be dance band musicians, indicating a highly active engagement with the musical culture of which they were a part.³²

Despite this, the fact that the growth of recording and broadcasting was seen as yet another cause of a passive attitude to leisure is instructive. The suggestion, as will become clear throughout this chapter, is that the parent generation saw most new leisure forms as a threat to the correct upbringing of young people throughout the 1930-1950 period. A similar trend has been observed by Brad Beaven in the development of the music halls in Britain in the second half of the nineteenth century. Beaven's work ties the origins of music halls to back room singing saloons and 'penny gaffs', both venues being a part of unquestionably working-class cultures.³³ Dagmar Kift has suggested that some middle-class critics of the time saw the halls as evidence of an outright rejection of evangelical values by groups within the working classes and therefore as potentially subversive.³⁴ However, by the end of the nineteenth century the character of the halls had largely changed, with alcohol being banned and a more 'theatre-like' atmosphere and mode of audience engagement being encouraged.³⁵ It could be argued that these changes had the result of shifting the ideological position of the music halls

³¹ *The Scotsman*, 06/07/44, p.3.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Beaven, *Leisure, Citizenship and Working-Class Men*, p.53.

³⁴ Dagmar Kift, *The Victorian Music Hall: Culture, Class and Conflict* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.177.

³⁵ Beaven, *Leisure, Citizenship And Working Class Men*, pp.53-59.

into the culture traditionally associated with the middle classes. While this process led to the acceptance of the form at the level of dominant discourses it is arguable that in doing so it alienated some of its initial working-class audience. While variety did survive into the late 1930s, it was eclipsed in popularity by the cinema and dancehalls as a focus of popular youth culture.

In a Scottish context, Maloney has observed the trend of initial apprehension being replaced by acceptance and integration among dominant socioeconomic groups in the reception of music hall in the last half of the nineteenth century. By the 1890s the form had become established enough within mainstream public discourses that it was only certain religious elements that still registered objections.³⁶ In fact it will become clear in later chapters that the church in Scotland was a constant source of opposition to the development of any new form of leisure which had either a commercial, technological or democratized basis. The way that these 'moral panics' tend to be a recurring phenomenon in times of social change has been studied by several writers. Eileen Yeo and John Springhall have observed that these panics seem to be a fairly constant feature of public discourse from the 1850s onwards and that government as well as media sources could be numbered among the propagators of these fears. Yeo identifies the basis of moral panics as a fear that the male youth of the country will be incorrectly socialised, leading to juvenile delinquency.³⁷

Kirsten Drotner has examined how these establishment concerns have often focused on the development of new forms of recreation. Perhaps the most illuminating aspect of Drotner's work is her observation that 'every new panic develops as if it were the first time such issues were debated in public and yet the debates are strikingly similar'. Drotner concludes that the result of this attitude is that each new panic 'leads to a tacit acceptance of the

³⁶ Maloney, *Scotland and the Music Hall*, p.83.

³⁷ Yeo, 'The Boy Is The Father Of The Man', p.185 and Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics*.

previously demonised media', describing this as the result of 'historical amnesia'.³⁸ In the case of the negative discourses surrounding the early cinema this theory can be seen to be accurate.

While Maloney and Brad Beaven have described the hostility to the music hall that was present in the 1850s and attributed it largely to the informal, public house based roots of the form, by the inter-war period criticism of the music hall had ceased to be such a source of concern for contemporary commentators. It should be noted that this was largely due to the fact that, by this point, the cinema had replaced the music hall in terms of public popularity. The status of the 'penny dreadful' also seems to have been revised by the 1940s as well, at least when criticism of the cinema was the goal of the writer. The Scottish writer J.A. Hammerton stated in 1944 that this cheap form of 'low quality' literature 'wrought not one per cent of the harm to their boy-readers that the Gangster films have done to the boys of the last quarter century'.³⁹ It is worth noting at this point that Hammerton was born in 1871. He would have been twenty-six before the first showing of a cinematograph film in Scotland.⁴⁰ When the slower uptake of the cinema amongst the middle classes is considered, it is likely that Hammerton was not overly familiar with cinema-going. With this in mind it is likely that the 'low quality literature' he spoke of would have been a part of the youth culture of his generation, and therefore normalised in his mind. The cinema, being a novel development, would have exhibited a culture among its audience that was outside the writer's experience, possibly leading to a concern that it was a source of incorrect, or merely 'different' (in this context the two terms should be seen as synonymous) socialisation.

These periodic re-evaluations of, in many cases, the recreational forms of the critic's youth are telling as they point towards a generational conflict and suggest that much of the

³⁸ Drotner, 'Modernity and Media Panics', p.52.

³⁹ Hammerton cited in Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics*, p.99.

⁴⁰ 'John Hamerton', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*; (<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37505>), [17/09/10].

criticism of youth culture was based around a fear of the new rather than any actual feature of the leisure form itself. It is also key in this regard that the young seem to have been the early adopters of new forms of leisure, perhaps raising fears that the young were failing to be correctly socialised into the ideals of their elders. In addition to this, in the 1930s, it seems that the value of youth itself was changing: one *Daily Record* writer describing the era as 'an age where everybody wants to be young'.⁴¹ The social importance accorded to youth in this discourse could be seen as a further contributing factor in parent generation fears surrounding new cultural forms. It may have served to highlight the exclusion of this generation from the 'modern', therefore reducing their cultural authority.

John Springhall has highlighted the importance of generational differences in terms of the reception of new technology, and makes the point that, for some groups these technologies could be said to be 'beyond our adult capacity to comprehend'.⁴² If this were the case for the technologies of the early twentieth century as well as for those developed at its end then the objection to youths engaging with this technology could be said to be two-fold. Firstly it implies that the parent generation feared a popular culture developing that they were unable to take part in or control. It seems that, in the case of the cinema there may have been some grounds for this fear of exclusion on the part of the older generations. Philip Corrigan has observed that, even by the 1940s, by which point the cinema was a socially accepted form of recreation, 57% of cinema goers were in the 18-40 age group despite only making up 42% of the general population. In addition to this a 1946 social survey revealed that 61% of those over the age of sixty never attended the cinema.⁴³ While the lack of those over sixty as participants in cinema-going could be partly explained by their lack of financial means, the fact that they claimed *never* to attend does suggest a disconnection between the recreational worlds of the different generations even if this was largely a life-cycle issue. When it is taken into account that the

⁴¹ *Daily Record*, 01/01/1930, p.11.

⁴² Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics*, p.161.

⁴³ Corrigan, 'Film Entertainment as ideology and pleasure', p.33.

cinema was popular among married women and unemployed men in the decades that border the Second World War rather than merely with youths there does seem to be an extent to which those in the generation that most represented the establishment were excluded from this culture.

While the fact that a majority of the over-60 generation did not attend the cinema should not be seen as evidence that they had never participated in this leisure form, it does indicate that they were cut off from it in their recent lives. This does not so much imply an ideological break between the generations but rather a situation where the older and younger generations existed in different cultural environments, and it may be that this was responsible for contemporary commentary that decried the state of youth throughout the period in question.

There is also some evidence that there was felt to be a growing generation gap in the inter-war period in areas outside of popular culture as well. The Scottish Education Department report cited above makes these fears clear, describing the educational gap between older school pupils and their parents. In many cases those remaining in school until 14 were seen as having surpassed the educational level of their parents, making the parental involvement in education that the report saw as essential, problematic.⁴⁴ It seems unlikely that this short period of extended education would have put 13-and 14-year-old pupils significantly ahead of their parents in terms of their level of knowledge. The presence of this fear in the minds of the writers of the report therefore requires an alternative explanation. This fear should be seen as a part of the contemporary debate surrounding the direction and speed of cultural change that was perceived as a part of modernity.

A focus on the young was a common feature of much commercial leisure in the inter-war period, from cheap literature to the cinema. This is not to imply that the under 25 group was the only one to make use of these new forms of leisure, rather that they were most often

⁴⁴ NAS, Confidential Report on the Leisure of West Lothian School Children, p.18.

associated with the young in popular discourse. An illustration of this fact is a comment piece signed 'man in the street' published in the *Daily Record* in 1942. In this piece the crowds waiting for the cinema are described as 'the multitudes of the young'.⁴⁵ The perceived existence of a distinctive youth culture in music extant by the Second World War is further supported by a letter written to the *Daily Record* in relation to the British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC) decision to cut down the amount of 'crooner' music that it broadcasted. The correspondent claimed that the decision was being made by 'people who are over the age of forty and who have no further interest in dancing or dance music'.⁴⁶ Another writer in the same newspaper proposed an even smaller age-range for the enthusiasts of dance music, suggesting that a previous commentator would be 'supported by almost everyone over thirty in his entertaining denunciation of the modern mania for crooners'.⁴⁷ This attitude is important as it could be seen as evidence of the creation of a youth-based subculture around dance music which could be used to provide an ostensibly oppositional identity with regards to dominant social or cultural discourses.

However, the criticism of the 'crooner' implied in the above quotation should not be seen as being based solely on a potential generational divide. A further point of contention was the fear that British culture was becoming Americanised through the consumption of American, and in particular Black American, cultural products. The following section will examine this discourse of Americanisation in terms of music and its relationship to an idealised British masculinity.

⁴⁵ *Daily Record*, 02/01/42, p.3.

⁴⁶ *Daily Record*, 05/01/34, p.12.

⁴⁷ *Daily Record*, 01/01/34, p.5.

4.2 - Dancing and the Development of Jazz as a Cultural Form

In Glasgow itself dancing became a highly popular activity for young people to a seemingly greater extent than was the case in other British cities. Charles Cameron noted, in a report on youth lifestyles published in 1943, that 'Glasgow men...appeared to pursue this recreation [dancing] more intensively than those in Cardiff and Liverpool'.⁴⁸ In 1934 the City of Glasgow Police Licensing Board issued 174 year-long licenses for premises to be opened for the purposes of dancing with a combined capacity of over 37000 dancers. When it is considered that the number of 14-25 year olds in the city at the time of the 1931 census was 198673 it can be seen that it was possible for these commercially run dancehalls to accommodate almost one fifth of the young population on any given night.⁴⁹ In addition to this there were many applications granted for temporary licences to run specific events. Not all these halls were purpose-built dancehalls, with many of the venues for dancing being social clubs, sports clubs and halls belonging to organisations such as the Ancient Order of Hibernians and Welfare clubs.⁵⁰

Following the Second World War the number of dancehall licences granted had fallen to 98 with an overall capacity of 27500 dancers.⁵¹ However, this reduction is likely to be largely down to wartime constraints on leisure time rather than changing public tastes. There is evidence that some dancehalls were requisitioned for use by the army. An example of this is the 'Stanley' dancehall on Stanley Street which had been continuously run by the licensee, Mr Williamson between 1933 and 1942 at which point it was requisitioned for use by the military. Williamson reapplied for a licence following the war, a further indication that it was the

⁴⁸ Cameron, *Disinherited Youth: A Survey, 1936-39*, p.105. NB: this survey compared the activities of youths in the cities cited.

⁴⁹ Population figure from HMSO, Report on the Census of Scotland, 1931.

⁵⁰ Glasgow City Archives E7/4/1-2, City of Glasgow Police Register of Licenses for Music Halls, etc. 2 volumes, 1934-1948 and 1949-52

⁵¹ Ibid.

exigencies of war that had earlier forced him out of business rather than a lack of continued demand for dancing at this point.⁵² In addition to this dances were sometimes seen as a help to the war effort, public dances were used as a way of raising funds for charitable organisations. A writer in the *Daily Record* stated in 1942 that:

The ballroom has long been recognised as the most profitable means of raising funds to meet the many urgent calls made upon the various institutions and other charitable objects...more especially since the war has the knowledge of the many possibilities attached to such ventures been fully exploited.⁵³

This development was said to be enjoying 'unstinted support' from the public, so the idea that there was a fall in the demand for this form of entertainment seems to be unfounded. The drop in dancing figures during wartime could be ascribed to the shutting down of some commercial halls and the conscription of large numbers of people into the armed forces. For those that remained civilians, especially those directed into essential war work, long hours were the norm. Time constraints and, potentially, a lack of energy would have reduced the opportunities to attend dances.⁵⁴ Indeed, one commentator in the *Evening Times* suggested in 1942 that the cinema was in many ways the only recreation available to many.⁵⁵ Despite this, by 1952 the number of licensed halls had marginally increased to 103 but the capacity of these halls was now over 32000 dancers.

The implication of these figures for the early 1950s is that dancehalls were becoming commercial enterprises to a greater extent over the period, excepting the War itself, with a reduction in the use of community organisation halls for dancing. This idea is supported by changes in the relative sizes of the halls across the period: in 1934 62% of the dancehalls licensed had a capacity of less than 200; this had fallen to 53% by 1952. At the other end of the scale the proportion of halls catering to over one thousand dancers went from 1% of the

⁵² GCA, E7/30/2, Licensing of Places of Entertainment, correspondence 1940-1947.

⁵³ *Daily Record*, 05/01/42, p.6.

⁵⁴ Stockman, 'Competing Discourses Of Masculinity Among Non-Servicemen In The West Of Scotland', p.38.

⁵⁵ *Evening Times* 02/01/42, p.3.

total to 10%. When it is considered that the licensed capacity of a dancehall was directly proportional to its size, with the rule determining licensed capacity being that one square yard of dance-floor was required for each dancer present, there seems to be a clear trend for increasing scale in the halls.⁵⁶

It seems then, that dancehalls saw a similar trend to that of cinema over the period as the small, local venues were gradually superseded by more capital intensive venues that were run solely as profit-making ventures. Indeed in the case of dancing it was observed by contemporaries that 'Practically all this dancing was done in commercial dancehalls'.⁵⁷ This statement would suggest that it was the smaller community halls that were used by older people and those more involved with voluntary organisations and established work cultures, whilst young people were both visiting these halls as well as consuming the entertainment provided by the commercial halls more in the form of a commodity and less as a way of interacting in community events. It may be that the commercialisation of youth dancing was one of the reasons that contemporary commentators often grouped these two recreations together for criticism.

The similarity of dancehalls to the cinema 'pleasure palaces' of the period is highlighted by Clare Langhamer, who states that dancing gave young women (and so presumably young men too), 'access to a world of comfort and glamour which many normally had little opportunity to experience'.⁵⁸ An example of this use of dancehalls is illustrated by one woman from Springburn who recounts that 'we used to go to the choir dances and although it was only one and six we went in full evening dress'.⁵⁹ Clearly for this woman even a dance held in the local church hall provided an opportunity to inhabit this fantasy of glamour and to play out adolescent sexuality in a similar way to the 'monkey parade' described by Andrew

⁵⁶ GA, E7/30/2, Licensing of Places of Entertainment, correspondence 1940-1947.

⁵⁷ Cameron, *Disinherited Youth: A Survey*, 1936-39, p.105.

⁵⁸ Langhamer, *Women's Leisure in England, 1920-1960*, p.65.

⁵⁹ Interviewee A.L., *Dancing in Glasgow*.

Davies.⁶⁰ For some, though, the 'glamour' of the larger commercial halls was an essential part of the experience. Interviewee Mrs. M.P., describing dancing in the late 1930s, stated that 'I had to have atmosphere for the dancing. The public hall was just a hall. No décor, nothing fancy...I didn't feel as if I was at the dancing if I wasn't in town'.⁶¹ This highlights the fact that it was the whole experience of the dancehalls that was important to its users rather than merely the activity itself. Perhaps in the case above the lack of atmosphere in the public hall at Springburn made it psychologically more difficult for dancers to fully enter into the fantasy, therefore leaving them self-conscious about the disconnection between the world they wished to inhabit and their actual socioeconomic position.

It is significant for this study that the majority of people that attended these dancehalls in the period were young. It has been stated by John Baxendale, in relation to the 1910-1930 period, that commercial dancehalls were 'colonised almost exclusively by 15 to 25 year olds'.⁶² Further to this, for women at least, dancing was an activity that virtually stopped after marriage, this was especially true after a woman had children.⁶³ The periodisation of Baxendale's observation is significant to this study as the young dancers he describes in the period leading up to 1930 would have become the parent generation by the late 1930s and after. With this in mind it might be expected that any social concern around dancing would have been neutralised by this point, as the parent generation of the later period would have grown up with this type of leisure being a part of everyday life. The fact that there still seemed to be some tension between the generations in terms of leisure choices implies that this was as much about the fear of the new within the parent generation as much as it was about dancing in general. Interestingly the jazz musician Humphrey Lyttleton has suggested that part of the popularity of the changing forms of jazz was that 'it was an idiom which the young felt their elders did not

⁶⁰ Davies, *Leisure, Gender and Poverty*, p.83.

⁶¹ Interviewee M.P., *Dancing in Glasgow*.

⁶² Baxendale, '...into another kind of life in which anything might happen...', p.146.

⁶³ For the lack of opportunity for recreation for women after marriage see Jones, *Workers at Play*, p.57-60.

understand, and they rather liked this'.⁶⁴ In this construction of the popularity of jazz among youths it was the ability to claim the form as their own that was related to the ideas of 'newness' and 'modernity' that characterised inter-war discourse. The demonisation of the youth culture of the younger generation can be seen to have continued into the post-war period, as observed by those studying the impact of rock and roll and the 'Teddy Boys' in the 1950s.⁶⁵ It is significant that those who were considering rock and roll a negative social influence would have been the ones enjoying the similarly demonised jazz in their youth. While the later complaints would have been occurring in a new socioeconomic context in the post-Second World War period their similarity to those of the inter-war period suggests a fear of a lack of control of youths and their socialisation.

However, it would be wrong to propose that this generational split led to two completely incompatible leisure cultures. One Springburn woman recalls her first dancing experiences occurring with her parents:

I started to learn ballroom dancing when I was about 14 [around 1942] and my father and mother – of course in those days they all danced some way – but of course they didn't know the modern stuff. So they came to a dancing class in the North British Locomotive Company, which they enjoyed.⁶⁶

The fact that many workplaces held dances for their employees as a part of their social provision is also significant in this context, suggesting that it was the commercial style of dancehall that was more youth orientated rather than the pastime itself.⁶⁷ In addition to this, the growth in popularity of jazz meant that there were two distinct forms of dancing practised by the 1930s. By the 1940s halls were advertising both 'modern' and 'olde tyme' dancing, one

⁶⁴ Lyttleton quoted in T.R. Fyvel, *The Insecure Offenders*, (London: Pelican Books, 1963), p.80.

⁶⁵ See for example, P. Rock and S. Cohen, 'The Teddy Boy' in Vernon Bogdanor and Robert Skidelsky (eds) *The Age of Affluence* (London, 1970), pp.288-320 and Louise A. Jackson, 'The Coffee Club Menace': Policing Youth, Leisure and Sexuality in Post-War Manchester', *Cultural and Social History*, 5:3, pp.289-308.

⁶⁶ Interviewee J.H., born c1929, *Dancing in Glasgow*.

⁶⁷ See Singer case study in Chapter three for references to workplace dances.

hall, the F and F in Partick, even alternating between the two styles on a night-by-night basis.⁶⁸ Baxendale has characterised the main difference between dancing in the pre- and post-jazz periods as the increase in importance in the role of the couple rather than of the totality of the dancers. 'Modern' dances left much more space for improvisation and individual expression than had previous, more formal set dances and, for that matter, traditional Scottish dances. The change in style, and its association with the young was being noted by newspaper cartoonists as early as 1920, W.K. Haseldon producing the following for the *Daily Mirror* in January of that year:



Figure 4.1: 'Modern youth and self-expression in dancing', British Cartoon Archive, WH5014, from *Daily Mirror*, 02/01/1920

Here Haseldon explicitly links fashions in dancing and the prevalent discourse of 'modernity as speed' to paint a more sympathetic picture of modern youth than implied by many

⁶⁸ See *Evening Times* dancehall adverts, for example 07/01/46, p.4.

contemporary commentators. The Archbishop of Canterbury, giving a 'new year' speech at the end of 1934 complained that "'Faster and faster" seems to be almost a motto of existence; and haste and hurry infect us with a heedlessness of soul'. In this construction of the modern the way that life is being lived, especially with regard to the 'incessant pressure of distractions [in the form of cinema and the press]' were imperiling the foundation of the character of youths.⁶⁹ The reference to warfare in Haseldon's cartoon is significant in this case: the release of pent-up consumer demand in the years following the First World War could have led to a belief that 1920s youths had an obsession with consumption. In fact, James Walvin has observed that leisure during the First World War was largely discouraged through the 'pressure of outraged opinion', with public sentiment seeing leisure as inappropriate in the context of conscription and 'national emergency' that existed at the time.⁷⁰ This led to a situation where the lifting of restrictions post-war would have resulted in a rush to engage in leisure once more. Counter to the negativity cited above, the notes related to Haseldon's cartoon go even further in providing defense of youths, and jazz in particular, with Haseldon stating that 'Much is talked about the need of self-expression by would-be folk dance revivalists - but that is exactly what jazz dancing is!'⁷¹ The idea that this type of 'self-expression' was seen by some as acceptable in folk dancing but not jazz dancing was likely to be down to the origins of the two forms of dancing. While folk dancing could be said to have grown from the British traditions, and was in many ways a 'non-contact' form of dancing, jazz had come from America, with the result that its influence was often seen as detrimental to the continuation of British cultural norms.

The fact that modern forms of dancing were heavily associated with black Americans is highlighted in a 1930 interview with an actress, Flora Le Breton who claimed that she had

⁶⁹ Reported in *The Scotsman*, 31/12/34, p17.

⁷⁰ Walvin, *Leisure and Society 1830-1950*, p128.

⁷¹ From the British Cartoon Archive webpage containing this cartoon, (<http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/record/WH5014>), [28/03/11].

learned 'her best [dancing] styles' in 'a coloured school in Harlem, New York's negro quarter'.⁷² This shows the importance of black culture in the perception of jazz and new dance music. The fact that she learned her dance moves directly from black people perhaps helped to enhance the authenticity of what she did and promoting her image among young dance fans who were drawn to black music and dance styles. However, for the establishment and those of the parent generation this authentic 'otherness' was the centre of their fears that the concept of 'British character' was under threat, a fear linked to the ideas of economic decline so acutely felt in the west of Scotland particularly in the period under review. In the 1930s the idea that American films were not merely supplanting British productions but were actually harmful to 'character' in terms of their content seems to have been a common one: a Glasgow minister stated in 1934 that 'the American film had done more to vulgarise and coarsen human life and thought than any other single agency in the life of the nation'.⁷³ In this context it can be seen that the influence of American culture was seen as a threat to the youth of the country as the following discussion will further demonstrate.

The growing popularity of dancing in the inter-war period in Glasgow occurred in a period that saw changes both in the music industry as a whole and in the kinds of music produced by this industry. All the changes in the way music could be reproduced discussed above were accompanied by changes in the form of music itself throughout the period. Ragtime was first popularised in the UK just before the First World War, and was complemented by new forms of dancing which made use of the faster and more rhythmically focused style of this genre.⁷⁴

⁷² *Daily Record*, 06/01/30, p.8.

⁷³ *The Scotsman*, 21/12/34, p.11.

⁷⁴ 1924 has been identified as a turning point in the history of ballroom dancing with instructors moving on to a more energetic style of dancing which could be seen as appealing more to younger dancers. It is difficult to know how long this change took to permeate all dance schools so this should be seen as an early estimate of changing styles rather than a cutoff point. See Belinda Quirey, *May I have the Pleasure?: The Story of Popular Dance*, (London : British Broadcasting Corporation, 1976), p.80.

Ragtime was the immediate precursor to jazz, a form that saw reactions from horror to obsession throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Central to these reactions was the age of the listener to a certain extent.

Tim Wall suggests that figures in the American music industry had 'commodified' dance music as a style during the 1920s, which led to dance music becoming 'a key style of commercial music'.⁷⁵ The fact that the music used for dancing was seen as a commercial style, and a functional one at that, was crucial to the reaction to it by the advocates of 'high culture' as it instantly devalued it, making it a commodity rather than an art. Indeed, the fact that much popular commercial music in the period under review was considered to be made for dancing was a major part of the critique of the form. An illustration of this point is the interest that lower middle-class men took in 'hot' jazz in the late 1920s, a form that was more orientated towards listening than dancing. 'Hot' jazz was considered less commercial for this reason and therefore taken to be a legitimate modern art form in some circles in contrast to the aforementioned 'low culture' of dance music.⁷⁶

Perhaps the biggest change in popular musical style that took place in the inter-war period was the introduction of jazz rhythm into commercial dance music. Baxendale has described this change in terms of a fundamental shift in form from what had come before: 'this could be a forties swing band, the Beatles at the Cavern, an early punk gig circa 1975: what it could not possibly be is Gus Elen or Marie Lloyd leading the audience into the chorus of their latest hit'.⁷⁷ Part of the change was in the emphasis on the rhythmic elements of the music, a change that had started in the ragtime craze of the pre-war period, and continued into the post-war period, arguably seeing its apotheosis in the house and techno styles of the late 1980s and early 1990s. Another important factor was the passion of the musicians playing the music, in appearance at least this was a far cry from the ordered and 'rational' demeanor of the classical

⁷⁵ Tim Wall, *Studying Popular Music Culture*, (London: Arnold, 2003), p.190.

⁷⁶ Baxendale, '...into another kind of life in which anything might happen', p.149.

⁷⁷ Ibid, p.138.

musician. The primacy of rhythm in jazz was itself a source of criticism for some contemporary commentators. In a speech given to the Incorporated Society of Musicians in 1930, Sir Hugh Allen proposed that jazz listeners were 'insensitive to everything but the insistence of the drums and seemed quite oblivious to the futility of the music'; he also described the form of music as 'sordid' and 'repellent'.⁷⁸ The language used here is significant, sordid in particular having connotations of debased sexuality that could be seen as diametrically opposed to the construction of married love and sexual propriety discursively associated with the British gentleman.

This link between music, dancing and sexuality was highly significant in the negative reaction that accompanied the popularisation of jazz in the inter-war period and was connected to the 'otherness' of the music's source. As suggested by Baxendale above, the emergence of jazz was a long way from the sing-along nature of the music hall and the quiet contemplation of the philharmonic concert hall. In fact this move from the intellectual to the emotional was a major part of the fears that jazz evoked. The criticisms of emotionalism in music were primarily related both to fears of a reduction of manliness in the young population that was being subjected to mechanised work and seemingly 'passive' recreation.

The 'otherness' of jazz-influenced dance music, and its successors such as rock and roll, was something that was clearly established by the 1930s both in terms of feminisation and racial degeneration. An example of this can be seen in the comments of John Foster Fraser, in the *Daily Record* in 1934, that jazz was: 'barbaric nigger music and the gurgling by gigolos with guitars of lascivious lyrics'.⁷⁹ This comment makes clear the primary objections to jazz music, namely that it was overly sexualized and associated with a negative racial stereotype. Jim Godbolt has observed that this connection of the new musical form with an idealized black 'other' was present in the ideas of those pro and con the introduction of jazz styles to

⁷⁸ Quoted in *Daily Record*, 01/01/30, p.7. Allen was the director of the Royal College of Music in London at this time.

⁷⁹ *Daily Record*, 03/01/34, p.12.

commercial culture, a factor that situates jazz as a seemingly 'exotic' form.⁸⁰ Another 1930s commentator stated that jazz, and the crooners who sang it in particular, 'take my imagination either to the nursery or the jungle, and in either case, I am disgusted'.⁸¹ The use of this language to express opposition to jazz is, once again, significant as it connects the form to qualities that are in opposition to notions of dominant masculinity.

The 'nursery and the jungle' suggest both a dependent and irrational, or even pre-rational, mentality ascribed to the colonial, usually non-white, 'other' in imperialist discourse. In addition to this, qualities of emotionalism were often coded as feminine, meaning that the comment of one reviewer in *The Scotsman* in 1940 that jazz was 'a reflection of the naïve, fervent emotionalism of the coloured people' should be read as a way of emphasising its 'otherness'.⁸² This meant that the establishment discourse concerning jazz was one that set it directly against prevailing notions of 'correct' masculinity in a British context. Indeed, Graham Dawson, in an investigation of the reception of the story of Lawrence of Arabia, has identified the existence of an 'exotic' strain of masculinity that was in opposition to that of the British male.⁸³ With this in mind, the inter-war opposition to jazz on racial grounds can be seen as part of an overarching fear that young men were finding role models that displayed social identities outside of those endorsed by establishment figures.

In addition to this, the concept of mass leisure itself being a form of Americanisation was an intense fear in the period that also entailed a loss of British masculine identity. America itself was seen as a feminised country by many, one *Daily Record* writer complaining that 'America today is ruled by her womenfolk', a comment that would symbolically link any invasion of American styles or products to a diminution of the masculine character of the nation.⁸⁴ It is

⁸⁰ Jim Godbolt, *A History of Jazz in Britain 1919-1950*, (Paladin: London, 1986).

⁸¹ *Daily Record*, 01/01/34, p.5.

⁸² Comment made in a review of the book *American Jazz Music* by Wilder Hobson, *The Scotsman*, 28/03/40, p.9.

⁸³ Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, p.170.

⁸⁴ *Daily Record*, 04/01/30, p.5.

worth noting at this point, that this was not merely an inter-war phenomenon. A writer in the *Daily Mail* in 1956 stated, in response to the riots surrounding the showing of the rock and roll themed film *Blackboard Jungle* that 'it is deplorable. It is tribal. And it is from America. It follows ragtime, blues, jazz, hot cha-cha and the boogie-woogie, which surely originated in the jungle. We sometimes wonder whether this is the negroes' revenge.'⁸⁵ This comment shows continued strong antipathy towards American cultural products, and the fear of inappropriate socialisation through their consumption, into the post-war period. Significantly, it is the style of dancing as much as the music itself that is seen as socially degenerate, with its supposed Black origins being presented as fundamental to the negative reaction it received.

This is not to suggest that the rise of jazz was universal in musical terms. Dick Hebdige describes much of the 'swing' music of the 1930s and 1940s, which was largely played by white bands in Britain as 'innocuous, generally unobtrusive, possessing a broad appeal, it was a laundered product which contained none of the subversive connotations of its original black source'.⁸⁶ In this way then, the original character of black music was subdued until it could fit more comfortably with European musical traditions, the main thing being retained, the danceable nature of the rhythms employed. This taming of jazz styles to fit in with more traditional musical forms could be seen as an attempt to reduce the potentially disruptive nature of this music and therefore create a pacifying alternative to hot jazz for young people. Similar processes could be observed in the 1950s with the promotion of the British Cliff Richard as a sanitized version of black American artists such as Little Richard and Chuck Berry.

⁸⁵ *Daily Mail*, 05/09/56, cited in Martin Clooman, 'Exclusive! The British press and popular music' in Steve Jones (Ed.) *Pop Music and the Press*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002), pp.114-115. The reference to the 'negroes revenge' could be seen as a reference to decolonialisation.

⁸⁶ Dick Hebdige, *Subcultures*, (London: Methun and Co. Ltd., 1979), p.47.

4.3 - Contemporary Reactions to Changes in Youth Leisure

The inter-war increases in the amount of leisure time available to many people that continued into the post-war period occurred concurrently with the introduction of new leisure forms, most notably in the commercial sector. As this section will show, contemporary commentators seem to have had similar misgivings about the precise form of entertainment that people were consuming as they did to the increase in leisure time itself. It will become clear that the choices young people in particular made in regard to their leisure consumption, such as a preference for jazz over classical music, or western films over other, particularly British films, were central to these criticisms. The *Daily Record* of January 7th 1930 gives an early indication of establishment attitudes towards the popular cultural products of the period, reporting a statement made by H.G. Abel that 'our literature is irreligious and indecent, our art ugly and our music barbaric'. Abel directly linked these qualities to 'vulgar, rowdy and superficial' states of mind among youths, linking 'deviant behaviour' among this group to their consumption choices.⁸⁷

There was continued social concern over the leisure activities of young workers in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. One reason for this was that this group had a higher level of disposable income than previous generations with the result that their recreational choices were arguably wider than at any previous time.⁸⁸ The greater independence and cultural autonomy that higher wages brought to young workers were commented on by contemporary writers, most often negatively, and were often the cause of social concern on the negative moral effects of 'modern' society. However, these concerns were far from new: John Springhall has observed that in its early days cinema was considered in a similar light to the 'penny dreadful', the cheap literature which was seen as a corrupting influence on youths

⁸⁷ *Daily Record*, 07/01/30, p.15. Abel was the headmaster of St. Olave's Grammar School.

⁸⁸ David Fowler has suggested that the youths of the inter-war period could be considered to be the 'first teenagers'. See David Fowler, 'Teenage Consumers' in A. Davis and S. Fielding (eds.) *Workers Worlds: Cultures and Communities in Manchester and Salford, 1880-1939*.

through its supposedly sordid subject matter and 'amoral' characters.⁸⁹ This comparison provides an earlier example of the fears for youth that were prevalent at many points throughout industrial society where the adoption of new leisure forms by youths was seen as a danger to society. Where these same criticisms were applied to the cinema it was largely the emulation of the protagonists in American gangster films that was a particular worry.⁹⁰ In the 1950s this trope was augmented by the 'rebel' character embodied by James Dean in *Rebel Without A Cause* (1955), a figure that had its British equivalent in the heavily demonised 'Teddy Boy' of the period.⁹¹

Andrew Davies' analysis of the reaction to the 'gangster' on screen has shown that the foreign nature of the gangster was a key part of the fears the figure conjured among commentators. Davies makes reference to an article in the *Glasgow Evening Citizen* that suggested that figures from gangster films, and their real life counterparts, were 'helping to destroy British character', a statement which highlights both the perceived deviance and the 'otherness' of the gangster in the context of British society.⁹² A similar discourse can be observed originating in official sources of the period. The Chief Constable of Glasgow's annual report for 1936 suggested that it was the 'desire for excitement and adventure created through witnessing gangster films' that was partly responsible for increases in juvenile delinquency in the preceding years.⁹³ It is highly significant that the portrayal of gangsters on the screen was singled out for criticism in a period where both national and regional newspapers were providing widespread coverage of American crime and making figures such as John Dillinger

⁸⁹ Springhall, *Youth, Popular Culture and Moral Panics*, p.99.

⁹⁰ See my masters dissertation, Stockman, 'Competing Discourses Of Masculinity Among Non-Servicemen In The West Of Scotland', p.51 for a further discussion of this idea in relation to the Home Guard in Scotland in the early 1940s.

⁹¹ See P. Rock and S. Cohen, 'The Teddy Boy' in Vernon Bogdanor and Robert Skidelsky (eds) *The Age of Affluence* (London, 1970), pp.288-320 for a discussion of the fears surrounding the Teddy Boy as a fundamentally deviant figure in early 1950s culture.

⁹² Andrew Davies, 'The Scottish Chicago? From Hooligans to Gangsters in Inter-War Britain', *Cultural and Social History*, 4:4, p.512.

⁹³ GCA, Glasgow City Council, Report of the Chief Constable of Glasgow 1936, p.31.

and Al Capone household names.⁹⁴ Essentially the readers of these newspaper articles were vicariously consuming the myth of the gangster in much the same way as cinema audiences. Indeed, the way newspapers of the early twentieth century created entertainment from crime was noted by George Orwell in 1946 in his essay 'The Decline of the English Murder' where the need for the readership to engage with this kind of story is satirised.⁹⁵ The fact that the newspapers themselves were not open to similar criticism to that of the cinema suggests that the predominantly young profile of these audiences, and the novelty of the medium of the sound film, that were to blame for the concern expressed.

The depiction of sex on the screen was also met with apprehension by establishment figures, especially where young viewers were concerned. Sarah Smith has identified a 'sex cycle' of films produced in the late 1920s and early 1930s that used sexual relationships as a focus. While complaints around gangster films were largely centred on the fear of boys emulating the crimes and attitudes they saw on film, those related to this 'sex cycle' were aimed at both boys and girls. In the case of boys it was feared that these films would 'prematurely inflame the unhealthy passions of boys with erotic images of women', while for girls the fear was that they would be 'corrupted' or engage in 'inappropriate sexual behaviour'.⁹⁶

As was so often the case in establishment concern over the content of cultural products aimed at the masses, a fear of increased juvenile delinquency was a central element of this argument. Cinema was also often criticised for its 'passive' nature. The aforementioned Scottish Education Department report refers to head-teachers describing the attitude of 'do nothingism' that regular cinema going could instil in youths.⁹⁷ The assumption being made

⁹⁴ Davies, 'The Scottish Chicago?', pp.513-516.

⁹⁵ In this article Orwell reflects on the character of the murders that have given the British public 'the greatest amount of pleasure'. See George Orwell 'The Decline of the English Murder' first published in *The Tribune*, 1946, citation from 'Essays and Journalism', *George Orwell Web Source* (<http://www.netcharles.com/orwell/essays/decline-of-english-murder.htm>), [03/03/11].

⁹⁶ Sarah Smith, *Children, Cinema and Censorship* (London: I.B Taurus, 2005), p.55.

⁹⁷ NAS, Confidential Report on the Leisure of West Lothian School Children, p.6.

here was that this would undermine the work ethic and therefore be detrimental to the fortunes of the nation as a whole.

While the above discussion considers the opposition to cinema and commercial forms of leisure from an establishment point of view, there was also a significant thread of opposition from the parties of the left and those sympathetic to their ideals. These left-wing commentators often referred to recreations such as cinema and mass market literature as a 'new opiate for the masses', suggesting that they were a tool of the ruling class to pacify the working classes.⁹⁸ This trend can be seen as especially strongly among left-wing writers. George Orwell suggested in 1937 that 'the movies, the radio, strong tea and the football pools have between them averted revolution'.⁹⁹ Similarly, Edward Gaitens, in his study of early twentieth century working-class life, depicted a character picking up an American magazine containing gangster stories with the result that 'he had forgotten his abortive football coupons, his unsuccessful bet on horses, his life of failure', clearly suggesting that this form of entertainment was used as an escape from negative feelings.¹⁰⁰ Walter Greenwood's 1933 novel *Love on the Dole* also describes films and books as 'temporary opiates', although Greenwood does point out the social uses that these recreations could be put to by merging them with street culture. The way the queue for the cinema was used as a venue for socialising is suggested by Greenwood as an autonomous use of commercially run leisure.¹⁰¹

Evidence that increased opportunities for leisure were, of themselves, seen as a negative social trend by some contemporaries also appeared in the newspapers of the time. Statements made by a speaker at a Baptist conference in 1930 refer to the idea that

⁹⁸ Andrew Davies 'Cinema and Broadcasting' in P. Johnson (Ed.) *20th Century Britain: Economic, Social and Cultural Change* (London: Longman, 1994), p.263.

⁹⁹ Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier*, p.83. Orwell posits this as a hypothesis rather than a conclusion but the tone of the comment is instructive in representing a contemporary attitude to commercial culture of the time.

¹⁰⁰ Edward Gaitens, *Dance of the Apprentices* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1990), p.161.

¹⁰¹ Greenwood, *Love on the Dole*, p.68.

'Multitudes of people are utterly failing to find a way through their hours of leisure. They read books and newspapers, watch the pictures, which are simply inane.'¹⁰² This statement indicates that religious groups were worried about the ways in which people were spending their leisure hours. The implication here is that the recreations they were choosing represented some lack in their cultural life rather than simply being a 'valid' use of that time. It is instructive that the reading of books is castigated on this occasion as it suggests an opposition to the content of the activity rather than its form. In the eyes of this speaker this 'inappropriate' reading was exposing youths to ideas and discourses that were not congruent with dominant forms of socialisation, and presumably reducing the time available to be spent on 'improving' literature.

I would argue, using similar sources, that this attitude to the way in which increased leisure time was being used continued to be significant throughout the decade of the 1930s and not merely from religious groups who might be expected to see growing alternatives to their work as a negative development. In 1938 the chairman of the Glasgow Council for Community Service in Unemployment described the way the increasing available leisure time was to be spent by the masses as 'the great problem impinging on them [the community] in the twentieth century' which needed to be solved in order for it to function as 'a blessing and not a bane in modern civilisation'.¹⁰³ What is key to this statement is that it is considered that work is the natural way that time should be used, and that time away from this pursuit needed to be spent in a way that was congruent with the social values of those within the establishment in order for it to be considered 'valid'.

There was also a fear that, if the leisure of young people was conducted free from any 'improving' influence, less acceptable influences would fill the gap. A Scottish Association of Boys' Clubs (SABC) field report of 1935 relating to the Alexandria area states that the

¹⁰² *The Scotsman*, 06/05/30, p.13.

¹⁰³ *The Scotsman*, 03/06/38, p.8.

Communist Party was a strong local presence and was 'actively against any other organisation' and that there were large local barriers to the formation of a Boys' club in the area. Indeed, the field officer suggested setting up a community meeting on the subject as an invitation only event in order to avoid local communist activists 'making trouble'.¹⁰⁴ The idea that the SABC saw organisations such as the Communist party as rivals in terms of their potential influence over young people is clear in this account. Similar concerns are raised in regards to the unemployed in Alexandria, a group the field reporter describes in extremely negative terms:

my private opinion is that the effort for the unemployed has come too late. It's like trying to revive a corpse, they themselves have developed a technique of how to employ their leisure time and the majority are content. Dog racing, football pools, football, street corners, public reading rooms, all play their part.¹⁰⁵

In this letter the unemployed are associated with key aspects of 'rough culture' such as football and gambling, and it is suggested that these choices are the result of a lack of interest in other activities rather than being a reasonable choice. Ferguson emphasises the lack of 'character' displayed by these men by stating that, while a Miners' Institute was available this had become 'a place for loafing in' rather than an opportunity for learning or more seemingly productive activities.¹⁰⁶ Another way in which to view the fears that reformers such as the SABC displayed in regards to the unemployed is suggested by Annmarie Hughes' observation that there were often strong connections between working-class organisations such as the National Unemployed Workers' Movement and the Communist Party.¹⁰⁷ Once again, it is the fear that young unemployed men were being socialised into ideologies opposed to the dominant discourses surrounding individualism and the place of the worker that were fundamental to attempts to 'oversee' the leisure of working-class youths. Further to this, as will be discussed

¹⁰⁴ NAS, GD281/83/118, Scottish Association of Boys' Clubs – File 1, Field Report dated 31/08/35, p2.

¹⁰⁵ NAS, Scottish Association of Boys' Clubs – File 1, letter from Norman Ferguson, Special Area Officer of the SABC to J.M. Mitchell of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, dated 21/09/35.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ In this instance Hughes is referring to the organisations in Greenock, Hughes, *Gender and Political Identity in Scotland 1918-1939*, p.61.

below, attending dancehalls and cinemas was as much a social activity as it was an act of consumption for working-class youths in the period under review. This 'collective' aspect of much modern commercial leisure could be said to be a reproduction of the social bonds of the street corner or the football match and therefore foster fears that the individualistic spirit was not being communicated to youths.

Attitudes suggesting that work was considered to be something more than a way of earning money are clearly illustrated in an article written by Squadron Leader Hayworth published in the *Daily Record* in the mid-1940s. This article suggested that the pay young workers were receiving constituted a 'poisonous system' of 'bribing' them with 'disproportionately high wages'.¹⁰⁸ While it is significant that this comment was made during the Second World War, and by a member of the armed forces, the tone of the statement implied that the increased wages for civilian workers at this time were an inherently negative development rather than simply inappropriate in wartime. This argument was not new, the idea of the 'Boy Labour Problem' having been part of social discourse since the late nineteenth century, as Eileen Yeo has observed.¹⁰⁹ However, the fact that it seems to have remained current until the period after the Second World War indicates that establishment figures still viewed work as a moral good in itself rather than simply as a means to earn a living. From this perspective high-earning young workers were seen to be failing to engage with their role as workers, and eventually providers, at the level of self-identification. The implication here was that they were being overly instrumental in their outlook and seeing work as simply a way of gaining opportunity to consume cultural goods and access to leisure rather than as a way of conforming to establishment mandated social roles.

This type of argument has echoes of much earlier discourses surrounding the work of social surveyors such as Seebohm Rowntree. In his analysis of urban poverty in York in 1899

¹⁰⁸ *Daily Record*, 19/01/46, p.2.

¹⁰⁹ See Yeo, 'The boy is the father of the man'.

Rowntree included a measure he described as 'secondary poverty'. Rowntree defined a family as falling into this category if income would have been sufficient to maintain their 'physical efficiency' if some of that income had not been diverted to other expenditure, 'either useful or wasteful'.¹¹⁰ It is important to note here that wasteful expenditure were defined as anything not necessary to basic physical survival and the continuation of the employment of the head of the household.¹¹¹ Drink and gambling were commonly cited as reasons for working-class families existing in a state of secondary poverty therefore it could be suggested that social commentators simply made the assumption that, with more disposable income available, young men would simply spend more on these 'rough' activities. What is suggested by middle-class attitudes to working-class consumption is that it was socially inappropriate for these young men to command high wages as it allowed them access to resources with which they could not be trusted. As will be explored in the following chapter these working-class youths were also seen as being incapable of using the new recreational choices available to them in ways that were in line with the goals of social reformers.

4.4 - Consumption as a route to social status

Taken together, the above sources would suggest a class element in criticism of young workers and their spending. Working-class people, in the minds of those making such comments should not have access to the luxuries that were available to their 'social superiors'.¹¹² This is likely to have been partly due to the importance of conspicuous

¹¹⁰ See Mark Freeman, 'Seebohm Rowntree and secondary poverty, 1899–1954', *The Economic History Review*. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-0289.2010.00570.x, 2011 for a discussion of Rowntree's concept of secondary poverty.

¹¹¹ Ibid, p.3.

¹¹² See reference to Johnston and McIvor, p.147.

consumption as a marker of social status among the middle classes.¹¹³ These distinctions would become meaningless if they became available to the mass of the population, leading to a corresponding reduction of prestige of the symbols of middle-class life. Guy Debord has suggested that the importance of symbolic consumption as a marker of social status can be seen as an essential part of the development of consumer culture, and therefore the socioeconomic structure of mid-twentieth century capitalism. Debord has suggested that, as consumer culture developed, the focus of social status shifted from 'being', to 'having' to 'appearing'.¹¹⁴ The implication of this change for the investigation of conspicuous consumption is that, once working-class youths were able to display similar consumption habits they would be able to claim a similar level of social prestige in the logic of a society that saw the appearance of a person as more important than their actual socioeconomic status, at least superficially.

A highly visible example of this 'democratisation' of social symbols created by the growth of opportunities for consumer spending among young working-class men in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s was the increasing popularity of the suit as a key item of popular male attire. Katrina Honeyman has suggested that, by the inter-war period the suit had 'loosened its main association with the world of work' and had 'crossed class barriers' to become ubiquitous by the late 1920s.¹¹⁵ Frank Mort and Peter Thompson have suggested that by the 1950s the tailor Burton's was 'the focal point on the high street', suggesting that men were more comfortable being part of the previously feminised activity by this point.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ See, for example, Jill Greenfield, Sean O'Connell and Chris Reid, 'Fashioning Masculinity: Men Only, Consumption and the Development of Marketing in the 1930s', *Twentieth Century British History*, 10:4, (1999), pp.457-476. for a discussion of this aspect of middle class culture in the 1930s.

¹¹⁴ Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, (Sussex: Soul Bay Press, 2009), p.27.

¹¹⁵ Katrina Honeyman, 'Following Suit: Men, Masculinity and Gendered Practices in the Clothing Trade in Leeds, England, 1890-1940', *Gender and History*, 14:3 (2002), p.426.

¹¹⁶ Frank Mort and Peter Thompson, 'Retailing, Commercial Culture And Masculinity In 1950s Britain: The Case Of Montague Burton, The "Tailor Of Taste"' in *History Workshop Journal* 38:1 (1994), p.106.

The 'popular' nature of the suit allowed men to approximate the appearance of a life of 'ease, pleasure and the ability to purchase a variety of desirable consumer goods' according to Laura Ugolini. In line with the analysis by Debord cited above Ugolini has suggested that it was the appearance of this status rather than its reality that was of primary importance.¹¹⁷ The practical result of the emphasis on appearance was that the ownership of a 'good' suit became an important social signifier for young men in the inter-war period, one that could be seen as essential in order to visually identify oneself as a man in an acceptable sense. One Shettleston man has stated that in the early 1930s, in terms of consumer items 'Our ambition then was to have a suit and a pair of pointed shoes and we were satisfied'.¹¹⁸ While this statement suggests a low expectation in terms of material possessions it indicates that the suit was considered an important item by young men and, due to its connection to a person's self-presentation, and presumably attractiveness to the opposite sex, it was a priority item. Despite the spread of popularity of the suit, it should be noted that the way that it was worn was not devoid of class-based signifiers. The 'pointed shoes' described by the above man could be seen as an attempt to mimic the 'spatz' worn by the stars of Hollywood gangster films and therefore be connected to the 'hard man' masculinity many working-class youths were trying to emulate.

In the 1950s the trademark long jacket of the Teddy Boy, a largely working-class phenomenon, would have been an overt display of conspicuous consumption, and a visual rejection of the culture of 'austerity' that had gripped Britain in the post-war years due to the government sanctioned export drive that had reduced consumer spending in the late-1940s in particular. These styles would have acted as social signifiers that allowed youths to use sub-cultural styles in order to associate themselves with certain discourses that were not consistent

¹¹⁷ Laura Ugolini, 'Men, Masculinities and Menswear Advertising, c.1890-1914' in John Benson and Laura Ugolini (eds.) *A Nation Of Shopkeepers: 5 Centuries Of British Retailing* (London: I.B. Taurus and Co., 2003), p.87.

¹¹⁸ Mitchell Library, Glasgow Collection, Shettleston Activity in Retirement Group, *Dolly Tints and Dabbities*, p.26.

with hegemonic ideals. T.R. Fyvel notes that Teddy Boys were largely drawn from the ranks of unskilled workers, with 'the grammar school set [having] no truck with Teddy Boy life', while those that go into skilled apprenticeships 'don't earn enough to keep up with the flash café life' that was required for prestige amongst this group.¹¹⁹ This is highly significant as it suggests that the members of this subculture were a part of the group that had seen their role in work reduced to that of 'machine minder' and were therefore seeking to form a masculine identity through their engagement with consumption.¹²⁰ It should be noted however, that, while phenomena such as the Teddy Boy encompassed a highly visual style it does not follow that all, or even most, youths would have been participating in these subcultures. so using them as the basis of an evaluation of Scottish youths en masse would be unwise.

In addition to this, there is evidence that, even for young men who were not attempting to fit into a highly stylised subculture, a high level of investment in consumption was not always possible. Where this was the case it seems that the *appearance* of consumption was still strongly important: one Springburn man recalls that he and his friends would call the blue suits they wore 'indigo suits' as 'in these days when things were very poor, and they came out on a Friday and "indigo" on a Monday, to the pawn office'.¹²¹ The importance of this type of 'conspicuous consumption' habits to young people was certainly seen as an issue by contemporaries. The aforementioned Glasgow City Council report claimed that:

crime is due in many cases to some members of a gang having a little pocket money when the others have none. In other words 'keeping up appearances' would seem to be a source of trouble even among schoolboys...The desire to frequent popular places of amusement, if gratified by illicit means, might therefore produce the criminal mind much more readily than any supposedly evil influence exerted by the entertainment itself.¹²²

¹¹⁹ T.R. Fyvel, *The Insecure Offenders*, p.84.

¹²⁰ The occupation of 'machine minder' was introduced as a category in the 1951 census.

¹²¹ Glasgow City Archives, *Dancing in Glasgow*, conversation with William M Brown, b.1914.

¹²² GCA, D-ED 9/1/8 – Glasgow City Council, Report on Juvenile Delinquency in Glasgow in 1940, p.15.

The idea that young people could be driven to criminal action through their desire to participate in commercial leisure is a significant one and indicates the extent of establishment fears surrounding this expanding sector of recreation. The feeling of exclusion from popular culture that accompanied unemployment or low waged work is expressed by the testimony of men who lived through the depression in Clydebank. One man recalls that, when unemployed 'you had nothing you could do, you'd just go for walks and try and look for work'. Similarly another man, who was in his mid-twenties at the time, recounts walking around Old Kilpatrick and street football as the only activities that were available to him whilst unemployed.¹²³ While there were some clubs set up for the unemployed in Clydebank in the early 1930s, 'It was like everything else, if you hadnae a 3d bit to get in wae or something or you couldn't get someone to skip you in, you know' so even these sources of recreation were denied to the very poor.¹²⁴ The experiences of these men echo that written about by Walter Greenwood in his assertion that 'that was the function of doors and walls; they were there to keep out those who hadn't any money'.¹²⁵ Despite this, it seems that there was a sense of the community itself coming together to provide activities for those unable to participate in commercial recreations. A Clydebank man recalls that, although 'you didnae have money to go to the dancing' the people of his working-class neighbourhood organised 'wee concerts and wee dances and all that'.¹²⁶ It is significant that the self-organised activities that are mentioned are ones that would otherwise be provided by the commercial sector in the context of voluntary organisations, such as the SABC, having issues finding support for their 'improving' activities. What this suggests is that, by the 1930s, the leisure provided by the commercial sector was the most highly prized form among young working-class men and that the activities provided by many voluntary

¹²³ COHP, testimony of Andrew McMillan and James McGhee.

¹²⁴ Ibid, testimony of James McGhee.

¹²⁵ Greenwood, *Love on the Dole*, p.171. Whilst Greenwood's is a fictional account, the statement made here could be seen as indicative of the exclusion from popular culture experienced by many young men, especially the unemployed.

¹²⁶ COHP, testimony of Frank Gilmour.

organisations was considered second best by this social group. This hypothesis will be further explored in the following chapter.

In fact many contemporaries considered the adoption of mass culture by young people, rather than their economic situation, to be the source of many social problems. It seems that this viewpoint was adopted in part due to the fears of economic and imperial decline that have been explored in the historiography above. An instructive example of this can be seen in the wartime comments of Glasgow Lord Provost Patrick Dollan regarding jazz music. In 1941 Dollan claimed that jazz itself was 'decadent' and that: 'they could not have a vigorous, healthy nation when that stuff was poured in their ears'.¹²⁷ This puts the blame for the perceived "degeneracy" of youth squarely on their choice of cultural products, even if these products were being provided by those in control of the distribution of culture, and directly identifies such choices as detrimental to the war effort. The fact that these comments were coming from a Labour council leader, one who had been a member of the Independent Labour Party, suggests that this negative reaction to jazz was based on Dollan's view that it was on the wrong side of the 'rough/respectable' cultural divide due to the perceptions of the form discussed above. Significantly, it largely seems to be the actual form of the musical entertainment rather than the fear of passivity that concert attendance could create that the provost found objectionable. This can be seen from the minutes of Glasgow City Council which record that the Council had staged 166 band concerts and 277 concert parties with a combined annual audience of 604383 in 1940, the year previous to the Provost's comments.¹²⁸ Clearly it was the fact that so many young people seemed to be choosing the 'rough' jazz, a product of the commercial leisure sector, over such 'respectable' council provision that was causing such establishment consternation.

¹²⁷ *The Scotsman*, 22/05/41, p3.

¹²⁸ GCA, Minutes of Glasgow City Council, April-Nov 1940. It should be noted that 1940 had seen a reduction in the number of concerts staged due to wartime conditions, however the figure had returned to a more typical 255 band events by 1942, suggesting that even during the war there was a large audience for this form of entertainment.

Similarly, the young generations of the 1930s to the 1950s were often castigated for lacking a strong work ethic and being 'pleasure mad' by establishment commentators.¹²⁹ However, it was not only in the sphere of mass culture that class issues intersected with recreation. The class-based nature of cultural criticism is also illustrated in correspondence concerning the regulation of social clubs. It is clear from a letter to *The Scotsman* that middle-class club members thought of their own activities as qualitatively different to those engaged in by the members of working-class clubs. The latter were seen as 'bogus clubs' and 'drinking dens' and there was a push for them to be regulated and monitored by the police, with the proviso that any new legislation must not affect middle-class clubs. A definite distinction was made between 'the principal political and social clubs in Glasgow and Edinburgh' and golf clubs on one hand and 'bogus drinking clubs' on the other'.¹³⁰ The implication of this argument is that it was the use to which workers were putting forms of recreation, as well as the choice of recreation, that was seen as problematic. This suggests that there was some fear of the subversion of culture from below that could negate the ideological content that middle-class cultural 'improvers' were attempting to incorporate into leisure.

With this in mind, one explanation for the obsession of the middle classes with the leisure of working-class youth is that it was due to an ideological realisation that the productive sphere could no longer be considered an area where creative fulfilment could be achieved in any meaningful way. This would lead to a situation where consumption was the arena in which identity could be most autonomously played out. A result of this realisation was that if young people were using their leisure in a way incompatible with middle-class social norms it could be

¹²⁹ For example, *The Scotsman*, 14/03/30, p6.

¹³⁰ *The Scotsman*, 27/03/36, p13. Note that while working-class clubs *in general* were being castigated for being illicit drinking dens there were some examples where working-class clubs were being used as fronts for drinking or gambling. One club in Paisley that stated it was formed in order to promote 'social intercourse and rational recreation' was raided in 1932 whilst containing 284 people, no furnishings and only a set of dominoes and a pair of boxing gloves for gaming purposes. See Brown, 'Popular Culture and the Continuing Struggle for Rational Recreation', p.222

seen as a challenge to the legitimacy of the social order. In this construction economic power or autonomy could be wielded in the act of consumption as well as the act of production.

This idea reveals a potential reason for the widespread criticism of commercial leisure forms that occurred in the mid-twentieth century, which often had an establishment, if not largely middle-class source, namely a fear of reduction of their dominance in terms of cultural discourse. The discussion of the growth of the commercial leisure sector above shows that for many people, particularly the young, the market was becoming a more and more significant source of popular culture and leisure. For the middle classes this meant that their own cultural norms were no longer a central determinant of the collective taste of the working classes. Rather working-class culture, as expressed through the consumption choices of (primarily) working-class youths, was fundamental to the character of mass culture. The American source of much of the commercial culture consumed by the working class is significant here as it deprived the British establishment of control over the production of mass culture compounding their reduced influence in directing popular discourse.

In terms of dancing there was a specifically gender-based response to the participation of youths. Perhaps the quintessential image of dancers in the 1920s, was the female 'jazzing flapper'. However, since dancing is clearly an activity in which both sexes were involved, the prevalence of the flapper stereotype perhaps indicates stronger concerns about female dancers than their male counterparts. This emphasis on the moral standards of the female dancer may have been a result of the contrasting characterisation of deviance among boys and girls present in social discourse of the time. A significant distinction was made between males and females that failed to live up to the moral and social norms of society with boys being defined as delinquents or hooligans and girls being criticised in terms of their sexual morality. While the delinquency of boys was often seen to lead to property crimes and put down to lack of opportunity for positive action 'Female delinquency is sexual: "incorrigibility" and unmarried

pregnancy' according to one critic of modernity.¹³¹ One correspondent to *The Lancet* in 1942 made this connection explicit by suggesting that delinquency can be defined as 'wanton destruction of property by youths and irresponsible behaviour and spread of venereal disease by girls'.¹³² In the context of dancing this is especially important due to the sexual connotations of dancing and its importance in young adult courtship rituals.

4.5 - The mass production of musical culture

The inter-war period saw much debate around the issue of the production and reception of popular culture, with many seeming to equate the mass reproduction of music to be analogous to the mass production of goods in modern factories. The idea that the mass production of culture was accelerating faster than the ability to make meaningful creative statements was expressed in the press, one commentator stating that 'mechanical production has outstripped spiritual invention'.¹³³ Theodor Adorno suggests that this commodification had made cultural products indistinguishable from each other, stating that

An approach in terms of value judgements has become a fiction for the person who finds himself hemmed in by standardised musical goods. He can neither escape impotence nor decide between the offerings where everything is so completely identical...¹³⁴

If this were the case then commentators that saw mass production in opposition to 'worthwhile' cultural production would be vindicated. However, Adorno also criticises the consumer of 'high' culture, stating that the difference in reception (and so presumably in the production of music) 'are only still manipulated for reasons of marketability'.¹³⁵ The implication of this is that the same productive and social processes are occurring in both 'serious' and 'popular' music, the

¹³¹ Paul Goodman, *Growing Up Absurd* (London: V. Gollancz Ltd, 1961), p.13.

¹³² Muriel Barton Hall, letter to *The Lancet*, 26/12/42, p.766.

¹³³ *Daily Record*, 07/01/30, p.15.

¹³⁴ Theodor Adorno, 'On the fetish character of Music and the Regression of Listening' in *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, (London: Routledge, 1991), p.26.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.31.

only real difference being the way the two are marketed which allows different social groups to adopt them and see them as a part of their social identity. The 'serious' classical consumer can use his cultural choice to confirm his place as a part of elite culture whilst the dance or jazz fan can in turn see his cultural choice as associating himself with concepts of 'youth' and 'modernity'.

In terms of the reception of mass culture it was often claimed that the advent of mechanical reproduction had made people treat music as a commodity that was listened to indiscriminately rather than as a unique and meaningful event. In addition to this, Adorno claims that since standardisation of cultural products has made 'the familiarity of the piece a surrogate for the quality ascribed to it' there is potentially a situation in which discriminating between products in terms of quality is a fairly meaningless activity.¹³⁶ The broadcasting of music in particular was often blamed for this perceived reduction in musical appreciation as 'the wireless is switched on in many homes, and never turned off unless someone complains that he cannot hear himself speak'. In fact the same writer went on to state that this means that 'Music tends to become one of those extraneous noises which are making modern life hideous'.¹³⁷

The blame that broadcasting got for the growth of passive listening was in spite of the wishes of the early controllers of the BBC. BBC literature made a definite distinction between 'serious' and 'tap' listening and even went as far as to broadcast periods of silence between programmes in the late 1920s and early 1930s in order to discourage the wireless from becoming a constant background noise.¹³⁸ While the purpose of this type of tactic was to 'raise' the level of appreciation in all listeners it is clear that the distinction made between 'popular' programmes playing dance music and 'serious' ones playing classical music put a definite class element into the definitions of who the serious and popular audience were. The

¹³⁶ Adorno, 'On the Fetish Character of Music and the Regression of Listening', p.26.

¹³⁷ *The Scotsman*, 03/01/34, p.8.

¹³⁸ Simon Frith, 'The Pleasures of the Hearth', p.29.

lack of popularity of the BBC's more 'serious' programming among working-class youth is apparent in the *Disinherited Youth* survey where Cameron claims that 'anything more serious than the Saturday night "music hall" was dismissed as "highbrow"'.¹³⁹ However, rather than interpreting the lack of demand for 'highbrow' cultural content among the working classes as a sign of a lack of taste or discrimination it may be more accurate to see it as a result of the purpose to which the radio was put by listeners in this social group.

An important issue in determining whether the musical experiences of young men were enjoyed in an active or a passive manner is the level of discrimination that was practised in terms of what was listened to. A passive reception of music could be said to be one where the listener makes no distinction between pieces and does not attempt to make value judgements on them in either an objective or a subjective manner. Conversely, active listening would entail a conscious engagement with specific pieces of music with the result that a meaningful emotional or intellectual response would be produced. Helmut Rosing has described this response as the 'functional' characteristic of music, without which it is not processed and therefore becomes simply background noise.¹⁴⁰ The fact that broadcast, or mechanically reproduced as in the case of the gramophone, music was being used as an addition to social events implies that this technological change altered the way in which music was used by many people. Rosing suggests that a fundamental change in this respect is the removal of the original social context of the music.¹⁴¹ This means that, as music does not have to be experienced in the setting of its creation, the listener is free to ascribe a meaning or social function to the music that suits their own personal needs in any particular situation. The result of this is that music becomes 'arbitrarily interchangeable' in regard to its social function or setting.

¹³⁹ Cameron, *Disinherited Youth*, p.102.

¹⁴⁰ Helmut Rosing, 'Listening Behaviour and Musical Preference in the Age of Transmitted Music' in *Popular Music*, 4 (1984), p.128.

¹⁴¹ Rosing, 'Listening Behaviour and Musical Preference', p.120.

Indeed, Cameron notes that working-class men's and boy's clubs commonly contained a well-used wireless, stating that: 'Most clubs have a wireless set which is permanently turned on, the programme acting as a background to billiards and cards'.¹⁴² This implies that wireless listening could act as a collective activity as well as an individual one, the image of a group of men listening in a social club, even if only as a background to create atmosphere, contrasting sharply with Adorno's characterisation of the lonely radio enthusiast.

However, the fact that not all the men in the clubs were actively listening to the wireless for all the time it was on does not imply that no member was at particular times. An important part of the idea of distracted or negative listening is that a person can easily switch between listening in this way and active listening if they wish. A more recent example of this phenomenon is given by Greil Marcus where he describes the effect of the Bob Dylan song 'Like a Rolling Stone' coming on the radio in a bar. Up to this point the radio had been providing 'unregistered background' to conversations but at the point this song started 'The languid crowd slowly turned from its pineapple and Bloody Mary breakfast; feet began moving, conversations died. Everyone *listened*, and everyone looked a bit more alive when the last notes faded.'¹⁴³ While the point Marcus is making here is in relation to the quality of the music rather than simple choice, his claim being that it is impossible to use 'Like a Rolling Stone as Musak', the idea of listeners moving between listening styles is relevant for the period in question. The potential for people to change from incidental to active listening suggests that there may have been more cultural discrimination than critics such as Cameron propose, with wireless listeners using the broadcast as background at some times and actively listening in to a song or band they enjoyed at others. While this idea does allow for more discrimination among listeners, it also raises the issue of familiarity being a marker of quality as the switch between active and distracted listening is more likely to be made if a song is known.

¹⁴² Cameron, *Disinherited Youth*, p.114.

¹⁴³ Greil Marcus, 'Songs of random terror: Real life rock top ten 1980' in *In The Fascist Bathroom*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), p.174.

What is at issue here is the social role that music played in society. Rosing describes the original social role of music in the period before 1780, as 'social interaction' music, defined as religious and court music. This form is joined around 1780 by so-called 'performance music' or 'pure' music, represented by what is commonly termed romantic classical music, a form highly identified with the emergent middle classes in the nineteenth century. Rosing sees the rise of transmitted music, that occurred around 1900, as a new functional form which 'at least in quantitative terms, outstrips both of them'.¹⁴⁴ While this characterisation of the periodisation of music seems reasonable in terms of 'high' culture it could be argued that it does not have the same resonance for popular musical forms. This is because there is a larger amount of social interaction in the consumption of popular performance music than is present in elite performance music. In the classical concert hall, patronised largely by the middle classes, the audience was expected to behave in a quiet way and engage with the music on an intellectual level, this form of musical appreciation being defined as the most appropriate way to react to art as an aesthetic product. In the music hall and the dancehall, however, there was a much greater level of interaction between the performers and the audience; indeed, in the consumption of the printed broadside ballad there was no real distinction between the performer and the audience in the informal setting. The difference in character of these two musical traditions could be due to the fact that these forms of music came out of the working-class environment of singing saloons, back court singing sessions and the distribution of printed ballads rather than the more formal world of elite art music with its basis in early religious music. This more communal relationship to music is suggested by the recollections of a Springburn man who states that

there was certain firms that supplied all the dance bands' music; Francis, Day and Hunter. Lawrence Wright was another and they issued a little book of songs and everybody knew the words, don't forget there wasn't an awful lot of radio and television

¹⁴⁴ Rosing, 'Listening Behaviour and Musical Preference', p.120.

about there, so you learned everything communally as it were, and the music just went...¹⁴⁵

The same man recounts that, like the songs 'most of the [dance] steps were learned up closes, without music under the gaslight.'¹⁴⁶ This strong connection between dancing and community activities suggests that conceptually separating autonomous street-based leisure and commercial leisure would be a mistake. Dancehalls, and attendance at them, should be seen as an integral part of community life for many young people in the period, rather than venues which carried the discourses of the proprietors. In line with these observations, Cameron describes the reception of music by the young men in the survey as 'emotional rather than aesthetical', clearly aligning it with the working-class conception of music.¹⁴⁷ With this in mind the commercialisation of popular music could be seen as the growth of social interaction music in the working-class model at the expense of 'art music'. If this model is accepted then the criticisms of jazz and commercial dance music in the 1930s and 1940s make sense from the point of view of competing discourses. The middle-class opposition to the 'indiscriminate' listening of dance music could be seen as an attempt to maintain cultural dominance. If it was not possible to make young working-class men listen to classical music then it was at least possible to portray the music they did listen to, and therefore their identities as consumers, as not culturally legitimate.

If the BBC's main aim under Reith was to provide cultural education then it was essentially ignoring what the majority of people wanted from the wireless, which was entertainment. This misunderstanding may have been due to the assumption made by the BBC hierarchy (among others) that failure to engage with middle-class cultural forms such as classical music and theatre was due to a lack of cultural awareness on the part of the 'popular'

¹⁴⁵ *Dancing in Glasgow*, testimony of William M Brown.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Cameron, *Disinherited Youth*, p.8.

audience. In this construction, those choosing commercial leisure over high art were doing so from the position of exclusion from any kind of culture, so the job of the BBC could be seen as providing this culture in a way that was in tune with the values and practices of the middle classes. If this were the case it would have served the dual purposes of acting as a public service and of socialising working-class consumers of leisure in a way that was acceptable to dominant cultural discourses. What this vision of public service misses is that the 'popular' listeners of the radio did not want to be socialised into a middle-class vision of culture: the purpose of the wireless to many seems to have been to provide entertainment and as another way of accessing popular, commercially produced music. This was especially the case in the early part of the wireless age as most broadcasts of dance music consisted of live outside broadcasts rather than the playing of recordings. The result of this was that it was hard for the BBC to influence the music played as broadcast popular music had to conform to the needs of a paying dancehall audience. In both broadcasting and recording then popular music 'depended on the judgments and tastes of the 'live' music entrepreneur' in the early 1930s.¹⁴⁸ The implication of all this is that wireless listeners used broadcasts to hear music they were already familiar with rather than to be 'educated' into a different listening style. In fact it could even be argued that there was a certain amount of vicarious pleasure involved in the consumption of outside broadcasts. Particular tunes would evoke memories of dancing, or importantly, feelings that are associated with the discourse of what going dancing means in terms of 'enjoyment'. This has significance in terms of gendered identity as the discourses related to dancing involve the public display and performance of adolescent sexuality. In this way the popularity of commercial dance music among young people could be said to have been as much about what it represented as a symbol of youth as it was about specific musical developments and styles.

¹⁴⁸ Simon Frith, 'The Industrialisation of Music' in *Music For Pleasure*, (Oxford: Polity Press, 1988), p.15.

Cameron's survey seems to agree with the assessments of the listening habits of working-class youth made by many middle-class observers, claiming that 'little or no discrimination was shown in the choice of items' listened to, this conclusion based on the fact that the wireless was often left on all day. However, Cameron's assumption that this meant that listeners were displaying no discrimination in their listening seems questionable, especially when combined with a subsequent statement from the same report:

Most of the men could recite with little difficulty the names of the various dance bands and their leaders. They could state the exact times when these were to be heard. They did not confine themselves to the home stations, but travelled far and wide to satisfy their thirst for 'swing' and 'rhythm'.¹⁴⁹

This statement shows that, contrary to the view that music was being accepted in an undifferentiated manner, the men in the survey did have preferences for particular kinds of music. The memorisation of the times at which favoured bands could be heard suggests that men were making value judgments about the music they heard and were not simply happy to hear anything that was broadcast. It seems that this discrimination went on in terms of the dancehalls that were attended as well. An advertisement for 'Green's playhouse' hall in 1946 advertised the visiting band leader, Joe Loss, as 'Radio's king of rhythm' and displayed the time at which part of the night's performance would be broadcast.¹⁵⁰ The fact that this advert also named three of the players in Loss's 'orchestra' also suggests that the target customers of the dancehall had a detailed knowledge of different musicians in the dance band genre and therefore made some kind of distinction and value judgment about their ability. Indeed, one Springburn man notes that 'We used to go to the Playhouse quite a bit because the big bands came to the Playhouse. Joe Loss was on'¹⁵¹ The bands that were playing were in some cases fundamental to the enjoyment of the whole dancing experience for some attenders: one woman recalls that 'it was a sad day when wee Billy [McGregor, bandleader of 'The Gaybirds']

¹⁴⁹ Cameron, *Disinherited Youth*, p.102.

¹⁵⁰ Advert in *Evening Times*, 04/01/46, p.2.

¹⁵¹ *Dancing in Glasgow*, testimony of Sam Watt.

was ousted from the Barrowland. Billy was the Barrowland. With him gone, it was the end of the ballroom era as we knew it.¹⁵² Clearly, for these dancers, there was a great deal of discrimination involved in the bands they danced to and therefore the halls they attended.

If advertising in this way was an effective strategy for dancehall proprietors then it is clear that familiarity with, if not an actual appreciation of, a musician was an important factor in deciding which dancehall to attend. However, the tone of some of the advertisements does raise a question in terms of how they attracted dancers. In addition to the price of admission and the quality of the band, Adorno raises a further possible determinant in the selection of dancehall in *The Culture Industry*. An advert for Green's Playhouse published in 1946 claims that it features 'the finest dancers in Glasgow at the finest ballroom' whilst one for the Westend Ballroom describes it as 'The Popular Palais!'.¹⁵³ These adverts are using the idea that popularity is a marker of quality: to use Adorno's phrase, 'having a good time means being present at the enjoyment of others, which in its turn has as its only content being present'.¹⁵⁴

The implication of this argument is that the fact that dancehalls were advertising their bands as 'broadcast bands' means that what people were really drawn to is the possibility of sharing in a recognisable, collective experience. The quality of that experience was secondary to the fact that its elements were part of a familiar cultural event that could be shared and whose meanings were coded as part of youth experience. In this construction cultural discrimination was still practised, but it occurred in terms of factors associated with the expected character of the whole evening rather than in those of value judgments related to the music itself. In other words it was the dancehall experience itself that made up the cultural product rather than the playing of the musicians themselves, who were merely one part of the entertainment. As one man put it in relation to the dances held at the Springburn Public Halls, 'I didn't like it because it had a church like atmosphere to me with those big organ pipes at the

¹⁵² Cited in Piers Dudgeon, *Our Glasgow* (London: Headline Review, 2009), p.172.

¹⁵³ Both in *Evening Times*, 05/01/46, p.7.

¹⁵⁴ Adorno, 'On the Fetish Character of Music and the Regression of Listening', p39.

top of the hall, you know.'¹⁵⁵ Another man 'wasn't very fond of Ayr Street, it was inclined to be a little bit less...genteel than Morrin Street, less genteel is about the kindest thing I can say about it. It was cheaper.'¹⁵⁶ It is important to note that the dancehalls were not merely places to consume musical entertainment, but rather social spaces that catered to youth socialising and provided venues for the showing off of skills and meeting romantic partners, as will be discussed in the final section of this chapter.

Cameron's questionable assumption that working-class listeners did not differentiate between cultural products was also present in debates about the cinema, with commentators complaining of the 'indiscriminate' character of film-going. One journalist who thought public tastes were improving was still convinced that 'this indiscriminate film-going will always be present to a considerable extent'.¹⁵⁷ Those involved with education went even further, describing 15-18 year olds who went to the cinema three times a week as 'making a flagrant abuse of their leisure'.¹⁵⁸ What these criticisms seem to miss out on is the fact that while cinema and the wireless were central parts of the leisure of young people this was often due to a lack of alternatives rather than an unthinking acceptance of any cultural product placed before them. The important fact here is that while commercial leisure may have been attended in an indiscriminate manner this does not necessarily imply that its content was being consumed indiscriminately. Evidence that this was the situation in the case of the cinema is found in a Mass Observation survey of cinema attendance in Bolton, conducted in 1937. Far from being ambivalent to the quality of the films they saw that the young men in the survey expressed preferences in terms of both genre and quality of films. Some made judgements based on the content of films such as one 19 year old who stated that

In my opinion, the films of today lack the necessary themes to give them a good basis. The acting and scenery improve with time. Excellent actors and actresses given

¹⁵⁵ *Dancing in Glasgow*, testimony of Andrew Stuart.

¹⁵⁶ *Dancing in Glasgow*, testimony of William M Brown.

¹⁵⁷ *The Scotsman*, 24/12/34, p.14.

¹⁵⁸ NAS, Confidential report on the leisure of West Lothian School Children, p.5.

unsuitable parts to play. The public of today are more critical and therefore more harder to please. More thought given to cast and theme and plenty of variety, and [the] public would hardly quibble.¹⁵⁹

While this statement does acknowledge the idea that earlier cinema audiences may have accepted films of less quality the respondent implies that the novelty of the cinema has worn off and it is therefore more important for the content of a film to engage the audience. What it, and many similar statements in the survey, suggest is that young filmgoers were taking an active interest in the films that they were seeing and applying personal criteria of quality to them. Some were going as far as to criticise technical aspects of the films as well as their content, as can be seen from the following statements: 'Even though I enjoy looking for the little slips and mistakes I had to admit defeat in your picture called Knight Without Armour starring Marlene Dietrich' or 'In historical films I think they are modernised too much. Some of the furniture and tapestry in houses and mansions. Also the utensils that they use for meals.' While there were some respondents that claimed that 'I enjoy all the pictures at the Odeon', they were in the minority, so the concept of a general lack of discrimination among the audiences of mass culture seems to be of limited application.¹⁶⁰

The idea of an active audience for commercial leisure is supported by the account of a *Film Weekly* reporter who visited a cinema in a working-class area of London in 1934. In describing the audience's reaction to a bad film the reporter observes that 'not for a moment did sickly tolerance cloud the audience's recognition of its badness. No lapse was allowed to pass unnoticed.'¹⁶¹ In this case a different form of pleasure was being enjoyed by cinema-goers from the one intended by the film-makers. Instead of using the film presented as an escapist pleasure or accepting the sentiments and ideology present in the film, this type of audience actively deconstructed the images placed before them in order to create their own

¹⁵⁹ John Martin Jones, 'Cinema Going in Worktown', in Jeffery Richards and Dorothy Sheridan, *Mass Observation at the Movies* (Routledge and Kegan Paul: London, 1987), p.47.

¹⁶⁰ All responses taken from Richards and Sheridan, *Mass Observation at the Movies*, pp.41-136.

¹⁶¹ Cited in Beaven, *Leisure, Citizenship and Working-Class Men*, p.198.

entertainment. Beaven goes as far as to say that this behaviour could be interpreted as 'transferring the audience participation of the music hall and the horseplay of the street into the arena of the cinema'.¹⁶² This argument shows that the creation of meaning in terms of commercial leisure was far from an exclusively top-down process, with consumers taking an active role in constructing their own experiences and will be explored below in relation to the uses of dancehalls.

4.6 - The dancehall as a site of autonomous culture

An indication of the popularity and importance of dancing is the way in which the activity itself was taken seriously by young people. An illustration of this is the annual *Daily Record* dancing competition, a report on the event for 1934 claimed that the attendance of 1200 dancers at the Partick F and F hall 'broke all previous records'.¹⁶³ While this may be hyperbole, the fact that there was significant interest in the competition indicates that dancing was seen as a way of displaying skill as well as enjoying the atmosphere or the music. These competitions seem to have been taken very seriously by Glasgow youths of both sexes. Records of a prosecution of a dancehall licensee for opening on a Sunday state that the hall had been opened to allow a group of people to practise for a dance competition. The policeman called to the complaint stated that there were around 40 people in the hall at the time. Of the 24 whose names are given in the report most are between 20-24 years old, with a fairly equal number of men and women.¹⁶⁴

The idea of dancing as a performance of skills is important both in terms of masculine identity formation and in the context of a reduction in the opportunities of obtaining skilled work discussed in the previous chapter. It is precisely this kind of activity that could be seen as an

¹⁶² Ibid, p.197.

¹⁶³ *Daily Record*, 30/01/34, p.3.

¹⁶⁴ GCA, E7/30/2, Licensing of Places of Entertainment, correspondence 1940-1947.

opportunity for young men to construct an identity, in this case being known as a skilled dancer, from the sphere of consumption rather than that of production. While many recreational activities, such as sports, could be said to offer opportunities for gaining and displaying skills it is likely that dancing was an especially important one for young men due to its connection to sexuality. Skill in dancing was a highly important part of peer group sociability for Glasgow youths from the 1930s onwards: 'to break into the big time social scene in Glasgow in the thirties one had to be a "rerr" dancer', in fact 'In that era, if you didn't dance, you were a wallflower', according to Glasgow dancers of the period.¹⁶⁵ The importance placed on dancing skill in these comments suggests that dancing was more than simply a pastime and more a way of asserting a social identity. This emphasis on individual skill can be seen as being congruent with the requirement to display skill as a worker in terms of the idealised working-class masculine identity. For this reason dancing could be seen as a prime site for the re-creation of working-class masculine forms in the sphere of leisure as opposed to work.

In this way dancing would be a direct way to assert masculinity in the presence of potential partners, its masculine nature bolstered by the tradition of men 'leading' their partner. An anecdote told by a Springburn man highlights the importance of dancing skill in the social arena of dancehalls. He recounts that

The girls all went in evening dress, and they carried a powder puff, and we all wore blue suits, and if you couldn't dance they put the mark of Cain on the back of your jacket, they would just dab the back of your jacket with this powder puff on your jacket and that was you marked for life.¹⁶⁶

Clearly, a man who could not dance in this context would find both his opportunities to meet the opposite sex and his social standing compromised in the eyes of his peers. As well as making it hard to ask women to dance, the unlikelihood of a poor dancer being asked to dance in the

¹⁶⁵ Agnes McKean and Sam Watt, cited in Dudgeon, *Our Glasgow*, p.174 and p.170.

¹⁶⁶ *Dancing in Springburn*, testimony of William M Brown.

'novelty' or 'ladies' choice' dance, would have excluded him from the ability to perform skills necessary to masculine prestige. This highlights the importance of dance being a display as much as a recreational activity. An instructive point here in relation to display is one mentioned by a Mass Observation reporter, that it was fairly common for two women to dance together but not two men.¹⁶⁷ The implication here is that the context of sexuality in which dancing occurred made two men dancing together incompatible with norms of masculinity that made this kind of contact inappropriate. In addition to this, the fact that women were only permitted to ask men to dance in 'special' dances called by the bandmaster meant that a man dancing with another man would be an admission that no woman had accepted his invitation to dance, once again representing a blow to his social standing.

However, this was not always the case among the group who would be expected to most closely resemble the typical masculine model. Percy Sillitoe, the Chief Constable of Glasgow, recalled that the leader of the 'Parlour Boys' gang in the 1930s, James Dalziel, 'scorned so profoundly the delicacies of life that he would dance only with other burly members of his gang, considering it effeminate to dance with girls'.¹⁶⁸ This is an interesting comment as it seems contradictory from the point of view of gendered identity. Essentially, Dalziel was unwilling to be associated in any way with the feminine, implying that his presence in the dancehall had more to do with performance of 'hard man' masculinity than it did with courtship rituals. Whilst Charles Cameron, in the *Disinherited Youth* survey, was able to state that 'the main attraction of dancing is the opportunity it gives for the sexes to mix socially' the customs of the dancehall imply that this was not the whole story.¹⁶⁹ The fact that women would dance together much more readily than men implies that there was a gendered difference in the way that the dancehall was used as a place of entertainment. For women it was the dancing itself

¹⁶⁷ Mass Observation Archive, papers from the Mass Observation Archive at the University of Sussex, Part 10, Topic Collections, Leisure and Recreation.

¹⁶⁸ Percy Sillitoe, *Cloak Without Dagger*, (London: Pan books, 1956), p.143.

¹⁶⁹ Charles Cameron, *Disinherited Youth*, p.105.

that was an important attraction as well as the potential for courtship. This is highlighted by a comment from one dancer who stated that women would always dance the 'Scottish' dances with female friends as doing so with men was 'taboo'.¹⁷⁰ For the men, however, it seems that 'the dancehall provided very public arenas where young men could display and assert their masculinity' in the words of Brad Beaven.¹⁷¹

Dancehalls were also places where young men were able to display the typical 'hard man' masculinity associated with 'rough' versions of popular culture. One area where this was the case was the consumption of alcohol. While all dancehalls in Scotland were unlicensed and, in addition, had strict rules against patrons bringing in their own alcoholic drinks, it seems that this official position was not always adhered to. Annmarie Hughes has found evidence of illegal stills in dancehalls, perhaps indicating a certain level of sympathy for traditional male recreations among proprietors, or at the least an acceptance that drinking would occur and a desire to generate further profit from it.¹⁷² Another way in which some halls facilitated young men's drinking is described in the reminiscences of a dancing enthusiast:

So you'd go to the door and ask for a pass out and the guy at the door gave you a pass out and you went over across to Murray's across at Flemington Street...the boys went and had a couple of pints, and went back into the dancing again. You got a docket at the door and you showed it and you'd get back in. They'd say 'now don't be long and don't come back here drunk!'¹⁷³

The dancehall being referred to here was in the Springburn area so it seems that the proprietor was facilitating the continuation of traditional working-class male recreational culture rather than attempting to foster new norms centred on the consumption of commercial cultural products. The admonishment from the door staff not to 'come back here drunk' could be seen as an attempt to outwardly comply with the licensing laws and the need to be seen to be

¹⁷⁰ Tony Jaconelli cited in Dudgeon, *Our Glasgow*, p.173.

¹⁷¹ Brad Beaven, *Leisure, Citizenship and Working-Class Men*, p.174.

¹⁷² Hughes, *Gender and Political Identities in Scotland*, p.142.

¹⁷³ *Dancing in Glasgow*, testimony of Sam Watt.

running a 'respectable' establishment without constraining young men's access to traditional 'rough' working-class masculine norms.

Even where halls did attempt to stop patrons drinking, for example in the case of the Locarno in the centre of Glasgow, youths developed strategies that allowed them to continue. Andy Stuart recalls that 'Males got frisked before they got into the Locarno but girls were never searched so they would take drink into their handbags for their boyfriends'.¹⁷⁴ This practice shows the desire on the part of young men to combine elements of traditional masculine culture with the newer recreational forms offered by commercial leisure providers. However, despite the fact that some dancers do allude to drinking in dancehalls, many claim that they never, or very rarely drank themselves. While this could be partly explained by an interviewees' reluctance to connect themselves with a primary aspect of the 'rough' culture of the time, there does seem to have been division in the activities performed in dancehalls. One man recounts that, in relation to asking women to dance 'if you went over and asked a girl to dance and she smelled drink on your breath, it was the boot'.¹⁷⁵ While there may have been drinking going on in the halls, this activity was not completely compatible with dancing and attracting a potential partner. What this suggests is that there were multiple ways of performing masculinities in dancehalls in the 1930s, one which emphasised the 'skill' associated with the respectable working-class masculine form through the act of dancing and one that had more in common with the 'rough' 'hard man' form through drinking.

This idea is highlighted by the fact that, in addition to the issue of drinking in dancehalls there were also a number of publicised cases throughout the decade where the street culture of the male gang was taken into the dancehalls, resulting in fights, and in extreme cases the death of dancers. In fact, news reports of incidents in dancehalls throughout the 1930s seem, in tone at least, to support the descriptions of such events described by McArthur

¹⁷⁴ *Dancing in Glasgow*, testimony of Andy Stuart.

¹⁷⁵ Tony Jaconelli, cited in Dudgeon, *Our Glasgow*, p.173.

and Long in their novel, *No Mean City*. As late as 1938 there is a report of a small scale fight at the Miner's Welfare Institute that turned into 'pandemonium', the suggestion being that, although no gang activity was mentioned, the fight had eventually involved most of the patrons of the hall.¹⁷⁶ In addition to this, the *Scotsman* reports several cases throughout the decade in which opposing gangs are directly implicated in dancehall fights.¹⁷⁷

A significant factor in these cases is that particular gangs would attach themselves to a hall, resulting in clashes if members of rival gangs entered. The report of court proceedings in regard to a murder during one of these fights that occurred in 1934 states that the incident occurred because 'a group of about 20 men forced their way in' to the hall. This territoriality mirrors the practice of gangs being associated with particular areas or streets in the city. In this way the local dancehall could be seen as a recreational focus for gangs, especially when the low entry price of the less prestigious halls is taken into account. When considered together these observations suggest that, far from being a way of constructing a youth-focused identity in opposition to traditional working-class culture, commercial leisure venues were being used as venues within which to display established gender norms.

The implication of this is that local dancehalls were seen as an integral part of a neighbourhood for young people. In the late 1930s correspondence between the social surveyor Charles Cameron and an unemployed man states that the man had a budget of 1/6 a week and, among other things attended a dancehall on a weekly basis indicating the importance of these venues for sociability in a way that was perhaps analogous to the pub for older men.¹⁷⁸ Oral history sources support this statement, one man declaring that 'I spent all my time at the dancing, all my hours', while a female dancer states that 'I'd say we went to Springburn Public maybe three times a week'.¹⁷⁹ With this amount of time spent in halls, it is

¹⁷⁶ *The Scotsman*, 04/01/38, p.14.

¹⁷⁷ See for example *The Scotsman*, 25/04/34, p.15 and *The Scotsman*, 31/08/35, p.14.

¹⁷⁸ NAS, GD281/83/188 – 18 + "Intensive" Experiment Glasgow, File 2, Jan 1938, correspondence.

¹⁷⁹ *Dancing in Glasgow*, testimony of Tommy Doyle and Alice Amato.

clear that they were highly important venues of youth sociability. It seems that, in terms of accessibility, this trend continued into the post-war period with prices remaining low in many places: entry to the Barrowlands Ballroom costing as little as 1/6 on some nights in the years following World War Two.¹⁸⁰

The idea that young men were using commercial dancehalls as a new venue for engaging in traditional street culture is supported by the records of a licence application in regards to the 'Tower Palais' dancehall on the south side of Glasgow. The reports on the conduct of this hall show that it was not unusual for men to bring alcohol into dancehalls. This was considered a problem in itself, one policeman stating that he 'did not consider that good order was being maintained' in the hall on an occasion where an 18 year old was found openly carrying two bottles of beer.¹⁸¹ More serious than drinking itself was the fact that these bottles often ended up being used as weapons in the event of any disturbance occurring. There is a record of this happening in January 1946 where a 28-year-old man was assaulted on the dance floor. In addition to this, much of the reporting of violence in dancehalls records that beer bottles were one of the principal weapons of the fighters. For example, a report of a fight in a dancehall in Glasgow in February 1930 states that one man 'started the trouble by waving a beer bottle over his head'.¹⁸² The fact that this was a recognisable signal of impending violence or disorder implies that it was common for fighters to use bottles as weapons. One of the reasons for the popularity of this weapon, according to Glasgow Chief Constable Percy Sillitoe, was likely to be that 'If you carried a gun or knife it was troublesome to be found in possession of it, but a beer bottle could be carried legitimately'.¹⁸³ The fact that it was beer bottles that were carried does seem significant though, both in terms of men using them, and in newspapers consistently reporting that it was beer bottles as opposed to any other kind of

¹⁸⁰ Advertisement in *Evening Times*, 03/01/46, p.2.

¹⁸¹ GCA, E7/30/2, Police Report 11/03/46.

¹⁸² *The Scotsman*, 13/02/30, p.7.

¹⁸³ Sillitoe, *Cloak Without Dagger*, p.143.

bottle that was involved in any particular incident. Being caught carrying alcohol in a Glasgow dancehall would have resulted in ejection, so it seems that the adult and masculine associations of beer as a drink were important to the young Glasgow men that frequented the dancehalls. It appears from these events that these young men were attempting to fulfill the traditional image of masculinity associated with the Glasgow man as a fighting and drinking 'hard man' even while they were taking part in the new commercial leisure culture.

The reason that this continuation of traditional street culture within the confines of the commercial leisure system is important is that it shows that working-class youths were subverting the intended practices of the halls and therefore their cultural meanings. This is significant as one of the primary criticisms of the new commercial leisure in this period was that it was engendering a passive attitude towards recreation and, by extension, life in its participants. A commentator in the *Daily Record*, writing in 1938, suggested that 'the art of conversation generally has slumped' due to the fact that 'people listen in to invisible conversationalists, but they do not listen to people whom they see before their eyes'.¹⁸⁴ The implication of this comment was that listening to the radio resulted in a less participatory attitude to culture and social interaction, a point of view that could be seen as indicative of the prevailing establishment attitude to the consumption of cultural products emanating from the commercial sector.

However, far from being a passive recreation, dancing is in fact an active and participatory activity both in terms of physical activity and the cultural and social meanings of involvement in which interaction with others is fundamental to the pastime. In fact it could be argued that dancing is a far more productive way to participate in musical culture than watching a classical concert as the dancers have an important role in constructing the performance of the musicians as well as their own experiences of the music, whereas the classical audience is

¹⁸⁴ *Daily Record*, 17/01/38, p.13.

usually far more passive. In addition to this dancing, and the material space of the dancehall, provided an environment where interaction between people was an integral part of the experience, be this in terms of courtship between sexes or sociability within sexes.

Further evidence that young men were ready to subvert the purposes and experiences of commercial leisure can be seen in the discussion of cinema-going in Cameron's *Disinherited Youth* survey. The young men that took part in the survey were not merely using the cinema to watch films; they also represented an important site for courtship. As one man put it, 'you go to the pictures because there's no other place you can go, and even when you come out around half past nine, what can you do if it is raining? We just sit on for another round of the pictures, there's nothing else for it.'¹⁸⁵ In this man's experience, then, the cinema was simply a place to be with a girlfriend that was free from adult supervision. The cheap entry price meant that a whole evening could be spent in the cinema without the need to spend significant amounts of money. What statements such as these show is that commercial leisure was often used to create a youth-centred social space as much as it was as a delivery system for the products of the culture industry. It is likely that dancehalls were used in a similar way to this: they may have been relatively more expensive than the cinema (and required a greater financial outlay in terms of clothes to fit in as mentioned below), but could have served a similar role as they were aimed primarily at young consumers, the same group that frequented the cinemas in such great numbers.

The attendance of dances affected youth consumption in another important way. It was noticed by contemporaries that fashion and dress were important to dancers of both sexes. Cameron observes that having the correct clothes to wear was a prerequisite of visiting dancehalls and that the lack of means to acquire them was a greater obstacle to dancing than the price of admission. In Glasgow this was an even bigger issue: 'In several instances, young

¹⁸⁵ Cameron, *Disinherited Youth*, p.104.

men wore their shabby clothes during the day and kept the good suit, not for Sundays [when they would traditionally dress in their best clothes to attend a church], but for the dancing.’¹⁸⁶ This highlights the importance of the dancehall as a venue for the performance of a gendered identity and fits in with the idea of the relocation of working class street culture into the dancehalls. A former gang member, Larry Rankin, has observed that the members of Glasgow gangs had a similar concern with their appearance describing the ‘Beehive Boys’ as ‘having more money than a normal gang, so most of the time they were well dressed, they could go dancing and different places and they were looked on by the other gangs as being dapper’.¹⁸⁷ In fact, it seems that the use of dress as a method of differentiation among young men was already an established practice by the late 1930s. In his memoirs Sillitoe notes that ‘It has been pointed out that a characteristic of many of these present-day young people is their pitiful vanity as displayed in the wearing of weird, ostentatious clothes’.¹⁸⁸ Sillitoe goes on to say that this is a symptom of the same attitude that leads young people to crime, and so essentially sees youth fashions as an expression of deviance.

However, it was not just gang members who were associated with the conspicuous consumption of fashion. One newspaper reports that the return of January sales in the post-war period was novel for the number of men queuing to get into shops early. This would suggest that by this point engaging in consumption and an interest in fashion was no longer seen as a predominantly feminine activity.¹⁸⁹ Even in the inter-war period a *Daily Record* columnist, writing in 1934, corroborated this view in a column advocating the importance of men’s dress; ‘a decent pride in ones appearance is not only due to a man as an alleged civilised being, but it is definitely incumbent upon us, not out of vanity but out of consideration

¹⁸⁶ Cameron, *Disinherited Youth*, p.105.

¹⁸⁷ Cited in Davies, ‘Street Gangs, Crime and Policing in Glasgow during the 1930s’, p.260.

¹⁸⁸ Sillitoe, *Cloak Without Dagger*, p.140.

¹⁸⁹ *Evening Times*, 02/01/46, p.4.

for those with whom circumstances bring us into contact'.¹⁹⁰ It is significant that the writer explicitly states that a man's attention to his clothing is not due to vanity, which could be seen as an attempt to 'de-feminise' the issue. The use of the term 'civilised' is also important in this context as it connects the act of consumption with ideas of rationality in order to further exclude the associations of feminine emotionalism that are often made in terms of engagement with consumption.

Brent Shannon has suggested that the move of middle-class men into the realm of fashion occurred in the years leading up to the First World War as retailers began to see this group as an untapped market for their products.¹⁹¹ It seems from the accounts given by Cameron and Rankin that this concern with fashion was replicated by working-class youths in the inter-war period, perhaps due to their increased spending power. However, the fact that Sillitoe could describe the clothes of the young as 'weird [and] ostentatious' shows that this adoption of dress as a marker of identity was done on youths' own terms and was not merely an imitation of the styles and conventions of another social group. It seems that youths in the 1930s were using clothing as another indicator of their association with the consumption of mass leisure and the principles of modernity. This encompassed both a connection with the manners and styles of American gangster films, as discussed by Davies, and a self-conscious adoption of so called 'jazz' styles, an epithet applied to many activities that were perceived to break connection with pre-First World War standards.¹⁹² In the words of Dick Hebdige, this was 'style as intentional communication'.¹⁹³

With all this in mind it could be that the problem that establishment commentators associated with the popularity of commercial dancehalls among the working classes was the

¹⁹⁰ *Daily Record*, 18/01/34, p.11.

¹⁹¹ Brent Shannon, 'Refashioning Men: Fashion, Masculinity and the Cultivation of the Male Consumer in Britain, 1860-1914', *Victorian Studies*, 46:4 (2004), pp.597-630.

¹⁹² For working-class youth imitating Hollywood gangsters see Davis 'Cinema and Broadcasting', p.271. For example of 'jazz' used to describe modern styles outside of music see for example *The Scotsman*, 10/12/46, p.4.

¹⁹³ Hebdige, *Subcultures*, p.100.

fact that they represented a rejection of middle-class values and standards of behaviour. The popularity of dancehalls could almost be seen as a challenge to the 'taming' of the music hall that Beaven describes as an attempt to make them more like the traditional concert hall.¹⁹⁴ It is significant from this point of view that this period saw the decline in popularity of the music hall along with the growth of dancehalls and cinemas. In the case of the cinema it was considered that music hall audience figures had been 'badly hit' by the introduction of sound films, leading to a decline in demand for the older entertainment form according to the *Daily Record* in 1930.¹⁹⁵ As discussed earlier, the music hall had been the original source of film entertainment in the earliest days of cinema, but it is likely that the introduction of sound film, with its requirement for updated reproduction equipment, meant that music halls were simply unable to compete with purpose-built cinemas in the provision of film and therefore became seen as outmoded.

This would suggest that it was the desire among the working classes for the form of leisure represented by the dancehall and the cinema, rather than the specific character of the music or films themselves, that was seen as the real cause for concern. The greater importance of the audience as a determinant of the experience of the dancehall in particular could be seen as a return to elements of the pre-war character of the 'free and easy', that had its basis in working-class drinking culture. The moral panic may have been due to the fact that dancehalls reintroduced the creative role of the audience and some of the interaction between performer and audience that establishment reformers had tried so hard to banish from the music hall.

Socially speaking then, the dancehall was a step back in the terms of rational recreation as it had more in common with working-class street culture than it did with middle-class theatre and concert culture. It is ironic then that commercial leisure culture was being

¹⁹⁴ Beaven, *Leisure, Citizenship and Working-Class Men*, p.53.

¹⁹⁵ *Daily Record*, 17/01/1930, p.7.

painted as encouraging passivity, as it was precisely its active elements that had led one Chief Constable for Greenock to describe behaviour in the dancehalls as 'conduct [that] savoured more of the Apache dens on the continent than of well-regulated social gatherings in this country'.¹⁹⁶

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the ways in which mass commercial leisure became a dominant player in the provision of recreations for many young working-class men. This development did not occur without controversy, and there was much contemporary comment on the potential social effects of a perceived shift from popular culture being primarily created to being merely consumed by 'the masses'. The above discussion has shown that a large part of this negative commentary could be put down to fears that unmediated, and perhaps more significantly, unsupervised access to cultural products could allow youths to construct their own social identities and tastes in ways that were unacceptable to the needs of establishment social norms. Central to these fears was the idea that dancehalls and, to a lesser extent, cinemas were creating youth-orientated social spaces in which the values of the parent generation were largely absent. This fear was compounded by the popularity of American cultural products, such as jazz and Hollywood films, over their British equivalents, that further prevented the transmission of British establishment values through the content of cultural products.

Cutting across this discourse was the further fear that, since these new leisure forms were largely consumed, rather than produced, the younger generation was becoming passive in its relationship to society. This is highly significant in terms of concepts of gender as the idea of self-motivated action, and by extension, personal responsibility were fundamental to the dominant discourses surrounding 'correct' masculinity. Despite these protests, the fact that

¹⁹⁶ Reported in *The Scotsman*, 17/05/34, p.8.

young people seem to have been playing an important role in influencing and creating the character of the dancehall experience suggests that attendance constituted a culturally creative act. It would seem that contemporary attitudes that saw the activity as part of a monolithic commercial cultural enterprise geared towards passive consumption were a long way from describing the reality of these places.

Just as it was, as discussed in the previous chapter, possible for young men to perform social identities situationally in workplace settings, so too the venues of commercial leisure opened up a whole new arena for the display of masculinity. The fact that it was largely peer-group performance in places such as dancehalls arguably made these displays more important in delineating the social hierarchy. While a young man who was, for example, an apprentice would have had a reasonably fixed social status in a shipyard due to his youth and lack of experience and skills, in a dancehall the primary ways of affirming social status would have been through dress and dancing skills. These attributes would allow men to present specific masculine forms that were tailored to increasing status amongst a peer group, rather than a general social or community audience. In addition to this, the above discussion has shown that there were multiple identities available to young men in the dancehalls that could be seen as loosely associated with the 'rough' and 'respectable' discourses that were the primary manifestations of contemporary working-class masculinity. Indeed some of the negative reactions to the growth of commercial leisure forms was likely down to the fear that the unsupervised mixing of those representing the 'respectable' and the 'rough' could result in the corruption of the former by the latter.

However, the significance of youths using the venues of commercial leisure as sites for identity construction should not be overstated at a socioeconomic level. An increased reliance on the market for the satisfaction of leisure needs could be seen as an opportunity for those in marginalised social positions to construct an identity based on consumption rather than

employment. However, there were significant limits to the extent to which this could be considered a true challenge to the hegemony of dominant ideals of masculinity. One limiting factor was the fact that, whilst consumers were able to make choices between the cultural goods available in the market, these choices were constrained by what the market provided. The result of this is that the opportunity to create oppositional identities through consumption is inherently limited. This means that, in order for youths to create oppositional identities through consumption, the things they consumed had to be somewhat detached from the intended meanings invested in them by their producers and re-symbolised. With this in mind it would be more sensible to view such artifacts and practices as having been absorbed into existing cultures rather than providing opportunities to create new ones. In the case of dancehalls it would perhaps be more accurate to think of their becoming new venues within which to 'do' working-class culture in the bounds of the resources available to young people rather than creating opportunities to create a whole new youth-based culture. The next chapter will examine the ways in which this concept can be attached to the use of rational recreational facilities by young working-class men.

Chapter 5 - Rational Recreation and Working-Class Youth

This chapter will examine the discourse of 'rational recreation' and the way in which it was embodied in the Scottish context in the mid-twentieth century through three organisations that focused their reforming efforts on young men: the Boys' Brigade, the Scottish Association of Boys' Clubs (SABC, the Scottish wing of the National Association of Boys' Clubs) and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA).

The first section of the chapter will discuss the concept of rational recreation as a specific historical discourse being propagated by certain social groups that continued to be relevant in the c.1930-c.1960 period. I will then discuss the work of the three aforementioned organisations both in terms of their specific work in the period under review and their relationship to the discourse of rational recreation, as well as to the ever expanding commercial leisure sector and the autonomous leisure pursuits of their members. The primary concern of the final section of the chapter will be the changing attitudes to mixed-sex activities among the voluntary organisations and the way in which they can be tied to the necessity to remain relevant to the recreational needs of their members.

One complication to consider in terms of the delivery of rational recreation through voluntary organisations is the extent to which working-class men themselves were able to take partial control of the running of such organisations on a day-to-day basis. Tammy Proctor has noted that, in the Boy Scout movement, advancement to leadership positions at a local level was accessible to working-class members who continued their association with the body into the late teens.¹ Similarly, there was a clear 'promotion' structure present in the Boys' Brigade that gave young men 'showing ability and quality of leadership' the opportunity to take on

¹ Tammy M. Proctor, '(Uni)Forming Youth: Girl Guides and Boy Scouts in Britain, 1908-1939', *History Workshop Journal*, 45 (1998), p.109.

increasing amounts of responsibility and eventually become 'officers' in the Brigade.² Significantly the system of promotion was said to have been 'founded on the system of the Public Schools and the Army – two organisations which have helped to make Britain great', a statement that indicates the heavily middle-class ideology of the organisation.³ In addition to this the Brigade ran residential training camps at Carronvale in Stirlingshire, as well as shorter non-residential ones in Glasgow, Dundee and Edinburgh, for those who wished to become officers and run their own Boys' Brigade Company.⁴

This relatively straightforward path to leadership in the organisation would have meant that there would have been opportunities for young working-class men to take charge of local companies and potentially alter their character. However, advancement in the Brigade relied on displaying the 'correct' traits so it is likely that those who eventually became leaders in the organisation had internalised the ideals of the Brigade to a certain extent. Further to this, while local level control of the organisation was possible for working-class men, at an institutional level the structure of the Brigade meant that these local leaders had little influence on the policies it followed. The 'Brigade Council' included leaders from all companies of the Boys' Brigade but it met only once a year and seems to have been limited to voting on some of the decisions made by the more exclusive 'Brigade Executive' made up of around forty older officers.⁵ This idea of 'grassroots' working-class influence in voluntary organisations tempered by establishment institutional control will be explored further below in relation to the SABC and the YMCA.

² Austin E. Birch, *The Story of the Boys' Brigade*, (London: Frederick Muller, 1965), p.102.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid, p.97.

⁵ Ibid, p.91.

5.1 - The Discourse of Rational Recreation

The promotion of rational recreation could be said to be a reaction to the growth of the urban working-class population in the mid-nineteenth century and the way they were spending their leisure time. William Baker has suggested that the provision of a Christian based recreation for young men who were migrating to London was one of the major motivations for George William's formation of the YMCA in 1844.⁶ There was widespread concern that the continuation of 'rough' culture, exemplified by drinking, gambling and violence was not only a threat to the lives of the participants themselves, but to the future of the nation, and even, in the most extreme expression of the ideology, the British Empire itself.

Indeed, the combination of fears surrounding a lack of discipline among young people and the fate of the nation as a result of this lack is evident, albeit from another source, well into the twentieth century. During the Second World War, one reason for the perceived need for social reformers to be involved in the upbringing of young people at all was the idea that working-class parents were failing to provide the correct level of discipline and socialisation. A 1940 Glasgow City Council report makes this link explicit in the context of war. Increased levels of juvenile delinquency are blamed on 'the definite neglect or default of the mother' in homes where the father is absent. It is made clear that the father's presence is essential for discipline as the mother is considered incapable of the same level of authority, especially if the father used corporal punishment for the purpose. The report went on to suggest that this lack of paternal discipline could be 'counteracted to a certain extent if the child joins some youth organisation'.⁷

The implications of these comments is a highly gendered view of parenting with only a father being seen as capable of providing physical authority in the household, and, in the

⁶ William J. Baker, 'To Pray or to Play? The YMCA Question in the United Kingdom and the United States, 1850-1900' *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 11:1 (1994), p.42.

⁷ GCA, D-ED 9/1/8 – Report on Juvenile Delinquency in Glasgow in 1940, prepared by Subcommittee on School Attendance of Corporation of Glasgow Education Department, pp.10-13.

absence of this authority, mothers' moral authority over young men was seen as inadequate for their discipline and, by extension, socialisation. This view suggests that authority in the working-class home was seen by establishment figures as depending entirely on the physical toughness of fathers. A similar attitude was taken towards the role of the schoolteacher during the Second World War. A Glasgow Corporation report went as far as suggesting that 'If character-making is to be regarded as an important part of the school function, it is desirable that there should be an adequate representation of male teachers, particularly to enforce discipline among older boys.'⁸ Once again it was assumed that male role models were the guardians of 'good character' and that female teachers, despite having holding a moral authority over their students, were not equipped to fully discharge their disciplinary role. The implication of this is that it is a correct *masculinised* character that the Glasgow Corporation Department of Education was attempting to inculcate, a project that is compromised by the military call-up of so many male teachers.

A century after the founding of the YMCA, and almost a decade following the Second World War, there is some evidence that the importance of the imperialist ideology was not completely absent from the worldview of the organisation. At this time the Kirkintilloch branch was planning a meeting with another local association where the topic 'Have we failed in our Christian duty to the Backwards peoples?' was to be under discussion.⁹ The missionary tone of this question suggests that the directors of the association still considered themselves, as Christians, to be acting as a 'civilising' influence on those who did not share their values around the world, as well, presumably, on the young men they worked with locally.

In the nineteenth century the physical fitness of the working classes was also seen as a national as opposed to personal concern in relation to their readiness for military service.

⁸ GCA, D-ED 11/1/189 – Corporation of Glasgow Education Department, Report on Juvenile Delinquency, October 1944, p.1.

⁹ East Dunbartonshire Regional Archives (EDRA), GD30/1/1/1 Kirkintilloch YMCA Minutes 1928-56, 16/5/54.

The recruitment drive for the Boer War in 1899 heightened these fears, due to the high proportion of volunteers that had to be rejected due to poor physical condition.¹⁰ J.A. Mangan and Colm Hickey have suggested in this context that, due to the concerns for the fitness of workers for both work and military service, 'Athleticism and Imperialism were the two truths essential to the nineteenth century worldview.'¹¹

The first of these ideologies, athleticism, was developed in the second half of the nineteenth century, and came out of the English public school ethos regarding the value of sports as providing the ideal socialisation in manliness. While sport was only one part of the socialising role that public schools provided for the children of the middle class, the fact that it was the element that was felt to be most translatable to activities for working-class youths meant that it was the primary concern of the rational recreationists in terms of the education system by the turn of the century.¹² This chapter will argue that, while the appeal of imperialism rose and fell across the first half of the twentieth century both in terms of its mass appeal and its rhetorical importance, the ideal of athleticism was an important part of rational recreation ideology throughout the period under review. Key to this ideal was its connection to evangelical forms of Christianity. Indeed, Callum Brown has observed that the discursive power of the evangelical narrative still had resonance for many into the late-1950s, even among people who were not regular church attenders.¹³

The meeting of religion and athleticism in the ideology of the middle classes has been described as 'Muscular Christianity'.¹⁴ This strand of thinking was, at least in part, an attempt to link the piety of evangelicalism with a stronger, and more dominant form of masculinity, in

¹⁰ Matthew Hendley 'Help Us to Secure a Strong, Healthy, Prosperous and Peaceful Britain', p.266.

¹¹ JA Mangan and Colm Hickey, 'Missing Middle Class Dimensions: Elementary Schools, Imperialism and Athleticism' in J.A. Mangan (Ed.) *European Sports History Journal: Reformers, Sport, Modernizers* (London: Frank Cass, 2002).

¹² JA Mangan and Colm Hickey, 'Athleticism in the Service of the Proletariat'.

¹³ Callum Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain: Understanding Secularisation 1800-2000* (London: Routledge, 2000), p.174.

¹⁴ For a discussion of this concept see, for example, Roper and Tosh (Eds), *Manful Assertions*.

order to counter accusations that the highly religious man was in some ways feminised or lacking in true manliness. Brown has shown that piety itself was often coded as a feminised virtue, and stated that 'the Christian church on Sundays [was] a highly feminised environment from the nineteenth century until the 1960s.¹⁵ The result of this was that advocates of religiosity among men needed a discursive tactic with which to link piety and masculinity. Similarly, Neil Garnham has observed that the Sunderland YMCA magazine in 1897 feared that its typical member was viewed as 'a namby-pamby creature, with a white face, an air of discouraged clericalism, and a bible always under his arm'.¹⁶ Muscular Christianity was a way of escaping these criticisms as it combined the piety of the evangelical discourse and the aggressive masculinity that was linked to sport and competition rather than to the more domesticated and, in some ways, feminised world of organised religion.

However, there is some evidence that the attempts of the church and its connected bodies to use Muscular Christianity as a way of 'masculinising' their faith and values were not entirely effective to say the least. The Boys' Brigade was an organisation that could be said to embody the principles of Muscular Christianity, and while it was, in many ways, effective in attracting many Glasgow youths it was certainly not considered to be an incontestably masculine organisation. One Springburn man who grew up in the late 1930s describes his and his friends' attitude to the organisation, 'when I was a boy, the crowd I went along with, we never seemed to bother joining the Scouts, or the Boys' Brigade, we used to call them cissies [an insult implying femininity and weakness] with their salmon tin hats'.¹⁷ It seems that for this group of boys the form of masculinity displayed by the Boys' Brigade was far from their ideal of what real 'manliness' was about. Interestingly though, this was not actually connected to the physical prowess of the Boys' Brigade members in comparison to the interviewee's. He goes

¹⁵ Callum Brown, 'Secularization, the Growth of Militancy and the Spiritual Revolution: Religious change and Gender Power in Britain, 1901-2001, *Historical Research* 80:3 (2007), p.400.

¹⁶ Neil Garnham, 'Both Praying and Playing: "Muscular Christianity" and the YMCA in north-east County Durham', *Journal of Social History*, 35:2 (2001), p.402.

¹⁷ GCA, Springburn Oral Histories Transcripts, No. 97 James Baxter, 21/12/87, p.14.

on to say that 'Of the boys in my class at Albert, there were Boys' Brigade men and there were Scout men, they had learned gymnastics at an early age being in the Boys' Brigade, the Lifeboys right up and all that, so they were more agile than we were, you know, we were all stiff (laughs).'¹⁸ The indication here is that it was the attitude of the Boys' Brigade that these Springburn youths found unmanly. It is likely that this would have been an important point in an environment where the independence of the skilled working man was still valued as a key attribute due to the continued local importance of the locomotive works as employers in Springburn.

The attitudes displayed here are illuminating in that they demonstrate the possibility of multiple idealised masculinities existing simultaneously, even among a group that, from a socioeconomic point of view, would seem to be fairly homogeneous. In this case the irony comes from the fact that the values that the organisers of the Boys' Brigade were propagating were ones which they considered to be most conducive to creating their preferred form of manliness while these values were simultaneously derided as unmasculine by the boys who chose not to join the organisation. The important point that this divergence of attitudes brings up is that, while the ideologies of rational recreation and the organisations which promoted them are usually referred to as deriving from the middle classes it is important to keep in mind the fact that this is referring to their cultural origin rather than the entirety of their membership. Writers such as Robert Gray and Eric Hobsbawm have suggested that the idea of a 'labour aristocracy' can be used as a way of taking account of differences within classes in the context of the formation of class consciousness, or to use a perhaps less controversial term, socioeconomic identity.¹⁹

The concept of the 'labour aristocracy' refers to a section of the working class which, while being in the position of wage labourers, was said to be more socially aspirational than

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Gray, *The Aristocracy of Labour*, Hobsbawm, *Labouring Men*.

others. These workers often had the more highly skilled, and therefore highly paid jobs and often saw themselves as comprising a separate social stratum to the rest of the working classes, especially in relation to those that worked in unskilled positions. The connection of this mindset to the rational recreationists lies in the fact that it was the children of the labour aristocracy who were most likely to be drawn to the values of organisations such as the Boys' Brigade. These young people could be attracted to the Boys' Brigade as the values they portrayed were more in line with those they had been brought up with than was the case for other working-class social groups. The labour aristocracy theory posits that the ideology of the labour aristocracy was not the same as that of the middle classes, merely that these groups felt that they had more in common with each other than they perhaps did with unskilled labourers.

Whilst the idea of an aristocracy of labour is useful as a way of thinking about differentiations within classes this chapter will show that, in the context of voluntary organisations, it is too simplistic a model to explain the use of rational recreations by working-class youths. Peter Bailey has shown that, far from being an inherent characteristic, 'respectability' can be used as a situational performance.²⁰ As will be explored below young men could be attracted to voluntary organisations as much through the opportunities they provided for leisure as through ideology.

The concept of 'rational' recreation is a useful one for thinking about the leisure provision of many voluntary organisations that were active during the 1930-1960 period; however, it is important to bear in mind that it should be considered in terms of its source, and the ideologies behind its provision rather than its form. As will become clear below, the actual activities that these voluntary organisations provided were often fairly similar in form to both the provision of the commercial sector and the kinds of activities which were undertaken autonomously by many working-class youths. The former is represented by the dances that

²⁰ Bailey, 'Will the Real Bill Banks Stand Up?'

the majority of organisations ran, and the latter are exemplified by the provision of football teams and leagues by both the Boys' Brigade and the YMCA, which could be seen as an attempt to replace the common, but 'delinquent' practice of playing football on the streets.²¹ Significantly, it was the idea that voluntary organisations could reproduce the recreational provision of the commercial sector in a morally-centred setting that was a large part of the motivation for conducting such activities, as observed by Stephen Yeo for the pre-First World War period.²²

For this reason rational recreation should be thought of as a set of values and ideologies which are disseminated through the provision of leisure facilities rather than a set of specific activities. This has the effect of making the range of activities that could be considered 'rational' very wide and allows the form these activities took to vary over time. Essentially there is nothing inherently rational about the activities themselves, merely in the values that were projected onto them by the largely middle-class patrons and organisers of the voluntary organisations in question. The significance of this construction of the 'rational' will become clear below where the ideas of youth agency and renegotiation are explored, and it is suggested that the administrators of voluntary organisations were not the only actors in this area able to project values onto recreational activities.

²¹ In fact the practice of playing football on the streets was illegal in Glasgow in this period. The Glasgow Police Criminal Returns for 1930 indicate that from 1905 those caught playing football would usually be cautioned by the Divisional Superintendent in the presence of their parents rather than being brought before the Police Courts. However, the fact that such a minor infringement was still taken seriously by the police indicates the continued establishment concern over 'rough' culture in the 1930s. See GCA, G352-20941435 COR, Glasgow Police Criminal Returns 1930, p.4.

²² Stephen Yeo, *Religion and Voluntary Organisations in Crisis*, pp.186-187.

5.2 - Establishment Recognition of Recreation by the 1930s

The above discussion has shown that the idea of using recreation as a form of socialisation had roots that stretched back into the nineteenth century. By the inter-war period the promotion of recreation as part of a healthy life for all sectors of the community had arguably become a fairly uncontroversial subject. A strong indication of this can be seen in the passing of the Physical Training and Recreation Act 1937 which sought to make greater provision of public spaces for sports and similar activities. The medical profession had also, by this point, come out in support of recreation, one Edinburgh doctor stating in a public meeting that 'Eight hours work, eight hours relaxation and eight hours sleep' was the ideal way of dividing the day.²³ In addition to this, by the Second World War the Scottish Education Department was actively promoting 'correct' forms of leisure as a way of preventing juvenile delinquency. A short film sponsored by the department in 1944 explicitly made a connection between the prevalence of juvenile delinquency and the lack of voluntary organisation provision in an area and suggests that 'the authorities main job is to see that these gaps are filled'.²⁴ Voluntary organisations were actually used as a part of the probation system for youths at the time, making recreation a key part of crime prevention strategies.²⁵ It is worth noting that the use of rational recreations as ways of training 'good citizens' was not an entirely new phenomenon, with these kind of views dating to the nineteenth century.²⁶ In the context of the inter-war period, the Glasgow Chief Constable's reports for the 1930s make frequent references to the

²³ *The Scotsman*, 02/03/34, p.7.

²⁴ Scottish Screen Archive, Ref 0291, *Children of the City* (Dundee: Paul Rotha Productions, 1944).

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Peter Bailey has suggested that some of the earliest attempts to promote rational recreation occurred following the passing of the Factory Acts in the 1840s as a way of creating a 'community of common sentiment and interest', see Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England*, pp.91-96. In addition to this see Price, 'The Working Men's Club Movement and Victorian Social Reform Ideology', for a discussion of the 'civilising' intentions of the initial Working Men's Club Movement. For late nineteenth century attempts to reform women's character through rational recreation see, Catriona M Parratt, *More Than Mere Amusement' Working Class Women's Leisure in England 1759-1914* (Boston: North-eastern University Press, 2001), pp.149-157.

idea that the *correct* form of leisure is fundamental to the creation of good citizens. The report for 1930 states that:

They [organisations such as the Boys' Brigade] afford splendid facilities for building up character, but there must be a quickening of interest on the part of organisations which are constitutionally the guardians of the moral and spiritual welfare of the young.²⁷

This comment clearly indicates that the goals of the rational recreationists were congruent with official discourses surrounding youth and leisure that saw leisure as a fundamental part of socialisation. Callum Brown has noted that, while there was no real Scottish Office policy on recreation at the end of the nineteenth century, by 1905 there was official recognition of the idea that popular recreations could lead to juvenile delinquency as well as a fear that voluntary organisations were at the brink of collapse.²⁸ While this chapter will show that the latter fear was not the case, at least for the three organisations under investigation, the observation does show that the desire to police youth recreations was one with strong historical roots rather than a mid-twentieth century invention.

The position of religious groupings in Scotland in the inter-war period was more ambiguous in terms of the acceptance of leisure for its own sake. A report prepared in 1938 by a youth-orientated committee of the United Official Secession Church suggested that 'rough' pastimes such as gambling, drinking and 'subtle and alluring forms of recreation and other activities' were causing youths to abandon the church, a fact that they predicted 'might spell disaster for the nation tomorrow'.²⁹ This clearly indicates some trepidation among Scottish religious leaders that new forms of recreation could be a challenge to their influence on youth and therefore the churches' future membership. Indeed, Sarah Smith has shown that the enquiries into cinema-going among the young that were conducted in the 1930s had executives that were overwhelmingly made up of those with direct ties to religious organisations. Smith notes that these enquiries ignored the findings of a national survey

²⁷ GCA, Chief Constable of Glasgow's Report 1930, p.4.

²⁸ Brown, 'Popular culture and the continuing struggle for rational recreation'.

²⁹ *The Scotsman*, 19/05/38, p.8.

conducted in 1911 and suggests that this was due to a desire to refute its positive findings on cinema's influence.³⁰ The implication of these observations is that the groups that undertook these surveys were attempting to justify their negative attitudes towards commercial leisure rather than discover the truth about the influence of the cinema on youths.

The Church of England seems to have been more accommodating of free time being spent outside the direct influence of the church. The Bishop of Croydon in 1932 suggested that 'It is much better for the mass of young men and girls who now parade the streets to be inside the cinemas seeing good stuff...it was perfectly right that there should be reasonable recreation.'³¹ With this in mind it seems that the Church in Scotland was adapting to the rise of commercial recreations at a slower rate than its counterpart south of the border. It should be noted that the Scottish Church, with its tradition of Presbyterianism had long been an opponent of many forms of mass leisure. Maloney has noted that in the 1890s the Church remained the only significant opponent to music halls, despite the fact that they had existed for half a century by this point and had become part of the 'mainstream of entertainment'.³² Of particular concern to the Scottish Church in the period under review was the provision of secular recreation on Sundays, a position that was not relaxed until the post-war period, and even then under protest.³³ This attitude appears to have extended to the organisations associated with the church: the Dundee YMCA stated in 1950 that 'any members of the Association who purport to represent a YMCA club In a Sunday competition or tournament...shall no longer be eligible to play in any Dundee YMCA team of that activity'.³⁴ These observations suggest that the religious lobby in Scottish society should be seen as inherently conservative, rather than specifically anti-commercial leisure. In fact, John Stewart has shown that the Church's concern with 'rough' aspects of modern working-class culture such as 'drunkenness, impunity and

³⁰ Smith, *Children, Cinema and Censorship*, pp.84-86.

³¹ *The Scotsman*, 25/11/32, p.5.

³² Maloney, *Scotland and the Music Hall*, p.83.

³³ See pp.367-368 below.

³⁴ Dundee City Archives (DCA), GD/YM/D/2/8, Dundee YMCA, Minute Book, 1938-1954, 03/05/50.

gambling' was an important part of its social philosophy from at least as early as the late nineteenth century, which places its objections to commercial leisure on a continuum regarding criticism of working-class leisure.³⁵

Callum Brown has observed that the church in Scotland undertook the promotion of groups such as the YMCA on a national level and individual church-based fellowship groups at the local level from the nineteenth century onwards and has suggested that 'various religious organisations had a dominance of the organised leisure pursuits of the young' in the 1890s.³⁶ Despite this it was clearly uncomfortable with the idea of leisure being provided by commercial, or indeed any secular source, perhaps fearing that these developments would lead to a loss of its own social influence. Critically though, Brown cites the origin of this secularisation discourse as the nineteenth century, so it may be more accurate to view these fears as a continuity in church thinking rather than as a reaction to the leisure patterns of the mid-twentieth century.³⁷

While recreation could be said to have become less controversial among establishment groups by the inter-war period, the form that this recreation should take in order to be considered a positive influence was still being contested both within and between classes. The discussion of the groups studied below shows the extent to which this conflict exercised those who wished to mould the young in particular, with the kinds of socialisation available through mass popular culture being a fundamental point of contention

In contrast to this, contemporary newspapers presented arguments regarding the importance of leisure to a 'balanced life'. An example of this recognition is an article printed in the tabloid the *Daily Record* in January 1930 and the readers' responses to it presented in the letters pages of following issues of the paper. The article in question recommends a two-year

³⁵ John Stewart, 'Christ's Kingdom in Scotland': Scottish Presbyterianism, Social Reform, and the Edwardian Crisis', *Twentieth Century British History*, 12:1 (2001) p.15.

³⁶ Callum Brown 'Religion and Secularisation' in A. Dickson and J.H. Treble (Eds.) *People and Society in Scotland, Volume III*, (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers Ltd., 1992), p.64.

³⁷ See Callum Brown, 'Did Urbanisation Secularize Britain?', *Urban History Yearbook* (1988), p.1.

'rest cure' for teachers after ten years of employment to counter what the writer describes as 'pedagogical insanity'.³⁸ The tone of the article is light hearted and it is difficult to see how serious the writer's views are and how much is satirical. However, the article appears in a page dedicated to serious news and the responses to the article printed in subsequent issues of the *Daily Record* appear to take the writer at face value so it is perhaps reasonable to treat it as a genuine opinion piece. Despite the ambiguity in the tone of the article this exchange brings up several interesting points concerning attitudes to recreation at this time.

Firstly, the article seems to suggest that the attitude to manual workers' needs for recreation identified by Johnston and McIvor as a characteristic of the pre-World War One period - that the working classes didn't need recreation in the same ways in which their social 'superiors' did - seems to have, at least partially, survived into the inter-war period.³⁹ This is indicated by the writer's suggestion that during their 'rest' from teaching, teachers should not be permitted to undertake any 'professional' work but should rather be encouraged to take up 'farming or other congenial manual labour'.⁴⁰ The key word that suggests there was some ideological basis to the statement is 'congenial', used in reference to manual work. Reference to any study of manual work in the 1930s would be adequate to show that, for the vast majority, such work was far from congenial. The implication then, in terms of the ideas being presented by the writer, is that manual work is a far less stressful occupation than teaching, indeed that manual work could almost be a form of recreational pursuit for those in more 'elevated' social positions.

In response to this letter one writer states that the problem that teachers have is often caused by a 'lack of suitable recreation' rather than being overworked. In this comment the idea that a rich non-working life could be used to compensate for an unfulfilling working life is made explicit. The respondent goes on to make the point that 'the average working man has to

³⁸ *Daily Record*, 13/01/30, p.5.

³⁹ Johnston and McIvor, *Lethal Work*, p.46.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

contend with more monotonous jobs and take his annual holiday without pay. No, or little, notice is taken of these worthies, the backbone of the empire.⁴¹ What is being suggested here is that many workers are being denied both a worthwhile working life and adequate access to recreation with which to make up for that lack. It is worth emphasising in this context that, in terms of establishment discourses, these calls for universal recreation were highly loaded. Those championing recreation for the masses who were not of the masses had a very specific idea of what they considered the appropriate content for recreation, one that was not necessarily related to what many people, the young and working class in particular, actually wanted. A similar attitude was displayed nearly a decade later in a 1938 article in *The Lancet*. It is reported that the physical medicine section of the B.M.A. discussed the idea that, for many youths:

A revival of agriculture would help substantially to solve some of the difficulties of adolescence. A spell of contact with the soil during which bodies, well fed and cared for, became inured to physical exercise in the open air under all conditions would do much to further mental as well as physical development.⁴²

It is clear from this statement that this group of medical professionals believed that urbanisation and the reduced physical nature of much work under mechanisation had led to a reduction in the physical and mental health of young people. The implication here is that the rural idyll is an ideal condition which modern society has destroyed to the detriment of public health. The article goes on to make this idea explicit in the context of leisure as well as work, suggesting that allotment schemes in cities are made more widespread thereby enabling the 'adult to solve his leisure problem other than by recourse to mechanised amusements'. It is significant that, once again, the increase in leisure hours for the general population is seen as a 'problem' that needs to be 'solved' through the ministrations of the cultural elite and the government, as

⁴¹ *Daily Record*, 17/01/30, p.2.

⁴² *The Lancet*, 03/09/38, p.575.

opposed to an opportunity for members of the working classes to spend time in a way of their choosing.

These ideas could be linked to the 'outdoor movement' of the early part of the twentieth century that saw recreations such as hillwalking and cycling as an important corrective to the ills of urban society. Indeed, Melanie Tebbutt has suggested that, in an English context, rambling was a highly gendered activity where the 'most arduous [terrain] was considered best suited to only the most manly of men'.⁴³ The suggestion of this point is that outdoor activity could function as both a recreation and a display of masculine prowess. It has been observed that the championing of the outdoors as an arena of recreation had multiple sources, and could be seen as a cross-class phenomenon. Knox has identified socialist groups such as the Socialist Rambling Clubs and ILP Cycle Scouts as important bodies in presenting alternatives to traditional working-class culture for politicised youths.⁴⁴ In contrast to this, Stephen Jones' study of leisure provision by voluntary organisations in the inter-war period identifies a strong middle-class dimension in the formation and involvement with organisations such as the Youth Hostel Association.⁴⁵ In addition to this, by the Second World War the perception that outdoors activities were an important part of a healthy life, for young people in particular, was an establishment concern. The 1944 government-commissioned report *The Needs of Youth in these Times* suggested the establishment of national parks to provide young people with opportunities to engage in swimming, hiking, camping and hostelling as well as the provision of more open spaces within towns and cities.⁴⁶ Mark Freeman has noted that in a post-World War Two context the Outward Bound project was heavily concerned with the 'character building' aspect of its programme, explicitly linking the physical endurance required in

⁴³ Melanie Tebbutt, 'Rambling and Manly Identity in Derbyshire's Dark Peak, 1880s-1920s', *The Historical Journal*, 49:4 (2006), p.1136.

⁴⁴ Knox, *Industrial Nation*, p.198.

⁴⁵ Jones, *Workers at Play*, pp.65-67.

⁴⁶ NAS, ED27/SED 329 *The Needs of Youth in these Times- A Report of the Scottish Youth Advisory Committee, November 1944*, pp.53-54.

wilderness activities with moral character.⁴⁷ These observations show that there was continued concern with getting youths to engage with the natural world through their recreation across the period under review as a way of countering the perceived problems of urban existence.

In academic circles the 'correct' use of leisure was seen as an important indicator of socioeconomic success in the post-war period. An example of this attitude towards recreation can be seen in the social survey *In their Early Twenties* conducted by Ferguson and Cunnison in 1955 and funded by the Nuffield Foundation. 'Good use of leisure' is cited, amongst other issues, as a contributing factor in determining whether the men in the survey had achieved a 'high occupational status' by the time they were 22.⁴⁸ The implication of this is that the way a person employs their leisure is a measure of their 'character' and therefore of their ability to succeed in a socially accepted role.

The idea of judging a person by their recreational choices was certainly not a new one, as can be seen in recurrent campaigns against working-class drinking and gambling in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Glasgow Corporation even attempted to make school leavers sign pledges not to engage in gambling in the 1920s similar to those the Band of Hope encouraged against drinking, describing gambling as 'another evil habit....which is daily leading so many to idleness and crime'.⁴⁹ This criticism of gambling suggests both a moral and economic objection to the pastime. At the same time Glasgow Corporation was attempting to reform the habits of school leavers by distributing a 'clean language' card along with the betting and gambling pledges. This card warned young people that the use of bad language was

⁴⁷ Mark Freeman, 'From 'Character-Training' to 'Personal Growth': The Early History of Outward Bound, 1941-1965', *History of Education*, 40:1 (2011), p.27.

⁴⁸ T. Ferguson and J. Cunnison, *In their Early Twenties: A Study of Glasgow Youth*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1956), p.3.

⁴⁹ GCA, D-ED 11/1/183 – Betting and Gambling correspondence, 1926-1972, Glasgow Corporation Education Department, Betting and Gambling Card. The fact that it was felt necessary to specifically target gambling as an issue at this point is significant as the pastime was illegal in Scotland during the period under review. What this suggests is that the breaking of gambling laws among the working classes was widespread enough to warrant further discouragement targeted at the young.

‘vulgar and unmanly’ and ‘shows a lack of refinement and self-control; corrupts the morals of speaker and hearer and inflicts intense pain on those of pure mind’.⁵⁰ The significance of the wording used in this case is that it directly referenced qualities inherent to middle-class forms of masculinity. In this sense these cards could be seen as an attempt to impose an explicitly gendered and class-based form of character amongst school leavers.

5.3 - Introduction to the Three Organisations

The Boys’ Brigade

The Boys’ Brigade was formed in Glasgow in 1883 by William Smith. The stated purpose of the brigade was ‘The advancement of Christ’s kingdom among boys, and the promotion of habits of Reverence, Discipline, Self-respect, and all that tends towards a true Christian manliness’. This object was central to the work of the brigade, and was established by Smith. It was also a very public object, being printed in all of the brigade’s literature and even being stated at the front of each issue of the *Boys’ Brigade Gazette*, perhaps in order to remind readers their ‘real’ purpose in the organisation.⁵¹ The object highlights the two main factors in the ideology of the brigade, according to its founder: religion and the correct kind of masculinity, or, what Smith would describe as the two pillars, ‘discipline and religion’. An examination of the early life of William Smith is illuminating in understanding the kind of character the brigade wished to impart on its young members. Smith was born in 1854 in Thurso and moved to Glasgow to work in an uncle’s warehouse business following the death of his father in 1867.⁵² According to his biographers, the main influences of his young life were military and religious. His desire was to ‘follow in his father’s and grandfather’s footsteps’ and

⁵⁰ D-ED 11/1/183 – Betting and Gambling correspondence, 1926-1972, Glasgow Corporation Education Department, Clean Language Card.

⁵¹ *Boys’ Brigade Gazette*. Note that the object of the organisation as quoted above was featured in the front pages of each issue of the magazine.

⁵² Peacock, *Pioneer of Boyhood*, p.15.

join the army, which he did by joining the First Lanarkshire Rifle Volunteers whilst in Glasgow. Religion was also important to Smith, Peacock describes his upbringing as conducive to a life of 'service' to youth: 'The child was fortunate in his early home, his parents were devout and god-fearing people who attended the village church regularly, and guided their children in the normal religious observances of Christian folk of those days'.⁵³

The implication is that it was this early upbringing, suffused with Christian values which led to his later interest in working with young people, and it was his lifelong interest in the military life which gave him the inspiration as to the direction that work took. In addition to this both of the Boys' Brigade historians who have studied the life of the founder seem to be at pains to highlight the typicality, rather than the exceptional nature of William Smith, both in terms of his upbringing and his outlook. Significantly, both MacFarlan and Peacock write of the Victorian era that saw Smith's birth and socialisation, and the development of the Boys' Brigade, in a highly positive way, using terms which suggest that this was some kind of social golden age, Peacock stating that, 'For the next 45 years the much maligned Victorian Age governed our destinies, the great Queen leading her people in the ways of peace, prosperity and moral rectitude.'⁵⁴ Similarly MacFarlan characterises the way the church was able to bring the city to a standstill on Sundays as a blessing, rather than the curse it was considered to be by many, and remained to be even into the post-Second World War period in Scotland. 'Sunday was different. Old Scottish custom brought complete peace to the city every Sunday morning...the ministers and magistrates saw to it that there was a decent and holy calm.'⁵⁵ This 'holy calm' referred to the fact that it was illegal for those running commercial ventures to open on Sundays due to continued pressure from the religious lobby to observe the Sabbath.

⁵³ Roger S. Peacock, *Pioneer of Boyhood – The Story of William A. Smith, Founder of the Boys' Brigade* (London: Clifford Frost Ltd., 1954), p.10.

⁵⁴ Peacock, *Pioneer of Boyhood*, p.3.

⁵⁵ Donald MacFarlan, *First for Boys, the Story of the Boys Brigade 1883-1983* (Glasgow: Collins, 1982), p.11.

It is clear from newspaper reports that this attitude was not shared by all in Glasgow. As early as 1930 Lord Provost Patrick Dollan is on record as stating that the anti-Sunday gaming campaigners had led to a situation where 'Glasgow [was] the only city where all youths could do on Sunday was walk the streets'.⁵⁶ This situation prevailed throughout the period under review and beyond, with some exceptions, the church in Scotland remained out of step with mainstream opinion on the importance and place of leisure. This seems particularly odd when it is taken into account that the church was often at the forefront when it came to debates on the prevention of juvenile delinquency, a clear case of doctrinal inflexibility preventing useful social progress. One important point in relation to the above quotations from each of the Boys' Brigade books is that both these books were written largely in order to appeal to the young members of the organisation themselves, rather than as an attempt at a comprehensive history of the organisation. It would seem from this observation that the worldview of the Boys' Brigade remained in some ways tethered to the evangelical Christian discourses bequeathed it by its founder, at least in terms of a certain level of nostalgia for the past if nothing else.

The immediate circumstance of the formation of the Boys' Brigade was Smith's work as a Sunday School teacher at the Woodside mission hall in the west of Glasgow. The accounts of this group suggest that it was a highly unruly one, and that the boys who attended were there as much to make trouble as they were to learn about the bible. Smith's idea was to use the military discipline that he had experienced, and been a source of, as a member of the rifle volunteers, in order to teach the boys of the class about 'correct' Christian manliness. To this end he recruited two of his colleagues from the volunteers to join him and a local club was formed.⁵⁷ Interestingly the early members of the Woodside brigade were not what would traditionally be described as members of the 'rough' section of the working class, being the children of artisans and skilled workers according to MacFarlan. Despite this, it is clear that

⁵⁶ *Daily Record*, 17/1/30, p.2.

⁵⁷ Peacock, *Pioneer of Boyhood*, p.18.

even among this group the values of the middle-class Christian founder were not shared by all of the would be recruits: 'Fifty-nine boys volunteered to join right away, some out of curiosity, others ready to see what fun they could make of the new idea. All of them were between 12 and 16. When they learned that discipline meant what was said, the number of recruits dropped to 35.'⁵⁸ This highlights an issue that the Boys' Brigade, and many of the other voluntary organisations often had to face. While their goal was to mould the values and identities of their membership into a shape that was consistent with their own ideals of 'Christian manliness', their strong outward projection of these values may have actually led to the situation where it was largely young people who already shared these values that were most often attracted to the organisation.

If this was the case then any potential to create a change in the culture of the youths who joined the organisation would be lost. Essentially the members could be said to have been reinforcing the values that they already held rather than absorbing those of a differing social group. There is evidence that this was the case for at least some of the members of the Boys' Brigade. One man recounted that he and his siblings were 'brought up and nurtured with the principles of Christian living'.⁵⁹ In this case it seems as if his joining of the Brigade was the result of his values rather than their source. However, as will be discussed below, it should not be assumed that the recruits to the Boys' Brigade did share these values in all cases. It was possible for youths to outwardly conform to the ideology of the middle-class run organisation, in order to make use of its facilities, without internalising its teachings. Richard Price has shown, in the context of the Working Men's Club and Institute Association (WMCIA), that the working-class membership was able to subvert the goals of the organisation and transform it into a

⁵⁸ MacFarlan, *First for Boys*, p.14.

⁵⁹ A quotation from Richard Jenkins, a member of the brigade in Glasgow in the mid-1930s in John N. Cooper (Ed.) *We Have an Anchor – Reminiscences of the Boys' Brigade from the Anderston District of Glasgow to Australia* (Glasgow: The Author, 2005).

body that catered to the cultural needs of the members rather than the benefactors.⁶⁰ Peter Bailey echoes this sentiment, stating that, in the late nineteenth century, 'workingmen used such institutions [as the YMCA] as a socially neutral locus for the formation of their clubs and teams; the function of institutions was more one of convenience than of direct encouragement'.⁶¹ While this kind of complete subversion was likely to be more difficult in organisations such as the Boys' Brigade due to the youth of the membership and the closely supervised nature of the activities the organisation provided, the principle that membership of an organisation does not imply an acceptance of its stated goals is a fundamental aspect of the analysis of rational recreation in this chapter.

Although the brigade started off as a single club, news of Smith's work soon spread throughout the evangelical community of the city and by 1885 Smith was in the position to form a 'Council of the Boys' Brigade' along with all those interested in forming companies in the west of the city, by the end of the year there were fifteen companies associated with this council.⁶² At this point twelve of these companies were in Glasgow, and the city remained a stronghold of the brigade into the twentieth century. By the brigade's jubilee in 1933 there were over 10000 Boys' Brigade members in the city alone representing 236 companies, whilst the movement as a whole saw national membership peak at 96000 in 1934, indicating the relative importance of Glasgow as a centre of the brigade's support even this far from its time of founding.⁶³ Perhaps surprisingly, for an organisation with such a strong religious link the Boys' Brigade remained popular throughout the 1940s and 1950s.

⁶⁰ See Price, 'The Working Men's Club Movement and Victorian Social Reform Ideology', 117-147

⁶¹ Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England*, p.139.

⁶² John Springhall, Michael Hoare and Brian Fraser, *Sure and Stedfast – The Boys' Brigade* (Glasgow: Collins, 1983), p.41.

⁶³ Glasgow figure from 46th Annual Report of the Glasgow Battalion the Boys' Brigade, 1930-31, national figure from Springhall, Hoare and Fraser, *Sure and Stedfast*, p.129.

Table 5.1 - Glasgow Boys' Brigade membership 1930-1960

Year	BB Companies	No. of officers	No. of Boys	All Ranks
1931	236	1489	10043	12383
1932	243	1556	10607	13100
1933	253	1539	12076	14500
1934	261	1606	12918	15474
1935	266	1620	12491	15070
1936	268	1640	12228	14894
1937	280	1602	12454	14953
1938	284	1611	12271	14793
1939	276	1620	11942	14523
1940	248	1450	8857	11138
1941	235	1441	8265	10458
1942	221	1405	7355	9436
1943	227	1457	8062	10119
1944	236	1556	9014	11192
1945	234	1620	9322	11556
1946	238	1513	9344	11398
1947	249	1455	9507	11515
1948	248	1495	9608	11663
1949	252	1511	10060	12216
1950	252	1524	9823	11991
1951	254	1537	9678	11851
1952	256	1497	9385	11524
1953	252	1479	9130	11238
1954	255	1505	9214	11346
1955	253	1498	9311	11436
1956	261	1554	9697	11906
1957	262	1559	9969	12257
1958	256	1483	9163	11352
1959	257	1512	9678	11967
1960	258	1554	10326	12733

Source: Glasgow Boys' Brigade Annual Reports 1930-1960.

NB: All ranks figures also includes 'staff sergeants'. These were young men between the ages of 17 and 19 who had remained members and were not considered to be officers (i.e. leaders), but were too old to be considered 'boys' in the terms of the organisation.⁶⁴

As Table 5.1 shows, there was a large drop in membership during the early part of the Second World War, likely a result of a range of circumstances including the requisitioning of Boys' Brigade accommodation for military purposes and the call up of officers and older members of the brigade to the forces. In addition to this, one man recounts that many of the civil defence

⁶⁴ This aspect of the organisation is described in Birch, *The Story of the Boys Brigade*, p.104.

classes that were put on by the government at this time were held on Friday nights, which had traditionally been the main parade night for the Boys' Brigade.⁶⁵ A further problem for the Boys' Brigade at this point in time would have been the fact that the organisation had spent much of the inter-war period attempting to distance itself from militarism, for example abandoning the use of the dummy rifle during drill in 1924.⁶⁶ This policy was likely a reaction to the experiences of World War One that reduced the currency of militaristic ideologies an issue that will be further explored below. The result of this was that the Boys' Brigade would have been unable to attract youths as effectively in a Second World War context where a militaristic form of manliness had, once again, become the ideal. Adding to the organisation's problems at this stage would have been the formation of the various civil defence bodies, which may have seemed more enticing than the Boys' Brigade at this time. However, it was not long before the Boys' Brigade seem to have regained much of their former strength and this continued to be the case throughout the late 1940s and 1950s, indeed, the organisation in Glasgow had a marginally larger membership in 1960 than it had had in 1931, spread over 22 additional companies.

As well as maintaining its numerical strength the Boys' Brigade seemed to be reaching a similar proportion of boys in the city at the beginning and end of the period. In 1931 the 10043 boys in the organisation represented 22.6% of the boys aged between 12 and 16 in the city. By 1951 the corresponding figure was 22.5%, indicating that the wartime decrease in membership had been overcome to a certain extent. While the membership of the organisation never returned to its late 1930s peak, by 1960 the brigade had reached its highest post-war membership at 10326 boys. This figure represented 23.3% of boys of the requisite age in Glasgow, indicating that the growth of commercial leisure options for young men had not lead

⁶⁵ Cooper, *We Have an Anchor*, p.8.

⁶⁶ Springhall, Hoare and Fraser, *Sure and Steadfast*, p.122.

to the widespread abandonment of the organisation which may have been expected.⁶⁷ Despite this continued success at the end of the decade, there was a reduction of around 9% in the membership of the organisation in the mid-1950s. The fact that the brigade was able to overcome this setback, both proportionally speaking and in terms of its absolute membership indicates that this was a temporary issue, as opposed to an abandonment of the organisation by the city's youth.

Perhaps the continued success of the Boys' Brigade in the post-war period could be put down to the growth of new housing estates that contained few amenities in this period. The records of the Glasgow Boys' Brigade indicate that it was one of the few leisure providers in these areas which were often built without the amenities that inner-city dwellers would have been served with in their previous communities. In the early post-war years the lack of churches and community halls made Boys' Brigade extension into these areas problematic, but by the 1953-54 session of the brigade they were able to say that 'So far it has been possible to start Companies and Teams in every new church'.⁶⁸ It seems then, that the extra companies that existed by the end of the 1950s were largely concentrated in the new housing estates of the city, the Glasgow Boys' Brigade Annual Report for 1952-53 stating that 'The uniting of the congregations of city churches has continued during the past session, but to some extent the loss of companies in this way has been offset by the addition of companies, particularly in the new housing areas'.⁶⁹ If this development in housing could be said to be responsible for the continued success of the Boys' Brigade, it seems then that it could explain the temporary reduction in the organisation's Glasgow membership. It clearly took time for the churches to become entrenched in these new communities and this would have had a similar retarding

⁶⁷ Population figures from Census of Scotland, 1931-1961, Boys' Brigade figures from Glasgow Boys' Brigade Annual Reports.

⁶⁸ Glasgow Battalion, The Boys' Brigade, 69th Annual Report, 1953-54, p.4.

⁶⁹ Glasgow Battalion, The Boys' Brigade, 68th Annual Report, 1952-53, p.4.

effect on the Boys' Brigade's ability to form new companies in order to make up for the loss of inner-city groups.

The implication of the success of the Boys' Brigade in the new housing areas is that these new recruits were from a variety of class backgrounds, and not necessarily the families of skilled workers, as is often assumed by accounts of the organisation. Sean Damer has shown that the housing schemes created by Glasgow Corporation in the post-war period were defined in terms of the socioeconomic position of their prospective tenants. The three categories that these fell into were 'Slum clearance', 'Intermediate' and 'Ordinary', and were essentially designated in terms of income and previous residence. The Slum Clearance housing was reserved for those previously living in city centre areas designated as slums, where much of the housing would have been condemned. The other two groups were selected from those in accommodation which was said to be 'overcrowded' and were divided in relation to the prospective tenant's ability to pay the higher rents required for this housing.⁷⁰ The result of this is that the different housing schemes were de facto socially segregated to a certain extent, with the more skilled, and therefore more affluent, workers taking up residence in the 'Ordinary' estates and the less well off being directed to the 'Intermediate' or 'Slum Clearance' estates depending on their specific socioeconomic circumstances.

With this in mind it would seem that the Boys' Brigade, if they were able to start companies in the churches of all of these new housing schemes, were able to attract youths from a variety of social and economic backgrounds, into the 1950s. This may have meant that the brigade was able to widen its social base in the period while the socioeconomic makeup of each individual company would have become more homogeneous. Arguably the economic changes of the post-1945 period would also have made participation in organisations such as the Boys' Brigade more accessible to working-class youths. The key changes in this regard

⁷⁰ Sean Damer, *A Social History of Glasgow Council Housing 1919-1965*, (ESRC Research Project R000231241, August 1991), pp.10-19.

were the government's commitment to full employment coupled with price controls in the years following the Second World War.⁷¹ When this is combined with greater access to paid employment for married women in the period, along with government policies encouraging women to remain in the workforce, it is likely that membership of the Boys' Brigade became possible for larger numbers of youths whose fathers worked in unskilled or semi-skilled work.⁷² Indeed, Finch and Summerfield's work on post-war marriage suggests that the extra income earned by married women's work was often spent on increased consumption.⁷³ In this context the Boys' Brigade, with its costs for uniforms and camps, may have been one of the beneficiaries of this income, especially if membership was still considered as a way of accessing a 'respectable' status. In addition to this, it seems that the move to new housing areas did not result in the breakdown of previous Boys' Brigade companies. One of the first residents of the Castlemilk estate recounts that her children continued to attend the Boys' Brigade company based in the area they had moved from.⁷⁴ This suggests that the move to a 'slum clearance' area did not completely separate youths from their older communities. In fact it seems that travelling to older residential areas was common due to the lack of amenities in the area: Castlemilk had 'no shops [and] practically no schools', for example.⁷⁵ This would mean that the Boys' Brigade companies formed in the new housing schemes of the post-war period were augmenting rather than replacing older companies.

⁷¹ See Catherine Schenk, 'Austerity and Boom', in Paul Johnson (Ed.), *Twentieth Century British Culture* (Harlow: Longman, 1994), p.303.

⁷² See Thane, 'Women Since 1945', p.395.

⁷³ Janet Finch and Penny Summerfield, 'Social Reconstruction and the Emergence of Companionate Marriage, 1945-1959' in D. Clark (Ed.), *Marriage, Domestic Life and Social Change*, (London, Routledge, 1991), p.13.

⁷⁴ Castlemilk People's History Group, *The Big Flit: Castlemilk's First Tenants* (Workers Educational Association, 1990), p.11.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

Scottish Association of Boys' Clubs

The youngest of the three organisations in this study is the Scottish Association of Boys' Clubs, formed in 1927, the Scottish wing of the National Association of Boys' Clubs, an English body that was essentially the blueprint for the association in Scotland. The NABC was formed in 1925 with the remit of pulling the efforts of the clubs together rather than acting as a central controlling body, as the foreword of the *Principles and Aims of the Boys' Club Movement* put it 'the NABC was formed not to be the centre of a new movement, but to lock together a number of existing bodies'. This is a key difference between the Boys Club movement and the other organisations. The rules imposed for a club to become affiliated were relatively loose, the *Principles* enumerates the following conditions as necessary for a club to be able to claim membership:

- (i) Has headquarters, (ii) Charges a membership subscription; (iii) Has a membership which comprises at least 15 boys between the ages of 14 and 18; (iv) Has a responsible head; (v) meets at least twice a week; (vi) Has been in existence for at least 3 months.⁷⁶

It is clear that these rules, whilst giving a framework for each club to adhere to, left the actual form that the club took to local conditions. This was significant in the early days of the association as one of the important factors in the formation of many boys' clubs was their independent, self-organised status.⁷⁷ By the 1930s there is some evidence that the association was attempting to rewrite this history, perhaps in order to further legitimise its work in the context of growing public discourses surrounding the provision of leisure. A report to the Carnegie Trust made by the SABC in 1934 suggests that

many...clubs have been formed by former pupils of schools such as Fettes, Loretto, and Edinburgh Academy, by local branches of Toc H, and by committees of leading citizens as in Aberdeen. Smaller clubs have also been formed by a few of the churches throughout the country.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ SABC, *Principles and Aims of the Boys Club Movement*, pp.3-4.

⁷⁷ W. McG. Eager, *Making Men – The History of Boys' Clubs and Related Movements in Great Britain* (London: University of London Press, 1953), p.411.

⁷⁸ NAS, GD281/83/118, Scottish Association of Boys Clubs File 1, Report of the Present Position Regarding Voluntary Organisations for Boys in Scotland 1934, p11. Note that Toc H refers to the organisation set up by Reverend Philip Clayton following the First World War to provide hostels for

This statement essentially credits middle-class reformers, in the form of either concerned 'leading citizens', ex-public school boys, or the same churchmen who were instrumental in the running of the Boys' Brigade and the YMCA, with the genesis of the movement, and the individual clubs themselves. In contrast to this assessment of the origins of boys' clubs a subsequent Carnegie Trust survey, *Disinherited Youth* seems to suggest that the majority of clubs that were started in Glasgow were done so on the initiative of the members themselves, often involving the conversion of disused shops into club rooms.⁷⁹ However, it may have been that these were not the kind of clubs the SABC was trying to encourage, as they were largely men's clubs that had a significant number of members in their early twenties. In addition to this the fact that many of these clubs seem to have been created autonomously by working-class men would have meant that they were functioning without a connection to any form of 'improving' agenda or voluntary body. One man who lived in Gallowgate in Glasgow recalled that when he was 16 'the older neighbours soon had formed a club, we got the use of an old building...My new dad who was a joiner did a lot of repairs in it and fitted a new dance floor'.⁸⁰ This suggests that not only was the club not of an 'improving' nature it also provided decidedly 'irrational' recreation, and this would go some way to explaining the SABC's reluctance to amalgamate such clubs. It is also significant that these autonomous clubs were often the resort of the unemployed rather than those with strong connections to established work cultures, perhaps implying that they would provide an inappropriate set of role models for the younger members. Having said this, the SABC seems to have had an equally negative attitude towards those work cultures which were based around the values of workers, as opposed to the needs of industrialists. An illuminating example of this attitude, which is indicative of the

men and to promote 'service and fellowship' among the community. See 'History' *Toc H* (<http://www.toch-uk.org.uk/History.html>) [25/09/11], for a short history of the organisation.

⁷⁹ Cameron, *Disinherited Youth*, p.114.

⁸⁰ Shettleston Activity in Retirement Group, *Dolly Tints and Dabbities*, testimony of Christopher Devlin, b 1915, p.25.

way the SABC thought recreation should be directed, is the comment made in regard to miners' institutes and the facilities they provided for young workers referred to in the above chapter, where they were said to be socialising young workers into the cultures of their older colleagues too soon.⁸¹

It is worth noting in this context that Glasgow seems to have been a weak area for the SABC throughout the period in question. Where possible the SABC attempted to affiliate local federations of boys' clubs, rather than individual clubs themselves, but there is a reference to the fact that, in 1930, shortly after the formation of the SABC, the Glasgow federation was disbanded due to a lack of membership. One potential reason for the lack of popularity of the SABC in the early 1930s could simply be the relative popularity of the Boys' Brigade at this point. Another potential reason is the attitude that the SABC had to the orientation and character of the clubs they were prepared to have associated with them. This is illustrated by the fact that there were a fairly large number of clubs in Glasgow in 1930 when the Union of Lads' Clubs collapsed. The Federation of clubs associated with the SABC in Glasgow at this point were considered by the association to be 'little more than football clubs taking part in a football league organised by the union...there were only four clubs that could be considered "boys' clubs" in the *intended* sense'.⁸²

There is an interesting tension here between the growing desire of the association to act as a 'top-down', organising body and the tradition of the individual clubs, and for that matter the apparent desire of the members to have a club they could control at some level, which was an expression of their local cultures. The *Principles* of the SABC state that

The conception of a club as a mere refuge from the streets, an alternative to the pictures or the street corner, where leisure may be whiled away in innocuous amusements designed to keep boys out of mischief, is more than inadequate; it is deadly.⁸³

⁸¹ See Chapter three, p.132

⁸² NAS GD281/83/118 – SABC, File 1, 1932-36, Draft of Statement on The Boys Club Movement in Scotland, 1932, p2, my emphasis.

⁸³ SABC, *Principles and Aims of the Boys Club Movement*, p.7.

This highlights the idea that, despite the apparently loose conditions for SABC membership outlined in the *Principles*, the SABC had definite ideas about what constituted a bone fide boys' club and what was simply a collection of boys doing as they wished. This attitude is further highlighted in a letter from Stanley Nairne of the SABC sent to J.M. Mitchell of the Carnegie Trust in 1934 that suggests that a 'knowledge of, and loyalty to, the club movement as a whole' and 'a greater knowledge of the technique necessary for conducting a successful boys' club' were essential for the leaders of affiliated clubs.⁸⁴ So, far from merely providing a support network for boys clubs', by the mid-1930s it is clear that the SABC were attempting to act as a controlling force in the conduct and aims of the clubs affiliated with it. Where this became problematic for them is where their attitude clashed with the needs of the youths of Glasgow, who seem to have had quite a different opinion on what they wanted from their clubs. The *Disinherited Youth* survey makes the point that attachment to boys' clubs, and clubs in general in the 1930s, 'was based more on some specific activity in which they could participate than on the principles and ideals of the movement. A good football team might be the chief attraction of a boys' club.'⁸⁵ What this suggests then is that there was a demand for Boys' clubs in Glasgow, but not necessarily for the kind of clubs that the SABC wished to encourage.

It seems the researchers of the Carnegie Trust had less of an axe to grind about this kind of motivation for joining clubs than the SABC did. The above quoted passage from the Trust went on to say that 'there is nothing wrong in this method of attraction, so long as it is properly used as a starting point to a wider range of activities and the all-round development of character and good citizenship', this despite the fact that the Trust was heavily involved with the development of the boys' club movement in the 1930s and 1940s.⁸⁶ In addition to this negative characterisation of boys' clubs that were based on a purely recreational, rather than

⁸⁴ NAS GD281/83/118 – SABC, File 1, 1932-36, Private document from Stanley Nairne (SABC) to J.M. Mitchell (CUKT) along with covering letter dated 8/10/34.

⁸⁵ Cameron, *Disinherited Youth*, p.114.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

an improving agenda, the SABC seems to have tightened up its membership criteria throughout the mid-1930s. The minutes of its 1935 leaders' conference asked the question 'The club movement glories in its freedom and the individuality of each club. Is there a danger that in this matter 'liberty may lead to licence', involving work that is not worthwhile, if so, how can it be prevented?'⁸⁷ This statement is key to the attitude of the SABC because there is no question that 'worthwhile' was to be defined by the goals of the conference itself, without any reference to the demands of the membership. By 1936 this imperative had shifted from a question of methods to a definite principle with the annual report for that year stating that: 'The association...insists that any boys' club to be affiliated to it must reach a definite standard.'⁸⁸ So while continuing to pay lip service to the idea of the fully independent club whose members had a meaningful input into its running and activities, the SABC was, seemingly, attempting to create a centrally controlled movement. They certainly wanted to have control over the atmosphere and overall culture of the clubs, and were extending the of training for potential leaders to this end in the name of improving standards. This would certainly have had the result of creating a certain shared culture for those leaders, if not for the young club members themselves.

Despite these issues of control and 'correct character' for clubs, the organisation does seem to have grown quite strongly into the post-war period. Whilst the membership of individual clubs is hard to ascertain, due to the largely informal nature of many clubs' organisation, the SABC was able to collect some overall membership figures throughout this period; these are shown in Table 5.2 below.

⁸⁷ NAS GD281/83/118 – SABC, File 1, 1932-36, Report on SABC Club Leaders Conference, p.3.

⁸⁸ NAS, GD281/83/119 – Scottish Association of Boys Clubs, File 2, 1937-1945, *The Street Corner or the Boys Club: The Annual Report of the SABC 1936*, p.8.

Table 5.2 - Scottish Association of Boys' Clubs Membership Figures 1933-1955

Year	No. of Clubs	Total Membership
1933	57	4552
1934	61	5806
1935	73	6610
1936	83	7223
1937	97	8441
1938	115	9859
1939	128	11989
1940	138	11363
1941	161	13311
1942-43	212	16483
1943-44	237	17920
1944-45	254	17882
1948-49	296	20872
1955	~300	~22000

Source: Scottish Association of Boys' Clubs Annual Reports 1933-1949. Note that the figures for 1955 are estimated from the data available.

This table shows that the SABC was able to consistently increase the number of affiliated clubs it represented and, with one exception between 1939 and 1940, increased the number of youths that participated in the movement throughout the period under review. The small reduction in members between 1939 and 1940 was put down to the fact that many of the 18 and 19 year old members had been called up for service. The large increase in membership that can be seen between 1941 and 1942 is put down to the fact that the SABC started working more closely with various denominational church groups at this point, with the result that an additional 52 clubs were affiliated with the organisation.⁸⁹ Interestingly, the SABC did not see the large dip in its membership at the start of the Second World War in the same way that was the case for the Boys' Brigade. The fact that the reduction between 1939 and 1940 was not greater could perhaps be explained by the reduced opportunities for alternative recreations during the war as well as the aforementioned addition of religiously based clubs. The wartime activities of the SABC will be further explored below, but it is worth noting here that this was the only one of the three organisations discussed that actually saw significant growth throughout

⁸⁹ NAS, GD281/83/119, SABC File 2, SABC – Annual Report 1942-43, p.3.

the Second World War and into the late 1940s. Wartime expansion could be explained through the fact that the at least some SABC clubs were directly connected to the war effort. The 1941 Annual Report of the organisation states that Air Raid Precaution (ARP) activities were being undertaken as a club activity.⁹⁰ For youths who were living with the discourse of the 'Peoples' War' this would likely be an encouragement to get involved with their local club. It would seem then, that the less formal, and less overtly disciplinarian nature of the boys' clubs meant that the movement was able to expand its appeal in the new social context of the post-war period, almost doubling its membership in the 1939-1955 period.

Young Men's Christian Association

The YMCA is the oldest of the 'rational recreation' based recreation organisations in this study. It was formed by George Williams in 1844 as an evangelical Christian organisation for young immigrants to London.⁹¹ Whilst having a strictly religious focus in its early years, by the inter-war period these activities had been joined by sporting and recreational activities in order to continue to attract members.

The change from a strictly religious to a more recreationally focused programme was not made without controversy within the association. Stephen Yeo has observed that, in the years leading up to the First World War, 'Congenial surroundings' were becoming more of a preoccupation than the 'principles of the movement', and this was felt to be the case by contemporary organisers of the Association.⁹² In addition to this kind of reservation, Neil Garnham has noted that, in the early days of the YMCA, sports were considered negatively as they could be seen to lead to men 'display[ing] personal prowess, simply for the sake of personal gratification'. They were also considered to be a distraction from the central Christian

⁹⁰ NAS, GD281/83/119, SABC File 2, SABC – Annual Report 1941, p.2.

⁹¹ Baker, 'To Pray or to Play?', p.42.

⁹² Yeo, *Religion and Voluntary Organisations in Crisis*, p.206.

purpose of the association, and therefore not regarded as highly important.⁹³ This is an important point as it indicates the need for a discourse such as 'Muscular Christianity' to be deployed in order to reconcile the ideas of athleticism and piety. However, Yeo suggests that the years prior to the First World War saw a withdrawal of 'vice-presidential patrons' from voluntary organisations in general which resulted in many of these organisations relying more centrally on the subscription money of the members.⁹⁴ This could have had the effect of giving working-class members of the YMCA a greater role in shaping the activities of the organisation on a day-to-day basis as they would be less dependent on the money of social reformers, who may have objected to some plans, for funding.

Quite apart from these developments, Garnham has suggested that one of the biggest barriers to the introduction of sports in the YMCA programme before the First World War was simply 'the apathy of both members and the general public toward physical recreation' in this period.⁹⁵ What this suggests is that the association was taking a largely instrumental approach to the introduction of sport, and it took a change in public attitudes to make physical recreation a worthwhile addition to the programme. It may have been that, in the pre-First World War context, these kinds of activities would not have acted as an effective way of attracting large numbers of members. By the 1920s and 1930s, with the growth of the aforementioned outdoor movement, it may have been that physical recreations were more of a draw due to potential members' involvement with such pastimes outside the association to a greater extent. The fact that the change in activities had not, by this point, created a shift in purpose in the eyes of the YMCA's organisers is illustrated by the statement of the Dundee YMCA in its 1929 annual report that: 'The object of the association is to provide facilities for the religious, intellectual, social and physical improvement of its members and other young men, by such means as are

⁹³ Garnham, 'Both Praying and Playing', p.398.

⁹⁴ Yeo, *Religion and Voluntary Organisations in Crisis*, p.198.

⁹⁵ Garnham, 'Both Praying and Playing', p.403.

approved by the association and its directors.⁹⁶ It is worth noting here that the association is still not alluding to recreation being one of its purposes, rather it is, 'physical improvement' that is their goal. The implication of this is that they see the provision of recreation as a means to an end rather than an end in itself, it is likely that the wording used here is an intentional attempt to downplay the significance of their sports provision in terms of the religious and moral goals of the association.

Another way of viewing the addition of sporting activities to the programme of the YMCA is as an attempt to discourage its members from taking a passive role in relation to sports and becoming spectators rather than actors. Yeo notes that one concern of the secretary of the Reading YMCA in 1909 was that members of the Association's football club would not 'scratch [skip] their matches on purpose to see a performance by the Reading Club – a team of professionals'.⁹⁷ This negative attitude to professionalisation in sport was still present into the inter-war period among voluntary organisations other than the YMCA. The aforementioned SABC *Principles* book warned in 1930 that 'The policy of the association with regard to play must therefore be to vigorously oppose the influence of commercial sport, which subordinates the game to the reward and character to material success.'⁹⁸ These two comments, made twenty years apart, indicate a continuation of the resistance to spectator sports among reformers that has been identified as a part of the nineteenth-century discourses surrounding muscular Christianity by Wray Vamplew.⁹⁹ When considered alongside the YMCA's conception of sport as a means to an end (that of character building) the reasons for the Association's perceived need to discourage young men from consuming, rather than participating in, sport is clear. The connection between being a spectator of sport and

⁹⁶ DCA, GD/YM/D/2/7 – Dundee YMCA, Minute Book No.8 1922-1938, Annual Meeting 20/9/29.

⁹⁷ Cited in Yeo, *Religion and Voluntary Organisations in Crisis*, p.205.

⁹⁸ SABC, *Principles and Aims of the Boys' Club Movement*, p.9.

⁹⁹ Wray Vamplew 'Sport and Industrialisation: An Economic Interpretation of the Changes in Popular Sport in Nineteenth Century England' in J.A. Mangan (Ed.) *Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism: British Culture and Sport at Home and Abroad 1700-1914* (London: Frank Cass, 1988), pp.12-14.

gambling is also worth considering in light of the Association's opposition to 'rough' forms of working-class culture.

The effect on membership of the addition of physical activities to the YMCA is difficult to judge, especially since the membership of individual local associations seems to have fluctuated greatly throughout each year. To further complicate matters, mention was frequently made in the context of the Dundee association that there were young men using YMCA facilities who were not members, which implies that there were a greater number of people making use of the association who would not be represented in the roll of official members.¹⁰⁰ However, it seems that, from the figures given at the annual meetings of the Dundee and Kirkintilloch branches, reproduced in Tables 5.3 and 5.4, that the YMCA continued to be a relevant organisation to Scottish youths into the 1950s.

Table 5.3 - Dundee YMCA membership, 1929-1959

Year	Full members	Associate members
1929	137	94
1930	97	139
1931	167	116
1932	131	121
1933	158	111
1934	132	58
1935	119	74
1936	104	54
1937	74	38
1938	82	39
1939	95	28
1941	70	23
1942	42	40
1949	218	478
1954	181	475
1959	169	458

Source: Minutes of Dundee YMCA 1929-59

¹⁰⁰ See for example, DCA, GD/YM/D/2/7, 6/10/39 for use of wartime canteen, GD/YM/D/2/8, 7/1/53 for use of facilities without paying membership fees.

Table 5.4 - Kirkintilloch YMCA membership, 1930-1955

Year	Full Members	Total Members
1930	99	153
1931	76	181
1932	85	156
1933	73	128
1934	78	172
1935	57	124
1937	-	78
1938	-	50
1946	103	-
1947	114	-
1948	125	-
1949	114	-
1950	112	147
1951	100	120
1952	97	117
1953	91	107
1954	74	94
1955	73	-

Source: Minutes of Kirkintilloch YMCA 1930-1955

Indeed, both organisations seem to have been flourishing towards the end of the period. If it is accepted that there was a significant growth in consumerism, and a reduction in the social draw of Christianity in the post-war period, as suggested by Callum Brown, among others, then the implication is that the YMCA had changed its public image, if not its deep-seated reasons for doing what it did.¹⁰¹ This is highlighted by the contemporary commentator T.R. Fyvel, who wrote in a survey of Juvenile Delinquency in the early 1960s that by this point the churches in working-class communities had been reduced in social influence to the extent that their 'dull angularity suggested only the dead aspirations of the Victorian era'.¹⁰² In this context the fact that religiously based rational recreation still found widespread acceptance among youths suggests that these organisations meant more to their members than the religious values they espoused, especially when it is considered that both the Boys' Brigade and the YMCA were the

¹⁰¹ See Brown, *The Death of Christian Britain* for the idea of a fall in church attendance and social power in the 1950s.

¹⁰² Fyvel, *The Insecure Offenders*, p.11. Note that while this survey was published in the early 1960s Fyvel claims that he started writing it in 1954, so it should be seen as a study of late 1950s youth, as opposed to that of the early 1960s.

result of the very same aspirations. It is likely that it was the opportunities for sports and outdoor activities such as camping that important in attracting people to the both organisations, and the fact that these opportunities were usually relatively cheap would also have been significant. The changing proportion of full members to associate members in the Dundee branch would support this hypothesis as the only condition of becoming an associate member was being 'a young man of good moral character'. In 1929 associate members made up 41% of members, by 1959 this proportion had risen to 73%. Associate membership would give a man 'all the privileges of members, except a voice in the management of the Association', whereas a full member would also have to be a full member of a church congregation.¹⁰³ This would place the YMCA in a position analogous to other providers of commercial leisure in the post-war period despite its religious motivations. It may have been that in the context of full employment of the 1945 period that the YMCA was used as a cheap source of sporting activities that would have allowed youths to spend more of their disposable income on the provisions of the commercial sector. In this way organisations such as the YMCA, that provided much of their recreational activities in an environment of little supervision could be popular in times of economic boom and bust.

The 1959 annual report of the Broughty Ferry YMCA states that the association had managed to gain new members despite the fact that they 'had to compete with the many counter attractions which exist today'. A significant aspect of this continued success is the fact that many of the newer members are said to be aged between 17 and 25.¹⁰⁴ Perhaps more significant, in the context of the discussion of working-class control of voluntary organisations undertaken at the start of this chapter, is the fact that they were able to state that 'new leaders have been recruited from among our members'.¹⁰⁵ This suggests that the organisation was still

¹⁰³ DCA, GD/YM/D/2/7 – Dundee YMCA, Minute Book No.8 1922-1938, 20/09/29.

¹⁰⁴ DCA, GD/YM/BF/5/4 – Annual Reports and Statement of accounts Broughty Ferry YMCA, Annual Report 1959, p.1.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

providing facilities which were valued by youths and men in the post-war period, and, contrary to the picture presented by the Dundee branch, that suggested an increase in instrumental membership, that there was still interest in running the organisation among the members. The latter point could be explained by the relatively rural position of Broughty Ferry in contrast to Dundee, which would have meant that there were fewer opportunities for engaging in commercial leisure when compared to the city. Much of the contemporary commentary on the formation of character suggested that by this age the critical stages of character formation had already occurred so in this context it may have been that the influx of older members could also have been seen as guaranteeing the continuation of the association through these older members' willingness to participate in its running. If this were the case then the association would have been looking to the future in terms of its attempts to socialise coming generations of youths.

The changes in the YMCA curriculum over the years illustrate the way in which voluntary organisations had to adapt their programmes in order to remain relevant to the lives of the people they wished to attract, as observed by Price and Yeo.¹⁰⁶ While they often attempted to remain true to their original founding principles, it is likely that changes which were made to the organisations in order to increase membership would lead to changes in the function of the organisations. An early example of this shift within an organisation that was originally formed as a vehicle for rational recreation is described by Edward Royle in relation to the mid-nineteenth century Mechanics' Institutes, which were judged as failures by contemporary observers. Royle points out that, while these institutes did fail in terms of their patrons' intentions, they actually provided a worthwhile form of technical education for the men that attended them. In this case the functional shift that occurred within the movement had the

¹⁰⁶ Price, 'The Working Men's Club Movement and Victorian Social Reform' pp.117-147, and Yeo, *Religion and Voluntary Organisations in Crisis*.

effect of attracting members to an organisation which had, in many ways, lost its initial purpose and taken on one that was more relevant to the needs of the members.¹⁰⁷

In the late nineteenth century the debate over the character and purpose of sport was not simply occurring within voluntary organisations such as the YMCA, but could be seen as a subject of general public discourse. Stephen Yeo has shown that the issue of the purpose of sport was being strongly contested among small football clubs, specifically in the context of the move from amateur to professional status made by Reading football club. This club finally became a professional one in 1895, making a change to the way it generated income, 'relying more on the money of consumers through the gate and less on men like Walter Howard Palmer or James Simonds [i.e. wealthy subscribers/patrons]'.¹⁰⁸ While the issue in this case was ostensibly the character of the club, and the way in which 'pure sport' was conceived, it could be argued that what was really at stake here was the control of the activity. While an organisation was reliant on wealthy patrons in order to survive financially, it was easy for those patrons to impose conditions for acceptance of this assistance, both on membership and on the culture of the club. Once the move to professionalism/commercialism was made these patrons no longer had the same influence, and the balance of power was shifted to the consumers of the game, in this case in the form of the spectators who, in the period under review, were largely working-class men.

In the case of the YMCA, the argument was less between 'pure sport' and commercialised sport, and more about the character of the organisation. Once again, control was a significant issue here as, in many cases, the sports clubs connected to the YMCA were formed by the members themselves rather than set up as a top-down enterprise. The result of this was that the control of the members' activities was taken away from the directors and given to the members themselves. There is evidence that this lack of direct control allowed the

¹⁰⁷ Edward Royle, 'Mechanics Institutes and the Working Classes, 1840-1860', *The Historical Journal*, 14:2 (1971), p.320.

¹⁰⁸ Yeo, *Religion and Voluntary Organisations in Crisis*, p.192.

members to engage in activities that were outside the ideological remit of the organisation. A clear example of this is the case of one of the clubs connected to the Dundee YMCA where, in 1938:

The secretary stated that it had been reported to him that one of the clubs was running a sweepstake in which bottles of whisky and wine, among other things, were being offered in prizes... Disapproval of such a method of obtaining funds was expressed but it was decided not to pursue the matter further.¹⁰⁹

There are two significant points to be made in relation to this issue. Firstly, the fact that the club was using drink to make money was in direct opposition to the association's temperance policies at this time. There are several references in the minutes of the association for the 1930s that suggest that the directors were sympathetic to the goals and policies of the Scottish Temperance Association, including a motion that they take part in the 'Temperance Sunday' campaign and bring the subject up as a part of the relevant bible class.¹¹⁰ Secondly, and perhaps more significantly, in the context of control is the fact that the directors decided not to take any action against the club in question. The implication of this is that they disagreed with the actions of the club in question but did not feel they were in a position to do more than register their objections, perhaps due to the fact that it was the members themselves who were running these affiliated clubs to a great extent. This suggests that the directors were more concerned about losing members by alienating them than they were with strictly enforcing their 'respectable' values on the membership.

In contrast to the Boys' Brigade and the SABC, the YMCA had more of a focus, as its name would imply, on young men rather than boys. By the late nineteenth century, when William Smith was founding the Boys' Brigade, the minimum age for membership of the YMCA was seventeen, perhaps a reason for the Boys' Brigade upper age limit being sixteen. The practical result of this policy of only admitting 'young men' rather than 'boys' was that, while

¹⁰⁹ DCA, GD/YM/D/2/7 – Dundee YMCA, Minute Book No.8, 04/02/38.

¹¹⁰ DCA, GD/YM/D/2/7 – Dundee YMCA, Minute Book No.8, 07/12/34.

there was certainly a set of rules and discipline associated with membership, perhaps most importantly the requirement to attend the weekly bible class, the directors of the association were less able to control the day-to-day activities of the members while they were making use of the facilities they supplied. YMCA members in their late teens and early twenties would simply not be amenable to the same constraints as their younger counterparts in the organisations that catered for those under the age of sixteen. A significant counter-influence to the discipline of the religious ideology of the YMCA would be the work cultures that many members of the organisation were involved in during the majority of the week. It seems unlikely that these men, who would often be in jobs where independence and self-direction were considered paramount virtues, would be ready to uncritically surrender these traits in their leisure time.

Another major reason for the relative lack of top-down control was that, outside bible classes or specific association meetings, much of the involvement that YMCA members had with the association was of an informal nature. This could encompass spending time in the rooms for social purposes, or be centred on membership of one of the sports clubs, many of which would have had little connection with the directors, especially if, in the case of a football club for example, its main activities were undertaken elsewhere. The fact that some of these clubs were in some ways quite distant from the central committee of directors meant that, as suggested above in the case of the whisky sweepstakes, these clubs were able to operate fairly autonomously in terms of their group norms, the implications of which will be explored later in the chapter.

Despite the differing approaches to the way in which members of these organisations would be moulded into the ideal future citizens, there is some evidence that the Boys' Brigade, YMCA and SABC were able to coexist without too much antagonism, and were in fact linked heavily

linked in some senses. First, it is worth noting the connection between the YMCA and the Boys' Brigade. William Smith was a member of the YMCA at the time that he formed the Boys' Brigade in Woodside, and it is suggested by Peacock that this association became: 'the natural haven for the Boys of the 1st Glasgow Company on reaching the BB age limit'.¹¹¹ As suggested above, it seems that the age limit of the Boys' Brigade and YMCA were in some way mutually supporting, with the Boys' Brigade acting as a 'feeder' organisation for the YMCA. This situation was explicitly recognised in the records of the Broughty Ferry YMCA for 1930 in the statement that 'the Boys' Brigade provides the best type of junior member to the YMCA'.¹¹² Similarly the Dundee association resolved not to form a junior section for those aged between twelve and sixteen in 1947 due to fears that this move could undermine the Boys' Brigade company.¹¹³ In addition to this, the Dundee YMCA seems to have considered the local Boys' Brigade company as an integral part of the association. In 1935 they demanded a financial report from the company, despite the fact that they had no part in its funding.¹¹⁴

It seems that not all of the YMCA associations were of the same opinion when it came to opening their facilities to those under the age of sixteen. The Kirkintilloch YMCA had a separate junior section for much of the period 1930-1960 despite the existence of a Boys' Brigade company in the town.¹¹⁵ There is even reference to the directors granting this section use of their hall on a Friday night, the night traditionally set aside for the Boys' Brigade parade.¹¹⁶ It seems that the association continued to follow this policy in the post-war period: an attempt was made in 1953 to revitalise the section, which was losing members and a suggestion was made that the section leaders use the 'Boys' Brigade book' for inspiration for

¹¹¹ Peacock, *Pioneer of Boyhood*, p.22.

¹¹² DCA, GD/YM/BF – 5/2 File 2: 64th Annual Report of the Broughty Ferry YMCA for year ending 31/3/1930, p.4.

¹¹³ DCA, GD/YM/D/2/8 – Dundee YMCA Minute Book, 1938-1954, 5/2/47.

¹¹⁴ DCA, GD/YM/D/2/7 – Dundee YMCA, Minute Book No.8 1922-1938, 14/2/35.

¹¹⁵ The 1st Kirkintilloch Boys' Brigade company was formed in 1892 and was active throughout the period under review, see 'About Us', *1st Kirkintilloch Boys' Brigade* (<http://1kirkintilloch-boys-brigade.btck.co.uk/About%20us>), [19/09/11].

¹¹⁶ EDRA, GD30/1/1/1 –Kirkintilloch YMCA Minutes, 1928-1956, 26/1/31.

the junior programme.¹¹⁷ In this case then, the junior section of the YMCA could be seen as a direct competitor for the Boys' Brigade rather than the 'natural' next step for boys reaching the brigade's upper age limit.

The provision of junior sections within the YMCA in the 1930s and 1940s did not always result, as may have been expected from the comments on the origins of the Boys' Brigade above, in a direct link to a Boys' Brigade company. While this was the case in Dundee it seems that, in some cases, the YMCA junior sections were actually affiliated to the SABC. However, in some cases the YMCA seems to have been providing recreational opportunities that competed with both the Boys' Brigade and the SABC. There is reference to the fact that the Glasgow YMCA youth section had 766 members in 1931, and none of the clubs these members belonged to was affiliated to the SABC. In addition to this, it would appear that the SABC saw itself as having higher standards for the operation of boys' clubs than the YMCA itself. A 1932 report suggests that 'YMCA clubs vary in size and are not, of course, all of equal value. Many of them suffer from inadequate leadership.'¹¹⁸ This lack of common standards across boys' clubs was, in fact, one of the major reasons for the founding of the SABC, so it is not surprising that the early executive of the association believed that there was a large scope for improvement in many of the existing clubs. Despite these differences, the relationship between the YMCA and SABC was largely a positive one, even if the two organisations did not always follow exactly similar programmes. A report on the position of the boys' club movement made in 1932 states that the initial Honorary Secretary of the SABC was a member of the YMCA council, a fact that implies a certain level of consonance in terms of the goals of the two associations.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 1/11/53.

¹¹⁸ NAS, GD281/83/118 – Scottish Association of Boys Clubs, File 1, 1932-36, Draft of Statement on The Boys Club Movement in Scotland, 1932, p.4.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

5.4 - Manliness and citizenship: rational recreation as a means to an end

The idea that recreation could be beneficial to people in ways beyond enjoyment highlights one of the fundamental defining features of rational recreation, that it was always considered by its main proponents to be recreation *for* something other than itself. Indeed, the fact that many of the commercial recreations that were developed during the twentieth century were ends in themselves was often a major cause of the lack of esteem they were held in. Even in organisations which would appear, on the surface, to have the provision of recreation as their reason for being this was strenuously resisted in the rhetoric of such organisations. For example the Annual Report of the Broughty Ferry YMCA for 1930 stated that: 'the primary purpose of our great organisation is the development of virile Christian character in all who are under the Red Triangle'.¹²⁰

This introduces the third strand of the rational recreation ideology, its strong basis in religious ideals of both citizenship, and most importantly for the purposes of this study, gender norms and behaviour. In this way the recreational goals of the YMCA were strongly linked to the religious goals of the organisation. Indeed, Neil Garnham has observed that in some quarters during the late nineteenth century the members of the YMCA were referred to locally as the 'young muscular Christians'.¹²¹ As the discussion below will demonstrate, this would still have been a reasonable assessment in the twentieth century. The YMCA was not the only voluntary organisation to use religious ideologies to justify the efforts it put into recreational provision. The Boys' Brigade, in a similar way to the YMCA, put its Christian credentials at the forefront of its public presentation. As mentioned above, their highly Christian 'object' featured prominently in both its internal and public literature and seems to have survived throughout the period, defining their thinking throughout its history. The National Association of Boys Clubs, in

¹²⁰ DCA, GD/YM/BF/5/2 File 2: 64th Annual Report of the Broughty Ferry YMCA for year ending 31/3/1930. The 'Red Triangle' refers to the logo of the YMCA.

¹²¹ Garnham, 'Both Praying and Playing', p.397.

many ways a less obviously doctrinarian organisation, also stated in its initial policy document, *Principles and Aims of the Boys' Club Movement*, that: 'A club is not treating its members fairly if it fails to recognise their spiritual needs...the boy instinctively reverences Truth and Justice and Love. The club must help him to identify these with Him who is their source'.¹²² What was common to all of these organisations in Scotland was their commitment to acting as a delivery mechanism for Protestant ideology, both in a strictly religious sense and in terms of the wider social discourses, such as the work ethic, which were seen as a major part of the Christian identity.

The extent to which this motivation was a part of the programme offered to the members of the organisation varied greatly between individual organisations. In the case of the Boys' Brigade, the bible class and religious training were a fundamental part of the organisation's main activities, this even extending to camp activities. One man, a member in the 1930s, recounted that while on the annual summer camp 'our bible classes were held in the marquee' and that 'Band members brought their instruments and played for the hymns'.¹²³ This seems to have been the case from the earliest days of the Boys' Brigade camp. MacFarlan cites the fact that one of Smith's early written instructions to other brigade companies on camping was that 'Each boy will, of course, bring his own bible'.¹²⁴ Another important aspect of the religious nature of the Boys' Brigade was the fact that each company was required to have a formal and meaningful connection to a local church. This connection was fundamental to the working of the Boys' Brigade company, with the local minister having approval of the appointment of officers. The significance of this connection to the church is that it essentially meant that anyone who had become a Boys' Brigade officer had been given a certain amount of social prestige and respectability, their selection as officers becoming almost 'proof' that they held the 'correct' social values. This in turn was likely to be an advantage in

¹²² SABC, *Principles and Aims of the Boys' Club Movement*, p.10.

¹²³ Cooper, *We Have an Anchor*, p.10.

¹²⁴ MacFarlan, *First For Boys*, p.30.

finding employment in a context where nepotism could be an significant factor in gaining access to trades.¹²⁵ The importance of this route to respectability can be seen in the large number of Boys' Brigade officers required to run the organisation. The Glasgow Battalion records show that between 1930 and 1960 there were never fewer than 1400 officers active at any one time, the lowest figure being reached in 1942. It is likely that the drop in the number of officers and boys in the local organisation at this point was due to the introduction of compulsion to Home Guard membership that occurred in February 1942.¹²⁶ This would have reduced the amount of time available for Boys' Brigade work and potentially led to the requisitioning of Boys' Brigade halls for military use.

Despite the centrality of religion to the programme of the Boys' Brigade it is worth noting that, according to Peacock's biography of William Smith, the regular Sunday bible classes were not made formally compulsory.¹²⁷ However, there is some evidence that this was not so much the case on a more informal, local level, one man who was a member in the 1930s stating that 'Sunday morning bible class was never a drudge, it was accepted as part of our itinerary and a place where we met with our chums. The fact that marks were awarded for attendance ensured an excellent turn-out.'¹²⁸ Another man, who was a member of the Boys' Brigade in the 1920s, recalls that going to the Boys' Brigade was as much about spending time with his friends as it was about absorbing religious values:

Actually most of ma friends were in that Boys' Brigade Company because of the fact that eh, ah wasnae a supporter, ah wasnae imbued with those ideas, although ah followed all the ism's and things like that with a certain amount of believe no' knowing any better, until ah did begin to assume some capability learning.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ See Chapter three on work cultures.

¹²⁶ Stockman, 'Competing Discourses of Masculinity Among Non-Servicemen in the West of Scotland', p.32.

¹²⁷ Peacock, *Pioneer of Boyhood*, p.49.

¹²⁸ Cooper, *We Have an Anchor*, p.13.

¹²⁹ Testimony of Mr GE, born 1908. Interview conducted by Annmarie Hughes, 30/07/97.

It seems, then, that the way activities such as bible classes were made more attractive to the members in the inter-war period was by making them a part of the community life of the brigade, and therefore something that was valued by the membership, even if ostensibly for reasons other than their intended purpose. While this approach seems to have been reasonably effective in the Boys' Brigade, it appears that the YMCA did not have the same success with the 'improving' aspect of their programme, despite the fact that bible class attendance was actually compulsory within this organisation. There is evidence in the records of the Kirkintilloch YMCA that there was a real need for the enforcement of attendance at bible classes among this admittedly older group of young men. In 1930 the committee moved to:

put a notice on the board to the effect that the general committee intends enforcing clause 4 of the constitution and that any member absenting himself from 2 consecutive Sunday morning meetings would receive a postcard. If that member had not given a reason to the Vice-Secretary members absenting themselves for more than 4 consecutive Sundays would be dealt with by the general committee.¹³⁰

This sanction appears to have been fairly ineffective though, and the committee are later moved to such actions as, in the first instance, the banning of defaulting members from using the billiards table. Eventually such members would have their names removed from the roll of membership, excluding them from the association.¹³¹ While this sort of action appears to have been rare, it does seem, from the attendance records given within the minutes of the Kirkintilloch organisation, that many members continued to miss these classes. Throughout the period 1930-1955 average attendance varied from a low point of 37% in 1934 to a more healthy 76% in 1948.¹³² The usual rate was somewhere between 50-60%, indicating that a significant minority of members were absenting themselves from the religious teaching of the association as often as they could without inviting disciplinary action from the directors.¹³³

¹³⁰ EDRA, GD30/1/1/1- YMCA Minutes, 1928-1956, 1/1/30.

¹³¹ EDRA, GD30/1/1/1 - YMCA Minutes, 1928-1956, 19/2/32, 27/10/33.

¹³² EDRA, GD30/1/1/1 – YMCA Minutes, 1928-1956.

¹³³ EDRA, GD30/1/1/1, YMCA Minutes, the average attendance at the bible meetings is given as a part of the minutes of the ABM of the association each year.

One of the potential reasons for the poor attendance of YMCA members at the bible classes is the fact that these classes were entirely separate from the other activities of the organisation. Unlike the Boys' Brigade where the religious activities were central to the organisation, the more informal nature of the YMCA meant that it was harder for the organisers to apply discipline to the members, or exclude them from activities as a sanction. In the case of the casual member, whose main connection with the association was using the recreational facilities of the local YMCA rooms, there was the problem of knowing whether they had been using the rooms, as there was no 'attendance record' for this type of activity. Indeed, it seems from the minutes of the Kirkintilloch association that a ban from certain activities had little effect on youths' use of the facilities. They note at one point that: 'the members who had received letters regarding their non-attendance had not been present at the Sunday morning meeting to date, and that one of these gentlemen was using the billiards table despite our letter'.¹³⁴ So the members were relying on the fact that the directors were not a regular presence at the rooms, with the result that they were able to use the YMCA in the way they wanted. This suggests that the organisers of the YMCA took the religious aspects of the association much more seriously than the membership, an idea which will be explored further in the section below.

In the case of the SABC, the religious aspect of both the association and the individual clubs was far less prominent. As shown above, the conversion of the young members to Christian values was certainly an important part of the motivation for boys' club workers, but the focus of the club as a place of recreation meant that these values were intended to be transferred through the various activities of the club rather than through direct sermonising and bible study as was the case with the other organisations referred to in this chapter. An illustration of this approach can be seen in the 1936 Annual Report of the SABC where, rather than advocating a large amount of religious training as a part of club activities, leaders were

¹³⁴ EDRA, GD30/1/1/1, YMCA Minutes, 19/5/32.

advised that 'running through the whole of these activities, is the idealism of a real and manly religion'.¹³⁵ This is certainly a more subtle approach to religious education, and it seems that the SABC may have seen this as being outside of their direct role. An early 1930s report suggested that the church largely sticks to the religious education while organisations such as the SABC focus on providing recreation for youths. It seems that the religious aspects of the club were unlikely to go beyond evening prayers. It is also worth noting that, aside from the above quoted passage on the spiritual needs of the club members, the volume *Principles and Aims of the Boys Club Movement* contains very little on the methodology of religious teachings. It seems as if the principles of Christianity were to be absorbed through the example of the leaders and helpers at the clubs rather than from active indoctrination as was the case in both the YMCA and the Boys' Brigade.

However, it is clear that what the SABC really wanted to achieve was the social indoctrination of the youths who joined the boys' clubs. An instruction to club leaders in 1940 on their responsibilities to their charges stated that 'in the end, the one object of all the activities of his club is the development of character'.¹³⁶ While the above discussion has focused on the religious objectives of the voluntary organisations this was not their sole purpose. As shown in the above quotation, the idea of imparting the correct values in youths was a question of personality and behaviour as much as it was one of the correct religious beliefs. While these ideas were clearly linked, in as much as many of the aspects of 'character' they wished to impart were based upon religious principles, there is evidence that the organisation's conception of correct socialisation was concerned with the religious, mental and physical aspects of youths' lives. This was encapsulated through the idea of 'fitness' which was the central concern of the organisation.¹³⁷ The choice of the term 'fitness' to summarize

¹³⁵ NAS, GD281/83/119, SABC File 2, *The Street Corner or the Boys Club: The Annual Report of the SABC 1936*, p.8.

¹³⁶ NAS, GD281/83/119, SABC File 2, SABC Annual Report, 1940, p.3.

¹³⁷ SABC, *Principles and Aims of the Boys Club Movement*, p.10.

the goals of the SABC is relevant to their concern with boys rather than young people of both sexes: there is a strong connotation of correct *masculine* character about the word, with its connections to both sporting and military abilities. Arguably this was important as it aligned the SABC with the goals of both the Boys' Brigade and the YMCA, who were also attempting to create a specifically masculine character in their members. This can be seen in the Boys' Brigade objective, in its reference to promoting qualities which 'tend towards a true Christian manliness'. While the YMCA's objective, as cited above, is less explicitly aimed towards the promotion of masculinity among its members, it would be reasonable to suggest that the values of Christianity it was promoting were those in line with a middle-class view of ideal manliness. While the extent to which the religious motivation of work with boys and young men is difficult to establish at the level of personal belief among voluntary workers, it seems clear that a commitment to muscular Christianity and athleticism were a common element of the ideologies subscribed to by many voluntary organisations well into the twentieth century. This was certainly the case from the point of view of the organisers, and much of the debate around the best ways to run the organisations in question could be seen as attempts to deliver these ideologies to the young members, instead of these members merely making use of the facilities provided. The idea that the latter, rather than the former, was often what the young members of these organisations were actually doing will be explored below.

Along with the gendered conceptions of piety and ideal masculinity, the idea of 'respectability' was another central part of the voluntary organisation programme in the inter-war period. In a sense the term could be said to be the centre of the self-identity of the rational recreationists, and the middle-class social ideal in general. However, whilst the term has often been used to refer exclusively to middle-class values, it can actually be seen as existing in working-class culture in a form modified to make sense in the different material context of working-class life. Hughes has shown that, while some aspects of middle-class respectability,

such as having a non-working wife, were unobtainable to workers, there were certain values which could be adhered to in order for a family to be able to claim a respectable identity.¹³⁸

Despite this, the form of respectability that organisations such as the SABC and the Boys' Brigade were attempting to inculcate in their young members was one which was based around middle-class rather than working-class values per se. The perceived importance of teaching young people a specific and inflexible form of respectability, largely based around the values of the public school system, seems to have come from a sense that the men, and in the case of all three organisations they seem to have exclusively have been men, who ran many voluntary organisations saw themselves as guardians of 'respectable' society. From a starting point of embracing this self-image they seem to have developed a feeling of 'duty' towards those in less elevated social positions. It should be emphasised that this attitude implied a largely negative position regarding working-class culture, which was seen, in most cases as evidence of a fundamentally aberrant socialisation, rather than a legitimate cultural response to working-class living conditions. The idea that the, largely middle-class, leaders of voluntary organisations were working to 'improve' this culture was spelled out clearly in the above quoted objective of the Dundee YMCA. A 1935 letter from Norman Ferguson, a Special Area Officer of the SABC, to the Carnegie Trust also makes clear the purpose behind rational recreation in regard to working-class culture: Miner's Centres in Lothian are criticised as having 'in most cases degenerated into places for loafing in'. Ferguson went on to lament the fact that 'the effort for the unemployed has come too late. It's like trying to revive a corpse, they themselves have developed a technique of how to employ their leisure time and the majority are content.'¹³⁹ What this suggests is that in the view of the organisation the unemployed men referred to are essentially already 'lost' to the improving socialisation of the SABC and their contemporaries. They have been fully integrated into a working-class culture based around

¹³⁸ See for example Hughes, *Gender and Political Identities in Scotland*, p.65.

¹³⁹ NAS, GD281/83/118 – SABC, File 1, 1932-36, Letter from Norman Ferguson to J.M. Mitchell, head of Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, dated 21/09/35.

'Dog racing, football pools, football, street corners, public reading rooms' and are therefore unlikely to be 'reclaimed' and become the 'respectable citizens' that rational recreationists are attempting to create.¹⁴⁰ The fact that these men were outside of the discipline of both employers and voluntary organisations would be the key to the idea that they were 'lost' to reformers. Steady work was often seen as a source of respectability so the unemployed were by definition excluded from this avenue of social acceptance. In addition to this, Andrzej Olechnowicz has shown that, in the 1930s, establishment reformers attempted to redefine unemployment as a 'new and fulfilling form of leisure'.¹⁴¹ If the unemployed men surveyed by Ferguson were using this 'leisure time' in ways traditionally coded as 'rough' then they were seen to be rejecting the 'improving' possibilities of this sphere of life and were therefore unlikely to be amenable to voluntary organisation ideology.

It could be suggested that this 'giving up' on previous attempts to re-socialise adult working-class men into middle-class forms of respectability was in fact partially responsible for the large emphasis many reformers placed on youth in this period. It has already been suggested that leisure held a much more prominent position in reformers' rhetoric regarding their desired improvements in society in the period under review and afterwards and it seems that these two factors may have been related. If reformers no longer saw a practical way of changing the behaviour of those who were already part of established working-class work cultures then they would attempt to mould the next generation *before* they became seriously integrated into these cultures. It is relevant in this context that the SABC thought that the ideal age for members to come to them was between 14 and 18, and that, critically in this context, it was only those who had left school during that period of their lives who were in need of their 'assistance', as stated in a report made by the newly reformed Glasgow Union of Boys Clubs in 1937: 'Nor must we forget the large number of secondary school boys who do not need the

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Andrzej Olechnowicz, 'Unemployed Workers, 'Enforced Leisure' and Education for 'The Right Use of Leisure' in Britain in the 1930s', *Labour History Review*, 70:1 (2005), pp.27-28.

assistance of voluntary organisations.’¹⁴² This statement makes clear that the boys who did not remain in secondary school, and who therefore went straight into either an apprenticeship or a ‘blind alley’ job, were the ones that needed to be under the influence of voluntary organisations. Presumably this was because they would otherwise have been socialised into the worldview of their workmates rather than that of their social ‘superiors’. The role of the young men who were to be leaders in the clubs can also be seen as a part of this philosophy of the replacement of influences from work culture with influences based on the values of the reformers. It should of course be taken into account that the values these young leaders were to inculcate in their charges were the ones they had so recently absorbed themselves from their extended secondary school or even university education. That youths recently out of school, and the work cultures they entered, were of particular concern to the SABC is explicable in the contemporary economic context. When the above quoted report was written the general strike of 1926 was still a recent memory. It may have been felt that the improvement in working-class employment prospects that had been brought about by the late-1930s rearmament drive would lead to increased worker, and more specifically trade union militancy, something that was in direct opposition to the desire to create a social cohesive society based on the myth of the rural idyll discussed above.

The desire that these leaders were ideally to come from privileged backgrounds is shown in the following statement from the 1937 Annual Report of the SABC: ‘Whether this boy [referring to the club member] is given the chance he deserves, and his heart desires, depends simply on whether young men of the right type will give one night a week, perhaps two, in a boys club. They have had a fair chance...In return, there is no finer or fitter form of service.’¹⁴³ It is relevant in this context to recall that, during the General Strike of 1926, students (who were

¹⁴² NAS, GD281/83/119 – Glasgow Union of Boys Clubs, Report of the Organising Secretary to be Presented at the 1st AGM on 26/10/37, p1.

¹⁴³ NAS, GD281/83/119 – Scottish Association of Boys Clubs, File 2, SABC Annual Report 1937, p.14.

overwhelmingly from privileged backgrounds in the inter-war period) had acted as strike breakers, once again connecting the organisational aspects of the boys' clubs with middle-class economic priorities.¹⁴⁴ The suggestion was that this group would almost 'lead by example' and that, as the members themselves got older, they would take the place of these young men after having spent enough time in the clubs to have become fully socialised into the values it propagated. In this way the members would go from gaining benefit from their involvement in the organisation to serving within it. The organisation made a point of downplaying the potential for class antagonism that might be invited by this relationship though, stating, in *Principles and Aims*, that:

Class feeling becomes absurd in boys' clubs where Public School and University men come not merely to 'run' or manage them, but to enter fully into their life, regardless of class, wealth or education. Clubs are not places where the rich and highly educated satisfy their conscience by good works. They are places where fullness of life can be found by sharing interests and occupations.¹⁴⁵

In this way, then, the members would see the leaders as potential role models rather than figures of absolute authority, implying more give and take between leaders and members of the clubs than might be suggested by its 'citizen moulding' programme. The SABC was really paying lip service to an egalitarian view of its work whilst in actual fact setting up power relationships that were highly ordered by class. The above statement could in fact be viewed as a continuation of the paternalist ideology described by Patrick Joyce in relation to nineteenth-century factory owners.¹⁴⁶ This construction sees the factory owner, or in this case, the agents of the SABC, as existing in 'harmony' with the working-class members whilst occupying a social position that is distinct from them. This allowed the SABC to publically state that they were entering into 'fellowship' with the membership whilst simultaneously attempting to remould the 'character' of the membership through a form of 'cultural imperialism'. In a context where the club was attempting to act as a surrogate for the socialisation that occurs

¹⁴⁴ Hughes, *Gender and Political and Identities in Scotland*, p.96.

¹⁴⁵ SABC, *Principle and Aim of the Boys Club Movement*, p.17.

¹⁴⁶ See Joyce, *Work, Society and Politics*.

through work cultures this is highly socially significant, as it had the potential to set up assumptions about the club members' place in society, and so could be seen as a way of ideologically reproducing the socioeconomic status quo. In addition to this the club method could be seen as an attempt to reduce left-wing sentiments in working-class youths. If club leaders were successful in creating a positive relationship with the members of a club then those members might be expected to be less likely to take a militant class-based stand in their employment later in life. Essentially the social philosophy of the SABC in the period under review was an attempt to create social cohesion based on a hierarchical structure in contrast to the more collectivist model that could be said to be a part of working-class culture and was espoused by socialists and trades unions. Further evidence that there may have been a conservative political function to some of the programmes of voluntary leisure providers is the Kirkintilloch YMCA's attitude to appropriate literature in the mid-1930s. In 1934 the committee was advised that 'certain periodicals of a political nature were finding their way into the reading rack'. To counter this they resolved that 'no literature of a political character should be allowed there'.¹⁴⁷ This is interesting as it indicates a desire by the YMCA to create a social space where the only acceptable worldview was their own. The inclusion of potentially subversive literature in their own reading room was clearly a threat to this goal. Indeed, in the context of the YMCA rooms, a relatively relaxed social space in which these ideas could be shared, it may have been felt that the ability of the members to get hold of such literature would be counter-productive to the whole task of 'improving' these young men that the association had set itself. It is worth comparing this attitude to the mention of public reading rooms in relation to the activities of the unemployed above. It might be expected that this would be seen as a positive thing, in relation to the regular conservative criticism of the fact that young people read

¹⁴⁷ EDRA, GD30/1/1/1 – YMCA Minutes, 1928-1956, 21/6/34.

little but comics and crime novels.¹⁴⁸ However, reading was apparently only considered to be a positive activity as long as the correct literature was being read in terms of its ideological content as well as its literary quality.

It is worth considering the role of the Boys' Brigade in the context of the inter-war period in terms of class relations. The Boys' Brigade was keen to distance itself from overt militarism in this period.¹⁴⁹ Despite this it could be argued that the work of the Boys' Brigade was one way of shoring up working-class boys' identification with the middle class and its values in the context of the depression and its aftermath. Similarly, the fact that it was based upon a military model, both in terms of its discipline and methods, could perhaps be seen as distancing it somewhat from working-class discourses of the inter-war period which favoured pacifism over militarism in many ways. The experience of the First World War led to the frustration of the heroic masculinity that had been a central part of the discourse of the war with the result that the military hero was no longer the exemplary social role model he had been.¹⁵⁰ Judy Giles has suggested that this led to the development of a new form of masculinity based on 'optimism and endurance' rather than sacrificial heroism.¹⁵¹ This would certainly have been a more tenable basis for masculine identity in the context of the depression, where the ability to endure hardship would have been more important than the exercise of heroic physical prowess. Indeed, the work of the SABC in the special areas in Scotland makes clear the antipathy towards military service among some young people in this period. In a report on fieldwork undertaken in order to set up more clubs in rural areas it was reported that the potential club members 'had some trouble when asked to fill in forms for membership as they thought it was a trap to eventually get them into military service'. In the example of a boys' club

¹⁴⁸ See for example the aforementioned report made in 1939 by Lothian school teachers on the leisure activities of pupils: NAS, Confidential Report on the Leisure of West Lothian School Children, p.11.

¹⁴⁹ See p.325 below.

¹⁵⁰ Adrian Bingham, *Gender, Modernity and the Popular Press in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), pp.192-199.

¹⁵¹ Giles cited in Bingham, *Gender, Modernity and the Popular Press*, p.213.

that was started in Blackbraes, in the North East of Scotland, a similar problem was encountered in that the organisers had 'not been able to persuade them that a boys' club has nothing to do with military service. The membership here has dropped down to 18 in consequence.'¹⁵²

In this context it was perhaps only the YMCA that were fully in touch with popular sentiment surrounding militarism in the 1930s. The minutes of the Dundee association made reference to a series of lectures to be held on the subject of peace in 1931.¹⁵³ In 1935 this policy seems to have been expanded with the directors agreeing to support the local League of Nations Union in their campaign for a plebiscite on 'Britain's attitude to war'. They also agree to provide 'such support as we could give, in the way of workers, the use of our rooms and also financially from our general funds'.¹⁵⁴

The conceptual connections made between the three organisations being studied here are not intended to imply that the three organisations in question operated along absolutely similar lines, or that their methods were entirely static across time. Rather they indicate ways in which the discourse of rational recreation was a common starting point for their work, and the way in which they approached the relationship of recreation, manhood and citizenship. The above account suggests that the organisations in question were largely concerned with propagating ideals, as opposed to providing leisure for youths in terms of their ultimate ends. This is not to suggest that they took an entirely prescriptive view of their work though, and it was common for all three organisations to make it possible for their members to take part in a variety of activities which could be considered 'popular' rather than simply 'rational'. In the case of the YMCA this can be seen in the minutes of both the Dundee and the Kirkintilloch associations, where it is clear that the inauguration of many of the sports clubs seems to have

¹⁵² NAS, GD281/83/119 – Scottish Association of Boys Clubs, File 2, 1937-1945, Field Report Dec 1936

¹⁵³ DCA, GD/YM/D/2/7 – Dundee YMCA, Minute Book No.8 1922-1938, 6/02/31.

¹⁵⁴ DCA, GD/YM/D/2/7 – Dundee YMCA, Minute Book No.8 1922-1938, 18/01/35.

been at the request of the members, rather than being a top-down imposition of activities the directors thought would be beneficial. The badminton club which was formed in Dundee in 1933 was recorded as being 'entirely self-supporting'. The only request this club made of the directors is that they paint a court for play in the gym, which was agreed.¹⁵⁵ It seems that the directors were happy to let the members dictate their own activities to a certain extent. The fact that the self-sufficiency of this proposed club was seen as something in its favour perhaps suggests that the directors were happy for the clubs to be reasonably independent of funding by the association itself, allowing them to concentrate on what seems to have been the more 'central' part of their programme, namely the religious and social 'education' of the members. In a similar manner to the badminton club described above, the post-war period saw the idea of forming an Art Club debated by the directors. A deciding factor in its favour was that there was 'an encouraging number of members [who] had indicated their intentions to participate'.¹⁵⁶ In this sense then, the directors based the activities they provided on the perceived needs of the membership, rather than simply on what they considered to be beneficial to them on a strictly 'rational' foundation, an idea that will be discussed below.

For all this willingness to indulge the recreational needs of the membership, it seems that there were limits to how much leeway associations would give individual clubs in terms of their relationship to the overall aims of the YMCA. In the reports of the Broughty Ferry YMCA for 1960 the recent decrease in membership was put down to the fact that they had 'asked the Queen Street Badminton Club to find other accommodation because it was felt that the Club was making no real contribution, by way of active help, to the general work of the Association'.¹⁵⁷ What this indicates is that the club in question was using the YMCA as a cheap and easy way of getting accommodation for their sport, rather than wanting to be a part

¹⁵⁵ DCA, GD/YM/D/2/7 – Dundee YMCA, Minute Book No.8 1922-1938, 3/11/33.

¹⁵⁶ DCA, GD/YM/D/2/8 – Dundee YMCA, Minute Book, 1938-1954, 3/9/52

¹⁵⁷ DCA, GD/YM/BF/5/4 – Annual Report and Statement of Accounts Broughty Ferry YMCA 1960, p.1.

of the 'community' the YMCA were attempting to create, with the bible class at its core. The important point to be made here, as it brings up one of the central tensions in the provision of rational forms of recreation, is that what the members of these organisations wanted from them was not necessarily in line with the aims the organisers had for them. The significance of this point in terms of the attitudes of the members themselves will be explored in the next section of this chapter. On the other hand, it was recognised, in the early 1930s at least, that the provision of recreation could be a way of attracting youths to the core of the association. The 1931 Broughty Ferry annual report stated that 'As a recreation billiards makes its appeal chiefly to the junior section. It is a game that brings out the finest qualities of sportsmanship, the art of controlling one's feeling when the play is going against us. Here it is that we recruit many of our members for a wider service.'¹⁵⁸ The provision of billiards is significant in the context of contemporary fears about the 'corruption' of youths who participated in the activity within the commercial sphere into the years of the Second World War. *The Needs of Youth in these Times* made its opposition to the presence of youths in billiards halls, rather than their playing of the game explicit:

there is a vast difference between an hour of recreation passed in a game of billiards and the waste of the precious leisure hours of childhood and adolescence in the atmosphere of a billiard saloon. The salons can be conducted in a seemly manner and yet be the means of developing wastrel habits and outlooks. The same strictures can be passed on dog-racing and all other places of resort used for purposes of betting and gambling and 'getting rich quick'.¹⁵⁹

This is a clear indication that it was the environment of commercial leisure, with its lack of supervision and connection to gambling, that was the real concern here. The way that the 'get rich quick' aspect of 'rough' culture contrasts with the emphasis on 'hard work' present in the ideology of 'respectable' culture as represented by organisations such as the SABC is key to understanding reformers' goals. The economic imperative to create 'hard-working' youths could

¹⁵⁸ DCA, GD/YM/BF/5/1 - Annual Reports of Broughty Ferry YMCA 1931, Director's Report, p.3.

¹⁵⁹ NAS, ED27/SED 329 *The Needs of Youth in these Times*, p.16.

be seen as a central goal of voluntary organisations, in line with the worldview of a hierarchical society discussed above. An assumption that these organisations were making, then, was that once these youths had been attracted to the organisation through the recreational provision they would be exposed to the opportunities for 'service' with that organisation and would take on the organisation's worldview. It is clear that this was a rather large assumption on the part of club organisers and the extent to which it was justified will also be explored in the next section.

The fact that the provision of popular recreations involved some form of compromise between what organisers wanted to provide, and what members would accept, was clearly understood from the point of view of the organisers themselves. For example, the SABC, in a field report on its work in the special areas in 1937 clearly indicates that the organisation saw the importance of providing popular forms of recreation as an enticement to potential members. The report states that, in relation to sport: 'I find that for new clubs in the special areas a good Physical Training and Games programme is essential in the initial stages. First the natural; afterwards the educational and the spiritual values can be imposed.'¹⁶⁰ There are several significant points in this statement, in terms of the ways in which the SABC wished to socialise its members. First there is the recognition that the youth must be attracted to the individual club through the provision of forms of recreation that are relevant to his interests, rather than by the advertising of its social goals. The fact that the SABC was comfortable with using this kind of enticement seems ironic to a certain extent as it seems to have encouraged the sort of social attitude that it was trying to prevent among young people, namely that of passively taking from the community rather than engaging with, and becoming a part of it. At the heart of these criticisms seems to be the idea that the commercial model of leisure provision was inherently flawed as it allowed people to engage in activities without investing any particular effort or

¹⁶⁰ NAS, GD281/83/119 – Scottish Association of Boys Clubs, File 2, 1937-1945, Field Report on Special Areas January 1937, p.2.

meaning in them beyond involvement with a financial transaction. However, this attitude is especially problematic when the comments on the prevalence of clubs that were 'little more than football clubs' among the early 1930s Glasgow boys' clubs cited above are taken into account.¹⁶¹ The impression given is that the SABC wanted youths to be active in the production of their own recreation, but only so long as the results of this activity conformed to the SABC's ideas of how leisure time should be spent. Once again, the conclusion that the SABC was intent on social conditioning, rather than simply empowering youths to achieve fulfilling social lives on their own terms, seems fairly inescapable.

Despite the ways in which providing popular recreations as an enticement to potential members may have gone against the grain of the SABC's central aims, as the last phrase of the above quoted statement makes clear, they may have seen this provision as justifiable in the context of the 'greater good' they were attempting to do. Organisers hoped that educational and religious socialisation would follow the initially casual relationship with the club, as the members started to internalise the values the leaders represented. Indeed the *Principles* of the association made it clear that the latter was an essential part of the club movement's purpose, stating that 'The conception of a club as a mere refuge from the streets, an alternative to the pictures or the street corner, where leisure may be whiled away in innocuous amusements designed to keep boys out of mischief, is more than inadequate; it is deadly.'¹⁶² So the provision of leisure, when not coupled with a socialising element, was to be avoided at all costs as it seems to have been seen to be encouraging 'passive' attitudes to recreation similar to those many reformers saw as inherent in commercial leisure. In fact, the *Principles* echoed the athleticism discourse of the previous century by explicitly noting that the SABC saw the playing of games as an instrumental activity in a similar sense to its educational and spiritual provision. It also seems significant that the word 'imposed' was used in relation to

¹⁶¹ See p.278

¹⁶² SABC, *Principles and Aims of the Boys' Club Movement*, p.7.

the transmission of social values from the organisers of the SABC to the young members. The implication of this is that the SABC recognised, contrary to its later protestations, that 'Nor need he [the club leader] define the qualities which the club requires in its members. Keeness, sportsmanship, fair play, friendship – all these are inherent in British boys.'¹⁶³ The values that it was attempting to inculcate were ones outside the ordinary cultures of their target audience.

5.5 - Rational Recreation for Irrational Youths?

While the organisers of the voluntary bodies in question were seeing the provision of leisure as a part of their programme of improvement, as a means to their ultimate aims of the 'correct' socialisation of their young members, it was not necessarily the case that the youths who attended were taking this 'improving' influence on board. The key debate here is whether the intentions of the rational recreationists were actually realised or whether the members of these voluntary organisations were able to make use of their provision without it having any fundamental effect on them beyond keeping them off the streets. This is not to suggest that every working-class member of one of the organisations was engaging in a form of resistance to the values of the voluntary organisation he was involved with, but the fact that this may have been the case for many provides a strong explanatory framework for these organisations having large memberships in the context of a still strongly autonomous working-class culture. Also relevant in this context is the fact that, in many cases, voluntary organisations may have been 'preaching to the converted' in terms of the cultural values they were propagating. An example of this can be seen in comments relating to the early make-up of the Boys' Brigade in North Woodside, as cited above. In this case it was likely that, to a certain extent, the values the Boys' Brigade was attempting to instill in the youths that attended were similar to those of their parents, rather than constituting an imposition of alien values from a 'reforming' class.

¹⁶³ SABC, *Principles and Aims of the Boys' Club Movement*, p15.

The focus of this section of the chapter is to explore the potential ways in which youths could be considered to be part of a voluntary organisation and yet not internalise the values it represented. Firstly, the values of the organisation could simply be ignored by the members, who could make use of the facilities provided and treat them in a similar way to commercial leisure provision, merely as a transaction to fill their time. I will describe this as an 'instrumental' attitude to leisure provision as it has parallels with Goldthorpe et al's description of post-war workers whose primary motivation for work was the money they earned rather than the value of the work itself.¹⁶⁴ In this construction the voluntary organisation's member would be attending for what he/she was able to get out of the association rather than viewing it as a way of life or a fundamental part of their self-identity.

This way of using voluntary organisations would be likely to see the young member pay lip service to the ideology of the organisation to the extent that he/she was able to convince the leaders that they were the 'right' kind of person to be a member. In a sense, this attitude to rational recreation was somewhat expected by the reformers and it seems that they felt they were able to achieve their aims despite this potentially difficult attitude, as suggested at the end of the previous section. It is likely that this attitude became more prevalent over the period under study due to the growth and proliferation of commercial leisure that was occurring at the time. One potential result of this shift in attitude would be that members of voluntary organisations would have a tendency to treat these organisations as if they were commercial concerns, and simply make use of their facilities without taking on board any of the 'teachings' it was attempting to communicate. The fact that all of the three organisations charged weekly subscriptions would only serve to increase the potential for members to conflate the commercial and voluntary sectors in terms of the leisure they provided. It seems that the SABC understood the importance of the role of the commercial imperative in the legitimisation

¹⁶⁴ Goldthorpe et al, *The Affluent Worker: Industrial Attitudes*.

of leisure provision. They insisted that a club, in order to qualify for affiliation, must charge a weekly subscription fee, on the basis that 'It is a commonplace of experience that what is not paid for is not valued. A club which provides everything free loses rather than gains members by doing so.'¹⁶⁵ Seemingly the principle behind this was that the SABC wished its members to take an active interest in the club, and it was thought that this could be best achieved by having them contribute financially, as well as by identifying themselves as active members. This insistence on financial contribution seems to have gone beyond clubs' need to financially sustain themselves in terms of equipment and venue costs and have been a point of principle. A similar sensibility can be detected in the YMCA records relating to their additional activities in the early 1930s. The minutes of a 1931 meeting stated in relation to one planned event that 'It was deemed inadvisable to have a free social and it was suggested that 1/- per member should be charged.'¹⁶⁶

Arguably the insistence of these organisations on the principle of payment for their recreational services was a way of making sure that the members did not take them for granted and consider their leisure provision as purely a form of charity. This may have reduced their attractiveness to independently minded young people. In addition to this, the SABC made it clear that members of a club should be making an active contribution to the running of the club, stating that, 'Without some measure of self-government a club is always in danger of losing boys of character and initiative, and keeping only the pallid personalities who reflect faithfully the leader's optimism, but have no energy or vital force of their own.'¹⁶⁷ Where this becomes problematic for the voluntary organisations in question is the fact that, by adhering to the principle of payment for their activities they may have actually reduced the potential for active involvement with the running of clubs or teams among the members. The downside of investing voluntary leisure with some manifestation of commercial practices would be that

¹⁶⁵ SABC, *Principles and Aims of the Boys' Club Movement*, p.17.

¹⁶⁶ DCA, GD/YM/D/2/7 – Dundee YMCA, Minute Book No.8 1922-1938, 13/3/31.

¹⁶⁷ SABC, *Principles and aims of the Boys' Club Movement*, p.15.

youths could consider the payment they make for these leisure facilities the end of their involvement with them. The result of this would be that the future of the organisation in question would be jeopardised due to a decreasing supply of young people who were motivated to take an active role in their running. Contrary to the desire of both the YMCA and the SABC, they would simply become another leisure provider rather than a form of character-building or social training for responsibility. The demand for payment would also have meant that, for the poorest youths, involvement with the club in any form would simply not be financially possible. This point is significant in terms of the SABC's attitude towards the unemployed discussed above. The unemployed in the 1930s would have struggled to pay for membership of a club, and the fact that the organisation considered these men 'lost' perhaps implies that they had little desire to recruit them.

It may have been that the large-scale growth in commercial leisure opportunities that occurred in Glasgow in the inter-war period, especially in regard to cinemas and dancehalls, contributed to the limited growth of the SABC and YMCA in the area at this time. The Boys' Brigade provided opportunities that were unavailable to young people in a more commercial form, in particular camping and musical instruction. Roderick Wilkinson recalls in his autobiography that it was his desire to learn to play the trumpet, rather than any sympathy with the ideals of the Boys' Brigade that led to his joining the organisation.¹⁶⁸ In contrast to this a significant part of the leisure provision of the SABC and YMCA was simply acting as a social space. The latter may have been less attractive to some young men for several reasons, perhaps most significantly, particularly for older boys, the fact that the social spaces that they were providing were male only and therefore did not present opportunities for members to meet the opposite sex. In this regard commercial leisure forms such as cinemas and dancehalls were clearly far superior; in the case of dancehalls, it could be suggested that a major part of

¹⁶⁸ Wilkinson, *Memories of Maryhill*, p.88.

their appeal was the opportunity for young people to socialise with members of the opposite sex. There is evidence that, when opportunities for mixed activities under the auspices of rational recreationists were made available, these were more generally popular than the single sex provision, the issues around mixed activities will be discussed below.

Another important difference between commercial leisure and rational recreation was the fact that commercial leisure providers made available spaces which were, to all intents and purposes, unsupervised. There may have been ushers in cinemas and door staff in dancehalls but other than in cases of serious disturbances their disciplinary role seems to have been fairly ineffective. For this reason, it may have been that even the 'hanging around on the streets' that was so demonised by contemporary commentators would have been seen by many youths as preferable to some of the rational recreation available to them.

A further way in which youths were potentially able to take part in the life of an organisation without taking on the socialisation it was attempting was through the renegotiation of the values of that organisation into a form which was congruent with their own. This is to say that the young members of the organisation could take the values being disseminated to them and adapt them to their own ends. The result of such a strategy would be that the member would feel that the values they were appropriating were consistent with those they brought with them from the cultural context they had been raised within, and which had more relevance to their parents' lives than to those of the middle-class reformers who headed many of the voluntary organisations. Also key in terms of renegotiation is the fact that, as suggested above, young working-class men were in positions of power in the local chapters of voluntary organisations.¹⁶⁹ While these men would be unlikely to be in a position to direct the strategy of organisations such as the YMCA at a national or institutional level, their running of individual

¹⁶⁹ See the introduction to this chapter, pp.249-250.

clubs and teams would have allowed them to confer a less doctrinaire, and less middle-class, character onto these bodies.

A third form of resistance to external socialisation, beyond an instrumental attitude to an organisation or the renegotiation of its values, would be the rejection of the values of the organisation and an attempt to subvert its meanings in ways which had no real connection with their founders' purposes. Richard Price, in his study of working men's clubs in the late nineteenth century, gives a powerful example of this kind of transformation in a similar vein to the mechanic's institute example given above.¹⁷⁰ While the initial purpose of the Working Men's Club was to 'civilise', 'refine' and 'elevate' the culture of the working-class members, as control was slowly relinquished to the members, these clubs became simply less commercially run forms of the pubs the reformers were seeking to replace.¹⁷¹ In this example, the members had been the ones who could truly be said to be controlling the direction and character of the clubs, where they became, among other things, a place where it was possible to get a cheap drink outside the regulated licensed hours that pubs were obliged to observe. However, this did not occur without compromise on the part of the working-class members and the middle-class reformers. A key example of this is presented by the attitude to drinking among the membership of a Leicester club who agreed to eject those 'who drank to excess'.¹⁷² This allowed the working-class club members to continue drinking whilst giving the middle-class reformers the confidence that they were 'improving' the pursuits of the members.

Due to the nature of the organisations being studied here, in particular their focus on youth, it will be appreciated that this third form of resistance to cultural control from above was less available to the targets of the reformers. As the Boys' Brigade, SABC, and, to a lesser extent the YMCA were bodies formed by adults for the benefit of youths, the power relations involved had the result of making such a fundamental change in purpose from the bottom up

¹⁷⁰ See p.288 above.

¹⁷¹ Price, 'The Working Men's Club Movement and Victorian Social Reform Ideology', p.118.

¹⁷² Ibid, p.128.

far less achievable, involving as it would the cultural conditioning of the adult group by the youths. This was the case from a practical as well as a psychological viewpoint: it would have been highly unlikely that a group of twelve to sixteen year olds could have run a body such as the Boys' Brigade on a national level without the capital, knowledge and authority of the adult organisers. This is quite apart from the fact that the officers of individual Boys' Brigade companies would have been able to influence their character and day-to-day activities to make them more relevant to the values of the working-class youths who made up the bulk of the organisation.

Despite the impracticability of members creating fundamental changes in the institutional nature of the youth organisations they were involved in, it does seem that there was a large amount of either an instrumental attitude to, or renegotiation of, the values of the organisations in order to fit the lives and cultures of the members. In this sense voluntary organisations could be seen as sites of cultural contest between the members and the organisers, taking into account the variation in socioeconomic position among the members of the organisations. It is worth noting in this context that there may not always have been such a large discrepancy between the way youths acted whilst using rational recreation than when engaged in less formalised activities. A telling episode from the minutes of Kirkintilloch YMCA suggests that some of the members were simply not displaying the 'respectable' Christian behaviour that the directors wanted to see. The Kirkintilloch association reported that they have had complaints from local residents about members 'standing at the door of the rooms and making remarks about passers'.¹⁷³ This is behaviour that might be expected from the more 'rough' section of working-class youth rather than the 'upstanding' young men of the YMCA and indicates that there were members who attended the association for reasons apart from the religious teachings it offered in the inter-war period.

¹⁷³ EDRA, GD30/1/1/1 – YMCA Minutes, 1928-1956, 23/2/34.

The discipline of at least some of the members of the Dundee association does not seem to have been much better by the early 1950s. The committee records that a director who had approached a member about falling behind in the payment of his membership fees was met with 'abuse and profane language' leading to the member's expulsion from the association.¹⁷⁴ Once again this would suggest that there were members in the association who were not taking on board the values of the association; they could even be seen as antipathetic to its whole ethos. This is not to suggest that all of the members of the YMCA were unmoved or unchanged by their connection with the organisation, but rather brings into question the idea that the socialisation it was attempting was successful, or even taken seriously by all of the membership. A similar case of instrumental use of rational recreation can be seen in some of the accounts of men who were in the Boys' Brigade in the 1940s with regard to their attitudes towards their membership. One man recounts that he 'only joined the Boys' Brigade because of the football team'; another states that, 'I went to the Boys' Brigade because of the football and all the activities you know...my mother wasn't a church-going person, but she was quite happy for us to go to the Boys' Brigade, because it got you off the streets'.¹⁷⁵ These are definite indications that it was not the religion or discipline that interested these boys. The reaction from the latter interviewee's mother is also worth taking into account as it suggests that it was not only the young members of voluntary organisations that saw them as simply a means to recreation rather than a socially significant movement. This idea would be in line with oral history evidence collected by Annmarie Hughes, one interviewee remarking that 'ah used tae go to the church on a Sunday and eh, ma mother told us eh, told me and another two brothers for tae go along wi' them ; you'll be oot e' trouble then ; ah'll know where ye are'.¹⁷⁶ These comments suggest that the instrumental use of rational recreation was a community-

¹⁷⁴ DCA, GD/YM/D/2/8 – Dundee YMCA minutes, 1938-1954, 4/7/52

¹⁷⁵ GCA, Springburn Oral History Transcripts, DG, 17/9/87, p2, and No. 94, 20/11/87, p.10.

¹⁷⁶ Interview with Alex Drummond, b1900, conducted by Annmarie Hughes, July 1997.

wide reaction to church and voluntary organisations as opposed to a strategy undertaken merely by the young members.

However, some did not take the necessity of pandering to the rational aspects of voluntary organisations in such a positive manner. One Springburn man, who grew up in the early 1930s, recounts his Sunday activities with something less than enthusiasm despite the fact that he was a member of the Boys' Brigade since age 12. He states that 'Sundays wis eh, oh it was a terrible day a Sunday. Eh, you got the Boys' Brigade bible class, ye had to go tae the church, ye had to go tae the Sunday school. Ye werenae allowed tae do anything else.'¹⁷⁷ While this earlier memory of time with the Boys' Brigade does not explicitly suggest an instrumental relationship to the movement, it is implied by the fact that attendance at the bible class was expected of members, if not actually mandatory. Presumably the interviewee had to go to the bible class as a result of his desire to take part in the other activities the brigade offered. Additionally his parents may have coerced him to attend: Hughes has shown that working-class parents would often use such provision as a surrogate for paying for childcare.¹⁷⁸ The interviewee does mention going on the annual camp each year from the age of 12 so it is likely it was at least partly the former that was key to his attendance at the classes. In common with the football playing members discussed above, this man seems to have seen the religious and moral teachings of the Boys' Brigade as merely something that had to be endured in order to get the benefits he wanted from it. In the context of the low standard of living for many working-class families in the 1930s it is likely that this 'cost' was easier to pay than the price similar opportunities would have commanded in the commercial leisure sector. Even where commercial leisure was engaged in to the full extent that was possible in terms of the family budget, it is likely that there would be time to spare for rational recreation. In the case of both the Boys' Brigade and the SABC there were activities available for members most nights of the

¹⁷⁷ GCA, Springburn Oral History Transcripts, No. 41, 19/12/86, p.5.

¹⁷⁸ See Hughes, *Gender and Political Identity in Scotland*, p.173.

week. One Glasgow Boys' Brigade member recalls that, for the payment of 1s on the weekly parade night he had access to 'PT and signaling on Monday, Brass band on Tuesday, Ambulance class on Wednesday, Swimming and Company Club on Thursday, Parade night on Friday, Football on Saturday and Bible class and youth fellowship on Sunday'.¹⁷⁹ So, even if he was spending some of his time at cinemas and dances there was potential for him to spend a significant amount of time with the brigade.

The SABC seems to have been attempting to work on a similar basis: one of its early conditions of affiliation with the association for clubs was that they met on at least two nights a week.¹⁸⁰ In its Annual Report for 1944-45 the association went one step further and produced a hypothetical breakdown of what observers would see if they walked into a club on any particular night. The idea behind this was to give outsiders, and presumably potential subscribers, an idea of the activities that were provided in their clubs. The programme suggested was fairly wide and ranged from musical appreciation, practice for putting on an opera, mending boots under the instruction of a cobbler, 'rough games', first aid and football.¹⁸¹ The reference to 'rough games' is significant in this context as it implies that the movement was keen to display a legitimate form of manliness in the context of the Second World War. Indeed this could be seen as a shift from earlier comments made by the association where the idea of providing a venue for rough games is seen as something to be avoided. *The Principles and Aims* suggest that 'he [the adolescent boy] will not "stand for" a club if it is a series of rough houses. He wants as much order and regularity as will enable him, unhindered, to use the opportunities which the club offers.'¹⁸² The juxtaposition of these types of game with the practicing for the opera is also significant here: the presence of games could be seen as a justification for the less explicitly 'manly', in terms of working-class culture, activity of opera, or

¹⁷⁹ Cooper, *We Have an Anchor*, p.33.

¹⁸⁰ *Principles and Aims of the Boys' Club Movement*, p.4.

¹⁸¹ NAS, GD281/83/119, SABC, File 2, SABC Annual Report 1944-45, p.2.

¹⁸² *Principles and Aims of the Boys Club Movement*, p.7.

as evidence that clubs provided activities for boys with all kinds of interests. In the context of the analysis of jazz presented in the previous chapter, the addition of opera to the boys' club programme could also be seen as an attempt by SABC organisers to interest youths in music that was more congruent with middle-class values. This should also be seen as a gendered issue as classical music and its appreciation was often coded as more rational and therefore masculine than jazz, which was seen as a more emotional and therefore feminine, and indeed, non-British musical form.¹⁸³

The idea here seems to have been that the club would give its young members an opportunity to engage in a rational form of recreation on every night of the week. When this is put into the context of the principle that clubs should cater to working boys rather than those in education, the intent is clear. If the SABC could provide regularly open social spaces for these young men, then they would not have the opportunity to become engaged in the culture of the street or the pub. These two locations, along with billiard halls, cafes and cinemas were often seen as being sources of poor socialisation. The implication was that they would grow up and take on the values of the working-class communities they lived in rather than being 'improved' in the way that the reformers would have chosen.

Another way in which an instrumental orientation towards voluntary organisations could have been manifested is in the actual activities in which the members were prepared to participate. The above examples from the Boys' Brigade show that the weekly Sunday bible class was something that even the more leisure motivated members were prepared to put themselves through. In the case of the YMCA, the activities which seem to have been most popular were the ones which were carried on away from the control of the central association such as the sports clubs and the more casual use of the rooms for socialising. As previously

¹⁸³ See Section 4.2

discussed, both the Dundee and Kirkintilloch associations seem to have had recurrent problems in getting a large proportion of the members to attend the weekly bible classes.

In a similar way to the Glasgow Boys' Brigade, the YMCA seem to have initially attracted some members through its football teams and sporting activities rather than through any kind of identification with its religious goals. The post-war reformation of the Dundee Anchorage football team is an example of the relationship some members of the association had with it. It is stated that, if they wish to have the club officially connected to, and therefore supported by, the local YMCA association the members must join the YMCA as well as the football club itself. One of the YMCA directors was moved to state that 'this procedure was the reverse of what should happen', that is, YMCA members should be allowed the benefit of the clubs connected to it, rather than clubs being formed and then taking advantage of the support of the association.¹⁸⁴ Presumably the directors were concerned that these new members would not be interested in the 'improving' aspects of the association, and would be simply using it to help fund their football team. This suggests that the association was well aware of the potential for the instrumental attitude that could be taken to its provision. At the same meeting at which the team was discussed, the directors resolved that they should have 'some say in the constitution of the club'.¹⁸⁵ It seems that, in the long term, the initial fears of the directors may have been well founded as there was a report at the end of 1954 stating that 'the YMCA and YMCA Anchorage Football Clubs were not adhering to the resolution regarding the necessity for club members applying for membership of the Association'.¹⁸⁶ So the club members were seemingly not interested in membership of the association and were merely using it as a means to an end. It is ironic that this was the case, as it could be argued that the YMCA itself was supporting the football team simply as a way of attracting members to the other activities that were its core focus. There is a connection here in terms of rational

¹⁸⁴ DCA, GD/YM/D/2/8 – Dundee YMCA Minutes 1938-1954, 1/5/46.

¹⁸⁵ DCA, GD/YM/D/2/8 – Dundee YMCA Minutes 1938-1954, 1/5/46.

¹⁸⁶ DCA, GD/YM/D/2/9 – Dundee YMCA Minutes 1954-1975, 8/12/54.

recreation usage with the comments made by the SABC in regard to the Glasgow Union of Boys Clubs in the early 1930s quoted above. It seems then, that what many young men wanted from their voluntary organisations throughout this whole period was simply a football club, rather than a club which provided a specific worldview for them to absorb.

5.6 - Rational Recreation During the Second World War and Beyond

Many advocates of athleticism went as far as to link prowess on the sports field with the requirements of the imperial project, citing a link between the kinds of manliness displayed by the sportsman and the soldier. The connection between the qualities of sport, military service and public school values could be traced back to the remark ascribed to Wellington that 'The Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton'.¹⁸⁷ While the veracity of this line, and its accreditation to Wellington, are far from certain, it does serve to indicate the way such activities were viewed. In the latter part of the nineteenth century this idea could be said to be a dominant one among the adherents of both evangelism and rational recreation. Indeed, in his 1945 essay *The Sporting Spirit* George Orwell likened international sports meetings to 'war without the shooting'.¹⁸⁸ While Orwell's description of the link between war, nationalism and sport was meant in a disparaging manner, the advocates of athleticism tended to view this connection as an important part of the socialising aspect of sport.

The Boys' Brigade's relationship with militarism during the period 1930-1960 was troublesome to say the least. From its inception the brigade had had a strong connection with the military. J. Berend Shaw, the historian of the Glasgow Battalion, states that 'The idea was military discipline combined with religious instruction', and that seventy-two of seventy-eight

¹⁸⁷ Quoted by Robert Richards MP, Hansard 16/06/42, accessed through *Hansard 1803-2005* (<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/search/playing%20fields%20of%20eton?decade=1940s&speaker=mr-robert-richards>), [21/09/11].

¹⁸⁸ George Orwell, 'The Sporting Spirit', *Tribune*, 14/12/45.

officers of the battalion in the 1886-7 Boys' Brigade session had served in the armed forces at some point.¹⁸⁹ In addition to this, military style drill, using a dummy rifle was an important part of the training the brigade provided until 1924 when the rifle was abandoned and the brigade cut its official ties with local Army Cadet Forces.¹⁹⁰ This move was prompted by a desire to increase the number of boys joining the brigade in the context of an increasing public support for pacifist attitudes at the time. The shift in public discourse away from militarism during the inter-war period has been ascribed to the frustration of heroic masculinity caused by the process of trench warfare, and the extremely high death toll among soldiers of all ranks it entailed.¹⁹¹ Indeed, during this period the Boys' Brigade made efforts to distance itself from its militaristic beginnings, arguing that, while its methods were reminiscent of military training, they were considered a means to the ultimate aim of instilling the correct manliness into its members.

The advent of the Second World War saw the Boys' Brigade play to its militaristic strengths once again. According to John Springhall, by 1941 the brigade was presenting itself as 'a training organization, approved for boys registering at the age of 16 to 17 years, in which membership can be continued until the time comes to join one of the services'.¹⁹² The Annual Reports of the Glasgow Battalion confirm the idea that the brigade was happy to put itself at the service of the military machine, stating that 'A handbook on pre-service training, which indicates how the Boys' Brigade training may be adapted to fully meet the needs of the present day, has been published this session'. Despite this, they were unwilling to resume their connection with the cadet force, stating that:

The executive have given full consideration to the Cadet question and have resolved that the Glasgow battalion of the Boys' Brigade can best aid the national effort by maintaining their activities at the highest state of efficiency and by extending their scope.

¹⁸⁹ J. Berend Shaw, *The Glasgow Battalion of the Boys' Brigade 1883-1983* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrew Press, 1983), p.1.

¹⁹⁰ Springhall, Hoare and Fraser, *Sure and Steadfast*, p.121.

¹⁹¹ Adrian Bingham, *Gender, Modernity and the Popular Press*, pp.192-199.

¹⁹² Springhall, Hoare and Fraser, *Sure and Steadfast*, p.177.

The existing curriculum of the Boys' Brigade, including as it does drill, physical training, signalling, ambulance, wayfaring, and swimming is, as has been proved on many occasions, excellent pre-service training.¹⁹³

The reluctance to be affiliated with the cadets was not just down to a belief in the superiority of the brigade's training, Springhall suggests that there were fears that such a link may 'lead to the religious aims of the brigade being compromised'. What is suggested by these changes in attitudes to militarism is that they were more of a strategy followed to keep the brigade in line with public opinion than they were a fundamental part of its ideology. While ideas of discipline and obedience were underlying aspects of the brigade's work, the impression given is that these were always to be subordinated to the goal of spreading Christian manliness, perhaps with the emphasis on the Christian.

The YMCA's position in the militarism debate was perhaps less contentious as it did not have the initial connection to military ideals that had informed the formation of the Boys' Brigade. Baker has shown that at the inception of the YMCA it was conceived as a strictly religious organisation, with even education being thought of as outside its initial remit.¹⁹⁴ This lack of involvement with the militaristic side of the athleticism discourse continued into the twentieth century. While the YMCA could certainly be said to have embraced the recreational side of its work by the inter-war period, Dundee having billiard, gymnastic and badminton facilities among others, by this point there was still no connection with any part of the armed forces. Indeed while there was a significant debate in the Boys' Brigade regarding its position in regards to militarism, the minutes of both the Kirkintilloch and the Dundee YMCAs in the years leading up to the Second World War do not contain a single reference to any links with the forces or similar organisations.

The connection between the forces and the YMCA itself was also much more ambivalent than that of the Boys' Brigade at the outbreak of the Second World War. One major

¹⁹³ 57th Annual Report of the Glasgow Battalion The Boys' Brigade, 1941-42, p.5.

¹⁹⁴ Baker 'To Pray or to Play?'

reason for this is that, due to their age, the majority of the members of the YMCA, in contrast to the Boys' Brigade, would have been eligible to be called up for the forces. For this reason the association would be less likely to feel a need to justify its existence in military terms in a time of 'national crisis'. In the case of the Kirkintilloch YMCA the association was shut down for the period of the war, its premises having been requisitioned by the army by the end of September 1939. The result of this was that the only activity still offered was the weekly bible meetings, which were moved to the local mission hall. These meetings continued until June 1941 when they were abandoned due to 'the call up of almost all young men' in the area. The association remained closed until February 1946 when it was revived in a similar format to its pre-war existence.¹⁹⁵

The Dundee association took a different approach to this, and carried on providing many facilities for its remaining members throughout the war. While this association was not actively training its members for service as the Boys' Brigade could arguably have been said to be doing, their contribution was more in line with providing facilities for servicemen stationed in the area, primarily through the provision of a canteen in their main hall.¹⁹⁶ In a sense this provision could be said to be in line with the original ethos of the YMCA itself, it was providing wholesome and 'rational' recreational facilities to those moving into a new area. It could also be seen as a direct continuation of the activities of the Dundee association as it would have been providing entertainment to young men from the area who were on leave, the primary difference being the lack of a requirement for these men to attend religious classes in order to make use of these services.

An interesting aspect of the measures taken to provide canteen and entertainment services to military personnel is that they were not to be provided by the men of the association themselves. The minutes which refer to the creation of the canteen state that 'It was agreed

¹⁹⁵ EDRA, GD30/1/1/1 – Kirkintilloch YMCA Minutes, 1928-1956, 29/9/39, 7/1/40, 7/2/46.

¹⁹⁶ DCA, GD/YM/D/2/8, Dundee YMCA Minutes 1938-54, 15/9/39

that a Ladies Auxiliary Committee be formed for War Work'.¹⁹⁷ This could be seen as a simply pragmatic response to the fact that many of the young men of the organisation would be volunteering or being called up to the forces, but I would argue that it says something about the gender norms the YMCA were attempting to promote at this stage. The implication here is that the young women of the area would be providing catering services for the men: in this way the traditional 'domestic' role of the women involved could be maintained while men were expected to be fulfilling the serviceman role. In this context it would perhaps have been considered inappropriate for the men of the association to be seen to be serving those in the forces in this way, as it would have put them in the position of performing what was seen as a feminine role.

By 1942 the association was also planning to run a hostel, to be organised and run by the female Auxiliary Committee. At this point 'there appeared...to be a need for the appointment of a Woman Assistant Secretary for the women's side of the work'.¹⁹⁸ The phrasing of this comment once again highlights the idea that this part of the association's activities was seen as one that was most appropriately undertaken by women as opposed to men. It is significant that this point of view remained so prevalent in the association as by this point in the war women were being directed into war work through the Essential Work Order of 1941.¹⁹⁹ In this context it seems that the YMCA were attempting to maintain traditional gendered roles within the organisation by restricting women to reproducing their domestic roles. This ideological stance could be seen as a way of shoring up masculinity as a counter to the fact that many women were taking on roles which had hitherto been considered masculine both in terms of their recruitment to heavy industry and as auxiliaries in the armed forces.²⁰⁰ It should be noted that the distinction between men's work and women's work within voluntary organisations was not a case of the men's contributions being seen as inherently superior. The

¹⁹⁷ DCA, GD/YM/D/2/8, Dundee YMCA Minutes 1938-54, 15/09/39.

¹⁹⁸ DCA, GD/YM/D/2/8, Dundee YMCA Minutes, 1938-54, 06/02/42.

¹⁹⁹ Gail Braybon and Penny Summerfield, *Out of the Cage: Women's Experiences in Two World Wars* (London: Pandora, 1987), p.158.

²⁰⁰ Ibid. pp.155-183.

value placed on women's voluntary work is illustrated by a statement made in the SABC's *Newsletter* of October 1947 regarding the work of the 'Ladies Committee'. In this publication there is a reference to a Stirling man organising a 'flag day', with the accompanying comment that the 'very fine example set by them [Mr McArthur and his helpers] may encourage other mere males to show what they can do to augment the very fine work which is being done by the Ladies Association'.²⁰¹ While the tone of this comment is gently mocking it does recognise the importance of the work done by the Ladies Committee in relation to raising funds for the association and imply that this work is most suited to women. Arguably this recognition of the contribution women could make to the work of voluntary organisations that were predominantly concerned with the socialisation of boys could be seen as a part of the of the 'teamwork' aspect of the companionate marriage discourse that was seeing growing popular acceptance in the years following the Second World War.²⁰²

In terms of wartime activities, one organisation that seems to have had more success in retaining members throughout the Second World War than the Boys' Brigade and YMCA was the SABC. Perhaps the most surprising aspect of the membership figures for the SABC is the fact that they were able to, except for the small decline noted above, increase their membership consistently throughout the period of the Second World War and in its immediate aftermath.²⁰³ This is in stark contrast to the fortunes of both the Boys' Brigade and the YMCA who saw a fairly major disruption to their activities during wartime. Whilst the latter organisations managed to regain much of their inter-war strength in the late 1940s the SABC was able to continue to expand at an impressive rate, almost doubling its pre-war membership by 1949.

²⁰¹ NAS, GD281/83/120 – SABC File 3, SABC Newsletter October 1947, p.4.

²⁰² Finch and Summerfield, 'Social Reconstruction and the Emergence of Companionate Marriage, 1945-1959', p.6.

²⁰³ See Figure 2.2 above.

This success was arguably not down to a growth in demand for such clubs from young men alone: the wartime annual reports of the SABC indicate that clubs were being seen as a useful institution by both military and civil authorities as well. The SABC annual report for 1942 makes reference to the fact that 'the War Office indicated their desire that boys in the Army Cadet Force should not only have military training, but the advantage of boys' club facilities when available'.²⁰⁴ There is also reference to the fact that the SABC had been organising clubs for the boys working as Civil Defence Messengers, perhaps in recognition that, even in a time of war, this group deserved to have some degree of leisure alongside their work and voluntary service commitments. The SABC was also attempting to increase the involvement of its members with civil defence duties during the war. There is reference in the 1941 report to club leaders that have 'arranged that very large numbers of club members are doing national service of one kind or another'.²⁰⁵ However, it seems by 1944 that these activities were largely unnecessary with attempts to arrange clubs for the Civil Defence Messengers at this point being largely unsuccessful as 'large numbers of boys taking some part in Civil Defence Services are, as it turns out, members of boys' clubs'.²⁰⁶ It is likely that the SABC would take this as a sign of the success of their methods and objectives because it could be argued that those taking part in voluntary civil defence work were embodying the ethos of service and 'social responsibility' that were central parts of the SABC ethos.

The interest of the government in the provision of boys' clubs, along with the aforementioned association with church groups, meant that the reduction in membership predicted in the annual report for 1941, due to the service and civil defence commitments of many of the members, did not actually occur.²⁰⁷ The SABC and its affiliated clubs continued to grow, and by 1944 the SABC was co-operating with a number of bodies in the setting up and

²⁰⁴ NAS, GD281/83/119 – SABC File 2, SABC Annual Report 1942, p.5.

²⁰⁵ NAS, GD281/83/119 – Scottish Association of Boys Clubs, File 2, SABC Annual Report 1941, p.2.

²⁰⁶ NAS, GD281/83/119 – Scottish Association of Boys Clubs, File 2, SABC Annual Report 1944, p.6.

²⁰⁷ See Figure 5.2 and discussion of affiliation of church groups on p.281.

running of clubs. These included the Scottish Education Department, Army Cadet Force, Local Education Committees and the newly formed Scottish Standing Conference of Voluntary Youth Organisations.²⁰⁸ In a sense, the SABC's involvement with civil defence work during the Second World War seems to have led to a certain level of 'legitimisation' of the young organisation in official circles. It is likely that this official support was a factor in the continued growth of the SABC throughout the late 1940s. Arguably the role of the SABC during the Second World War had less to do with its attitude to militarism than it did with the oft-repeated value the organisation placed on the concept of 'service' in a social sense. It is important to note that the SABC took a wide view of this concept, and while its use during the war to denote armed forces participation was clearly important, it was also used more generally in terms of the work undertaken by the organisations themselves throughout the 1930-1960 period.

Despite the limitations of the idea that leisure rather than work was the main source of 'degradation' among youths, it seems to have survived the Second World War.²⁰⁹ The SABC annual report for 1944-45 stated that 'A man's work does not define his character – his use of leisure discloses it'.²¹⁰ Arguably this could be seen as both justifying the work of the association in wartime and, to some extent, an explanation of the assumed social position of the organisers themselves. Firstly, it is likely that the SABC felt that there was a need to justify the time and effort that it spent on the leisure needs of young people in a time of 'total war'. To this end the 1943-44 annual report states that:

We wish to pay tribute to those older men who, despite added business responsibilities, still find time to serve each week in a boys club. Our colleagues in the services would be the first to suggest that these men, like the younger age group to whom we presently refer, are fulfilling Drake's exhortation to his men: 'Let us show ourselves to be all of a company'.²¹¹

²⁰⁸ NAS, GD281/83/119 – Scottish Association of Boys Clubs, File 2, SABC Annual Report 1944, p.6.

²⁰⁹ See pp.149-150 for a discussion of the perceived role of recreation on the degradation of youths.

²¹⁰ NAS, GD281/83/119, Scottish Association of Boys Clubs, Annual Report 1944-45, p.10.

²¹¹ NAS, GD281/83/119, Scottish Association of Boys Clubs, Annual Report 1943-44, p.2.

The implication here is clear: while these men were too old to perform active service in the military, their home front duties were considered to be as much a part of the war effort as those of soldiers in the field. It may seem disingenuous for the association to make this claim in this context when it is considered that the 'younger age group' referred to in the passage comprised younger boys' club leaders who were in the forces but, taken together with the previous quotation from the subsequent year's report, it can be seen as in some ways demonstrating the association's self-identity of its social role. Arguably the two quotations above indicate that the SABC was in agreement with the commentators cited earlier that social ills were the result of personal choice not socioeconomic environment, and so the best way to tackle them was through the 'improving' auspices of boys' clubs.²¹² Since young men were subject to high levels of external control during the war, through conscription, and direction to war work and civil defence duties if civilians, the restatement of a discourse that it was leisure and not work that 'degraded' them was an important way of preventing the war effort from being seen as a causal factor in social problems. The result of this establishment deflection of responsibility is that, in a similar manner to the 1930s comments above, young workers are seen as personally responsible for their own 'character' defects. These are constructed as being a result of their wasting, and 'misuse' of leisure, rather than being seen as a result of potentially formative nature of their deskilled, monotonous or exhausting work.

In a similar way, if the leisure time activities of young people were critical to forming their character, then the fact that the SABC was committed to providing leisure which had a socialising nature could be seen as shaping the rising generation to become the citizens of the future. If this was accepted then the activities of organisations such as the SABC would be critical to the nation's future. This concern for the standard of the future citizen was echoed in the newspaper commentary of the time. An article published in the *The Scotsman* on a survey

²¹² See pp.146-148 above.

of the future needs of youth and their place in society claimed that a 'new kind of young man and woman [is] needed for adult living in the world of today'.²¹³ In this context the work of the SABC would be seen as another essential part of the reforming of society following the Second World War. It is likely that these concerns would only become more significant in the 1950s, as commercial culture and the mechanisation of work became more and more prevalent.

T.R. Fyvel commented, in relation to the youth of the mid-1950s in England, that this period saw 'a more intensified gang life, [In England] characterised by a hostility towards authority in every form'.²¹⁴ While the emergence of the 'Teddy boy' in the 1950s could certainly be seen as constituting a new subculture, I would argue that, in terms of gang life, rather than a new trend, what this really shows is a reinstatement of an inter-war phenomenon. As has been established in Chapter four, this kind of violent gang life was a notable part of inter-war Glasgow culture and Andrew Davies has described a similar culture existing in Manchester in the 1930s.²¹⁵ What this suggests is that it was the obvious visibility of the Teddy boys which made them seem like a significantly new phenomenon in post-war society, leading to a sense that youth was more 'out of control' than it had previously been, in line with the 'historical blindness' described by Drotner.²¹⁶ The class component of the Teddy boy is also important. Penny Tinkler has shown that working-class youths often had greater access to discretionary spending than their middle-class contemporaries, as well as having more freedom due to the extended schooling prevalent among the latter group.²¹⁷ The result of this was that the Teddy boys were a predominantly working-class phenomenon, a state of affairs that was likely to increase fears that they were a threat to social order. A further potential reason for the new concern with these 'delinquent' youths was that they were seen as a sign that the welfare state

²¹³ *The Scotsman*, 11/09/45, p.4.

²¹⁴ Fyvel, *The Insecure Offenders*, p.17.

²¹⁵ Davies, *Leisure, gender and poverty*.

²¹⁶ Drotner, 'Modernity and Media Panics'.

²¹⁷ Penny Tinkler, 'Youth', in Francesca Carnevali and Julie-Marie Strange (Eds.) *Twentieth Century Britain: Economic, Cultural and Social Change*, 2nd Edition, (London: Longman, 2007), p.226.

was not leading to the socially cohesive society which had been promised by wartime rhetoric claiming that 'everyone was in it together'. Mark Freeman has noted that there was a continued focus on the idea of secondary poverty in the immediate post-war period, so a highly visible form of 'deviant' working-class spending would have been seen as both an economic and a moral issue.²¹⁸ In this environment it seems likely that the work of the voluntary organisations would continue to be considered a social necessity in order to promote the social stability and 'good character' which were so desired after the dislocations of the war.

5.7 - Voluntary Organisations and mixed-sex activities

While all three organisations addressed in this chapter were founded on the principle of providing male leisure, this did not remain the case in an exclusive sense throughout the 1930-1960 period in the case of the YMCA and the SABC. The Boys' Brigade was the exception here, as it seems to have lacked any motivation to provide facilities for young women. This was despite the existence at the time of the Girls' Guildry, a sister organisation to the Boys' Brigade, that had formed in Glasgow in 1900 and was later to amalgamate with the Girls' Brigade of Ireland in 1964.²¹⁹ While, as will be discussed in this section, both the SABC and the YMCA seemed to move towards a position of co-operation with their counterparts that catered for young women there seems to have been a continued separation of the Girls' Guildry and the Boys' Brigade throughout the period under investigation. The primary reason for this is likely to be related to the form of the boys' organisation, as many of its activities, such as drill would not have been considered appropriate ones for girls and young women to take part in. The quasi-military structure of the organisation's membership, where boys were given military style 'ranks' would also have been likely to make it difficult to include young women as

²¹⁸ Freeman, 'Seeborn Rowntree and secondary poverty, 1899-1954', pp.13-14.

²¹⁹ 'History', *Girls' Brigade of Northern Ireland* (<http://www.gbni.co.uk/history.php>) [15/12/11].

it would have been problematic in terms of normative gender relations to have female members outranking male members. Quite apart from this the fact that the explicit goal of the Boys' Brigade was to promote 'Christian manliness' rather than, for example, 'Christian citizenship' means that it may not have had the motivation or the means to inculcate the 'correct' kind of femininity. In fact, in the Boys' Brigade it could be argued that female membership would actually be sending the 'wrong' messages about femininity and the role of women in society as the entire programme was geared towards producing *manliness* of an appropriate type.

An important initial point to make is that it seems to have most often been the representatives of the female or mixed branch of the organisations that made the first move towards incorporating mixed activities into their programmes. The most telling of these examples can be seen in the reaction of the NABC to these advances from its female counterpart the National Association of Girls Clubs (NAGC). The NABC's response to this was highly negative throughout the 1930s and 1940s, often citing the 'high standards' needed for the running of boys' clubs. A letter from Lord Aberdare of the NABC to his counterpart in the NAGC demanded that, for any co-operation on the subject of mixed clubs to occur between the two organisations, 'the council confirms its [the NABC's] view that the needs of boys between 14 and 18 cannot adequately be met in clubs which fail to provide separate sections for boys of that age'. Aberdare went on stress the need 'to emphasise the necessity of standards of effort, skill and achievement in all clubs whether mixed or single sex'.²²⁰ The suggestion here is that the clubs run by, or affiliated with the NAGC are of a lower standard than those run by the NABC and the sharing of membership would therefore constitute a negative influence on the work of the club. One possible explanation for the NABC's reluctance to link their activities with those of the SAGC is the differing views that existed in regards to male and female physical recreation at the time. Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska has shown that, while physical recreation

²²⁰ NAS, GD281/83/125 – Standing Joint Committee of SABC and SAGC, Letter from Lord Aberdare to Mrs Walker Elliot, dated 11/04/45.

for women was accepted, and encouraged in contemporary discourse to a certain extent, there was opposition to women's participation in competitive sports due to its perceived 'masculinising' influence.²²¹ When it is considered that the competitiveness was seen as an important part of the masculinity espoused by the NABC, in line with the trait's importance in terms of individualistic capitalism, it is clear that the methods of inculcating masculine and feminine character were in some ways incompatible in terms of the ideology of the NABC.

It may be that the NABC saw itself as having a greater moral mission than those organisations providing clubs for girls. True Christian manliness was something which had to be achieved through the formation of the right kind of 'character'. Zweiniger-Bargielowska's work suggests that the major preoccupation of those providing women's physical recreation in the inter-war period was the creation of 'race mothers' through the improvement of physical efficiency.²²² While there was a moral component to this concern in terms of poor health being seen as down to 'errors in living', it seems that there was less of a focus on 'character' in these discourses and more of a concern with the physical efficiency of the nation.²²³ Once again, this attitude is likely to have meant that the directors of the NABC saw the objectives and methods of the NAGC as less than ideal for the inculcation of the forms of masculinity with which they were concerned. The practical result of this attitude among the NABC was recorded in a report from the Standing Joint Committee of the SABC and SAGC to the Carnegie UK Trust. The committee stated that, in the case of the English organisations, it was the National Association of Girls Clubs that was applying for a grant to expand its mixed club work, unlike the situation in Scotland where the SABC and the SAGC formed a joint committee to carry out this work.²²⁴

²²¹ Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, 'The Making of a Modern Female Body: Beauty, Health and Fitness in Inter-war Britain', *Women's History Review*, 20:2 (2011), p.308.

²²² Ibid, p.302.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ NAS, GD281/83/125 – Standing Joint Committee of SABC and SAGC, Report to the Carnegie UK trustees on a grant for the joint committee.

Some of the SABC's reservations were more of a practical rather than a principled nature. Most significant among these was a fear that introducing mixed clubs would lead to youths coming there merely to meet those of the opposite sex rather than to join in the activities of the club itself. They did seem more open to the idea of co-operating with the organisers of girls' clubs, though, and by the post-war period the joint committee felt secure in suggesting that

for the 16 plus age-group there is real enrichment if boys and girls can meet together in a club. By being together they learn to mix naturally, and to behave as normal people behave in a healthy, happy family atmosphere. There can be little doubt that the boy does improve through mixing with girls. A good deal of the roughness disappears and, in a good club, the boy gradually learns the courtesies which are due to women.²²⁵

The tone of this statement is in line with the promotion of companionate marriage that was a key part of post-war gender relations according to Finch and Summerfield.²²⁶ The reference to the 'courtesies due to women' is especially evocative in suggesting a more equal relationship between men and women in the context of married life, or even courtship. In addition to this, during the war the SABC was already describing the joint youth work committee with the SAGC as promoting 'the right relations between boys and girls in their development to manhood and womanhood', indicating a commitment to providing socialisation in terms of sexual relationships.²²⁷

However, despite this growing positive attitude to mixed club work for boys over 16 now seemingly present among the SABC, it was the girls club association which eventually changed its name to include mixed clubs rather than the SABC. This would indicate that the SAGC had a greater flexibility and, it could be suggested, greater willingness to change the character of its provision in order to attract members. In fact by the mid-1950s the SAGC was able to claim that 'many, if not the majority of the clubs affiliated to the SAGC are mixed clubs

²²⁵ NAS, GD281/83/125 – Standing Joint Committee of SABC and SAGC, Report of an enquiry into joint youth work undertaken by the standing joint committee of SABC and SAGC, dated 26/6/48, p.9.

²²⁶ Finch and Summerfield, 'Social Reconstruction and the Emergence of Companionate Marriage, 1945-1959'.

²²⁷ NAS, GD281/83/119, SABC – Annual Report 1943-44, p.4.

and over 3000 of the (approx) 11500 members are boys'. For the SABC the main connection to mixed clubs was through the affiliation of the boys' sections of mixed clubs.²²⁸ This indicates that the attitude of the SABC towards mixed club work was falling behind that of many of its potential members, as it seems, from the above figure, that there was a strong demand for mixed clubs among young men themselves. Clearly there was still some reluctance amongst the organisers of the SABC to fully embrace the opportunities for reaching youths that were made available through joint work. This could be put down to the association's continued focus on inculcating 'manliness', which may have been compromised by having to spend their energies on creating an appropriate mixed environment. However, Fyvel's survey of 1950s youth suggests that the SAGC may have been moving in a more effective direction. Fyvel suggests that the most popular pastime for many youths in this period was visiting cafes, and that in many cases 'picking up girls is the only real activity' that these provided.²²⁹ In this context, a club that offered both gender-specific and mixed activities could be seen as being closer to providing what youths were wanting from their leisure time. The fact that they would be doing this in a supervised environment would arguably be more in line with the goals of the SABC than their continued reliance on the commercial sector to provide this interaction.

While much of the active opposition to mixed clubs came from the organisers in these associations, it is interesting to note that the opposition did not result in a reduction in the number of members that attended these clubs. As Tables 5.1-5.4 demonstrate, rationally based recreation appears to have continued to be popular with youths as late as the end of the 1950s. It seems that the single-sex nature of many of these clubs did not affect their popularity, particularly in the Glasgow area where it can be seen that the Boys' Brigade and the YMCA, two organisations who did not admit women, were still popular throughout the period in question. One possible explanation for this slowness to move into mixed organisations in the

²²⁸ ED27/112 – SED SABC-SAGC – Joint Clubs Committee, General. Internal document on Joint Youth Work, 10/3/54.

²²⁹ Fyvel, *The Insecure Offenders*, p.99.

Glasgow area could be the relative lack of newer industries in the area. As the idea of the homosocial 'hard man' was so important to the culture of the heavy industries, the continued importance of these industries in the area could have delayed a shift to a more 'modern' form of gender relations in terms of leisure. The autobiography of Colin MacFarlane suggests that the pub continued to be a central part of leisure for working-class men into the 1960s. He describes how he and his companions would look through the windows of 'The Britannia' in the Gorbals as if it represented the adult male world they dreamed of one day entering.²³⁰ If young people saw the continued use of the pub as the focus of male companionship there may have been a greater desire among this group for juvenile organisations that mirrored these local institutions in terms of providing opportunities for homosocial bonding.

It is significant in this context that the SABC itself, in its early literature, actually compared the social structure of its clubs to the often maligned street gang. Whilst the activities that gangs engaged in were seen as anti-social, the spirit responsible for their formation was praised as 'a natural social unit; what has to be done is to direct the spirit of the gang towards a constructive and socially useful end'.²³¹ So the gang was simply a misdirection of healthy youthful energy, and was indeed 'the one possible club and the street corner the one practical continuation school' for many working-class youths.²³² As Andrew Davies has observed, the gangs present in Glasgow in the inter-war period were largely territorial and concerned with fighting rival gangs rather than having overt economic or criminal intent.²³³ These gangs would have provided opportunities for young men to form homosocial bonds, as well as display territorial loyalty and skill in fighting. While the actual activities of the gangs were seen as negative, the traits they were displaying were actually similar in principle to some of those espoused by the SABC. When the analysis of sport as a 'rationalised form of violence'

²³⁰ Colin MacFarlane, *The Real Gorbals Story* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 2007), p.14.

²³¹ SABC, *Principles and Aims of the Boys' Club Movement*, p.6.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Davies, 'The Scottish Chicago', p.512 and p.521.

is taken into account the gangs could be said to be mirroring the aggressive masculinity considered ideal by the advocates of muscular Christianity.²³⁴ In this construction it was the lack of discipline and 'proper character' of the gangs that was considered to be a social problem rather than the desire of young men to form them. With this in mind, the goal of the SABC could be seen as bringing the local cultures involved with the gangs within the cultural direction of their 'social betters' as much as it was to create new forms of social grouping for working-class youths.

The alternative interpretation of why a lack of mixed activities failed to reduce the popularity of boys' clubs relates to the forms of leisure *other* than that of voluntary organisations that the SABC members were engaging in concurrently. It seems from much of the evidence that dancing in Glasgow was a more major part of youth socialising than it was in other areas, where, despite being popular it did not seem to excite the same level of interest. This is illustrated in the autobiography of Robert Douglas, where the writer's enthusiasm for dancing is met with a certain amount of bewilderment by his fellow army recruits.²³⁵ It could be that the large amount of time spent in mixed-sex venues such as dancehalls and cinemas by Glasgow youths meant that many young men used these venues as their primary opportunity to interact socially with women. The result of this could be that they were more likely to look for an all-male association during their other leisure hours. Similarly, the significant level of overcrowded housing in many Glasgow communities could have led to young men looking for a completely masculine-coded space within which to spend their time, away from the feminine connotations of the home. The domestic space often seems to have been one controlled by mothers as much as it was by fathers in many cases. This is likely to have been a growing issue during the Second World War and its aftermath due to the common absence of fathers from households through military service, or, possibly due to their death in the war. In fact a

²³⁴ See Conley, 'The Agreeable Recreation of Fighting', p.68.

²³⁵ Robert Douglas, *Somewhere to Lay My Head* (London: Hodder, 2007).

wartime report into juvenile delinquency stated that this paternal absence was having a strong detrimental effect on the socialisation of many youths, leading to an increased tendency towards delinquency.²³⁶ Even after the war, long working hours and a preoccupation with recreational activities that often excluded women would have led to many fathers spending a significant time outside the home, further exacerbating the connection in the minds of youths between the home and the feminine.

An exception to the negativity shown towards mixed activities by some of the male organisations discussed above is the Broughty Ferry YMCA, which did allow women to be a part of the various clubs that were affiliated to it. One example of this can be seen in the 1930-31 annual report which records the association's appreciation towards the lady members who had assisted in the administration of the badminton club. The minutes of the Dundee YMCA suggest that a similar arrangement was in place at this association. While it did not admit women as associate members until after the Second World War, when it established a Women's Auxiliary to the association, there was reference in discussions of its formation that suggests that women were allowed to be club members even while they were not association members.²³⁷ They decided to end this practice when the Women's Auxiliary was formed, presumably to encourage women to join the association in their own right and to therefore come under the discipline of the association.

There seems to have been a growing recognition of the importance of mixed-sex activities amongst the organisers of both the YMCA and the SABC and their female counterparts the YWCA and the SAGC. Whether this was a result of changing attitudes within the organisations themselves or simply a reaction to changes in the society at large is difficult to conclusively ascertain. However, arguably the change was analogous to the move to provide greater levels of recreation in the organisations in the first decades of the twentieth

²³⁶ GCA, D-ED 9/1/8 – Sub-committee on School attendance of Corp. of Glasgow Education Department, Report on Juvenile Delinquency in Glasgow in 1940, p.12.

²³⁷ DCA, GD/YM/D/2/8 – Dundee YMCA Minute Book 1938-1954, p.23.

century. Essentially, the voluntary organisations at the centre of this chapter were largely engaged in reacting to the ever widening definition of appropriate recreation. The apparent exception to this rule was the Boys' Brigade which, despite claims of adaptation and 'modernisation', seems to have been fairly static in both its attitude to introducing mixed-sex activities, and indeed in its commitment to its founder's central object. One indication that this organisation was intent on the masculinising aspect of its programme is a statement made in *The Story of the Boys' Brigade*, a history of the Brigade written with its members as the intended audience that characterised its methods as 'using every manly sport and activity fitting boys for Christian citizenship'.²³⁸ The fact that this statement regarding the Brigade's activities was present in a book published in 1965 illustrates the continued focus on manliness present in the organisation and makes it clear that the introduction of female members was far from being one of its interests. This is especially striking when the amalgamation of the Girls' Brigade of Ireland, the Girls' Life Brigade and the Girls' Guildry, in the previous year, had led to a situation where there was a Girls' Brigade that had a strikingly similar objective, of 'the extension of Christ's Kingdom among girls' active in Scotland.²³⁹

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that there was a genuine disconnection between the goals of the social reformers who ran voluntary organisations and the uses to which these organisations were put by their young members. As the above discussion has shown, voluntary organisations considered their work to be that of moulding the social identities of young people in order to make them congruent with establishment norms both in socio-political and gender terms. The method for creating these social identities that seemed to prevail across the 1930-

²³⁸ Birch, *The Story of the Boys' Brigade*, p.11.

²³⁹ History', *Girls' Brigade of Northern Ireland*.

1950 period was the building of 'character', a personal quality that encompassed the ideologies of middle-class masculinity and citizenship discussed in the historiography above.

In this light, the role that recreation took in the programmes of the organisations discussed should be seen as a largely instrumental one, being adjuncts to wider aims rather than the focus of their activities. As shown in the early part of this chapter, sport and recreation were largely added to the programmes of voluntary organisations in order to make the prescriptive aspects of their activities more palatable to potential members and, in some cases, to discourage the use of commercial leisure among this age-group. The negative way in which commercial leisure was viewed by voluntary organisations can be explained in two ways. Firstly, the idea that commercial leisure forms were being indulged in as ends in themselves sat uncomfortably with their view of recreation being a vehicle for the inculcation of 'character'. The time spent on such activities was therefore seen as time wasted, and more importantly, was time spent away from of any 'improving' influence. Further to this, many rational recreationists saw the influence of commercial leisure products as negative in itself, castigating the habits that were being picked up from cinema screens and popular literature. In addition to this, voluntary organisations saw themselves as being in direct competition with commercial leisure sources, and feared that youths brought up with easy access to these sources would reject their own provision, and by extension their ideology. This was especially true in the context of church groups in Scotland, as exemplified by their continuing lobbying for the continuation of the ban on Sunday recreations into the post-war period.

Key to the negative attitudes towards commercial leisure and the milieu within which it was engaged was the idea that working-class culture was inherently inferior to that of the middle classes and other establishment formations. While rational recreation was often presented as an attempt to reform the 'character' of the individual youth, it should perhaps be seen as an attempt to fundamentally reform working-class culture and remake it in the image of

muscular Christianity and middle-class propriety and piety. Where this became problematic was the point at which youths themselves engaged with the organisations.

The use of rational recreation by the working-class youths who were the targets of the ideology was not in line with reformers' goals. The above discussion has shown that, far from submitting to cultural reformation, many youths simply used organisations such as the YMCA as a source of recreation, both in terms of continued sociability based around the customs of street culture and as a way of accessing activities, such as sports, in which they would otherwise be unable to participate for economic reasons. In fact there were strong parallels with the ways in which commercial leisure was used by many youths, as an additional venue for the exercise of existing cultural practices rather than as a site for the reception of new values. For this reason, viewing rational recreation as a form of cultural control would be inaccurate due to its lack of success rather than due to its initial goals. Youths were able to renegotiate, or simply reject, the ideologies being propagated whilst paying lip service to them to the extent that was necessary for their continued involvement with the desired leisure resources. While this does not imply that this was the case for all youths at all points of their engagement with rational recreation, the possibility of the strategy being used suggests that the transformative aspects of the rational recreation project were rarely reached. Young men were likely to simply bring the values they held outside of the organisation into their time in them, thereby retaining the masculine identities that had been formed through community norms in their earlier, and contemporary, experiences.

Conclusion

This thesis has shown that there were a number of influences in the construction and performance of masculinity among young men in Scotland in the period under review. The economic context that men lived in was a fundamental factor in determining the types of masculinity that were acceptable both at work and within the greater community. This is due to the fact that the identity of a worker as a worker was an important determinant of their masculine status within the community, especially in the period up to the 1930s. As Chapter three has demonstrated, the work cultures of Scottish men were often carried into the community sphere where they could continue to provide a certain social prestige. In this sense the work cultures of Scottish men were a fundamental part of working-class masculine culture itself, essentially providing a justification for the male domination of women, who were restricted to the private sphere of home and family in terms of discourse and gender identity, even where their work was an essential part of the family economy.

In the 'traditional' working-class communities studied in this thesis, such as Springburn and Clydebank, the continuation of the performance of the 'hard' worker within the community was made all the more important due to the proximity of workshop (in these cases the locomotive works and the shipyards respectively) and residential communities. The result of this was that it would have been difficult for men to perform one kind of masculinity at work and another, contradictory one within the community. This is not to suggest that these performances were not situational, but rather that the situation, in terms of the recipients of the performance, were the same in both settings; therefore, in order to maintain a composed identity, these performances needed to be congruent. Despite this, it is important not to consider the significance of work cultures in the construction of working-class culture as an example of strict economic determinism. Marx wrote that 'It is not the consciousness of men

that determines their being, but on the contrary, their *social being that determines their consciousness*.¹ The research presented in this thesis has suggested that, rather than determining consciousness, it would be more apt to suggest that social being has the potential to shape the performances of social, and in particular masculine, identity which may or may not be an expression of internal consciousness.

However, the connection between social being and internal consciousness is perhaps one of the most problematic areas of gender identity to research, as it relies entirely on an ability to discern psychological states, rather than on measurable elements or behaviours per se. A further complication is introduced into this line of questioning by the performative nature of masculine identity. When these two complications are considered, it is difficult to ascertain where performance ends and internalisation of masculine values begins. Arguably, the level of continued performance, referred to above, that was required of many working-class men in the inter-war period would be likely to increase the level of internalisation of the masculine norms associated with both their work and communities. The policy of 'slum clearance' in the 1930s and 1940s and the building of new housing estates in the post-Second World War period had the potential to shift the level of internalisation that was required. When workplaces and communities became more separated, or in communities where there were mixed employment opportunities, such as the Maryhill area of Glasgow, the requirement to perform a work-based masculinity in social settings would be reduced. This situation could have had the effect of decreasing the level to which internalisation of masculine norms was necessary, since the amount of performance required would have been reduced if the same people were not encountered at work and in communities. In spite of the potential for greater segregation of work and residential areas to alter gender relations, the work of Ann Hughes and Karen Hunt on inter-war Manchester housing suggests that the way these estates were planned actually

¹ Karl Marx, *Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy*, trans. by T.B. Bottomore (London, McGraw-Hill, 1964), p51.

served to reproduce and even strengthen the existent sexual division of labour among tenants.² However, while this implies a continuation of the male provider and female housewife distinction, the increased privacy of these estates would have made it possible for men to alter their masculine performance within the domestic sphere even if this didn't effectively reduce their gender power in terms of married relations. In addition to this, in an English context, Ross McKibbin has suggested that the community networks in traditional working-class residential areas were characterised by a 'wary mutuality' rather than communality with kin networks being more important than those of neighbours.³ Also significant in terms of Glasgow was the fact, in the case of the slum clearance estates, communities were often moved into new housing 'en bloc' with the result that any kin or neighbour networks would be transported between areas.⁴ Taken together, these sources would suggest that there was a certain level of transference of culture from older inner-city communities to the new estates. This would suggest that, while moving to new estates would have had significant impacts on working-class culture, it did not necessarily indicate a fundamental restructuring of this culture.

Despite these considerations concerning housing, it is important to emphasise the significance of work cultures and their concomitant masculine identities and values in shaping working-class cultures in the 1930 to 1950 period, as discussed in Chapter three. This is because economic conditions had a fundamental part to play in the creation and reproduction of living conditions. The low wages and unstable employment patterns described in Chapter two that were typical of mid-twentieth-century Scotland meant that, in many cases, both men and women had to endure tough living conditions where the continuation of the 'hard man' masculine form could be seen as a way of coping. As section 1.2 has discussed, the

² Ann Hughes and Karen Hunt, 'A Culture Transformed? Women's lives in Wythenshawe in the 1930s' in Andrew Davies and Steven Fielding (Eds.), *Workers' Worlds: Cultures and Communities in Manchester and Salford, 1880-1939*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), p.86.

³ Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England 1918-1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.181.

⁴ Damer, *A Social History of Glasgow Council Housing*, p.20.

transference of the 'hard man' into domestic situations could have negative consequences for quality of life for all members of working-class communities in terms of stress on the family economy caused by money used for male 'spends'. However, if the performance of a composed masculinity between work peers and community peers was required, as suggested by this study, then these work cultures should be seen as integral, 'ingrained' parts of working-class masculine culture as a whole. The result of this would be that men, and particularly young men who had not had the experience of being socialised into existent work cultures, would still feel social pressure to perform the masculinities associated with the dominant working-class social identities. This, of course, was complicated by establishment discourses attempting to instill 'respectable' (in the middle-class, 'character' sense) behaviour and social identities in youths.

Where the connection between dominant masculinity and work roles became further problematised, during the depression of the early 1930s and subsequently through the growth of 'semi-skilled' work in the 1940s and 1950s, the performance of traditional masculine roles through popular cultural sources became more important. This is because the occupational changes that had, in economic terms, made the skilled worker figure less important occurred much faster than changes in the entrenched culture of working-class communities. The result of this was that increasing numbers of young men were being culturally socialised into masculine identities that had previously had their basis in the economic lives of men in their role as 'producers'. Young men were therefore in a position where they needed to find alternative ways of claiming and performing masculine identities amongst their peers and this coincided with the expansion of the commercial leisure sector, making the venues of this sector ideal places to recreate working-class culture as discussed in Chapter four. It is important to note here that this move to the expression of masculinity by the means of consumption should

be seen as performing masculinity *through* consumption practices rather than constituting the creation of an identity as a consumer in the period up to the early 1950s.

A key factor in this analysis is that the way in which venues of commercial leisure were being used by young Scottish men as places in which to perform 'traditional' working-class masculinities rather than as sites to actively create new ones. This move to using the venues of commercial leisure as a way of asserting a dominant masculine identity should be seen as a significant social development in itself. Arguably this process was in line with Debord's analysis that consumerism resulted in a shift from 'being' to 'having' to 'appearing'.⁵ This change allowed young men to perform a masculine identity in order to gain social prestige without necessarily being able to fulfill the economic role originally associated with that identity.

The similarity between the culture of the working-class community and that of commercial leisure venues is highlighted by the tone of the oral history interviewees who described their experiences in dancehalls and cinemas. There is a suggestion that the culture of these places was something familiar to these people and that the social norms present were not a new set to be 'learned' by the attenders. The result of this would have been that the local dancehalls and cinemas so popular with working-class youths were seen as extensions of the community rather than as places that operated under the 'rules' of commercial spaces. I would argue that this was because the public/private sphere distinction operated differently in working-class culture than it did in that of the middle classes. The poor housing conditions endured by many working-class families in the mid-twentieth-century, characterised by overcrowding, especially in Glasgow, meant that the communal areas of tenements, as well as the streets themselves, were used as social spaces. This resulted in close community cohesion but also meant that what was ostensibly public space was seen as a part of an environment that was communally controlled and therefore part of a collective living

⁵ Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, p.27.

experience. Examples of this use of space range throughout age groups and levels of 'respectability', from children playing games on the street, to unemployed men gathering on street corners, to bookmakers using back courts as places to set up shop.

These conclusions have implications that relate to previously posited historical interpretations of the use of commercial leisure. Firstly, the idea that the products of the culture industry were aspects of a programme of social control can be rejected, as it seems that the content of cultural products such as films and popular songs were, in many cases, simply not the important part of their appeal for young people. Chapter four has shown that cinema-goers were able to ignore or reject the 'messages' of films and were likely to use the cinema as a place to socialize as opposed to a place to absorb cultural 'lessons'. This was the case to an even greater extent in the dancehalls of Glasgow, where, for young men, the performance of masculinity and the playing out of emergent sexuality was often the most important part of the pursuit. This is not to suggest that young people did not practise discrimination in the consumption of cultural products - the discussion of dance bands in Chapter four shows that they did - but rather suggests that doing so was of secondary importance to the primary goal of attending the venues of commercial leisure. Indeed, the renegotiation of social norms and cultural products in order to make them relevant to specific situations should be seen as a key strategy of youth interaction with culture at large.

However, while commercial leisure did not act as an agent of social control, it should be noted that it also did not seem to act as a way of constructing deviant social identities, at least in the central-Scottish context in the period up to the early 1950s. This is because, as suggested above, it seems that the masculine identities that were being performed through the use of commercial leisure were those that were congruent with dominant working-class masculine forms, either 'rough' or 'respectable', that had their basis in work cultures. In this sense then the social identities that were being constructed could be seen as essentially

conservative as they were attempts to perform the traits of already dominant masculine forms in an environment where access to the status of skilled worker was restricted due to economic changes and/or age. This would contradict Bill Osgersby's suggestion that the agency of youth in negotiating consumption should be seen as in some way 'radical'.⁶ In fact some of the renegotiation that was undertaken by young men could be characterised as reactionary. The arenas of commercial leisure was being used as a way of re-establishing a claim to traditional working-class forms of masculinity in a situation where this identity was less likely to be available from an economic role. Even in cases where young men did have access to apprenticeships, it would be reasonable to suggest that they were continuing to perform the associated masculinity in popular cultural environs along the lines discussed above. This does not suggest that working-class youths had no agency in their use of culture, rather that they were using it in order to recreate existing cultural norms.

Highlighting the lack of 'radicalism' in the working-class renegotiation of cultural products may seem a counter-intuitive point in light of the widespread establishment criticism of the use of leisure discussed throughout this thesis, but it is significant that it was often the more 'rough' aspects of this use that came under most scrutiny. One way of interpreting this concern regarding 'rough' culture would be in terms of its potential for making people less economically productive. A worker who had been injured in a fight, or who turned up for work under the influence of alcohol, or its after-effects, would be less able to perform his duties. For this reason 'rough' culture needed to be suppressed in order to maintain industrial discipline. The fears of cultural commentators were seemingly not based on the fear of subversion so much as they were based on a lack of control. One reason commentators saw the way that commercial leisure venues were used as a threat was due to the possibility of the mixing of social groups in situations in which there was no real 'adult' supervision to the interaction. This would have

⁶ Osgersby, "'Well, it's Saturday Night an' I Just Got Paid'", p.302.

been of particular concern in Glasgow's city centre dancehalls where the custom of dancers dressing as 'glamorously' as they were able would have made socioeconomic differences between dancers harder to identify. In this case it would be reasonable to suggest that much establishment concern was based on the fear of 'respectable' youths being corrupted by 'rough' youths. In this context the carrying of working-class culture into the venues of commercial leisure, that were open to all classes, could have been seen as a challenge to the hegemony of establishment discourses within the public sphere. By comparing the use of both rational and commercially based recreations by youths, it can be seen that similar processes were occurring in each arena. This provides a further explanation of the antipathy directed at commercial leisure by the voluntary organisations: they saw them as areas of uncontrolled sociability beyond the reach of 'improving' influences.

This transference of culture also had significant implications for voluntary organisations and their provision of rational recreations. As Chapter five has shown, voluntary organisations were attempting to create social spaces in which they were able to provide socialisation that was in line with their conceptions of good 'character' and, in the case of organisations catering for young men, idealised forms of masculinity. However, it seems that the achievement of this goal was far from straightforward. Young men were able to renegotiate or simply reject the discourses presented by these organisations in order to make use of their facilities in the same way they used commercial leisure provision, even whilst outwardly paying lip service to these discourses. The result of this was that young men were able to bring working-class culture into spaces coded as middle-class by the providers of voluntary organisations, thereby largely negating the ability of these organisations to 're-socialise' youths. The YMCA seems to have had the largest problem with youths rejecting their ideological teachings whilst participating in

their recreational activities. The lack of supervision of those using YMCA buildings at times outside of their classes allowed youths to openly flaunt the organisation's rules.⁷

A major obstacle that voluntary organisations faced in the period under review was that they were attempting to remake the 'character' of working-class youths along the lines of respectability that were specific to middle-class cultural forms. As already discussed, many aspects of working-class masculine forms had their basis in the need to cope with harsh economic conditions. Essentially, the voluntary organisations were challenging the validity of these coping mechanisms without reference to the system that made them necessary. This links the ideology with earlier ideas surrounding the difference between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor in which poverty, and its negative socioeconomic results, were in some cases attributed to failures in individual character rather than socioeconomic conditions. From this point of view the attempts at reforming the masculinities of youths undertaken by voluntary organisations can be seen as a failure.

All these conclusions highlight the way in which gender was a fundamental part of the social identity of working-class youths that had its basis in the whole socioeconomic environment they experienced. Whilst work was an important part of this identity, the way that work cultures and community cultures interacted meant that exclusion from employment in the industries that prized a 'hard' masculine form did not necessarily mean that the performance of this masculinity was irrelevant. For many young men, aspiring to this masculinity was an important part of claiming prestige among their peers, and the use of popular culture was one way in which they were able to construct and perform this masculine identity. This interconnectedness of working-class youth culture is summed up by one Clydebanks man recalling his early years working at John Brown's shipyard in the 1930s:

⁷ See p.297 for an example of this behaviour.

We had quite a good time discussing things in the yard after working hours. What happened in the yard was discussed at the corner [of the street] that night. And then we would make our way to the dancing.⁸

⁸ McKinlay, *Making Ships, Making Men*, p.13.

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