

Scottish Masculinity in Historical Perspective

Workshop I: Men's Bodies: Summary Notes

Overarching issues:

- methodology: use of personal testimony by (modern) historians *and* health researchers (oral history interviews, focus groups, blogs etc) to access subjectivity and experience
- Understanding across the disciplines of gender as performance rather than gender as structure
- Integration of historical understandings into research into contemporary issues - how can this be conducted profitably?
- Scotland & Scottishness: question of what (if anything) is distinctive about men's experience in Scotland. Quantitative indicators suggest there are specific Scottish issues (mortality rates, suicide rates etc) but is this borne out in the qualitative evidence? Heteronormativity? Workplace practices as key to Scottish masculinities? Poverty?
- Generational issues - need for longitudinal studies to examine change over time and generations
- Sites for performance of masculinity: workplace, streets (metrosexuality),
- Time - different uses of time by historians (*longue duree*) and contemporary researchers (shorter time spans)
- Class
- Relationship between the body and masculinity - how is this constituted/imagined/experienced? How key is the body to men's sense of the masculine self? KH - is it key in health terms [cf women]; RO'B - notion that illness can disrupt masculine id; BG - body seen in terms of muscularity and sexual performance is central; body as key to self respect; AM - focus on bodily physique as external to the self; disability leads to loss of masculine id; JP - embodiment of masculinity in 'passing' as another.
- What is the nature of the dialogue between historians and health researchers? Contemporary perspectives and understandings may be informed by knowledge of long term continuities in ways in which men perform masculinities (eg Scotland legacy of heavy industry, risky body practices etc). Historians might think about masculinity as 'doing' (eg doing health)
- Change/continuity: how can change be explained/understood? economic shifts; epiphanal moments (eg war, serious illness, redundancy etc); discourse change