



**HAPPY ARE THOSE WHO
DREAM DREAMS AND ARE
READY TO PAY THE PRICE
TO MAKE THEM COME TRUE.**

inspirations
Tupac Shakur

**'They said Tupac shouldn't be
my role model':**

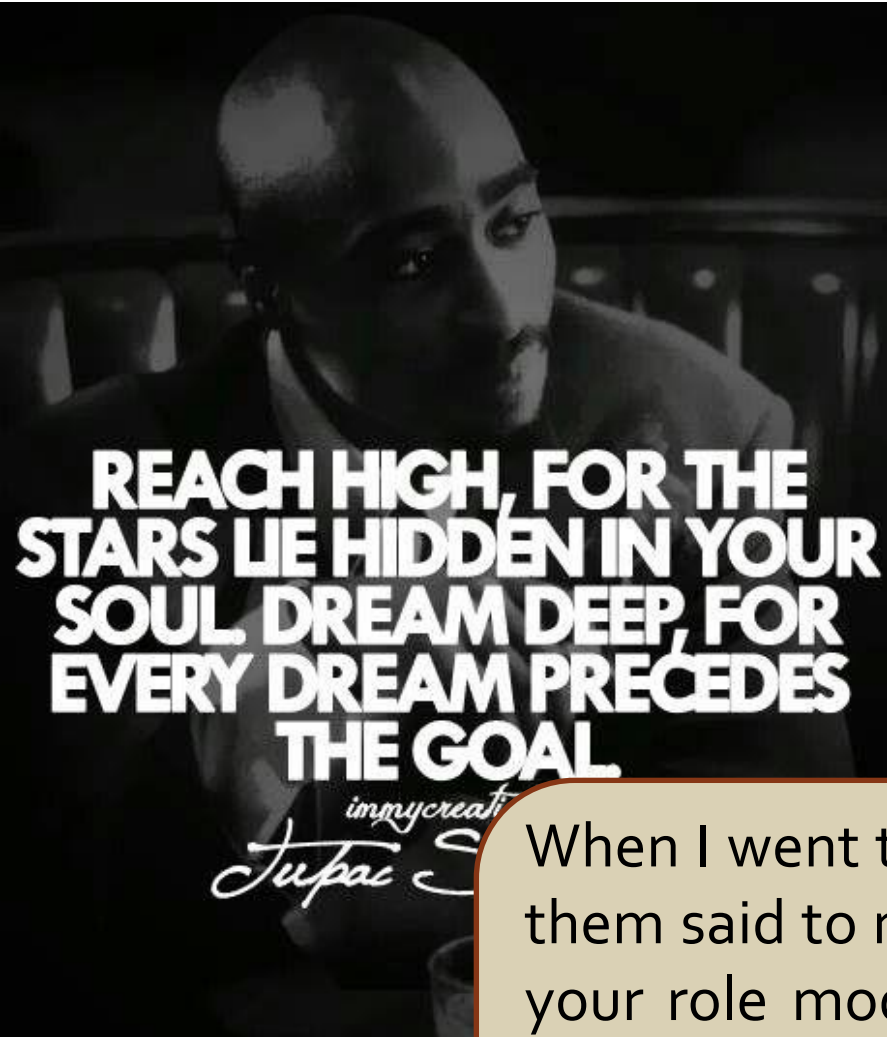
***'risky' masculinities, youth
aspirations and celebrity
culture***

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Snoop, boy, 16-17, Somalian, London

When I went to my work experience, one of them said to me, they go 'who's your, who's your role model?' I said 'Tu Pac', she goes 'Right'. And I explain everything to her, she just couldn't, she said 'I think he shouldn't be your role model, you should have another role model'.

Masculinities 'in crisis'

What made a British man used to be earning, providing and belonging. But I fear that gold standard has melted into taking, owning and consuming....I'm particularly troubled by a culture of hyper-masculinity – a culture that exaggerates masculinity in the face of a perceived threat to it. ... We're teaching many of our young boys the price of everything and the value of nothing.



Diane Abbott,
2013

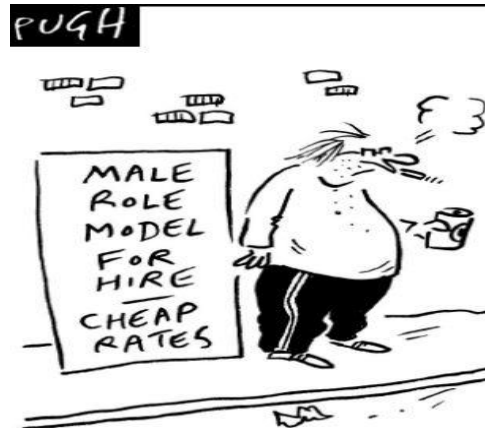
I don't doubt that many of the rioters out last week have no father at home.... Perhaps they come from one of the neighbourhoods where it's standard for children to have a mum and not a dad. Where it's normal for young men to grow up without a male role model, looking to the streets for their father figures, filled up with rage and anger.



David Cameron,
2011

'Role models' and 'problem boys'

- Neoliberal education policy and the moral panic of boys 'educational underachievement' (Francis 2006; Epstein et al, 2006)
- Welfare Reform and poverty: poor communities as 'man deserts'; 'no male role model in sight' (Centre for Social Justice)
- The crisis of 'young black men': Hannah Hamad (2014) on racialised and individualised discourses of African American role models and absent fathers in policy and popular culture
- Wider discourse of aspiration deficits



Constructing masculinities via celebrity

- **Social construction of masculinities**
(Barnes, 2012; Connell, 1995; Frosh et al 2002; Mac an Ghail, 1994)
- **Class, gender, race - 'Ideal' pupils and 'successful subjectivities'**
(Archer and Francis, 2007; Youdell, 2004; Archer et al., 2010; Mendick et al., forthcoming)
- **Hierarchies of masculinities, including those 'authorized' in school and peer group**
(Connell, 1995; Martino, 1999; Archer, Halsall & Hollingworth, 2007; Rollock, 2007)
- **Young people and everyday popular culture**
(Buckingham & Bragg 2004; Inthorn & Street 2011; Richards 2011; Nayak and Kehily 2008) but paucity of work on boys and celebrity.
- **Celebrities as 'Imaginary boys' (Martino) in young people's everyday practices and identity work**

ESRC-funded study (2012-14) exploring:

- *What discourses of aspiration circulate in celebrity representations?;*
- *How do young people use these discourses in constructing their aspirations?*
- *How are these shaped by class and gender?*

Methods:

- Six secondary schools (11-18) in England
- Group and individual interviews with 144 young people (aged 14-17) about their aspirations and engagements with celebrity
- Textual analysis of 12 case study celebrities



KEEP
CALM
AND
LOVE
TOM DALEY



Tom Daley, Nicki Minaj, Mario Balotelli, Bill Gates, Beyoncé

Kate Middleton, Katie Price, Emma Watson, Prince Harry, Kim
Kardashian, Will Smith, Justin Bieber

Imagination exercise

'I would probably want to be friends with Will Smith, he's quite cool, quite a flamboyant man. And erm I probably wouldn't want to be friends with, [pause] probably Balotelli...Because like he's always in the papers about he's like rebelling against stuff, and stuff like that.

And is there anybody else who you'd want to be friends with?

Erm. Probably Prince Harry...He's quite a cool guy, yeah, pretty laid back. Even though he's part of the royal family he's erm, yeah he's pretty cool.

Schmidt,
boy, 16-17,
mixed race,
London

Mario: Rebels, trouble and unhappy objects

“He sets fireworks off out of his bathroom window and, you know, he would just be so much fun to hang around with”

- Rick, boy, 16-17, White British, London

“I’d be very careful around him. You know. Because if he misses a penalty he starts beating up the ground on the floor and stuff, you know. If I tell him he had got a question wrong in class, you know, I don’t know what he’d do. [both laugh]” – Lewis J, boy, 16-17, White British, London

“I think he’d be naughty...he’s maybe stupid....

Or just bored of education’ – Boo, boy, 16-17, Manchester

“He’s a bit like Marmite. You either love him or you hate him...He said like, I can’t, he said if anyone’s racist to me I’ll go to jail because I’ll kill them [slightly laughing] or something like that, so it’s quite a bold statement which is why I like Balotelli” – Herbert, boy, 14-15, white, rural

“He just likes to mess around, and like getting into trouble, but not into too much.” – Syndicate, boy, 14-15, mixed race, London



Will: the 'acceptable' class clown and happy object

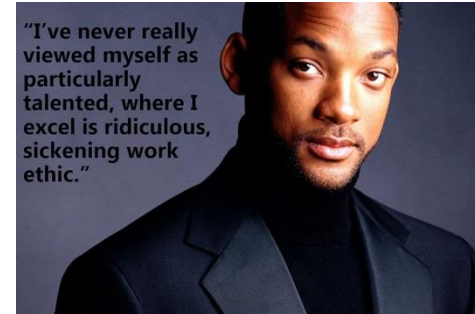
"Good nature, good personality, and nice... I think Will Smith is a good example of a good role model because he's real...he wants to do well in life, wants to achieve something." - Schmidt, boy, 16-17, mixed race, London

"He just seems down-to-earth and hilariousnot the most well-behaved student, but quite clever." - Dumbledore, boy, 16-17, White British, rural

"I don't know what else to say, he's just really funny...I'd love to be friends with Will Smith" – Edward, boy, 16-17, Black African, London

"He'd fit in with like my group of people that I hang around with, coz he's funny and they all like tell jokes... they don't like mess about, but they're a bit laid back when it comes to like break time and that." - Tim Jimmy, boy, 14-15, White British, London

"I think he'd be like the joker in the class." - Charlie Sheen, boy, 16-17, Asian, London



Harry: the 'ultimate lad', ordinariness & the buffer of privilege

“He just seems so funny. Like he acts how everyone wants the royals to act. He’s still like a lad I suppose...he comes across as this down to earth guy and he’d just be fun to hang around with” – Rick, boy, 16-17, White British, London

“He might just do crazy things like, you know, flying helicopters to go and pick up his girlfriend, that would be fun.” - Olivia, girl, 16-17, White British, rural

“He does stuff that isn’t really prince like. ... I’d probably see him like maybe having a laugh in class, but like getting on with the work... it’s probably like his character and personality that makes me say that.” – Peter, 14-15, White British, rural

“He'll be like down to earth quite different to like compared with the queen as well....more like ordinary people...he's like involved in loads of like in the army and everything, because I think he would, like he would take interest in like studies” – Aliyah, girl, 16-17, Pakistan, Manchester



Conclusion

Snoop, boy, 16-17, Somalian, London

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"THEY GOT MONEY
FOR THE WAR
BUT CAN'T FEED
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KUSHANDWIZDOM

Tupac Shakur

Thank you for listening



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