Hegemonic Masculinity Depiction in Steven Knight's *Peaky Blinders* TV Series

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Abstrak

Peaky Blinders adalah serial televisi yang berfokus pada masyarakat yang sangat patriarkal di tahun 1920-an. Sifat-sifat hegemonik maskulinitas seperti gaya kepemimpinan agresif, stoik, dan otokratis, sangat erat terkait dengan gambaran karakter utama laki-laki. Subordinasi perempuan diperlukan untuk mempertahankan otoritas laki-laki (Connell, 2003). Penelitian ini mencoba mengungkap bagaimana maskulinitas hegemonik dipromosikan dalam Peaky Blinders dari sudut pandang gender yang digagas oleh Raewyn Connell. Perspektif ini digunakan untuk mempelajari hierarki peran dan representasi gender dalam serial ini. Diskusi dilakukan dalam dua tahap utama. Pertama, peneliti menunjukkan representasi maskulinitas hegemonik yang dipraktikkan oleh karakter utama laki-laki di series ini. Dan yang kedua, peneliti menunjukkan bagaimana peran masing-masing konfigurasi gender turut andil dalam mengkonstruksi maskulinitas hegemonic dalam series Peaky Blinders. Hasil pembacaan dari riset ini menunjukkan bahwa karakter utama dari series ini yaitu Thomas Shelby mempraktikkan sifat-sifat yang diasosiasikan dengan maskulinitas hegemonik seperti berlaku kasar dan agresif, mendukung dominasi laki-laki terhadap perempuan, mempraktikkan gaya kepemimpinan yang otoriter, serta menekan berbagai jenis emosi yang diasosiasikan dengan kelemahan.
Kata Kunci: maskulinitas hegemonic, agresif, stoik, otokratis, gender, hierarki gender

Abstract

Peaky Blinders is a gangster TV series which depict a highly patriarchal society in the 1920s Birmingham. The depiction of the main male character is closely related to hegemonic masculinity traits, such as aggressive, stoic, and autocratic leadership style. Connell suggests that to maintain male power, female subordination is necessary (Connell, 2003). This study aims to reveal how hegemonic masculinity is promoted in Peaky Blinders from a gender perspective initiated by Connell. Furthermore, this study also examines the gender relation between each gender configuration which appears in this series. The discussion is divided into two main sections. First, the researcher demonstrates how the main male characters in this series practice hegemonic masculinity. Second, the researcher demonstrates how the role of each gender configuration in the Peaky Blinders series contributes to the construction of hegemonic masculinity. The result of the reading show how Thomas Shelby as main character exhibits traits associated with hegemonic masculinity such as being rude and aggressive, supporting male dominance over women, employing authoritarian leadership styles, and suppressing various types of emotions associated with weakness.
Keywords: hegemonic masculinity, aggressiveness, stoicism, autocratic, gender, gender hierarchy

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been a rising interest in critically examining how gender roles and identities are portrayed in popular media. As an effective narrative medium, TV series can create and reinforce society's perceptions and norms about masculinity (Steyer & Shenkan, 2018, p. 7). *Peaky Blinders* is a British gangster series that fascinate audiences with its gripping narrative and vivid portrayal of early 20th-century Birmingham. Steven Knight as the director of this series, showcases the brutal and violent underworld of criminal gangs. The Shelby family serves as the central force of the gang's operation and power dynamics. Despite the series has received considerable praise for its fascinating plot and dynamic characters, it is essential to investigate how it portrays and reflects hegemonic masculinity.

Led by an authoritarian Thomas Shelby, the peaky blinders depicted the hegemonic masculinity behavior through their determination of authority, power, and supremacy. (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832) define hegemonic masculinity as a pattern of practice that allowed men's dominance over women to continue which embodies the legitimacy of patriarchy. The theorists

believe that this ideology is a cultural product and legitimated the global subordination of women to men. Hegemony does not refer to violence. But the fact is that hegemonic masculinity lasts because it is supported by coercion. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt emphasized that male hegemony and female subordination were formed by a long historical process, not from a self-reproducing system (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 844). In the reformulation of Hegemonic masculinity, Connell wants to emphasize that hegemonic masculinity can survive because of the support from emphasized femininity behavior.

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The male characters in *Peaky Blinders* manifest traditional notions of masculinity by showing stoicism, aggressiveness, and a refusal to express vulnerability. They adhere to strict gender roles, where women are frequently assigned to supporting roles and are objectified for their beauty or used as pawns in the men's schemes. The hegemonic masculinity behaviors contribute to the legitimation of a patriarchal society.

The main characters in this series are members of the Shelby family, namely Thomas, Arthur, John, Polly, Ada, and Finn. Three members of Shelby named Thomas, Arthur, and John are veterans of the Great War who endured prolonged post-war trauma. A study conducted by Thomas Mueller found that these veterans indicated Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) which caused them to have difficulty adjusting after returning to society. "Continued violence becomes the cure for those coping the ravages of military conflict" (Mueller, 2022, p. 35) Violence becomes a habit and then carries over unconsciously when they return to society. According to Thomas Mueller, these characters support hegemonic masculinity behaviors, where men hold domination over women and on a higher position than women in the gender hierarchy.

George S. Larke-Walsh in his article also focuses on a similar issue, namely the causal relationship between war and toxic masculinity. George believes that war has a significant role in shaping the toxic characters of Thomas, Arthur, and John (Larke-Walsh, 2019, p. 41). Different from the study conducted by Mueller, George's study places these characters as actors who justify toxic masculinity as a result of war, not as victims of war. Thomas is stuck in nostalgia for imperial masculinity and as a result, his trauma continues for everyone else. George concludes that the director of this series succeeded in presenting and changing toxic masculinity as heroism.

Ayustin and Christin analyze types of discrimination against women from three positions. This study reveals three types of discrimination which are discrimination toward women as subject position, object position, and as the audience (Ayustin & Christin, 2022, p. 5). To conduct the study, the researcher uses Sara Mills' discourse analysis which focuses on women's discourse from feminist perspective. This study concludes that the female characters in the Peaky Blinders TV series are victims of patriarchal society and post-war atmosphere.

The three studies above focus on gender issues, especially gender inequality that occurs in women due to excessive masculinity. The dissertation written by (Garcia, 2019, p. 15) examines the Peaky Blinder TV series from a different perspective, namely a historical perspective. This study compares the sociological background of the series and the real Peaky Blinder. The results of the study reveal that the form of masculinity of the Peaky Blinders that appears in the series is different from the actual form of masculinity of the Peaky Blinders gang. This is influenced by the mixing of place and time settings. Apart from being different in terms of perspective, this study reveals the fact that women who are part of Peaky Blinder also carry out hegemonic masculinity habits.

Previous research has shown in general and explicitly that the position of hegemonic masculinity is held by Shelby through the elaboration of the characteristics of the hegemonic masculinity that is practiced. However, as Connell highlighted in his 2005 reformulation of hegemonic masculinity, extensive analysis is required to verify the enactment of hegemonic masculinity in a culture. According to Connell, each gender configuration contributed to the construction of hegemonic masculinity. As a result, in addition to studying the features of hegemonic masculinity, the setting's gender relations must also be examined (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). In general, Connell divides the gender hierarchy into two, namely hegemonic masculinity as the holder at the top of the hierarchy and non-hegemonic masculinity which in practice tries to seize the top position in the hierarchy.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the depictions of hegemonic masculinity in the Peaky Blinders TV series. It aims to investigate the numerous dimensions and forms of hegemonic masculinity as depicted through the main male character, their

relationships, and interactions within the series' setting. This study aims to shed light on the potential effects of such representations on the maintenance of gender stereotypes and the reinforcement of dominant patriarchal power structures by examining how masculinity is portrayed in the series.

A comprehensive analysis will be done to attain this objective, drawing on Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity and media studies frameworks. The study will use a qualitative method to evaluate significant events and character arcs, paying particular attention to how power, aggression, sexuality, and emotional expression connect with and reinforce hegemonic ideals of masculinity within the narrative.

The results of this study are expected to contribute to the scholarly discussion about gender representation in media and its impact on larger societal understandings of masculinity. Overall, this study intends to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of gender representations in media by examining the portrayal of hegemonic masculinity in the Peaky Blinders TV series, with a larger goal of encouraging a more inclusive and equitable society.

METHOD

This research focuses on the analysis of hegemonic masculinity depictions in the TV series "Peaky Blinders This research applies hegemonic masculinity theory by R. W. Connell which provides the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity such as aggressiveness, stoicism, and autocratic leadership style (Wedgwood et al., 2022, p. 5). The primary data of this research is taken from the elements of film such as dialogues and scenes. This research will also include various written resources from books and journal internet as supporting resources.

Documentation is used to collect the data of this research by watching the series, noting the dialogues and issues related to the chosen topic, and capturing the scenes that show the existence of gender hierarchy and hegemonic masculinity. The first step of data collection involves a comprehensive selection of relevant episodes from the series. The researcher selects the episodes which exhibit male characters and events that represent hegemonic masculinity's traits using a purposive sampling approach.

Furthermore, data will be collected from publicly accessible scripts, screenplays, character descriptions, dialogues, and scenes to gain a deeper understanding of the intended portrayal of hegemonic masculinity by the show's creators.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Peaky Blinders is British gangster series set in a highly patriarchal society. The portrayal of gangster in the Peaky Blinders series presents several traits of masculinity such as, aggressiveness, toughness, competitiveness, physical strength, emotional restrain, and autocratic leadership-style (Wedgwood et al., 2022, p. 5). These traits are frequently connected to hegemonic masculinity.

Aggression is a certain aspect that frequently link with hegemonic masculinity. Most of the male characters in this series exhibit an aggressive nature that is not only displayed by gang members but also by police officers, politicians, and even some female characters. However, Steven Knight as the director of this series want to emphasized the aggression side of the gangster. One of the forms of aggressiveness that is emphasized is physical aggression, as is often done by Arthur Shelby. In order to prove his manhood, Arthur Shelby frequently conduct physical aggression and use violence. For example, it shown in season 2 episode 1 when Arthur beats his opponents in boxing ring to down.

Figure1. The portrayal of Arthur's aggressiveness (S2:E1)

Sociology defines family as an institution that has important role in promoting aggression. This is supported by Connell's opinion in his book entitled "Gender and Power" which states that family is considered as one of agencies to socialize models of behaviors that appropriate to the one sex or the other (Connell, 2003, p. 263), including aggressiveness. The Shelby boys: Arthur, Thomas, and John naturally practice aggressive and tough traits to show their masculinity. Being aggressive and tough is the ideal male standard taught by his father, Arthur Shelby Senior. The inheritance of aggressive traits from father to son is not as simple as inheritance through biological genes, instead there is the influence of ethnic identity from the Shelby family.

This family comes from a rural ethnic gypsy who have nomadic life, moving from one place to another in the wild. To facilitate mobility, the Gypsy tribe does not set up tents, but lives in a caravan or boat. To keep their families and possessions safe, men who are physically stronger than women are given the task of protecting them from robbers and wild animals. Starting from this gender-based division of tasks, men then adopt and maintain aggressive and violent traits. Gradually, these two traits became the gender norm for gypsy men. This is in line with the idea (Connell, 2003, p. 175), which explains that aggressive and violent behavior is the result of gender

socialization promoted by parents, especially the father as the head of the family.

In gangster culture, it is often to glorify and romanticized aggressive behavior. A study conduct by (Ireland et al., 2018, p. 212) mentions that gang membership is considered as a social grouping that promotes hegemonic masculinity traits especially aggression. Being aggressive is necessary to assert power and dominance over others as done by Peaky Blinders members gang to establish their dominance over other characters. In order to expand their criminal activities, this gangster actively seek opportunities such as conducting protection racket, smuggling, and gambling.

The phenomenon of protection racket is common in gangster culture. In Peaky Blinders, the members of the gang extorting local businesses for protection money. Ironically, the local businessman received no protection but intimidation and extortion. On the other side, peaky blinders not feel guilty and normalize this phenomenon. Protection racket for peaky blinders is an attempt to perpetuate their legitimacy where they are in power. This gang takes pride in intimidating and ruling over others. It is shown through Thomas Shelby's attitude when he is showing off to Grace about his hegemony in Small Heath by said: *"Oh, I don't pay for suits. My suits are on the house. Or the house burns down."* (S1:E3)

Peaky Blinders do not only show their aggressiveness through physical aggression, they also exhibit aggression through heavily verbal aggression. For the purpose of establishing dominance, defying authority, or defending their own interests, characters engage in fierce verbal sparring, use harsh language, and heated confrontations. Thomas Shelby is known for his keen wit and quick tongue. He constantly participates in verbal confrontation with other characters, typically asserting his power and gaining the upper hand in negotiations or confrontations by employing sarcasm and witty wordplay. Thomas's verbal hostility reflects his cunning and strategic attitude, which allows him to manipulate and dominate others around him.

Figure 3. Emotional restrictions depicted in Peaky Blinders (S3:E3)

Based on traditional gender norms, an ideal man does not show their emotion as much as women. They are expected to suppress their emotions. From the series, many male characters especially Thomas Shelby exhibits emotional restrain to establish and sustain his authority in the social setting. As a leader of gangster, Thomas is expected to maintain stoicism and toughness. Expressing too much emotions could be perceived as a weakness and this is strictly avoided because it can damage the image of Peaky Blinders. Even in a state of distress, Thomas shows symptoms of tight emotional suppression. It is shown in the series when Thomas struggling with emotional restriction after the death of his wife.

The scene above shows the accumulation of sadness and hatred that is being held back and not expressed properly. The emotions that kept piling up inside Thomas finally exploded into anger. Traditional gender roles discourage men who express the vulnerable emotion such as sadness and fear. As a result of this emotional restriction, anger becomes a predominant emotion that emerges frequently at distress time. Men are permitted to express anger because it aligns with the expectation of assertiveness.

Peaky Blinders TV Series also depicts an autocratic leadership style. It is a type of leadership in which the leader has complete power and control over decision-making and excludes the participation of subordinates (Northouse, 2016, p. 381). The depictions of this leadership style in series are presented by Thomas Shelby. Thomas puts all the power and decision-making under his authority. He rarely let other characters involves with his plan and decisions. The authoritarian leader expects others to obey and follow them without question.

Thomas's autocratic leadership style is rooted from his ambitions to maintain his control and power. In order to maintain this leadership style, Thomas manipulates other characters and argue that this behavior need to be done to protect the Shelby family and expand their criminal empire. However, the depiction of autocratic leadership leads to tensions within the gang and the family. Polly Gray, the aunt in the Shelby family, often expressed his disappointment with Thomas's absoluteness in leading the organization. It is shown in season 1 when Thomas takes a decision without telling the family members. Polly said:

[Polly] Rule one. You don't punch above your weight.
[Thomas] Billy Kimber is there for the taking.
[Polly] Says who? Says Tom and his parliament of one. (S1:E4)

From the quotation above, it can be seen that Thomas relying on his own judgement and does not take opinions from others. This style of leadership allows him to project an image of strength and dominance.
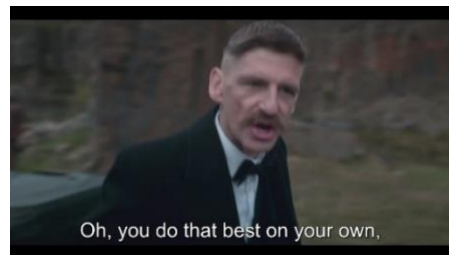

Figure 4. Thomas represents autocratic leadership-style (S5:E1)

The absoluteness of Thomas's position in Peaky Blinders became increasingly high and unattainable after the death of his wife. Thomas is portrayed as increasingly authoritarian and suspicious of all characters including his own family. Thomas's change creates opposition from the rest of the Shelby family. Thomas's life as a leader was increasingly isolated and there was an erosion of the trust of his followers.

Female character depiction in Peaky Blinder

According to Connell's reformulation of hegemonic masculinity, it is necessary to examine the role of women in gender relation. Connell argues that in patriarchal society, women contribute to support hegemonic masculinity regime. Set in the early 20th century, Peaky Blinders TV series depicts traditional female gender roles and expectation. In Peaky Blinders, female characters frequently embody traditional domestic roles such as taking care of the home, taking care of family members, and being a nurturing presence in the Shelby household. Women who embody traditional gender roles and expectations are often associated with several traits such as obedience, passive, subservient. In this following discussion, the portrayal of traditional female gender roles in Peaky Blinders will be discussed.

Domesticity is closely tied to the portrayal of traditional female roles in patriarchal society. Men, on the other hand, relate to the role of breadwinners. From a feminist perspective, this division of tasks restrict women's freedom of expression. It is as if women have no other choice but to take care of domestic work. It is as if women are not allowed to carry out activities in public spaces. This generates the misconception that household work is an absolute obligation for women and can only be done by women. And if women refuse to do it, then women are considered fail in carrying out their dutie Domesticity is portrayed in Peaky Blinders, especially in the context of the Shelby family and how female characters interact with one another. The early 20th-century gender roles and expectations, in which women were primarily in charge of taking care of the home and running the household, are frequently emphasized in the show. It is depicted in several characters such as Polly Gray, Ada Shelby, Esme Shelby, dan Linda Shelby. In the beginning of the series, these character support the idea that women are the one who responsible for domestic work.

Linda Shelby is the wife of Arthur Shelby. She is one of female character that represent the traditional gender norms such as domesticity. She is shown caring for the house and her family, seeking to establish a stable and supportive atmosphere. Linda's portrayal emphasizes the difficulty of women at the period, who had little agency and authority in their relationships. She wishes for a more conventional and peace domestic life that stable and secure.

Domestic work done by women should be rewarded equally with breadwinning done by men. Just like men, housewives also have an important role to support a family. However, in patriarchal nations, handling home tasks is typically frowned upon.

Breadwinning in meaning contestation is considered superior because the indicator for calculating value is money alone. On the other hand, domestic work is considered lowly. It can be avoided, when it demeans domestic work, it implicitly means it demeans women. This is because in this series, domestic work is generally the responsibility of women.

This will be very different if men oversee managing household production. Men who take care of household chores will be praised and applauded, while women who take care of household chores will be considered normal and normal. This reinforces that hegemonic masculinity is a normative ideology that benefits men. Because whatever role is taken, men will get an advantage over women

In Peaky Blinders, managing domestic responsibilities is often the object of ridicule to attack women's character. In season 1 episode 5, when the Shelby family is having a family gathering, Shelby' father verbally insults Polly Gray that offends Polly's dignity by saying:
"Please, woman. Let me be. Finish your sandwich and sling your hook… Polly Anna, I'm a guest of the head of this family. So why don't you maybe tend to your mangle or your scuttle?"

This dialogue implies that women should only mind domestic responsibilities and should not interrupt men's speech. Arthur and John, despite being in the same scene, show no intention of defending Polly. This indicated that they agreed with their father's statement that the role of women should not exceed domestic work.

Female characters in Peaky Blinders are viewed as supportive figures who provide males advice and emotional support. This role is represented through the female characters from Shelby family. For example, Polly Gray as the aunt of the Shelby is shown give Thomas advice for the business matters. Thomas's wife, Grace Shelby, also exhibit this trait. Grace's position as a supporting wife perpetuates gender stereotypes. Her character exists to support and encourage Thomas, frequently prioritizing his needs and ambitions above her own. This portrayal shows the power dynamics and gendered expectations of the time, where men were often presented.

Figure 5. The portrayal of supportive women for men (S3:E1)

Traditional gender roles also expecting women to become obedient and conforming to societal expectations or the authority of male figures. This series depicts certain

female characters who exhibit obedience in various ways. These female characters are the wife of Shelby's brothers.

Figure 6. The expectation that women must obey her husband (S5:E1)

In traditional gender roles, women are often depicted as passive and subservient. their value largely determined by their relationship to men. They are primarily defined by their relationships with male characters, such as being wives, girlfriends, or family members. They typically appear as supportive individuals, serving as love interests or sources of comfort for the male protagonists. This role demonstrates how reliant women are on males.

Peaky Blinders also portrayed women as a figure who dependent on men for protection and survival. Grace burgess is an example of how dependent women are represented in this series. Her interactions with Thomas and the Shelby family frequently affect her behaviors and decisions. In many cases, her narrative centers around her interactions with Thomas rather than her own personal interests or agency.

The social background of the Peaky Blinders series is the life of gangsters who live during a working-class society living in the city of Birmingham with a post-World War 1 setting. With this chaotic social condition, Steven Knight presents a male character who is filled with hegemonic attitudes masculinity. Elements that represent masculinity dominate this series, starting from fight scenes, gambling, war, and illegal business. The female characters in this series often receive discriminatory treatment from the male characters. In fact, Elizabeth Grey, a matriarch character who has a high position in the gang, is not spared from discrimination and harassment.

Gender hierarchy in Peaky Blinders

Connell's theory of masculinity offers a framework to examines gender hierarchy in a patriarchal society. According to Connell, the highest position in the gender hierarchy is occupied by men who practice hegemonic masculinity. This type of masculinity represents the ideal masculinity that is valued and rewarded by society. Peaky Blinders TV series also shows a gender hierarchy. In this series, the one who occupies the position of hegemonic masculinity is Peaky Blinder, particularly the Shelby family. In order to assert power and dominance, this gangs exhibit aggressive and violent behaviors.

The main characters in "Peaky Blinders" represent various facets of masculinity that correspond to their social class. A dominant form of masculinity characterized by power, dominance, and violence is represented by Thomas Shelby, the main character and gang leader in Peaky Blinders. His masculinity, which is rooted in his role as a gang leader and his readiness to use force to further his objectives, is centered on his authority and capacity to exert influence over others.

Peaky Blinders depict a male-dominated society in which men occupy most positions of power and authority. Thomas Shelby, demonstrates this dominance. He makes decisions, gives orders, and expects obedience from other character around him, including women. Other male characters in the criminal underworld use violence and power to maintain their supremacy.

In Connell's gender hierarchy, there are multiple configurations of masculinities. Apart from hegemonic masculinity, there is one type of masculinity that benefits from the patriarchal system of society, namely complicit masculinity. It refers to individuals who preserve conventional masculine standards and behaviors. Member of peaky blinders are shown embodying complicit masculinity. One of the characters that represents this masculinity is Michael Gray. Michael's position within the family and business is quite stable and advantageous. Throughout the series, Michael frequently adheres to certain traditional masculine characteristics and expectations. He also aligning himself with the expectations of the male-dominated society.

Peaky Blinders also displays a marginalized masculinity representation. This form of masculinity occupies a lower position in gender hierarchy. This masculinity refers to men who face marginalization due to their race, class, and sexuality. This series portrayed marginalization toward black male characters. Even though peaky blinder as the highest authority holder does not support the marginalization of black people, the society itself shows racist behavior. A black male character, Isaiah Jesus, gets a confrontation from a white male character. He said, *"I don't drink with black."* This scene below shows the hierarchy of masculinity, where marginalized masculinity has lower position compared to

complicit masculinity.

Figure 7. Marginalization toward black male character (S2:E4)

Connell's theory also highlights the concept of emphasized femininity, which refers to the idealized version of femininity that is often associated with subordinate forms of masculinity. In the first season, Ada Shelby and Grace Burgess, represent various emphasized feminine traits. Grace uses her femininity to her advantage

in order to gain control and influence over the men in her life. Ada is initially conforming to emphasized femininity. This series portrayed Ada as woman who expecting to be a wife and mother. However, as the story developed, Ada challenges traditional gender roles by engaging in political activism. The roles and behaviors of these characters highlight the contrast between dominant and subordinate gender roles.

Connell's theory also highlights how institutions contribute to the maintenance and reinforcement of forms of masculinity. The expression and acceptance of various masculinities in "Peaky Blinders" are influenced by gang hierarchy, social class, and the post-World War I setting. The violent and criminal behavior of The Peaky Blinders reflects a hypermasculine culture that has its roots in working-class upbringing and the need to survive in a hostile environment. On the other hand, aristocratic masculinities that rely on social standing, charisma, and political influence are represented by figures like Billy Kimber and Oswald Mosley.

Connell's theory also highlights the potential for resistance and subversion of dominant forms of masculinity. In "Peaky Blinders," characters such as Michael Gray and Alfie Solomons challenge the established hierarchy through their unconventional actions and strategies. Michael wants to improve the gang's methods of operation, abandoning traditional violence and embracing legal ventures. A Jewish gangster named Alfie defies social norms and demonstrates his wits and cunning while navigating the criminal underworld. The alternative masculinities portrayed by these characters go against the established norms.

Connell's theory can be used to analyze "Peaky Blinders" because it offers a rich portrayal of masculinity. The series investigates how dominant and subordinate forms of masculinity interact, the impact of social structures and institutions, and the possibility of subversion and resistance. The audience can gain understanding into the creation and negotiation of gender roles in a particular historical and cultural context by analyzing the complex dynamics of masculinity in "Peaky Blinders".

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, "Peaky Blinders" portrays masculinity in a strongly patriarchal society in a captivating way. The key characters embody hegemonic masculinity, which is defined by aggressiveness, toughness, competitiveness, physical strength, emotional restraint, and autocratic leadership. The aggressive behavior required for expressing control and domination is glorified and romanticized in gangster culture.

The portrayal of masculinity in the show is deeply rooted in family and cultural influences. The Shelby boys, particularly Arthur, Thomas, and John, inherit their aggressive and rough personalities from their father, Arthur Shelby Senior, who taught these attributes

as the standard within their ethnic identity as a rural gypsy. Physical violence and heated verbal confrontations are used to show the gang's aggressive behavior, which frequently leads to the creation of their power over others.

Furthermore, the series draws attention on the patriarchal society's typical gender roles and expectations of women. Female characters in "Peaky Blinders" usually play domestic roles and are meant to be submissive and supportive of the male characters. Their worth is frequently assessed by their interactions with males, and their agency is confined to offering counsel and emotional support.

The gender hierarchy in "Peaky Blinders" depicts the supremacy of hegemonic masculinity, as exemplified by the Shelby family, which holds the majority of power and authority. Complicit masculinity is also depicted, with an emphasis on conformity to traditional masculine values and actions. In contrast, marginalized masculinity, as illustrated by black male characters, faces discrimination and inferior societal standing.

Connell's theory of masculinity gives a framework for understanding the series' complicated dynamics of gender roles, highlighting the power of institutions as well as the possibilities for resistance and subversion. The representation of many types of masculinity and their relationships in the musical reflects the historical and cultural setting of post-World War I Birmingham. Overall, "Peaky Blinders" not only captivates spectators with its captivating plot and characters, but it also offers a thought-provoking examination of masculinity, gender roles, and power dynamics in a patriarchal society.

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