

# THE DISCOURSE OF DOG FIGHTING

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## ABSTRACT

*In this essay, we discuss dog fighting as a blood sport with a history embedded in the status-driven display of masculinity, power and violence. Based on published reports and interviews with those living and working in dog fighting neighborhoods, we show that the contemporary cultural knowledge of dog fighting is a discourse with multiple meanings: for those who pit dogs against each other, for the worried public, for those who are charged with law enforcement, and for the dogs themselves. We conclude with an argument that the discourse of dog fighting might best be approached from the perspective of green criminology with a focus on those who are most abused by the crime: the fighting dogs.*

## REFLEXIVE STATEMENTS

*Linda Kalof writes for both academic and general readers on the representation of animals in western culture. Her current project is a historiography of animal imagery in blood sports and other human rituals and how those depictions are linked to the devaluation of marginalized social groups.*

*Carl S. Taylor promotes humanitarian efforts in distressed communities and leads efforts to encourage peaceful resolution and community leadership initiatives that include youth. In this community effort, dog fighting has been targeted by a group of ex-offenders under the umbrella of "Good Shepherds," who are educating youth and community members about dog fighting.*

**D**og fighting has finally entered the public discourse for the sorry sport that it is, and as is the case with most issues regarding the human treatment of other animals, the debate over pitting animals in fights to the death is highly contested. The contestation takes multiple forms, most of it in the popular

media. For example, just as NFL commissioner, Roger Goodell suspends the star football player Michael Vick for "reprehensible acts" in dog fighting activities (including the execution of dogs by hanging, electrocution and drowning), Whoopi Goldberg appears on national television defending Vick's dog fighting activities as tied to his cultural upbringing in the South where dogs are "sport." Meanwhile, both PETA and the Humane Society of the United States denounce dog fighting as cruel and inhumane; the public reacts with shock at the news that standard dog fighting practice includes killing dogs who lose fights, refuse to fight or are otherwise not worthy of the pit; and conservative bloggers denounce the public outcry over a "few wasted mutts" (Conservative Opinion 2007). In this essay, we use the term "discourse" to refer to the written, oral and visual texts that contribute to the cultural knowledge of dog fighting. In our culture, the violent blood sport of dog fighting has a multiplicity of meanings: for those who pit dogs against each other, for the worried public, for those who are charged with law enforcement, and for the dogs themselves. We conclude with an argument that the discourse of dog fighting might best be approached from the perspective of green criminology with a focus on those who are most abused by the crime: the fighting dogs.

## BACKGROUND

Sex, masculinity and the display of animal aggression are the basic ingredients of all blood sport rituals (Kalof 2007). For example, both bull fighting and cock fighting are male-focused activities in which masculine values including sexual potency and aggressiveness are played out in combative sport rituals. In bull fighting, the matador proves his superiority over the bull in a highly gendered performance that eventually emasculates the bull as the animal is worn to exhaustion and no longer able to exercise his wild and "willful maleness" (Marvin 1994:161).

A very similar validation of masculinity and sexual virility is central even to combative blood sports that ostensibly involve only animals. In his classic essay on cock fighting in a Balinese village, Clifford Geertz (1973) argued that while it appears that cocks are the ones fighting in the ring, actually it is the men. In Bali, men have a close identification with their cocks (same pun in Balinese as in English), who are symbolic exaggerations of the male ego. Other ethnographic studies of cock fighting document that the sport is a male event. The bird owners are male, the audience is male, the birds are male, and the attributes valued in the ring are masculine virtues (Marvin 1984). Scholars have uncovered numerous links between cock fighting and a male world of aggression and violence. For example, research has found that the rural blue-collar White men who place bets on cock fights in the United States have hyper-masculine

world views that emphasize the reaffirmation of masculine identity through such themes as authoritarianism, sexual animism and male bonding (Hawley 1993). A study of Venezuelan cock fighting documented the sport as a ritualistic form of aggression that allows for the expression, negotiation and resolution of cultural patterns of hostility and is symbolic of a competition among men who seek recognition of their sexual potency among each other and in the larger community (Cook 1994). Cock fighting in Martinique has been described as a way for male members of an oppressed group to express masculine identity and aggression (Dundes 1994:249). And in a provocative essay, Alan Dundes (1994) argued that the cockfight is a "thinly disguised symbolic homoerotic masturbatory phallic duel, with the winner emasculating the loser through castration or feminization" (p. 251).

It is curious that few scholars have focused on dog fighting as a blood sport similarly centered by sexuality, masculine values and the deployment of animals as symbols of a culture infused with macho aggression and menacing violence. Both cock fighting and dog fighting are sport activities staged by humans in which animals are incited to fight, maim, and kill each other. Both are focused on *competition* without a survival-of-the-fittest component; *winning* as a singular goal with little interest in the process of fighting, only the outcome; *spectators* who watch the fights and validate the superiority of the winning animal's human handler; and *gambling* on one of the animals to win (Cashmore 2000). Further, in both sports there is a clear juxtaposition between owning fighting animals and aggressive masculinity.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF DOG FIGHTING AS A SYMBOL OF MASCULINE PROWESS

The history of dog fighting begins with training dogs to attack humans and other animals in combative blood struggles, an activity of sport and spectacle that dates to at least the fifth century BC. Etruscan wall paintings show scenes of bloody competition between humans and dogs, black figured vase paintings depict Greek men provoking dog fights, and floor mosaics from Libya celebrate the Roman arena slaughters with scenes of humans and dogs working together to spill the blood of a wide variety of other animals, including horses, antelope and wild boar.

As hunting partners for humans, dogs trained to attack large, ferocious animals have long been highly valued and greatly feared. The regulation of hunting privileges in the Middle Ages preserved hunting rights for the elite and prohibited the ownership of hunting dogs by those below a certain social level, linking the status of dogs to the status of their owners (Thomas 1983:105-6). By the twelfth century, breeds other than the hunting hound gained status, and of



these, the English mastiff was particularly admired. The mastiff had courage and strength, characteristics that were symbolic of English masculine prowess, not only to the English themselves but also to their visitors from foreign lands (MacInnes 2003).

The medieval English were very fond of the ferociousness of the mastiff who could attack both deer and men and, if wearing a spiked collar, even wolves and wild boar (Gilbert 1979:65). Accordingly, the mastiff was not allowed to roam in the forests (unless his feet were maimed so he could not run with any speed), but instead was kept close by to protect his people and his people's private property. As a descendent of the "bandogge," a dog who was collared and tied up during the day but allowed to roam at night to protect property, the mastiff was trained to kill in defense of a master by using a bear as a human substitute (Brownstein 1969). Other animals were used as training exercises to make dogs aggressive and willing to fight to the death, including boars, chimpanzees, and even horses. But bears and bulls were the bait animals of choice, the bear because of his similarity to humans in form and shape, and the bull because of the popular idea during the sixteenth century that setting dogs on a tethered bull with the resulting frenzied exercise tenderized the bull's flesh and made the meat more digestible (indeed for some time, butchers were not allowed to sell "unbaited beef").

But what began in the Middle Ages as strategies to protect property and produce tender meat, setting dogs on other animals evolved into a full scale blood sport that entertained large numbers of people during the Renaissance (Kalof 2007:65). Popular with both the nobility and non-noble folks, animal baitings were held throughout England for hundreds of years in both urban and rural contexts. Dogs attacked chained bears and bulls for tourists in London and for drinkers at church ales who would spend money on beer brewed for the baiting event by the churchwardens to raise money for the parish. Large animals were not the only ones tormented by dogs for human sport. Badger baiting and training dogs to kill rats in rat pits were popular entertainments, particularly rat killing, which was celebrated in the huge number of rats that could be dispatched in any one competition. For example, in 1825 at the Westminster Pit, the dog Billy was matched against The Kentish Bitch in the number of rats killed in a simultaneous competition (see Figure 1); within 7.5 minutes, Billy had killed 90 rats, and The Kentish Bitch had killed 65 rats in just under 9 minutes (Drabble 1948).

While numerous theories have been offered up to explain the English penchant for animal baiting, the one that holds particular relevance for this essay is that the English identified with the dog's courage and valor, creating opportunities for blood sport and baiting events to evolve into spectacular displays of masculine bravado (MacInnes 2003:21). Finally, not only were the



**Figure 1.** Rat-killing Dog Billy, London c 1823. Artist unknown. Photo courtesy Sir Isaac Brock. [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Rat\\_Killing\\_Dog.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Image:Rat_Killing_Dog.jpg) (Retrieved October 24, 2007)



spectacles believed to be scenes that played out wild and uncontrolled natural animal behaviors, baiting was used in a patriarchal symbolic system as a metaphor for the abuse of women. For example, the historical records in Somerset, England contain reports of a man who threatened to tie his wife to a stake and set dogs on her and of a woman who was stolen from her home by two men to be their "bear" (Stokes 1996:76).

It was not until 1835 that animal baiting finally was banned in England, and with the prohibition of baiting contests, dog fighting increased in popularity. Pitting dogs against each other was just as spectacular as bull and bear baitings, but also had other advantages: there were few legal interferences because one could fight dogs in any shed or hollow without generating attention, and afterwards it was easy to get away (the wounded or dead dog could be hauled away in a sack) (Drabble 1948). Dog fighting was considered more sporting than bear or bull baiting because there was no victim tethered to a chain without the ability for escape, and the goal was not so much to kill the other dog but rather to be "game enough to try" (Drabble 1948:917).

Even though dog fighting was illegal in England and all organized dog fighting finally stamped out by the beginning of the twentieth century, fighting dogs were still being bred and exported to the United States, where the sport was

still legal in some states (Drabble 1948). However, the United States was also legislating against dog fighting with Henry Bergh at the forefront of the attempts to eliminate cruel sports; in 1874 he was able to secure search and seizure rights, forcing the dog fighting "fraternity" to go underground (Evans and Forsyth 1997). Now, more than 125 years later, even after finally passing a federal law in 2007 that criminalizes animal fighting throughout the United States, the pernicious blood sport of dog fighting is currently at epidemic levels.

### THE SCOPE OF THE DOG FIGHTING PROBLEM IN THE UNITED STATES<sup>1</sup>

There are more than 40,000 dog fighters in the urban centers of the United States, and most residents of high crime areas are exposed to dog fighting from cradle to grave. One report documented that almost all children interviewed in the ninth grade classes in a public high school in Pontiac, Michigan had personally witnessed a dog fight (Gibson 2005:29, n. 13). Further, most of these youngsters believed that there was nothing wrong with dog fighting, indicating that they were highly desensitized to the violence. Rap singers and American hip/hop culture glorify dog fighting, while urban clothing and toy manufacturer promote the blood sport through their product advertisements. For example, Nike recently ran an ad that showed two dogs lunging at one another attempting to fight, but the company spokesperson denied that the ad was about dog fighting at all but rather about "the compelling need to win, to beat your opponent and win at all odds ... People have to understand the youth culture we cater to ... Our market is the urban, edgy, hip-hop culture—that's who we try to reach" (Gibson 2005: 29, n. 14).

Some dog fighters are skilled professionals who operate in national and international clandestine networks, but others are mid-level dog fighters who remain in specific geographical regions. These "fanciers" or "enthusiasts" are usually acquainted with each other and return repeatedly to the same fight pits. Dog fighters typically have extensive criminal backgrounds, but they are still highly respected in the local community. The fights take place in remote barns and warehouses, where drug dealers distribute drugs and where refreshments, entertainment, and gambling are provided. The most violent dog fighter is the street fighter and gang members who attend organized fights to gamble and traffic in drugs—"drugs, gangs, dope, dogs ... they all go together" (Gibson 2005:6). In the gang culture, fighting dogs are used as tools to ensure security (much like they were in the Middle Ages) primarily for drug traffickers who stash drugs in containers to which they chain dogs in yards, empty fields and basements.



For gang members, their dogs are an extension of social status, and dog matches are used to celebrate the gang leader's supremacy and intimidate younger gang members. As participants in underground organized crime activity, dog fighters not only make large amounts of money, but they also participate in numerous peripheral crimes, including drug dealing and use, gambling and theft. As extensions of social status and individual identity, losing dogs that survive the pit are immediately killed or tortured and mutilated if the owner is particularly embarrassed by the dog's cowardly or unsporting behavior—a ritual to regain the respect of their peer group (Gibson 2005:8). These extreme measures are not only valuable in reviving lost respect, but also mechanisms used by gang members to initiate young members into a culture of violence.

Dog fighting and the status it provides among peers are not unique to urban street culture. Symbolic meaning and the Southern culture of honor come together in dog fighting activities in Louisiana and Mississippi, where ethnographic work documents that the sport of dog fighting provides validation of masculinity for predominantly White male working-class men (Evans, Gauthier, and Forsyth 1998). For these men, fighting dogs are symbols of heroism and mythic masculinity, much as they are for urban gang members. The rules of the fighting ritual are also similar: dogs are expected to fight bravely (like a man), penalties are levied on dogs who behave cowardly (like a "cur") and dogs who refuse to fight are quickly killed, allowing the owner to regain some of the status lost because of the dog's poor performance (Evans et al. 1998:833).<sup>2</sup>

In the next section, we describe the problem of dog fighting in Detroit based on field notes and personal interviews collected by Carl Taylor. Dr. Taylor has been working with Michigan's urban youth for over a decade on projects aimed at positive youth development. Dog fighting emerges as a particularly insidious problem among these youth.

## **DOG FIGHTING IN DETROIT**

Field interviews conducted by the International Gang Research Project with psychologists, city officials, religious leaders, former gang members and community residents document that dog fighting is a cornerstone of illicit commerce in the city of Detroit.<sup>3</sup> In fact, the problem of dog fighting in urban Detroit was first recognized twenty years ago by a former gang member who had become a successful youth worker. He complained that it was difficult to convince youngsters that dog fighting was cruel and inhumane with so many sports celebrities, entertainers, and professionals participating in dog fighting as spectators, placing money bets, and socializing with underworld figures:

People need to know that while dog fighting is seen as fun ... (the participants are) more than boys from the hood. Lots of people come from all over, Canada, suburbs, and upper class blacks and brown men. They come to see the prostitutes, eat the bar-b-que, watch bare-knuckle fights, street car racing, buy dope, and ... they come to see the dog fights to the death. It is ... like a carnival ... every week, lots of money is moving around. What I hate, they blame it all on the ghetto, it's really lots of people not from the ghetto that make dog fighting happen in Detroit. You wouldn't believe who is attending these dog fights, right now in Detroit.

In the observations of urban communities around Detroit, organized dog fights emerge as serious racketeering activities—business ventures that draw a cross section of spectators from the middle class, the working class, the wealthy and the street culture. The increase in dog fighting seems to have come at a time when small communities lack the manpower, resources, and education to effectively combat the illegal sport. But some are trying. The city attorney for Ecorse, Michigan (a suburb of Detroit) decries the dog fighting that takes place in abandoned buildings and other isolated areas and is attended by heavy-betting Ecorse insiders and outsiders:

The question is complex, we have found evidence of dog fights being held in secret locations within our city limits. . . . The culprits are many times those involved in criminal enterprise. We know from our police chief that we have fourth amendment challenges. Some of these dope dealers have the dogs to protect their businesses of selling, distributing illegal drugs. Our officers are at risk trying to investigate whether dogs are loose, pit bulls waiting inside yards, illicit places for dog fighting, or growing marijuana [*sic*].

The field interviews document that many Detroit urban residents live in constant fear of pit bull dogs. This fear can be attributed in large part to the urban legends of pit bulls that are perpetuated by media portrayals of vicious dog attacks and to the stressful situations, including moral decline and increasing violence that urban people must confront on a daily basis (Cohen and Richardson 2002). Here are the words of a city attorney working in a Detroit suburb faced with an increase in dog fighting that has seriously compromised the safety of the community:

We have children being attacked by pit bulls, trained for fighting (and) unfortunately getting loose. I dictate to our ordinance department, along with law enforcers, to destroy any pit bull or aggressive dog running loose in our community.



Some of the most compelling evidence of the heightened fear of fighting dogs comes from long-time residents of the community. For example, a 96-year-old woman, known respectfully as Mother Smith, lives in what is left of a once proud working-class block on the Westside of Detroit. Her son, an educator and clergyman, complained of the menace in their neighborhood created by the pit bulls who belong to an alleged drug dealer:

These damn devil dogs are running loose ... The young boys have these damn dogs, when you get out of your car they attack. This pit bull thing is a living hell, they're not dogs, they are devilish dogs from hell. This is hell, living locked up, can't go out on your porch, get out of your car. My mother cannot go to sit in her garden backyard, she must stay locked up in her house... Jesus, I can't bear this anymore.

The Smiths were the first Black family to move to Highland Avenue, which had 52 single-dwelling homes back in 1949. Today, the number of occupied homes stands at only 21, with much of the neighborhood taken over by drug dealing, constant gunfire, and dog fights in abandoned houses. Violence has made her block a battle zone, and Mother Smith laments:

I never dreamed that my block would end up like this. The dog fighting is hideous, we are all suffering; I saw one of those pit bulls attacking a little boy, mauled half to death. The men were laughing, can you imagine that? We raised our family (here) now the dogs are raising the kids, pit bulls are in control, pit bulls and their dope dealing masters.

The concept of "master" is particularly relevant in the discourse of dog fighting. Pit bulls are masculine status symbols for young gang members in urban areas, with the ownership of menacing dogs indicative of high self-esteem, macho imagery and gangster mentality. A clinical psychologist speaking of the dilemma of dog fighting in urban Detroit emphasized that young unemployed men are gaining status by emulating well-known celebrities who own and display fierce, wild animals:

Remember it goes back to the time of (the) Roman Empire, the great warriors, soldiers, generals had wild animals as mascots, pets ... animals so dangerous that mere mortals would cringe at the sight of some warrior-king walking with his Lion, Jaguar, or wild beast. Young boys see drug dealers with these killer dogs, expensive to purchase, expensive to maintain, train, and to bet on.... These boys are imitating those macho kings, the dogs replace the Lion. If you are poor, no job, many are impressed by the deadliness, the danger of being a thug, a gang represents work, money, and status. The dog is simply part of the image that distorted young boys applaud.

The late gang analyst, Clyde Sherrod, spoke candidly about the danger of having young children exposed to dog fighting. Sherrod, a savvy street investigator, was an anti-animal-fighting advocate who not only recognized the danger of aggressive dogs, but also that the dogs were carefully trained for fierceness. In a field interview, he argued that denouncing the dogs was similar to blaming the victim:

A kid can wander into danger so easily, whether its pit bulls, fighting cocks, or alley dogs, wild animals don't see kids, they see prey, dinner, a pit bull is looking for a kill ... that is what these young fools have taught them, don't blame the damn dog!

## DISCUSSION

"Blaming the damn dog" is only one of several themes that contribute to our cultural knowledge of dog fighting. For those who own fighting dogs, the animals are used as extensions of social status, as symbols of masculine power, as tools to intimidate others, and as weapons for the protection of property and illicit drug activities. For community residents and law enforcement officials, dog fighting and the ubiquitous presence of pit bulls in high crime urban areas creates a continuous climate of fear of illegal activities, violence and social disruption. The terror of pit bull dogs is particularly compelling with reports of mauling elderly residents or young children, often believed to be unsuspecting victims who are prey or bait for out-of-control vicious dogs.

In fact, some argue that pit bulls are very people-friendly dogs and among the most loyal (and most abused) breeds in the United States (Cohen and Richardson 2002; Gibson 2005). Dogs generally are unique in their predisposition to humans (see Figure 2). They relate to us as members of the pack and as litter mates, they are easily trained and their physical size is manageable (Irvine 2004a). Alas, it is their gentleness and fierce loyalty toward humans that have made pit bulls particularly desirable for dog fighting; pit bulls are well known for their willingness to take considerable abuse and neglect yet remain faithful and non-aggressive toward their owners (Gibson 2005).

Particularly problematic in the discourse of dog fighting is that the animals are considered only property. Thus, the abuse suffered by the dogs is of minor (if any) significance *sui generis* because the cruelty is usually considered a minor offense against property, not a real crime (Beirne 2007:62). However, keeping dogs for the purpose of fighting, employing abusive training methods, using them as protective weapons and pitting them against each other in bloody combat are all clear transgressions against their basic rights. As Leslie Irvine (2004b) argues, it is a basic right of animals not to be treated as the property of others. She acknowledges that giving animals this basic right means not only the end of



**Figure 2.** Marble grave stele depicting a dog, 460 BC, Athens Archeological Museum. Photo by Linda Kalof.



institutionalized animal exploitation in consuming animals for food, clothing and laboratory experiments, but also the abolition of pet-ownership and keeping companion animals. Regardless of the dismay most of us feel when confronted with the prospect of a life without animal companions, it is the notion that they are not to be treated as property that has the potential for reconfiguring the discourse on dog fighting.

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Of course, property and status are time-honored bedfellows, and here lies another contribution to the cultural knowledge of dog fighting. A brave, ferocious, winning dog reflects positively on his owner and, as a "trophy animal" is similar to the "trophy wife," the prized possession that is displayed over and over again as a symbol of the owner's status. Indeed, it is the juxtaposition of the display of both animals and women in a masculine, aggressive, violent patriarchal culture that perpetuates attitudes that exacerbate the domination and control over less powerful others (Kalof, Fitzgerald, and Baralt 2004).<sup>4</sup>

The discourse of dog fighting should be centered more directly on the physical, psychological, and emotional abuse of the animals themselves, "as objects of study in their own right" (Beirne 2007:62). This focus is possible using the lens of green criminology, the study of the harm inflicted on the environment and other animals by governments, corporations and everyday human activities. Animal abuse in all its guises, not just dog fighting, is particularly relevant in this regard, and green criminology seeks to understand and confront the social problem of animal cruelty. The horse, for example, has for more than a century been given voice in the cruelty inflicted on him as a source of labor<sup>5</sup> and at the end of life, a source of sport and entertainment, as in Mark Twain's (1906) "A Horse's Tale":

How many times have I changed hands? I think it is twelve times—I cannot remember; and each time it was down a step lower, and each time I got a harder master. They have been cruel, every one; they have worked me night and day in degraded employments, and beaten me; they have fed me ill, and some days not at all. And so I am but bones, now, with a rough and frowsy skin humped and cornered upon my shrunken body—that skin which was once so glossy, that skin which she loved to stroke with her hand. I was the pride of the mountains and the Great Plains; now I am a scarecrow and despised. These piteous wrecks that are my comrades here say we have reached the bottom of the scale, the final humiliation; they say that when a horse is no longer worth the weeds and discarded rubbish they feed to him, they sell him to the bull-ring for a glass of brandy, to make sport for the people and perish for their pleasure. (P. 36)

Such a voice is rarely given to fighting dogs—those who are also laborers, albeit in the fighting ring. Indeed, they are not considered victims at all in the dog fighting discourse, but rather "fighting machines with insatiable blood-lust." The sport is viewed as nothing more than events at which the animals are allowed to act out their normal behaviors (Gibson 2005:9-10). This denial of victimization is particularly problematic when linked with another justification for the



sport—the glorification of the "old-timers," men who are considered heroes and role models in producing good fighting dogs and bringing younger participants into the insider circle of dog fighting. This appeal to tradition and generational bonding in the enjoyment of animal blood sports is similar to that expounded by the proponents of both cock fighting and sport hunting. The masculine neediness for blood, bond, and brotherhood sustains animal blood sports and appalling animal abuse (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3. Fighting dog. Photo courtesy PETA.**



It is time for a new discourse on dog fighting, one that takes into account the emotional, physical, and psychological abuse of the dogs themselves, those who are forced to labor in the fighting pit. We close with a poignant description of the outrageous violation of another living being that is the horror of dog fighting:

His face is a mass of deep cuts, as are his shoulders and neck. Both of his front legs have been broken, but Billy Bear isn't ready to quit. At the referee's signal, his master releases him, and unable to support himself on his front legs, he slides on his chest across the blood and urine stained carpet, propelled by his good hind legs, toward the opponent who rushes to meet him. Driven by instinct, intensive training and love for the owner who has brought him to this moment, Billy Bear drives himself painfully into the other dog's charge ... Less than 20 minutes later, rendered useless by the other dog, Billy Bear lies spent beside his master, his stomach constricted with pain. He turns his head back toward the ring, his eyes ... searching for a last look at the other dog as (he) receives a bullet in his brain. (C. M. Brown quoted in Gibson 2005:7-8)

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>The material in this section is adapted from Gibson (2005).

<sup>2</sup>The notion of killing the dog who refuses to fight can be traced to Ancient Greece (see Pliny the Elder, n.d.).

<sup>3</sup>Field interviews and parts of the interview with Clyde Sherrod are from the Michigan Gang Research Project, part of the International Gang Research Project (IGRP); Mrs. Smith was interviewed August 2006, unpublished from the Overcoming The Odds (OTO) Project, a joint project with MSU/Tufts University: C. Taylor and Richard Lerner, Co-PIs; Virgil Taylor, Field Manager. The IGRP (formerly known as The Michigan Gang Research Project) was created in 1981 for the purpose of researching gang phenomena and understanding the dynamics associated with gang culture. A primary focus of the project over the last twenty years has been youth as related to gang culture and organizations. Founded by Carl S. Taylor, the Michigan Gang Research Project has effectively engaged and interacted with hundreds of gangs and thousands of gang members and gang leaders throughout the United States and Europe.

<sup>4</sup>Further, it is argued that those who are oppressed tend to disregard the well-being of the less powerful, suggesting that poorly-educated men who live in cultures with oppressive economies will more likely participate in cruel animal blood sports, and this is particularly the case in southern-most cultures of the world (see Preece and Chamberlain 1993).

<sup>5</sup>See, for example, Sewell (1877).

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