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# 'People Look at Us, the Way We Dress, and They Think We're Gangsters': Bonds, Bridges, Gangs and Refugees: A Qualitative Study of Inter-Cultural Social Capital in Glasgow

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## Abstract

It is widely recognized that refugee integration occurs most effectively within communities that are rich in inter-cultural social capital. This paper explores the dangers associated with intensely bonded and disconnected communities and the relationship between refugee marginalization and the presence of youth gangs. Drawing upon a small-scale qualitative study with young refugees in Glasgow, it seeks to explore the extent to and ways in which these young people experience social bonding and bridging and participate in gang culture. The findings suggest that excessive bonding social capital often limits opportunities for inter-cultural integration in Glasgow. Gang membership, although driven primarily by territorial issues, provides one site for ethnic solidarity and racial prejudice. The paper considers the potential for community initiatives to build inter-cultural cohesion, and ends by calling for changes to dispersal policy and for further research to explore the most effective vehicles for building social capital in multi-ethnic urban communities.

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