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Sport and the maintenance of masculine hegemony

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Abstract

Sport is a crucial arena in which masculine hegemony is constructed and reconstructed. The effects of sporting activity are usefully analyzed in terms of two major dimensions. Those that relate directly to men, and those that serve dominant interests less directly, though no less effectively, through inferiorizing women and their activities. Processes through which sport directly supports male dominance are ones which associate males and maleness with valued skills and the sanctioned use of aggression/force/violence. Sport celebrates the dominant form of masculinity, though it must be noted that as well as women, some men are also excluded. This monopolization process is completed by a series of concrete processes which exclude women from the terrain completely, or if they do manage to pass through the barriers, effectively minimizes their achievements. Four concrete processes are considered and illustrated from the Australian sporting scene, those of definition, direct control, ignoring, and trivialization. It is necessary to understand these processes if we are to develop strategies to circumvent them. The mere fact that it is necessary for these processes to be continually invoked

There fact that it is necessary for these processes to be continually invoked demonstrates that there are contradictions which can be exploited.



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