



Humiliation Through Performance: Conflicting Dynamics And Gender Relations Among Boys In After-School Soccer

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Abstract

Background: Previous research has shown that violence among boys in sporting contexts is often legitimized through gender expectations that connect masculinity with toughness, competitiveness, and the capacity to endure or inflict pain (Messner, 1990; Kreager, 2007; Odenbring & Odenbring, 2020). However, less attention has been paid to how specific sport techniques may trigger conflict and violence among boys, particularly in contexts marked by high rates of violence against women. This research examines the contentious dynamics among a group of adolescent boys playing football during school hours at a school in a region with a high rate of violence against women.

Methodology: The study is part of a broader research agenda investigating gender relations in territories with elevated rates of violence against women in Porto Alegre, Brazil. Participant observation, diary entries, and focus groups form the core of the data collection. Data were analyzed using Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Results & Conclusion: Particularly relevant emerging from this data was the ways boys viewed fights as the result of disrespect, excessive aggression, or humiliating moves. As such the violent behavior among these boys was often seen as a marker and expression of damaging and damaged masculinity within the sport of soccer. Particular moves such as the "Nutmeg" or "Rainbow Flick" symbolized skill and dominance. However, these moves also place the player who executes them in a vulnerable position, as they may face physical retaliation. In this paper we examine the complex relationship between masculinity, aggression, and vulnerability in sport, highlighting how the pursuit of dominance can lead to consequences for both the instigator and the target of humiliation within soccer among these adolescent boys.

Keywords: Masculinities; Humiliation; Male Honor; Youth Sport; Violence



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