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Masculinities, Goffman and Maintaining the Street: A narrative understanding of young males' experiences of gang culture and Sports-Based-Interventions

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Abstract:

Within this paper we seek to explore notions of governance of citizenry through the politics of crime and sport. Sport is often presented as a panacea to combat a range of risks to advancing liberal democracies such as ill-health, lack of education and attainment, morality, drug (mis) use and crime. The seemingly redeeming and transformative powers of sport have manifested in the emergence of a plethora of policy initiatives designed to combat the social problems aforementioned. Much has been espoused about the power of sport and this has been accepted, largely anecdotally, as we have witnessed a number of policy shifts focussing on 'elite', 'competitive', 'healthy', 'inclusive' and 'educational' elements of sport and physical activity. In order to offer insight into the experiences of such sporting interventions aimed at tackling these social problems, this paper explores narrative experiences of the 'Street Elite' project which provides the context to offer critical commentary regarding policy, governance and the conforming citizen. This paper focuses on the findings of a small-scale mixed method study of 12 males and their experiences of a Sports-Based-Intervention in order to explore the complexity of governance and control through the eyes of those involved in programmes that are deemed transformative in nature. It will consider the ways in which regimes of control are derived, implemented and received whilst challenging the accepted notion that sport is a vehicle for positive change that can significantly impact upon those 'disengaged' young people. Considering arguments aligned to 'front' and the way in which young men present themselves to avoid stigma and maintain face; this paper will seek to argue that sports initiatives aimed at tackling crime, health and educational issues are reinforcing the issues faced by young men who seek to maintain their position in the community.

References

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