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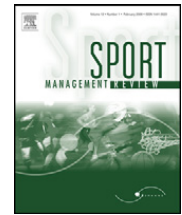
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# Sport Management Review

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## Review

# The Maintenance of Masculinity Among the Stakeholders of Sport

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### ABSTRACT

Feminist and hegemony theorizing are used to explicate how sport and its ancillary organizations and occupations have managed to reproduce its masculinized nature despite the gains of second wave feminism that characterizes the broader culture. The author shows that contemporary sporting institutions largely originated as a political enterprise to counter the first wave of feminism, and describe how gender-segregation and self-selection permits sports' gatekeepers to near-exclusively draw upon a relatively homogenous group of hyper-masculine, over-conforming, failed male athletes to reproduce the institution as an extremely powerful gender-regime. The author suggests that, because orthodox notions of masculinity are institutionally codified within sport, it will take more than affirmative action programs to bring gender equality off the pitch; it will also require gender-integration on the pitch.

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## 1. Introduction

Although there are various purposes of organized sporting participation for boys and men, a consistent finding is that competitive sport serves as a social institution principally organized around the political project of defining certain forms of masculinity as acceptable, while denigrating others (Anderson, 2005a; Crosset, 1990; Connell, 1987; Cunningham, 2008;

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Kimmel, 1994; Majors, 1990; Messner, 1992, 2004). Contact team sports have been particularly recognized as leading markers of masculinity, where participation is made near-compulsory through boyhood culture (Messner & Sabo, 1990; Pronger, 1990; Whitson, 1990). As such, boys are structured into a desire to be associated with masculine dominance by partaking in sports that sculpt their bodies and construct their identities to align with hegemonic perspectives of masculinist embodiment and expression. Competitive team sports therefore exist as a microcosm of society's gendered values, myths and prejudices about gender, but they also actively construct boys and men to exhibit, value and reproduce traditional notions of masculinity—stratifying them in accordance with a hegemonic form of masculine dominance (Hastings, Zahran, & Cable, 2006; Messner, 1992).

In the United States, women's sporting participation has increased since the 1972 passage of Title IX (McDonagh & Pappano, 2008). Today, women are well represented as participants at the lower levels of sport. However, women's representation dramatically decreases in the professional ranks; particularly among the sports which capture media interest (Burstyn, 1999). Matters are worse for openly gay men. Compared to women, gay men have made very little progress in opening mainstream sports to gay participation (Anderson, 2002, 2005a; Pronger, 1990).

But the masculinization of sport is not limited to that of athletes alone. Sport, as an all encompassing institution, involves not only the men and women who play the games, but those who train the athletes (Acosta & Carpenter, 2006); those who hire and manage the coaches, athletic directors and sport agents (Hoerber, 2007); those who market and promote sports (Cunningham, 2007); and those who report on the successes and failures of athletes through sport media (Lapchick, Breden, & Wright, 2006). Men are highly over-represented in all of these positions. Accordingly, both athletes and sports' stakeholders are overrepresented by men, in an institution run by and for heterosexual men (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008).

## 2. Gender Theory

Gendered institutions are always dynamic arenas of tension and struggle, but perhaps there is no other institution in which gender is more naturalized than sport (Caudwell, 2003; Davis, 1990; McKay, 1997; Messner, 2000). As a highly segregated, homophobic, sexist and misogynistic gender-regime, sport not only contributes to the gender order but it also reproduces a conservative and stabilizing form of masculinity that has considerable costs for both sexes (Anderson, 2008a; Burstyn, 1999; Connell, 1987, 2002; Demetriou, 2001; Kidd, 1990; Messner, 1992, 2002). This has also been recognized by sport and gender scholars whose work focuses on the organizational context (c.f. Cunningham, 2007, 2008; Cunningham and Sagas, 2004; Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2005; Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008; Shaw and Hoerber, 2006). In the following sections, I build upon this research base and also draw from the literature on the gendered nature of work and occupations to more clearly explicate the gendered nature of sport organizations.

Acker (1990) illustrated that much of the work concerning gender and organizations finds that the workplace is assumed to be gender neutral. However, she argued that the problem exists in that work and organizations are not; and that when they appear such, it is because they obscure "the embodied nature of work" (p. 139). By posing as gender neutral environments work and organizations are able to retain male dominance. Essentially, they manage to hide discriminatory practices that keep women from a number of masculinized workplaces (Fielding-Lloyd & Meân, 2008). Accordingly, men control most all positions of power in important social and political institutions (Sørensen, 1984). Sport, however, is somewhat different. There is considerably less masking of masculinity in sport. Instead, it remains a hierarchically driven enterprise whose members proudly boast of its masculinized nature (Cunningham, 2008).

A bifurcation of what it means to be masculine and feminine continues to polarize relations between the sexes in ways that generally subordinate, marginalize, or undermine women and gay men (Messner, 1992). Increasingly, however, gender literature challenges the singular and unitary conception of gender identity, arguing that there exists a multiplicity of sometimes contradictory masculinities that can be successfully drawn upon in masculinity performance (Wetherell & Edley, 1999). Accordingly, Connell's (1987) application of Gramsci's (1971) hegemony theory to masculinity has served as the most useful and prolific paradigm to analyze the relationship between men and the institution of sport.

Connell described hegemonic masculinity as a social constructionist process (West & Zimmerman, 1987) by which one form of institutionalized masculinity is "culturally exalted" above all others (Connell, 1995, p. 77). In this system, men are compelled to maintain and sustain a host of achieved and ascribed variables associated with hegemonic power. Connell (1987) and many others (c.f. Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997; Light & Kirk, 2000) use hegemonic masculinity as a heuristic tool to explicate how a dominant and hegemonic archetype of masculinity is constructed in relation to women and against other forms of masculinity, which it subsequently subordinates. Accordingly, competitive team sports especially have been described as organizational settings that are near-totally intolerant of homosexuality (Donnelly & Young, 1988; Dunning & Sheard, 1979; Price, 2000; Schacht, 1996), and this homophobic sporting culture has been theorized to influence gay men to remain closeted (Anderson, 2005a; Pronger, 1990).

Despite an increased understanding of the multiplicity of softer, more 'inclusive' forms of masculinities (c.f. Anderson, 2005b, 2008a, 2008c), the disparity of representation of men and women continues to obstruct the development of sexual equality. Theoretically, much of this remains for the very reasons that Connell suggested in 1987: Despite the recognition of a stratification of masculinities, all men desire to be associated with the hegemonic form. This unites men under one umbrella of patriarchal rule. Burton Nelson (1994), argued that sport is particularly important in this cultural reproduction, as sport is one institution where men very visibly dominate women. And, as sportswomen have increased their quality of play over the

years (in sports like distance running), men have increasingly relied on sports that exaggerate the small but real difference between men's and women's physical phenotypes (like American football). This symbolically permits men to continue to code all femininity as inferior to all masculinity and therefore all women as inferior to all men.

Knights (2004) argued that this symbolic hierarchy is both a condition and a consequence of the reification of the binary, suggesting that this makes the gender order difficult to challenge from a representational epistemology, because there exists a reification of the categories of male and female (and masculine and feminine) as absolute and unchanging binaries. Sport (and men's dominance in it) makes challenging this gendered system more difficult. Cunningham (2008) argued that one way of deconstructing the hierarchical content of the gender binary is by disrupting masculine hegemony at work. This, of course, is not easy to do. Sport, after all, was created by and for straight (and White) men. It was designed with the political project of promoting men's heteromale domination, and it therefore recruits workers from within its own gendered sporting fields.

### 3. Men's Dominance

Since the passage of Title IX there has been an increased percentage of girls and women who play and compete in organized sports. However, the percentage of women that coach women's teams has decreased to 42.4%. Acosta & Carpenter (2006) also found that less than 2% of men's collegiate teams are coached by women. In the United Kingdom, Sportcoach research (2004) found that 81% of all qualified coaches (at all levels of sporting participation) are men, and Claringbould & Knoppers (2008) showed that women are far less likely to exist at higher levels of sports' organizing bodies, too. For example, they showed that in the Netherlands Olympic organizing body, just 14% of the employees are women. Even when women do matriculate to sport management, they are likely to be placed in marginalized positions (Whisenant, Pedersen, & Obenour, 2002).

Similarly, Lapchick et al. (2006) have also shown that sport media is run mostly by and for men. For example, they surveyed more than 300 U.S. daily newspapers, finding that men comprised 95% of sports editors in newspaper sports departments, 87% of assistant sports editors, 93% of columnists, 93% of reporters, and 87% of copy editors/designers. David Nylund (2007) found that 80% of sports-stalk radio hosts are men. Accordingly, Farred (2000: 101) described sports talk radio as "overwhelmingly masculinist," and Smith (2002: 1) called it "an audio locker room."

What this suggests, is that despite the gains of feminism and the mandates of Title IX, and despite the increased acceptance of gay men in sport (Anderson, 2002, 2005a), there has been little change to the gatekeeping practices of the occupations within the sport industry (Fielding-Lloyd & Meân, 2008). Accordingly, Knoppers & Anthonissen (2005, p. 1) wrote, "Despite at least thirty years of research and policy making directed primarily at women. . .and regardless of changes in the way managers do their work, senior management [in sport] is still primarily a male preserve, numerically and culturally." Moreover, the literature on sport, coaching, and members of the sport media complex, highlights that not only are members of these occupations over-represented by men, but that they are occupied by highly masculinized men (Bruening & Dixon, 2008). An ethos of hyper masculinity is embedded in sport, its managers, coaches, players, reporters and even its referees (Pallone and Steinberg, 1991). These are men who conform to what I have previously called 'orthodox' notions of masculinity (Author, 2005b) in that, regardless of their race, age, or socio-economic status, they conform to the requisites of hegemonic masculinity through attitudinal positions of antifemininity and homophobia (Messner, 1992; Nylund, 2007). As gatekeepers, they maintain power to not only control much of the discourse related to sport, but they hire the next wave of workers within the sport-media complex. Accordingly, those who organize and run the institution, remain highly overrepresented by heteromale men.

Sport organizations so highly value orthodox masculinity that I have previously called sport "a cult of masculinity" (Anderson, 2005a). More adroit, Burstyn (1999) calls sporting culture "A great, masculinist, secular, religion" and (Sklair, 1991, p. 6) calls it "a major trans-global socio-economic and cultural-ideological force." Highlighting the exclusion these varying terminologies refer to, in the four major American teamsports, there are no women participating on these teams, and there exist no openly gay professional coaches, referees, or players either (Anderson, 2005a). Accordingly, sport, as an all encompassing institution, remains not only highly masculinized, but it has remained over-representative of heterosexual men.

The sexual and gendered composite of sport and its ancillary organizations is however of more than just academic interest. The manner in which people are recruited and retained in sport's stakeholders' positions is a matter of political and social concern (Fielding-Lloyd & Meân, 2008). Burstyn (1999) and others (Messner & Sabo, 1990) have argued that while sport is widely regarded as being outside the dominant political and social American institutions, the masculinist account of power and patriarchy that it promotes is also central to the constitution of political power. Accordingly, sport as an idealized practice of masculine power and privilege has profound social consequences outside the sporting arena (Sage, 1990).

In this article, I focus not so much on the outcomes of this masculinist, homophobic and patriarchal institution—this is something that is already very well documented in the literature (Messner & Sabo, 1990). Instead I focus on how sport reproduces itself in virtually unaltered ways, despite the gains of the second and now third waves of feminism; and despite the more recent gains of the gay rights movement.

### 4. Sport (and) Management as a Masculinist Enterprise

The industrial revolution is significant to the production of masculinity both within sport and also within sport management. Although the invention of the machinery and transportation necessary for industrialization began early in the 1700s, the antecedents of most of today's sporting and management culture can be traced to the years of the second

industrial revolution. During this period, families migrated from a pastoral life seeking a stable wage and the possibility of class mobility. It was also during this period that sport changed from recreational leisure activities of the white, wealthy upper-class men to a social institution run principally for lower and middle class white boys and men (Author, date suppressed). This occurred for numerous reasons.

First, sport helped socialize boys into the values necessary to be successful in this new economy, which often required great physical strength and stamina. Sport was also thought to engender the qualities of hard work and risk-taking necessary in the dangerous occupations of industrial labor or mining (Rigauer, 1981). The implicit danger of factory work or mining also influenced an ethos of stoicism, bravery, and fearlessness for the men who worked in these industries. But most important to the bourgeoisie ruling class, workers needed to be obedient to authority and sports taught boys this docility. Carter (2006) said sports teach, “A clear hierarchical structure, autocratic tendencies, traditional notions of masculinity and the need for discipline” (p. x). Cancian (1987) described these changes as part of a separation of gendered spheres. She suggested that expectations of what it meant to be a man or woman grew bifurcated as a result of industrialization: Men grew more instrumental in their labor and purpose and women (mostly robbed of economic agency) grew increasingly domesticated.

So, just as certain sports are coded as masculine or feminine, occupational labour is similarly divided according to the masculinized or feminized ‘nature’ of the institution (Cunningham & Sagas, 2008). Occupational segregation was/is so profound that, Reskin and Hartmann (1986) showed that in order to balance out the gender segregation of the workforce (and make an equal number of men and women in all occupations) more than half of all men or women would have to change their job categories. While conservative theorists, such as Parsons & Bales (1955) and Simpson & Simpson (1969) have argued that this is a natural outcome of the natural differences in socialization patterns; others (Eisenstein, 1979; Hartmann, 1976) have instead looked to patriarchy as the cause.

Management was born out of this historical period, too. Modern management emerged during this industrial period to help separate industrial owners from their workers (Wajcman, 1998). By dividing a work force and offering managers a financial benefit to squeeze productivity from the labourers, the bourgeoisie created a tool to control workers, to increase efficiency, and to reduce direct confrontation with their work force. Owners held the carrot of occupational promotion to an under-salaried work force, thereby reducing the chances of rebellion or unionization. Industry managers were therefore selected from a work pool associated with an even higher degree of masculinity than the workers they supervised (Collinson & Hearn, 1996; Maier, 1999; Rutherford, 2001). This, “I did it so you can too” ethos is embedded in much of the managerial leadership styles even today. It appears in the informal assumptions; the taken for granted norms, values, and processes that are perpetuated over time (Cunningham, 2008). It exists in the notion that masculinity is, in and of itself, a managerial quality.

For example, in a recent study of the criterion used for managerial selection in sport organizations Hovden (2000) found that selection criteria included various types of desirable masculinized leadership traits, suggesting that the corporate image reflects the valorization of masculine norms. Similarly, Collinson and Hearn (2001) described five dominant discourses concerning managerial ethos: Authoritarianism, paternalism, entrepreneurialism, informalism and careerism—characteristics that are all coded as masculine. Thus, just as sport is over-represented by men who approximate the archetype of hegemonic masculinity, managerial positions are created for white heterosexual middle/upper class men who also exhibit hyper heteromascularity (Cunningham, 2008). Ostensibly, these positions are advertised as gender neutral, but the qualities associated with desired managerial capital remains masculinized (Meyerson & Kolb, 2000).

Rutherford (2001) argued that, “men’s ability to hold on to management as a male domain is rooted in men’s ability to construct the cluster of skills that make up management as being rooted in masculinity” (p. 328). Accordingly, Coakley (2004) suggested that, “being tough, disciplined, and physically strong enough to dominate others often is the central criterion for evaluating everyone from coaches to business executives” (p. 268).

This is even the case for management in feminized terrains. For example, in the field of nursing (where men comprise just 5% of male nurses) men ride ‘a glass escalator’ of promotion and account for the majority of managerial positions (Williams, 1995). So even though occupational segregation occurs according to the masculinized or feminized nature of work, men retain dominance in management.

Simultaneous to this industrializing epoch, however, was the first wave of women’s political independence (Hargreaves, 1986). Smith-Rosenberg (1985) suggested that men felt threatened by the political and social advancements of women during the late 1800s and the first part of the 20th Century, as they were losing their patriarchal power. The antidote to the rise of women’s agency, and the decline of men’s masculinity, largely came through sport. Thus, a key element in the sporting project was elevating the male body as superior to that of women. Connell (1995: 54) suggested, “men’s greater sporting prowess has become. . .symbolic proof of superiority and right to rule.” Thus, sport not only reproduced the gendered nature of the social world, but sporting competitions became principle sites where gendered behaviour were learned and reinforced (Hargreaves, 2002).

Modern sport was therefore born out of the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century notion that it could help prevent youth from possessing characteristics associated with femininity. It was designed to compel boys to reject all but a narrow definition of masculinity; one that created good industrial workers, soldiers, Christians and consumers. The construction of sport as masculine and homophobic enterprise was both deliberate and political, and, over a hundred years later, it remains so today.

Sport, it would seem, has served well the principle for which it was designed: It has created a social space in which boys are taught to value and perform a violent, stoic and risky form of masculinity based in antifemininity, patriarchy and homophobia (Messner & Sabo, 1990). Those who control sport have therefore been men who approve of this masculine

ethos. Accordingly, (Knoppers & Anthonissen (2005): 12) wrote, “Although ‘male culture’ is an often cited reason for the relative lack of women senior managers [in sport], little research has been done to explore how that culture is created and managed by men ‘doing and thinking masculinity’ and the role that images of athletic masculinities play in that.” This article addresses precisely this issue. In the section that follows, I explain the cultural and structural influences that permit both sport, and those who manage and work within it, to retain the masculinized ethos in which it originated.

## 5. Reproducing Men's Dominance

One might question just how hegemonic masculinity has retained such cultural dominance over the previous century. How has sport resisted the first, second and now third waves of political and academic feminism; the gay liberationists' ideals of the 1970s and 1980s; and the gay assimilationists' efforts of the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s? How, despite all of this progressive activism, cultural awareness, and even increasing legislative equality that these social and academic movements have brought, has the symbolic and real power of ‘the good-old boy’ retained such power?

The analysis I provide begins by focusing on how sport itself (those who play it) reproduces masculinity. I then explain how these athletes matriculate up to the ranks of coaches, sport managers, and others involved in the sport-media complex. I suggest that these men both self-segregate and are selected into these occupational positions, precisely because they overly conformed to the mandates established in the gendered practices of sport. But the analysis I provide is applicable to other institutions as well. Sport, after all, is not the only gender regime.

Accordingly, my model highlights the mechanisms of both culture and structure that operate near-seamlessly in order to produce not just sport as a masculinized institution, but many other masculinized institutions as well (Acker, 1990; Cunningham, 2008). Hopefully, by understanding the process by which men dominate women in sport and sport's management, it will lead us to critically and differently analyze how men maintain dominance in other economic, social, and cultural hierarchies, too. Hopefully this more comprehensive understanding will help those concerned affectively wither at masculine domination within the broader culture.

In constructing this argument, I first borrow from Bourdieu (2001), who highlighted that men's dominance is accomplished through an interlocking system of cognitive oppositions and social patterns in families, schools, and the state—all of which are grounded in the reification of the dominant male and submissive female. He (like so many gender theorists) argued that the interlocking system of cognitive categories and objective social differences produces the (false) perception that there are deep-seated differences between the sexes. This is something clearly and easily explicated in sport, as masculinity is synonymous with sport. Thus, because masculinity is institutionalized in our governing institutions, I have previously suggested that it places sport at the forefront of men's dominance (Anderson, 2008b).

This section therefore takes a different perspective on patriarchy and homophobia (in sport). Instead of theorizing a grand narrative about gender, I examine the particulars of how *sport* and its management has resisted the advancements of women and gay men. Essentially, I do what Bourdieu did not. I do what Knoppers & Anthonissen (2005) have recently called for: I explicate that perfectly integrated, self-reinforcing system, with no internal contradictions or conflicts that enables sport and its management to reproduce itself as a masculinist enterprise. I explain the cultural and structural variables that combine to make sport and sport management resilient to change.

Consistent with hegemony theory however, my thesis is that as resilient as patriarchy has been, no form of masculinity can be entirely self-reproducing (Connell, 1995). The reproductive process is laden with social tension and ultimately it *can* fail (Anderson, 2002). Accordingly, although it is largely out of the scope of this paper, I later draw on the work of Cunningham (2008) and others to show how we might effectively deinstitutionalize masculinity from sport.

## 6. A Perfectly Integrated, Self-Reinforcing System

Because we culturally attribute to team sports a number of socio-positive characteristics, we encourage and even force children (particularly boys) to play them. Parents believe that sport will teach their sons' character, leadership, and a sense of fair play. One of the more resilient myths is that team sports teach boys and men how to work together (Miracle & Rees, 1994). But researchers find that the most salient benefits of athletic participation are found in elevated self-esteem, better school attendance, educational aspirations, higher rates of university attendance, and perhaps even post-schooling employment (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Carlson, Scott, Planty, & Thompson, 2005; Sabo, Melnick, & Vanfossen, 1989).

I, however, have previously questioned whether these quantitative investigations are potentially misleading, because they fail to examine whether the benefits associated with sporting participation are the result of something intrinsic to team sports, or whether they reflect the political dominance that a socially elite group of males exhibit over marginalized others in a sports-obsessed culture (Anderson, 2005a). I ask if the higher rates of self-esteem attributed to athletes are a result of their scoring goals or whether this instead reflects a statistical effect of the lowering of non-athletes' self-esteem in response to being subordinated by athletes whom are culturally and institutionally glorified for scoring goals in school cultures?

However, what is important toward understanding the role that sport plays in western society's is not whether sports *deliver* upon the socio-positive outcomes; rather, what is important is that people *believe* they do. This is reflected in team sport participation rates. For example, compared to the 6% of American parents that discourage athletic participation, 75% encourage it (Miracle & Rees, 1994). This is largely a fact that the United States remains one of the few Western countries

to intertwine public education with athletic programs (Gerdy, 2002). Some American high schools even report participation rates as high as 72% (Carlson et al., 2005). Thus, there exists great cultural and institutional pressure for boys to participate in teamsports (Miracle & Rees, 1994; Plummer, 1999; Pollack, 1998). As a result, sport is *all-important* to the lives of many boys and young men. They are socialized, rewarded and esteemed for playing sport from the time they are quite young. This makes their father's happy, it makes them one of the boys, and it permits them to fit the dominant masculine mould so that they can feel like (as a boy) they are doing things right (Pollack, 1998). In order to promote this masculinist thinking however, boys and men must be structurally removed from the contaminating effect of girls and women.

This process of gender segregation has been documented from early childhood (McGuffey & Rich, 1999; Jordan & Cowan, 1998; Kite, Deaux, & Miele, 1991; Messner, 1990) to the later stages of life (Antonucci & Akiyama, 1987; Neugarten, Moore, & Low, 1965), but is it something much more *visible* in sport. Largely a product of both men's and women's socialized desires, men and women occupy separate spaces in the sporting world (Anderson, 2008b; Crosset, 1990; Frye, 1999; Hargreaves, 2002; Kidd, 1990; Pronger, 1990; Whitson, 1990). Few other institutions naturalize the segregation of men and women so near perfectly as do teamsports (Davis, 1990; Messner, 2000, 2002). While occupational sex-segregation is declining in other institutions (Cotter, Benedict and MacDonald, 1995; Reskin & Roos, 1990; Rotolo & Wharton, 2004), formal and traditional reasoning has left teamsports a largely unexamined arena of gender-segregation (Caudwell, 2003; Messner, 2000, 2002). While this segregation has *many* male-driven purposes, it is important to note that feminist separation also occurs in sport.

One can certainly understand feminist desire to play sports away from men, particularly because, in gender-segregated sports, women are protected from the violence of male athleticism (Kreager, 2004; Smith, 1983). Female-only settings also appear to empower women and to provide them with female solidarity in a setting free from men's intimidation and harassment (Fielding-Lloyd & Meân, 2008). But the ethos surrounding separate sporting programs is much more institutionalized.

Hoeber (2008: 69) showed that even when men do wish to address sexism in sport, they often look to "help women" within the existing system, rather than challenge the fundamental (masculine) values that underpin the institution. Accordingly, in the wider context, Fielding-Lloyd and Meân (2008: 37) suggested that separatist policies "can hinder gender equity as they re/produce difference." I argue that the separation of the sexes in sport maintains a hegemonic stranglehold on our abilities to think differently, to imagine a better model of gender integration in sport (Anderson, 2008b). This is because sport is naturalized through notions of 'opposite' phenotypes (Davis, 1990; Messner, 2000) and myths about boys' elevated levels of innate aggression and athletic advantage over girls (Butterfield & Loovis, 1994; Messner, 2002). Thus, collectively, sex-segregation in sport, as Messner described (2002: 12), is "grounded in a mutually agreed-upon notion of boys' and girls' 'separate worlds.'"

Key to the reproduction of this masculinity, boys who emulate the institutional creed of orthodox masculinity are usually selected over players who break from its tenets, influencing them to adopt the gendered norms associated with orthodox masculinity. Ewald & Jobu (1985) showed that some athletes so overly adhere to the norms of sporting culture that they disrupt family relationships, work responsibilities, and even their physical health—all guided by a masculine creed of *giving it all* for the sake of sport and team. I have previously shown that gay athletes largely remain closeted for these same reasons, fearing that coming out will thwart their athletic progress (Anderson, 2005a).

Hughes & Coakley (1991) described this social deviance as *overconformity* to the sport ethic. They said, "The likelihood of being chosen or sponsored for continued participation is increased if athletes overconform to the norms of sport" (p. 311). Of course, athletes do not see overconformity as problematic, rather "...they see it as confirming and reconfirming their identity as athletes..." (p. 311). Building upon Hughes & Coakley (1991) overconformity theory, I examine the structural mechanisms that help reproduce sport as a site of orthodox masculinity by highlighting the near-total institutional aspects of teamsports.

## 7. Sport as a Near-Total Institution

Goffman (1961) described a total institution as an enclosed social system in which the primary purpose is to control all aspects of someone's life. Foucault's (1977) description of the military serves a useful example. Here, Foucault maintained that, through intense regimentation and implementation of a standard ideal of behavior, the military is capable of transforming peasants into soldiers; because men become more docile to the system. He suggested that their growing identity as a soldier is essentially one of subordination from agency, and that the longer a soldier remained in the military the less agency he maintained to contest it.

Though I do not suggest that competitive, institutionalized teamsports *are* a total institution (athletes do have the freedom to quit sport), I argue that sport approximates a 'near-total' institution. This is because, much like the military, sport uses myths of glory, patriotism, and masculine idolatry, along with corporeal discipline and structures of rank, division, uniform, rules, and punishment to subordinate individual agency and construct a fortified ethos of orthodox masculinity in which they are then stigmatized for quitting (Britton & Williams, 1995; Woodward, 2000).

When athletes' individual thoughts are aligned with their teammates, they are given social prestige and are publicly lauded. Athletes who toe the line are honoured by their institutions and celebrated by a community of fans (Bissinger, 1990; Messner, 1992, 2002). Hughes & Coakley (1991): 311 said, "Athletes find the action and their experiences in sport so exhilarating and thrilling that they want to continue participating as long as possible." Coakley (1998: 155) added, "...they love their sports and will do most anything to stay involved." Thus, it is understandable that from the perspective of an

athlete, particularly a good athlete, sport is a socially positive vessel. And while I think the reasons athletes will do almost anything to remain in teamsports are more complicated than just the thrill one receives from playing them, the point remains that athletes who withstand the selection process do so because of both their outstanding athletic ability *and* their willingness to abide to orthodox masculinity. It is this willingness that I later highlight as being key to reproducing sport management and other ancillary sporting occupations as masculinized terrains.

## 8. Limiting Men

There are problems however with obedience to authority. Being “one of the boys” is not always in one’s best interest. Sport also controls and limits men (Kidd, 1990). In conforming to the norms and excelling in sport, athletes limit whom they befriend; they shut out other cultural influences that might open their consciousness to new ways of thinking, and they are therefore less exposed to those who do not fit orthodox masculine requisites (Anderson, 2005b; Robidoux, 2001). Men who spend their formative years in competitive teamsports are much less likely to meet gay men, feminized men and other types of men who do not fit the jock model. Similarly, men who spend their formative years in competitive teamsports are sheltered from understanding women’s athleticism, and their leadership capabilities. They are even challenged to get to know women as friends. Instead, women remain on the sidelines objectified and demonized for their femininity (Anderson, 2008b).

Conversely, athletes who do not adhere to the tenets of orthodox masculinity are sanctioned by verbal insults and are less likely to be given valued playing positions within sport (Hughes & Coakley, 1991; Hekma, 1998). Coming out of the closet, ‘acting feminine,’ or being told that one is not a team player is a mark of shame that is likely to drive non-conformists away from the sporting terrain (Hekma, 1998). Thus, men who see things differently are less likely to crave the peer recognition and social promotion that sport provides athletes. These men are less likely to put team expectations before their individual concerns and physical health. They are men who are therefore less likely to one day manage sport.

Opposite these men, those who thrive in the masculine arena; those who sacrifice their individual agency and contribute to the reproduction of a rigid, masculine sporting culture, are rewarded in numerous ways. Of particular concern to sport, this virtually necessitates that those who aspire to the next level must publicly disengage with any stigmatized notion of sexual or gender ideology that is inconsistent with orthodox masculinity (Anderson, 2005a; Messner, 2002).

From an early age then, athletes befriend each other on and off the field. Their social lives are routinely dictated by a rigid schedule of athletic practices, competitions and other team functions. Teamsport athletes report that the further they matriculate through the ranks, the less freedom exists to inhabit any social space outside this sporting network, and the more their identity narrows in order to be competitive with other men (Anderson, 2005a; Messner, 1992; Nixon, 1994; Robidoux, 2001).

I have previously suggested that this might make gender construction in teamsports different from the type of agency-laden gender construction that West and Zimmerman (1987) or Thorne (1993) suggest occurs more broadly. This is because, from youth to adulthood, men socialized into competitive teamsports follow a subtle but increasingly institutionalized gender ideology—an incipient notion of gender that slowly erodes their individual agency and restructures them as highly masculinized conformists in thought and action. The subordination required for retaining one’s sporting status, or being selected for advancement, withers at their agency to construct oppositional masculinities. This is then justified by the prevalent belief that homogeneity is required in sports to produce desirable results (Sabo & Panepinto, 1990), even though there is only a small and dubious relationship between a group’s social cohesion and athletic success (Mullen & Copper, 1994).

## 9. Failed Athletes

The problem for athletically talented and successful men, however, is that they are so endowed with masculine capital (Anderson, 2005a) that it influences them to define their master identities as that of *athlete*. However, not every boy who dreams of making it to the National Football League will do such. The transition odds of making it from youth sport to the professional ranks are phenomenally long. Instead of making it to the top, most athletes self-segregate out, are selected out, graduate out, drop out, or are forced out of organized sporting participation through injury. Sport is a volatile field where careers end on poor plays or mis-steps. Athletes can, at a moment’s notice, be cut from a team. In fact, as an athlete, the only thing that one can be assured of is that one’s career *will* end; and relative to other occupations, it will do so early.

Thus, whether an athlete suddenly loses his association with his athletic identity, or his body ages out of competitive form, all athletes must disengage with competitive sport. And when this happens, they are generally no longer valued in the sport setting (Messner, 1987). Men who drop out, are forced out, or otherwise do not make the next level of sport, often find themselves dislocated from the masculine prestige they once enjoyed—something sport psychologists call the disengagement effect (Greendorfer, 1992).

Athletes who rode atop the masculine hierarchy feel the greatest loss upon disengaging from that elite status (Anderson, 2008a). So, for those with no further opportunity to play competitive sports, coaching, managing, refereeing, or commenting on sport becomes one of the few alternative venues for returning to the game. Thus, sport almost always draws coaches, managers and other leaders from those who overconformed to the previous cohort’s ideals, something perceived to give them expertise as coaches, managers, promoters, announcers, organizers or radio talk show hosts. It is in this manner that expertise becomes linked with masculinity (Fielding-Lloyd and Media, 2008).

Then, as coaches and managers, these ex-athletes rely upon heteromale narratives to promote their individual experience and to inspire a new generation of boys into a similar ethos of orthodox masculinity (Anderson, 2005a, 2007; Hughes & Coakley, 1991). This is even the case for those who are later employed outside of sport (Fielding-Lloyd & Meân, 2008). Men who predicated their identities as athletes, and men who take up highly esteemed occupational employment, attribute much of their success to sport, and therefore value this sporting ethic wherever they go. Or, as Fielding-Lloyd and Meân suggested (2008: 25) they, “adhere to traditional, hegemonic, versions of their identity as part of the process of working up their own organization or category membership.”

The system is then reproduced through the selection process of coaches, managers, trainers and others within sport's ancillary fields. Having a recent and successful sporting record authenticates a coach, a manager, or a sport's radio talk show host. The more successful one was, the more he or she is thought competent in sport's related jobs as well (Lyle, 2002). This is because it is assumed that the journey one takes to become the world's greatest athlete necessitates having intellectual mastery over other areas of life and work as well. Accordingly, managers desire to hire men who have sporting experience.

This prevents those not weaned on sport from entering almost any profession related to sport, and it also influences the system to forego a more rigorous manner for judging the abilities of a job candidate. This system also limits the awareness, observations, or formally learned ways of thinking that non-athletes might bring to the field (Fenwick & Neale, 2001). Finally, this system limits the agency of employees who somehow manage to get hired without a sporting background, because they are disadvantaged by their co-workers who can say, “I played professional ball and you have not.” Thus, as gatekeepers, sport managers maintain a great deal of sway in determining the social outcomes of sport. Sport managers could hire coaches who view sport differently. They could hire more women, men of color, and those not weaned on sport. Unfortunately, these gatekeepers are highly over-represented by men, further hindering women and others from advancing through the system. And when women do make it, they are often disadvantaged. For example, in coaching, women are not given the same career progression opportunities as men. And when they are hired, they are devaluated and invalidated (Avery, Tonidandel, & Phillips, 2008; Knoppers, 1989; Staurowsky, 1990). In sport management,

Women who exist within sport management positions are also more likely to encounter career-progression barriers than are men (Sagas & Cunningham, 2004; Inglis, Danylchuk, & Pastire, 2000). Thus, considering the overrepresentation of men in sport and its ancillary occupations, creating a diverse organizational culture will entail more substantial change than just the affirmative action policies that some sporting organizations have in place (Shaw, 2006). Theberge (2000) argues that (concerning the current affirmative action approach to women's full inclusion in the institution) sport and its ancillary occupations will never fully embrace the cause of women in sport. Cunningham (2008: 137) suggests that this change must occur at the macro, meso and micro levels of social interaction, so that it contributes to “the deinstitutionalization of organizational practices,” and McDonagh & Pappano (2008) suggest that the whole system needs to change through forced gender segregation within sports playing fields. However we do it, changing the masculine nature of sport will not be easy. However, industry leaders and the sporting ruling class should take note: A group's sex diversity is positively associated with performance gains on marketing oriented tasks (Fenwick & Neale, 2001).

## 10. Discussion

In order for men to be successful in sport, they must spend most of their youth and young adulthood dedicated to their athletic endeavours. Accordingly, they predicate their social and personal identities as that of an athlete. This then means that when they fail to make their athletic dreams, they desire to be associated with sport in an ancillary fashion. In this aspect, it is failed athletes who self-segregate into sporting related occupations, like sport management.

But for every athlete who has been highly merited by sport, there are many more that do not make the cut, often having had horrifying experiences in sport. Those who were marginalized or publicly humiliated in sport are rarely represented in coaching or managerial sporting positions. Those objectified by sport are highly unlikely to seek employment within the sporting industry. Unfortunately, when these marginalized athletes drop out, are pushed out, or otherwise leave the sporting arena, their perceptions of how sport ought to operate go with them. Those who were marginalized by sport and those who were too intimidated to play them in the first place do not go on to coach, manage or comment on sport, and their perhaps more critical, progressive or innovative ideas about how sport and sports management should operate go unheard. In this manner, sport is essentially a closed-loop system. That is, sport and its ancillary occupations are closed to voices of dissent.

Masculinity and men's dominance is bolstered not only by this self-segregation and self-selection process, but it is also reproduced by coding masculinized values as being important to work place “spirit” and productivity. Essentially, talking the masculine talk and walking the masculine walk builds trust and respect among other men and teammanship, discipline, hard work and sacrifice are characteristics that are thought synonymous with business as they are with sport. Clearly, women have a hard time competing with this form of masculine capital, not because they lack male genitalia, but because they are formally segregated from boys and men in sport where this language is learned and sanctioned as appropriate. As Cameron (1998) points out, it is people who “do” institutions; and the way men do them in sport constructs *men's* language, cognitive patterns, and leadership styles that spill over into business. Those who do not do not learn the cultural codes and behavioural conducts of sport (women, openly gay men and others), do not impress upon the masculine gatekeepers one's worthiness of occupational performance. Water cooler questions are organized around, “What sport did you play” and not “So what differing voice can you bring to this institution?”

Howe's (2001) research into the professionalization of rugby highlighted that institutional norms are highly influential in recreating identities among players on and off the pitch. Similarly, Parker (2001: 61) suggested that everyday routines construct masculine identities through official and unofficial norms, including a "professional attitude." These studies illustrate the power of social capital in constructing a certain type of valued individual for the sporting labor market. They signify the social connections and norms of relational cooperation that are embedded in trustworthiness of cooperation for mutual benefit (Putnam, 1995). For example, Harvey, Lévesque, & Donnelly (2007) have recently shown that in sport volunteerism, women do not form the same social capital related to work and occupation as do men, that the gaps between men and women in the value of weak ties suggests that women's forms of sociability facilitates the creation and development of ties related to family, not the labour force.

What I am suggesting here is that senior managers *may* strategize to keep women out of the sporting workforce themselves, but rather it is much more likely that the institutionalization of sexism in sport operates at a much more invidious manner (Cunningham, 2008). I suggest that even well-minded, feminist men, can unwillingly reproduce the culture of masculine privilege in sport. I recognize that even as an openly gay male coach, I have done this myself (Anderson, 2000). Sexism occurs not just because men decide that they do not wish women to join their club and simply describing the gendering of sport as the outcome of such overlooks the power of the institutionalization of it (Connell, 1987: 117). Accordingly, we must look to the micro, meso, and macro layers of the social institutionalization of men's privilege in sport if we are going to understand how men's privilege is reproduced.

So, while *some* managers might strategize to keep women out of sport, it is more likely that the gatekeepers choose individuals that have social and masculine capital—factors that they assume will make *a man* 'the best man' for the job. Gatekeepers (ex-sportsmen) are likely to consider that their former sporting histories have well prepared them for their current occupation; accordingly, they would seek similar qualities in people they hire—appointing clones to reproduce the masculinized nature of their sport. Women, exempt from masculine capital and lacking in social capital, are considerably less likely to maintain the experience, connections and referent power that is needed to be "legitimately" better than men on a C.V. or in a job interview. Women might actually come to the workforce with a different perspective. Accordingly, New (2001: 736) suggested that, "The best 'man' could be anyone who might not threaten the ways of being and doing with which they are comfortable."

So while men may make intentional decisions which reproduce sport as sacred masculine terrain, they are not necessarily strategic in their thinking. This is how sexism is institutionalized in sport and sport's management. And it is for this reason that Cunningham (2008) has called for and explicated a model to deinstitutionalize sexism within the sporting industry; something Fink (2008: 147) suggests *can* be done, even though it requires, "attention to multi-level influences, new contexts and subjects, varied methodologies and the combination of these factors to produce greater theoretical development."

## 11. Conclusions

In this article, I hoped to have shown that the system of reproducing the masculinized nature of sport and its ancillary occupations and organizations is much more than just culturally hegemonic, it is also structural. Not just structural in the sense of a social, historical and institutionalized pattern (Cunningham, 2008), but literally structured by codified rules of segregation, reminiscent of the same rules that once formally segregated blacks from whites. It is a resilient system which, despite the gains of second wave feminism that characterizes the broader culture (Reskin & Roos, 1990) and a dramatic reduction in cultural homophobia both within (Anderson, 2005a, 2008a) and outside of sport (Loftus, 2001), reproduces a more conservative form of gender expression among men, helping the entire institution reproduce itself as an extremely powerful gender-regime. But it is important to remember that hegemonic masculinity is not seamless, in sport or any other social institution.

I, alongside a growing number of scholars (McDonagh & Pappano, 2008; Meyerson & Kolb, 2000; Shaw & Frisby, 2006) suggest that because liberal feminism and affirmative action programs have not yield meaningful results in over forty years, it will take experimentation with structures and narratives in order to facilitate meaningful change (Shaw & Frisby, 2006). I suggest that gender-equality in sport is not enough; we need to instead experiment with the gender-integration of both sporting programs and their management (and a restructuring of the rules and procedures by which teams compete) before women are given equal opportunity for sport-related success and therefore matriculation into sporting-related careers. I recognize that gender-desegregating sport is a politically charged proposition, and I am aware that among traditionalists of sport the potential implications of these findings may not be received favorably. But hegemonic perspectives that value gender-segregation in sport—whether they be masculinist or feminist in origin—should not stop us from academically examining a counter proposition. Hopefully this article will help men and women better understand the institutionalization of masculine privilege within sport and its ancillary settings, so that we may better wither at it—making sport something closer to the meritocracy for which it is esteemed.

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