

Evers, Clifton, University of New South Wales, Australia

Intimacy, Sport and Young Refugee Men

This paper is based on ethnographic work done with a cohort of young refugee men as part of an Australian Research Council project: “The Well Rounded Person: the role of sport in shaping physical, emotional and social development”. The concern I explore in this paper is how sports-based intervention programs and concomitant research reproduce unequal power relations. The paper explores the political potential of ‘intimate events’ that emerge such sports programs and research. These intimate events produce affective and emotional geographies on and off the field whereby intimacy becomes a site for struggle. By intimacy I am referring to a social, biological and psychological mediation, where authorial and hierarchical order can be scrambled and challenged. The argument is that while sport cannot provide over-arching answers to social challenges faced by young people if we eschew large-scale developmental outcomes and focus on the intimacy of mediation a compelling micro-politics benefiting young people’s agency can emerge.