

Homophobia, Sport and the Group Socialisation of Australian Males

Pol McCann

Introduction

The qualities that are admired in men – autonomy, strength, reliability, fearlessness – are not essential qualities of masculinity but rather attributes that males are taught in a variety of contexts. Boys exhibit a range of behaviours but some are more valued than others. This paper examines the role that sport has in creating a specific style of team-oriented, physical masculinity. Of particular interest is how team sport developed into its current form in conjunction with ideas of masculinity which were seen as desirable for military service. These attributes of masculinity have spread in their influence beyond the sports field and the military unit, coming to represent the embodiment of hegemonic masculinity in the modern West. Against this idealised form of masculinity, other masculinities are compared. Sexuality is a key means of creating a sense of self, and as heterosexuality is privileged in the West, homosexuality is considered to be ‘failed’ masculinity. Thus, homophobia is frequently used to coerce boys and men into the desired forms of behaviour. As sport in the West embodies successful masculinity and team sport is the most valued form of sport, boys and men are socialised into this competitive, team-oriented form of behaviour – or risk the most feared insult to masculinity in Australia – ‘poofster’. This paper aims to draw linkages with how men are coerced into those practises through fear of attracting this emasculating label.

Method

Participants were sourced through theoretical sampling, using a combination of convenience and snowball techniques. I obtained my first four interview contacts using convenience sampling, through colleagues who had friends who they felt might give interesting insights for various reasons: three straight men who had a mix of gay and straight friends, and a retired minister. These men provided some valuable insights, but none of them exhibited any current homophobic attitudes. This led to theoretical sampling to find a more diverse range of groups with different attitudes to sexuality and gender.

The research proposal stated that this research would access men from a variety of geographical areas. Being a city-based researcher, making contacts in regional and country areas presented a barrier. However, this was circumvented by a series of interviews on ABC radio. As well as extra urban contacts, this brought in most of my out-of-Sydney participants. Men who volunteered after hearing the radio interviews were asked some brief questions to try and create a mix of regions, working class and middle class men, and reasons for

wanting to participate in the research. No in-depth questions about sexuality or gender were raised at this point. Thirty-three men were selected for interviews. Two of these men provided an extra nine snowballed participants from their places of work to make up two focus groups. Two men's groups were approached to find members for another two focus groups (a total of nine men). This made a total of 45 individual interviews, which were augmented by a further 18 men in four focus groups: a final total of 63 participants.

Thirty-four men came from either Sydney, Canberra or Newcastle. Twenty-nine men came from regional centres, small towns and rural areas. Fifty-four men were born in Australia, one in New Zealand, five in the United Kingdom, one in Canada, one in Melanesia and one in Egypt. Three men were Aboriginal, one was a Pacific Islander, one was Middle Eastern and the remainder identified as Caucasian, mostly Anglo-Celtic and one Dutch. Eleven men had been in the armed services or police forces, and three had been in prison. Nine participants had been sexually assaulted as children (one by a female and eight by males). This ranged from unwanted advances but no actual sex, to pack rape. Five men had had consensual sex with other males (a total of 12 reported same-sex sex; the child-sex and consenting adult-sex categories are not mutually exclusive). Sixty identified as heterosexual, one as bisexual and two as gay: the bisexual man is currently married and both gay men had married but subsequently divorced. Of the interview participants, 31 were identified as 'moderately' or 'highly' homophobic during adolescence, and four currently held moderately or highly homophobic attitudes.

Using qualitative, semi-structured interviews in a grounded theory framework, participants discussed what they considered masculinity to be, and how they felt they fitted into this concept. Interviews were analysed using NVIVO software. The themes which emerged included how both homophobia and ideas of 'proper' masculinity are learnt through childhood; how language is able to shape the behaviour and attitudes of boys by marking out some concepts as 'gay'; how restrictive ideas of gender are reinforced in homogenous environments; and how masculinity is embodied, particularly through sport. In line with the constant comparison technique of grounded theory (Glaser 1996; Strauss & Corbin 1994), subsequent interviews examined these themes in greater depth. Pseudonyms have been assigned to all men.

History of Sport

There is a story about two small children standing in a museum in front of a painting of Adam and Eve. One child asks the other: 'Which is the man and which is the lady?' The other child answers, 'I can't tell – they don't have any clothes on' (Shapiro 1991 p.248).

The differences between the most muscular female and the slimmest male indicate that body type alone is not always sufficient to delineate the gender of the person, and as the above quote indicates, social markers such as clothing are important in conveying information. However as ideas like gender are socially produced

(Connell 1995), and as men are generally larger than women, we have come to associate size and muscularity with masculinity. The elevation of the mesomorph as the ideal modern male has privileged a body form which is suitable for athletic activities, and comes to be seen as embodying desirable masculinity. The athletic body stands in opposition to the objectified sexual female form – although as the rise in women's sport in the twentieth century attests, athleticism for women is becoming increasingly desirable. Notwithstanding this development, the male form is still constructed, through technologies of the gymnasium, training – and sometimes steroids – as larger and more muscular than the female form. The sporting body therefore comes to represent a visual marker of gender differences.

Robertson (2003) describes the attributes of desired masculinity, and locates their production in sport which has become an institutionalised method of inculcating 'proper' gender into boys in the West since the nineteenth century. With its focus on physical superiority and competition, sport has become one of the most public performances of desirable masculinity in the West, and the qualities which make for successful sportsmanship – strength, fearlessness, team-orientation – are also useful attributes of a reliable soldier. As masculinity is broadcast beyond the immediate reach of the sports fields or media coverage, it encapsulates and disseminates gender ideals to the extent that it becomes written into the social DNA as the code of 'true' masculinity.

Prior to the nineteenth century sport had existed in a series of loosely defined folk games in Europe. Many games had structural-functional characteristics which assisted in reinforcing the social systems by creating social cohesion between villagers, between people and institutions, or were designed as a technique to physically train bodies for warfare (Howell & Howell 1992). Sport developed deeper social meanings during the Industrial Revolution. Men who were previously likely to be self-employed were more likely to be labourers for wages, changing the relationship that men had with their work. This removed an important marker of masculine status as workers were increasingly separated from their work by the interface of machinery, the production line and bureaucratisation (Kimmel 1990; Kimmel & Kaufman 1994). Industrialisation led to a surge in urbanisation with an associated decrease in village life. By the middle of the nineteenth century the 12 hour day was replaced by the ten hour day, and by the 1870s, Saturday only required work in the morning, leading to more leisure time (Howell & Howell 1992).

The 'Victorian antisexual ethic' (Messner 1992 p.95) required that leisure time be filled productively to absorb energy which may otherwise be misdirected to sinful, sexual activities. Sport filled this role by providing 'homosocial interaction' – that is, a social environment in which men interact without the presence of women – and due to the physically tiring capacities of sport, the feared possibility of homosexual interaction was minimised while still providing an arena in which men could bond. To Hardin (2000) it is no coincidence that the emergence of codified team sport occurred at the same time that homosexuality was categorised and

pathologised, and sport became an acceptable institution for 'nurturing in boys the values necessary for manhood [...] a means on instilling moral fibre' (Robertson 2003 p.707).

The game of rugby, which emerged in the 1820s at the school from which it draws its name, imbued the importance of sublimating individual needs for the greater good of the group and reinforced the importance of submitting to authority (White & Vagi 1990). This training was vital to military life (Connell 1995; Fitzclarence & Hickey 2001). Howell and Howell cite the folk wisdom that saw that 'the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton' (1992 p.24), and sport's influence extended from the peak of the Empire to the development of the modern nation state (Miller 1998; Probyn 2000). Visible symbols of the parallels between sport and Empire are on display in school halls where flags and banners hang alongside plaques naming the rugby First XV captains, like so many honour rolls of war's fallen soldiers (Connell 1995).

Britain required an effective military during the late colonial period which featured the Boer War and World War I. In Australia, sport became a proving ground for specific styles of male behaviour considered useful to armed forces defending the Empire (Adair & Vamplew 1997). Soldiers had to be brave and impervious to pain – or at least prepared to minimise how it impacted on their performance. They had to sublimate their individual needs for the benefit of the entire unit. They had to be strong and determined, and yet yield unquestioningly to authority. All of these factors were able to be fostered through training boys and men to adhere to teams in sport, and came to be considered as attributes that all men should aspire to.

To Connell (1995), this increasing use of sport as a training mechanism for Western masculinity has inculcated men with an elevated sense of competition that had not previously existed. As Butler (1995) discusses how aspects of a socially constructed gender become so ubiquitous as to seem to be essential, so too can this vision of aggressive, competitive masculinity: warrior-like attributes of masculinity pervade our social consciousness so fully that other enactments of masculinity are seen as deviant. Both Griffin (1995) and Plummer (2006) both see sport remaining as a vigorously defended bastion of male heterosexuality, for if sport represents pre-eminent masculinity, and homosexuality represents failed masculinity, what would gay athletes say about the status of heterosexual athleticism?

The discussion will now look at a mind-body dualism in masculinity where physical capacities in boys were valued, and internal, academic attributes were devalued. Firstly, we will see examples from the social world of boys at school, then look at how schools themselves replicated this narrow view of acceptable masculinity, and finally how the military creates group cohesion by promoting physical dominance.

Boys and the Elevation of Sport

The men interviewed for this research discussed varying experiences of sport in childhood and adulthood. For some it was a weekly humiliation as they were pitted against more able-bodied boys in aggressive games that were little more than school-sanctioned bullying rites. Some men partook in sport grudgingly, doing so because of the social benefits of being involved in the 'right' sort of activity. Others spoke of it with true affection, both for the fun of the game, the opportunity to physically experience their developing bodies, and for the sense of companionship they experienced with team-mates. Sporting ability was closely linked to notions of popularity, and those unable or unwilling to compete were often sidelined. Sport was used to mark out differences between the genders.

PM: Was there any mixing of boys and girls in that kind of play? Did any of the girls join in footy?

Arthur: Not to my knowledge. The girls used to play things like elastics, use a skipping rope but we used to play British Bulldog. (former soldier, federal police officer, 37, large city)

Similarly, sport created hierarchies within genders and these are marked out with what Plummer (1999, 2001) notes are the most feared playground insults: homophobic nominators. The data in this study also showed that those who did not play sport were seen as failing masculinity – they were called 'poofers' regardless of their sexuality. Boys who resisted the incitement to partake were likely to have their behaviour commented up, utilising comments that were:

Walter: ...very often about their sexuality. (accountant, 37, large city)

Thus, there was intense social pressure to play. This homophobic pressure continued into adulthood.

Jordan: There's still that big perception here in country NSW that if you don't drink down in the pub and play football, what are you?

PM: Okay, what are you?

Jordan: You're a poofter. You're a bit of a nancy boy. Bit of a girl. (at-home dad/ welfare worker, 42, small town)

The attitudes of adult men between each other transmitted ideas of homophobia, through social phenomenon like sport, so that it was broadcast to children as well: a boy who does not play sport is a poofter. Connell and

Messerschmidt (2005 p.851) elucidate the links between sport, sexuality and the embodiment of masculinity for young men:

...in youth, skilled bodily activity becomes a prime indicator of masculinity, as we have already seen with sport. This is a key way in which heterosexuality and masculinity become linked in Western culture, with prestige conferred on boys with heterosexual partners and sexual learning imagined as exploration and conquest.

The fear that homosexuality may pollute this paradigm of masculinity is shown in a broader context as well. Miller (1998) observes how organisers of the Gay Games were sued by the US Olympic committee for breach of copyright when they used the name 'Gay Olympics', and yet there was no challenge to the use of 'Olympics' by other organisations such as the 'Police Olympics' or the 'Dog Olympics'.

Boys and Masculine Embodiment

Some boys are genetically predisposed to larger bodies and/or reaching puberty early. This gives them an advantage over smaller or later-developing boys, and according to Craig and Peplar (2003), larger boys are more likely to use their presence for social advantage by bullying. They specify the role of sexuality in the control of boys by peers: 'adolescents can readily acquire power over others by identifying vulnerabilities related to sexuality and using these as a means to bully ...' (2003 p.579). This was reflected in the data gathered here. Luke noted how homophobic bullying increased in late primary school, directed at smaller and less athletic boys.

Luke: I think there was certainly some challenging of your masculinity or, later on, in the later years of primary school, you might get called a fag. (IT professional 26, large city)

As discussed by Plummer (1999, 2001), Luke links homophobic bullying to failure to embody masculinity as puberty approached, rather than actual sexual behaviour. The connections between sporting prowess, bullying, and a distance from academia were also discussed.

Shane: If you didn't play sport you were relegated to being a nerd. I always remember that the kids who were great at football always seemed to be the ones who were bullies for some reason. (teacher, 32, small city)

Shane's comments are mirrored by Plummer (1999), who described boys in peer-groups bullying individuals, and a link between team sport and bullying. Masculinity came to be associated with physicality and groups, and intellect was an internal, solitary pursuit which was considered feminine or gay. Standing out was socially dangerous, but this was suspended for gifted athletes.

Ryan: It's interesting how if you're, even if you're competitively threatening for sport, the absolute *crème de la crème*, that doesn't somehow get you ostracised like being the *crème de la crème* of being bright. (IT professional, 53, large city)

While boys on one hand are told to be part of the team, sport is an area in which there is some latitude to be superior to peers – to become the '*crème de la crème*' – as this brings benefits for the whole team. However being academically superior was considered very differently. Howard was asked what sort of attention academic ability brought from peers.

Howard: Good question. I would say in a bad way. I was in that boat, personally, and because you were able to perform mentally above your peers, you were perceived to be more on the girls' side of things. (accountant, 44, large city)

However, boys who were academically proficient could receive a social insurance – if they were also good sportsmen.

Frank: If you were athletic it was alright to be intelligent, but if you were that little nerdy bloke in the corner, then you had a problem. [...] If you studied for your exams and you got a good result, you were there to be the duty punch bag basically (laughs). And ostracised of course. But if you were good at footy, well you know, free pass. (police officer, 39, large city)

Ideas of 'real' masculinity resonated with these men. In a focus group, when asked which boys were perceived to becoming 'real men', Anton interjected his answer before the question was stated:

Anton: (interrupts) The football players. They were it. [...] If you were into sports you were in the in crowd. (public servant, 35, large city)

In this context, sport is seen to socialise the stronger boys together, insulating them all from the possibility of being isolated – a fate left to non-sporty boys. Those who had the right body and were capable of playing sport with some degree of skill and enthusiasm became 'real men'. Sport was a public enactment of both having an acceptable male body, and adherence to acceptable modes of behaviour.

Schools and the Elevation of Sport

As well as boys elevating the social status of sporty peers, schools did likewise. Although the primary function of a school is to educate its charges, physical education is also part of the curriculum. Sport was seen to bring status to schools and sometimes it appeared to have a greater role than education in the schooling of Australian boys. This irony was not missed by Walter:

The high school prided itself on being a great sporting school so anyone with any particular abilities was highly regarded, both by the teachers as well as the other students I think. Yes, so there was sport. Academia seem to matter less to the school sadly. That's the way it seems. I'm not sure if it's changed but probably not. (laughs quietly). Umm, yeah. (accountant, 37, large city)

Another participant who excelled at sport described several examples where his abilities privileged his time at high school. Academic shortcomings were over looked for those who could offer the school prestige through sport.

Dennis: I can recall having an interview at the school with the headmaster and my father said, 'My son is no good at maths', and the headmaster said, 'But does he play sport?' And my father said, 'Yeah, he loves rugby', I got in. (stay-at-home dad, 49, small city)

Following admission to the school based in his sporting ability, Dennis cited more favouritism by both the housemaster and the headmaster.

Dennis: The First XV would have dinner with the housemaster and his wife. We would go into his room and we'd all sit down for a special dinner with the housemaster. The housemaster was a great rugby union fanatic [...] and it was just fantastic, you know, because you were special at school. I can recall getting into trouble and being sent to the headmaster's office. And the headmaster said, 'What did you do?' And I would tell him whatever I'd done. He said, 'Are you in the First XV still?' And I'd say, 'Yes, yes sir', He said, 'Well don't do that again', Now if I hadn't been in the First XV I would have been caned. But I was never, ever caned at school because I was part of the First XV rugby union side. It's bloody bullshit but that's how it was. (stay-at-home dad, 49, small city)

Dennis appreciated that it was 'fantastic' to hold this elevated status, but also said that positive discrimination based on a game that he excelled at was 'bloody bullshit.'

Shaping Behaviour for the Military

The utility of having a muscular body and being confident in its use was also described by men who had been in the armed services. Failure to engage in sport, having the wrong body or not be team-oriented were policed by fellow servicemen and the armed services. Pat recalls an incident from his navy days with a young man who was overweight, intelligent and shy.

Pat: He was covered in boot polish. He was tied up in a kit bag. And kit bags are this high and about that round [gestures] so you could fit a young man into them and tie them up, and roll down the road in them. Which would have been terrifying. [...] He didn't meet the criteria of being a young boy. A bit like *'Lord of the Flies'*, he wasn't as physically able as most of the rest of us were. [...] He didn't integrate at all. From the very first day because of his physical shape and from day one we were put into a very demanding regime of physical activity and he couldn't keep up. Bright academically though. He arrived as the highest academic achiever and left at the bottom in about six months. [...] We felt he was making us look bad. (furniture restorer, 59, large city)

The overweight recruit was seen to bring down the honour of the unit for failing the physical and social enactments of masculinity demanded by the navy. Ivor recalls how the army also pushed soldiers to their limits to leave a core of soldiers who had a certain level of physical strength and team-orientation.

Ivor: I can't think how many times in my army career, I carried a fucking log somewhere. I don't know what the purpose of it is but you get ten guys, you are travelling 20 kilometres today, everyone's got their pack and rifle, and you're taking the log as well. I mean what the fuck ... it's just designed to take you right to the edge physically [...] The thing that was most socially criminal was to jack on your mates, that was a term that was used often, to let the other people down. If you weren't carrying your load, you were being jack on your mates for dragging them down. (student, 26, large city).

The requirement by the military to have cohesive units and physical strength meant that individualism was problematised, and a pressure from the military – and within the unit – was brought to bear on those who were physically struggling with training not to let the team down. Another former soldier described an attrition process for those who were unable to adhere to military ideals.

Frank: The idea was to weed people out. (police officer, 39, large city)

Failure to have the right body, to display strength and fearlessness and to integrate into teams were due cause to either eliminate soldiers, or coerce them into the desired behaviour by utilising homophobic language.

Some Sports are more Masculine than Others

In the states of New South Wales and Queensland, rugby held the mantle of elevated masculinity. In discussing prestige at boarding school, Ivor identified the central position that rugby held in discourses of tough, heterosexual gender.

Ivor: [Socially dominant boys] all played rugby, they all played well, they did the manly thing, they dates girls. (student, 26, large city)

In the southern states, it was Australian Rules (AFL) had more status.

Arthur: Some guys played rugby, but the emphasis was on Australian Rules. That was the big sport. The other ones were seen as, not inferior but just not... it was Melbourne, I mean, you know. [...] At that school there were other options during the football season. A lot of those guys ended up playing things like hockey [...] The guys who weren't terribly good at sport ended up playing hockey or perhaps soccer. (police officer, 37, large city)

Four interesting undercurrents are on display in these statements: to Ivor, playing rugby and dating girls were 'the manly thing', indicating that failure to play risked a subsequent failure of heterosexuality and masculinity in general. Arthur's coda, 'I mean, you know' indicates that there is almost no question about playing anything but AFL in Victoria. His statement 'there were other options' positions AFL as the dominant game, and if other games were presented, they were only alternatives from the preferred choice. Finally, his implication about hockey and soccer in the statement about boys who were not 'good at sport' is that that only AFL was really 'sport'. That privileged title was reserved for AFL.

Size was a delineating factor in whether or not a boy was able to play the game which embodied masculinity most successfully. Robert echoed the themes of the dominance of football, as those who could not play were relegated to the less masculine game of hockey.

Robert: The kids who played hockey were the ones who couldn't play football. But yeah so I consider the football sports, including soccer, to be masculine, but I don't consider hockey to be masculine. (public servant, 28, large city)

Robert's mention of soccer hints that within the rubric of football, another hierarchy existed. Shortly after that statement, he expanded this point, explaining how more status was attached to the most aggressive games with homophobic language delineating lesser forms.

PM: Okay, what are men's sports?

Robert: Football.

PM: AFL or rugby, or -

Robert: (interrupts) No, all forms of football. Even soccer.

PM: What do you mean 'even' soccer?

Robert: Well, certainly soccer had a stigma associated with it when I was growing up.

PM: Which was?

Robert: Which was 'pansies', (public servant, 28, large city)

The Value of Groups for Males

Sport has been discussed as a socialising process that elevates some body types over others, and lauds those who suppress their fears about the potential for injury. Implicit in the discussion has been the importance of bonding with the team, and the problematisation of those who are considered individuals. In this concluding section, we look specifically at peer-bonding and how those who resisted it were treated.

Mike: Rugby and the sports that you had to play, which were all team sports, it taught you to be part of a team. And it was compulsory. You couldn't just not do it. You had to be a part of it. And I think what that did is it taught you a bit more about camaraderie and morals, and standing up for your peers, and being part of something. (plumber, 41, large city)

For Mike, the forming of boys into collectives based on shared ideals happened naturally and happily, and was augmented by structures such as school and sports teams. For other men, masculinity and the shaping of boys into homogenous, group-oriented socialisation was restrictive.

Dennis: I think I recognised pretty early on that there's two different environments here: there's one being part of the team and being accepted, having no problems, or if you're an individual you're going to have problems. (stay-at-home dad, 49, small city)

However, the journey from peer-oriented youth to autonomous adulthood is not necessarily linear. Pat described his transition, but also described the imperative to be part of a team in the navy.

Pat: As an adolescent I wanted to fit in and I was very much part of the group and as a man I was more assured of myself and my position and was quite happy on my own space in a group. Because I was in the forces for along time, there's pressure to conform to the model, but outside of that I don't think I did conform. (furniture restorer, 59, large city)

As noted by Adair and Vamplew (1997) and Fitzclarence and Hickey (2001), the military require men who will put the needs of the unit before their individual desires, and these notions start to be instilled into boys through team sport.

In the years when personality is developing from child to man, the need to be seen as the right sort of man gave the peer group the capacity to provide security to young men. If they fitted the hegemony like Mike, this made adolescence easier than for those who were unable to play, or disinterested in sports and team socialisation. As with other examples of non-hegemonic behaviour, homophobia became the fallback position for policing deviations from the hegemony, and an effective method of either forcing boys to adopt it or create distance from those who rejected it.

Discussion

Sport permeates the culture to the extent that Australians see themselves as a sporting nation. Through sport we create and disseminate concepts of idealised masculinity, and the data from which this paper is drawn shows the centrality in sport's role in constructing these ideals. Adolescents use sport as recreation, and as a healthy means of exercising, but sport has powerful social influences in the creation of in- and out-groups. As such, sport can shape ways which valourise some behaviours and attitudes, and problematise others. Non-hegemonic male behaviours, such as expressing certain emotions or being academic, are devalued in the push to shape all boys into the next national sporting icon. This occurs not only between peers, but also within institutions such as sports teams, schools who gain status from sporting success, and the armed services which elevates team-oriented ethos as a troop management technique. Homophobia becomes institutionalised through these practices, as such language is seen as allowable in 'toughening up' boys into men. However the twin results of this is to force boys and men into narrow beliefs of what 'successful' masculinity embodies, and to marginalise those of any sexuality, who cannot or have no interest in partaking these activities.

Analysing sport allows us to use a widespread phenomenon as a window into relationships between men, and between genders. Sport permeates structures such as school and social clubs, and the styles of interacting that are useful in sport have been shown to be created and replicated in other gendered institutions. Tracing how sport develops over time, in different cultural contexts, and in different periods in a

man's life allows us to map the changing influences that sport has over men, with men's interactions with each other and with women, and our notions of Australian masculinity.

Masculinity has been shown to be an unstable state which must be learned by each generation, and this article has shown one of the pre-eminent techniques for learning masculinity in Australia. Many of the men interviewed felt that they had been coerced into playing, based on the fear that if they did not, they would be considered lesser males, and called poofers. This indicates two important findings of this research: it amplifies the findings that male behaviour is policed by homophobia, showing how homophobia can force boys and men into activities that they are ill-suited for. Secondly, it shows how Australian masculinity is conceptualised as physical, but not intellectual or emotional. The implication from this research for educators and policymakers is that alternate forms of physical activity should be available in schools that do not necessarily prioritise physical strength or team involvement.

Presenting a range of physical activities for both boys and girls, which are not necessarily predicated upon aggressive competition or physical dominance will allow children of all sizes and capacities to engage their bodies in healthy ways, and minimise the potential for creating narrow enactments of gender.

Also, teachers and sports coaches must not allow homophobic pejoratives to be used to goad boys into playing: while the use of racist abuse would not go unchallenged, there is still a tacit approval for boys to call each other poofers or faggot. Schools and sports clubs must take the issue of homophobia seriously. Failure to do so makes them complicit in elevating a narrow form of masculinity which negatively impact on both the boys who receive such label as well as other boys who shape their own behaviour into aggressive, overly-competitive displays to 'prove' that they are becoming 'real' men.

REFERENCES

- Adair, D. & Vamplew, W. 1997, *Sport in Australian History*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne.
- Butler, J. 1995, 'Melancholy gender/refused identification', in *Constructing Masculinity*, eds M. Berger, B. Wallis, & S. Watson, Routledge, New York.
- Connell, R.W. 1995, *Masculinities*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, Sydney.
- Connell, R.W. & Messerschmidt, J.W. 2005, 'Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the concept', *Gender & Society*, vol.19, no.6, pp.829-859.
- Craig, W.M. & Peplar, D.J. 2003, 'Identifying and targeting risk for involvement in bullying and victimization', *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, vol.48, no.9, pp.577-582.
- Fitzclarence, L. & Hickey, C. 2001, 'Real footballers don't eat quiche', *Men and Masculinities*, vol.4, no.2, pp.118-139.
- Glaser, B. 1996, 'Introduction', in *Grounded Theory: The Basic Social Process Dissertation*, eds B. Glaser & W. Kaplan, Sociology Press, Mill Valley CA, pp.ix-xvii.
- Griffin, P. 1995, 'Homophobia in sport: Addressing the needs of lesbian and gay high school athletes', *The High School Journal*, vol.77, no.1/2, pp.80-87.
- Hardin, M. 2000, 'What is the word at Logos College? Homosocial ritual or homosexual denial in Don DeLillo's *End Zone*?', *Journal of Homosexuality*, vol.40, no.1, pp.31-50.
- Howell, R.A. & Howell, M.L. 1992, *The Genesis of Sport in Queensland: From the Dreamtime to Federation*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, Queensland.
- Kimmel, M.S. 1990, 'Baseball and the reconstitution of American masculinity, 1880-1920', in *Sport, Men and the Gender Order: Critical Feminist Perspectives*, eds M.A. Messner & D. Sabo, Human Kinetics Books, Champaign, Ill, pp.55-66.
- Kimmel, M.S. & Kaufman, M. 1994, 'Weekend warriors: The new men's movement', in *Theorizing Masculinities*, eds H. Brod & M. Kaufman, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, California.
- Messner, M.A. 1992, *Power at play: Sport and the problem of masculinity*, Beacon Press, Boston.
- Miller, T. 1998, 'Commodifying the male body, problematising "Hegemonic Masculinity"', *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, vol.22, no.4, pp.431-447.
- Plummer, D.C. 1999, *One of the Boys: Masculinity, Homophobia and Modern Manhood*, Harrington Park Press, New York.
- Plummer, D.C. 2001, 'The quest for modern manhood: Masculine stereotypes, peer culture and the social significance of homophobia', *Journal of Adolescence*, vol.24, no.1, pp.15-23.
- Plummer, D.C. 2006, 'Sportophobia: Why do some men avoid sport?' *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, vol.30, no.2, pp.1-16.

Probyn, E. 2000, 'Sporting bodies: Dynamics of shame and pride', *Body and Society*, vol.6, no.1, pp.12-28.

Robertson, S. 2003, 'If I let a goal in, I'll get beat up': Contradictions in Masculinity, Sport and Health', *Health Education Research*, vol.18, no.6, pp.706-716.

Shapiro, J. 1991, 'Transsexualism: Reflections in the persistence of gender and the mutability of sex', in *Body Guards: the Cultural Politics of Gender Ambiguity*, eds J Epstein & K Straub, Routledge, New York.

Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. 1994, 'Grounded theory methodology: An overview', in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, eds N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, California.

White, P.G. & Vagi, A.B. 1990, 'Rugby in the 19th Century British boarding-school system: A feminist psychoanalytic perspective', in *Sport, Men and the Gender Order: Critical Feminist Perspectives*, eds M.A. Messner & D. Sabo, Human Kinetics Books, Champaign, Ill.