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Exploring homophobic practices and acceptance of gay players among male basketball players in Johannesburg

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Abstract

In post-apartheid South Africa, sport has been positioned as a vehicle for social cohesion. This study investigated if this theory extends to issues of sexuality. It examines the experiences of players within the Johannesburg basketball environment to investigate the acceptance of gay players and the current attitudes towards homophobia. Bourdieu's theory of habitus is used as a theoretical framework and semi-structured individual interviews were used as the method of data collection. The study involved 10 active players of various ages above 18 years and a range of racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. Thematic data analysis was used to analyse the data. The findings of the study revealed that the Johannesburg basketball environment is one that subscribes to the principles of hegemonic masculinity and that forms of alternative masculinities are associated with gayness.

Keywords: sport, sexuality, homophobia, basketball