No Pain, No Gain: Hegemonic Masculinity in Japanese Sporting Subcultures
Wolfram Manzenreiter, University of Vienna

In post-fordist society, the field of consumption has replaced the world of production as the main arena in which dominant stereotypes of masculinity and femininity are communicated and reinforced. Sport is one of the last strongholds giving shelter to a gendered hierarchy which is ultimately based on popular folk models of physical and psychological differences between men and women. Previous research findings suggest that deference to male authority, homosociality, hierarchical junior-senior relationships, conformity and control, and the spiritual or ethical appreciation of pain and violence are characteristic elements which exaggerate masculine traits and devaluate feminine ones in sports. My contribution opposes the rather well-documented observations of these “masculinity rites”, that overwhelmingly have been gained from studies on sports in highly formalised, competitive and organised settings, with less explored subcultural modes of alternative sport involvement, such as surfing, skateboarding, climbing or football fandom. Confronting traditional, mainstream sports with subcultural sport scenes and lifestyle sports, I want to explore to what degree hegemonic masculinity has also shaped ideas and ideals of maleness within these countercultural sport worlds and whether they actually offer the space for the experience of alternative modes of masculinity.