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SNOWBOARDING

The Construction of Gender in an Emerging Sport

Kristin L. Anderson

Previous research has identified sport as a practice that creates and legitimizes notions of male dominance. However, gender is constructed and resisted differently within various sporting activities. This article addresses the diversity of masculinities in sport through an exploration of the construction of gender in an emerging sport—snowboarding. The analysis identifies four social practices used by male snowboarders to construct their sport as a masculine practice: (a) appropriation of other cultural masculinities, (b) interaction and clothing styles, (c) violence and aggression, and (d) emphasized heterosexuality. The findings indicate that the historical context of snowboarding and the social class, race-ethnicity, and age of snowboarding participants influence the social practices used to create masculinity. Although snowboarders rely on different social practices to construct masculinity than those used in organized sports, these practices also serve to support notions of male dominance and difference from women.

I guess it's kind of like controlled chaos . . . controlled anarchy with a cause behind it. The cause? Is to go bigger and fatter than everybody, or spin the most or whatever you're doing at the time that you want to do it. And you want to do it better than everybody else.

—Male snowboarder, age 16

In U.S. culture, doing it “bigger and fatter” is one means of exhibiting masculinity. He who earns more money, owns a bigger house, and drives a faster car is thought to possess the masculine qualities of strength, skill, aggression, and competitive drive. One of the most common ways for men to “do it better” is in sport. Through their attempts to run faster, to hit harder, to jump higher, or to throw farther, men can demonstrate strength and superiority. Past research has emphasized the importance of sport in creating and maintaining notions of male dominance and difference from women (Hall, 1985; Hargreaves, 1986; Messner, 1992a; Oglesby, 1989; Sabo, 1985). Within organized sports, the exclusion of women, hierarchical and regulated structure, and violence help to create a particular form of idealized masculinity that becomes part of men's identities through their participation as athletes or fans (Messner, 1992a). Moreover, as spectators celebrate

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the "masculine" qualities of the athletes, they legitimize the notion that men are naturally suited to "do it better" in institutions other than sport (Messner, 1989; West & Zimmerman, 1987).

However, sport is not a monolithic structure; gender is created and resisted differently in the many activities considered sport. The various constructions of masculinity within the institution of sport have received little attention in the literature on gender and sport. The masculinities of the runner, football player, and rock-climber are qualitatively different; each sport combines various symbolic discourses to create a masculinity particular to the sport. Most of the sociological study of sports and masculinity has focused on organized sports such as football, baseball, and basketball—sports that have a history of excluding (and more recently separating) women. Little is known about the construction of gender in alternative and emerging sports, such as mountain biking, in-line skating, and disc golf. Unorganized and highly individualized, emerging sports may be sites for new constructions of masculinity.

This article addresses the diversity of sporting masculinities through an exploration of the construction of gender in an emerging sport—snowboarding. Recent theories of gender emphasize that masculinity and femininity are idealized cultural symbols rather than individual qualities or traits and that gender is collectively constructed through social practice (Connell, 1987; Segal, 1990; West & Zimmerman, 1987). Moreover, the social practices that form the gender power structure simultaneously reflect and recreate structural inequalities (Connell, 1987; Messerschmidt, 1993). Age, social class, sexual preference, and race support or constrain individual opportunities to "do gender" through exhibiting the dominant and idealized masculine or feminine qualities (Collins, 1991; hooks, 1989; West & Zimmerman, 1987).

As cultural practice, gender is not unified or cohesive but contradictory and contested (Bordo, 1993). Many competing versions of masculinity and femininity appear in a culture at a given point in time, but power structures influence which constructions of gender become dominant and which are subordinated (Connell, 1987). Because there are competing versions of masculinity, dominant notions of masculinity must be formed in relation to what Connell (1987) calls "subordinated" masculinities and in relation to women (p. 183).

Despite this emphasis on the active construction of gender within feminist theory, few studies have focused on the role of sport in creating and sustaining idealized images of masculinity and femininity. As Whitson (1990) notes, "Theoretically informed studies of the place of sport in the social construction of masculinity remain exceptional and isolated, not forming part of a focused scholarly dialogue" (p. 19). The exceptions, however, have expanded our understanding of how and why sport serves to create notions of male dominance and difference from women (see Cahn, 1990; Messner, 1992a; Sabo & Messner, 1993). Recent analyses of alternative

sports such as the Triathlon and body building have revealed contradictions athletes face while trying to embody masculine ideals (Connell, 1990; Klein, 1990, Wacquant, 1995). Other research has shown that race and class influence men's ability and choices to "do masculinity" through sport (Messner, 1989).

As an inchoate sport, snowboarding is a good case for analyses of the ways in which new sporting practices become gendered. In the following analysis, I focus on the processes of gender construction within snowboarding and the contradictions that emerge from these processes. Initially, I describe the social and historical context of this emerging sport. Second, I discuss the strategies that snowboarders use to create a masculine image for snowboarding. I then explore the ways in which social class, race, and age influence the construction of gender within snowboarding, and how female snowboarders both resist and accommodate these masculinizing strategies.

METHOD

The following analysis is informed by a combination of methods: (a) in-depth interviews conducted with 10 snowboarders, (b) a content analysis of the 1993 and 1994 editions of the two largest snowboarding magazines: *Snowboarder* and *TransWorld Snowboarding*, and (c) participant observation at a snowboarding shop and several ski resorts in Southern California. I interviewed six men and four women who had been involved in snowboarding for at least 2 years. Respondents were located through a voluntary sign-up sheet at a snowboarding shop in Southern California and through a snowball technique.

Table 1 provides demographic information about the respondents and pseudonyms through which the snowboarders are referenced in the following analysis. Five of the snowboarders were European-American, 2 African American, 1 Cuban American, 1 Mexican/Native American, and 1 Asian/European-American. Their ages ranged from 16 to 29 years. All of the respondents reported a heterosexual orientation. Although the majority of snowboarders are young White men (TransWorld Publications, 1994), I purposely conducted interviews with a diverse group of snowboarders to gain information about the perceptions of snowboarders on the margins of this new sport. The interviews with women, snowboarders older than 25, and with both men and women of color were especially useful in illuminating the interactions and contradictions of race, class, and gender in snowboarding. All interviews were conducted by the author in cafés and restaurants near the snowboarding shop. The interviews lasted about 1 hour, and they were tape-recorded and transcribed for analysis. I asked open-ended questions about the respondents' initial involvement and current experiences in snowboarding; participation in other sports; attitudes about riding with, and competing against, men and/or women; and the political aspects of snowboarding.

TABLE 1
Description of Respondents

Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Race	Education (years)	Occupation	Years Participation
Adam	M	20	European American	15	college student/ snowboard shop	4
Ben	M	20	European Asian American	14.5	college student/ snowboard shop	4
Chris	M	27	African American	12	electronics	2
Debbie	F	20	European American	15	college student/waitress	3
Eric	M	16	Cuban American	10	high school student/ food service	3
Fern	F	29	European American	15	office manager	3
Gina	F	24	Mexican/Native American	24	office manager/esthetician	3
Holly	F	21	European American	21	college student/retail clerk	5
Irving	M	29	African American	29	general contractor	2
John	M	16	European American	11	high school student	5

The content analysis focused on how women and men are portrayed within the snowboarding media and the gender issues that appear in the media text. However, to describe the media presentation of snowboarders, I coded all photographs of snowboarders in the seven 1994 issues of *Snowboarder* and calculated the percentages of representation by race and gender. *TransWorld Snowboarding*, the largest snowboarding magazine, has a distribution of more than 165,000 copies (TransWorld Publications, 1994). *Snowboarder* has a circulation of around 80,000 ("A look," 1994). Four of the snowboarders interviewed subscribed to *TransWorld Snowboarding*, two subscribed to *Snowboarder*, and three others reported that they purchased and read one or both magazines on occasion.

In addition, I worked as a salesperson in the snowboarding shop during the period the interviews were conducted and observed snowboarders for an average of 20 hours a week for a 5-week period. I also observed snowboarders on several occasions as I attempted snowboarding. My interaction with snowboarders in these contexts facilitated the analyses of interview and magazine data.

SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Snowboards were first marketed in 1977, after two East Coast surfers wanted to practice surfing in the winter and created "snurfers" to ride on the snow ("Battle of the Piste," 1993). Since this inauspicious beginning, snowboarding has become "the fastest growing winter sport" (Battle, 1993, p. 96). In 1988, snowboarders made up around 6% of those actively involved in downhill snow sports, whereas skiers made up the other 94%. By 1992,

snowboarders constituted 24% of those active on the slopes (TransWorld Publications, 1994).

The rapid growth of this new sport is largely due to the interest of young, middle-class men. The median age of snowboarders is 15.5 years, about 70% come from households with annual incomes above \$35,000, and 80% are male (TransWorld Publications, 1994). Although information on race and ethnicity for the general market of snowboarders is not available, my content analysis of the 1994 issues of *Snowboarder* revealed that snowboarders receiving media coverage are overwhelmingly young, White, and male. More than 86% of the images (both features and advertisements) depicted White male men, whereas only 5% of the photos portray Latino, African American, or Asian men. White women were pictured in 9% of the shots, and images of minority women were entirely absent.

Like organized sports, snowboarding is currently dominated by men. However, it is developing in a very different social and historical context than did organized sports. Women's increasing sport participation in past decades has meant that sport is no longer an exclusively male institution (Cahn, 1990). Within snowboarding, the norms and rules of participation are actively debated and the images and identities of the "snowboarder" are in a state of flux. In response to my question about how her male friends view snowboarding, Debbie replied, "I don't know if they really think of it as a guy thing. I think it's so new it hasn't been labeled anything yet." Furthermore, the data suggest that women's participation is increasing. All of the snowboarders interviewed had noticed more women riding in the 1994 season than in previous years. In addition, female snowboarders are beginning to receive some media attention and a few are sponsored by snowboarding corporations. The 1994 snowboarding magazine issues contained more references to, and images of, female riders than the 1993 issues. Thus, unlike most organized sports, snowboarding is emerging in a context of women's sport participation and is not automatically considered a masculine practice.

Part of the reason for women's rising participation may be the unorganized nature of the sport. In contrast to the exclusive and competitive nature of organized sport participation, snowboarding is open to those that can afford the lift tickets and equipment. Moreover, few snowboarders participate in competitions. Only one respondent, Holly, had participated in a snowboarding competition, and this was a local competition sponsored by a ski resort and open to anyone wishing to compete. Some respondents said that they liked the individualistic practice of snowboarding in contrast to the organized team sports in which they had participated in previous years. Adam noted that he did not like team sports because they have "kind of the one-for-all attitude. If one person screws up, the whole team gets punished. I didn't like being responsible for other people." Thus, the practice of snowboarding does not involve the sex-segregated teams and emphasis on group effort that characterizes organized sports.

In practice, riding a snowboard involves little that conforms to the dominant ideals of the sporting masculinity, such as strength, aggression, and teamwork (Segal, 1990). It involves binding one's feet onto a 4- to 6-foot oblong board and "riding" the board down the mountain by shifting one's weight such that the board glides through the snow on its edges. Snowboarding looks similar to surfing or skateboarding to an observer. Chris described it as "the sensation of floating on powder." Also, snowboarders create "tricks," which involve "airs" (jumps and turns), and construct obstacles and half-pipes in the snow to facilitate these tricks. Riding the board downhill is termed *carving*, whereas riding in the half-pipe or jumping obstacles is *jibbing*. Those riders who prefer carving are "old school," whereas those who prefer the jib style are the "new schoolers." Several respondents emphasized that snowboarding requires balance and flexibility as well as strength. Ben said that "girls are probably more, they are better suited for snowboarding and skateboarding because their center of gravity is in their hips, it's not like in their shoulders." Thus, the physical practice of snowboarding does not require the "masculine" strength and aggression that legitimize the exclusion of women in some sports (Young & White, 1995).

Snowboarding's contextual differences from most organized men's sports influence the ways in which snowboarders construct gender. Snowboarding does not have the regulated structure, standard competitions, organized recruitment strategies, and exclusive participation practices that have facilitated the construction of masculinity within organized sports (Messner, 1992a). However, snowboarding has come to be a means of masculinity construction for its young male participants. Through several social practices, snowboarders can make the practice of riding a board down a mountain into something that conveys their masculine status.

STREET PUNKS, SKATERS, AND GANGSTAS

How are meanings about the appropriateness of snowboarding for men or women created? My interviews, content analysis, and observations suggest that male snowboarders engage in social practices that help to construct this emerging sport as a masculine activity. In the following section, I argue that these practices combine to form a masculinity signified by the image of the "street punk."

APPROPRIATION

Male snowboarders and the snowboarding media have appropriated elements of two existing cultural versions of masculinity—the "skater kid" and the "gangsta"—in creating the stereotypical snowboarding image. The skater kid image is borrowed from skateboarding, which has become a major influence on snowboarding in recent years. According to Ben, to be a good snowboarder,

you have to have some kind of skateboarding skill too, because like, I'd say 95 percent of the tricks I do—no, 100 percent of the tricks I do are skateboard related, and I think that if you don't skate, it's going to be really hard for you.

By stressing that a skateboarding background is an essential requirement for success in snowboarding, male participants connect snowboarding to an almost exclusively male sport and diminish women's belief that they can be as successful (Fize, 1990-1991). Fern stated the following: "I don't know any other women that snowboard . . . I think most of the girls that I know don't have any kind of a skating background, and I didn't either, and it helps you so much. The guys who started skating just like stepped on a board and rode it." In addition, the appropriation of skateboarding style helps male snowboarders construct snowboarding as a tough, street punk activity, as Debbie suggests:

Most snowboarders were skateboarders, or a good percentage in California of snowboarders were skateboarders, and then there are surfers and all that, and that is all male-dominated things. And because it, in California it's kind of a scrappy thing. It's supposedly not a thing that a girl should do.

The term *scrappy* suggests that snowboarding is aggressive and violent; women may appear unfeminine or even be harmed if they try to participate. By appropriating elements of skateboarding, snowboarders can affiliate with a male-dominated sport and construct snowboarding as "not a thing that a girl should do."

Snowboarders also co-opt elements of another masculinity—that of the urban "gangsta." Ben reported that "snowboarders buy all of this stuff that makes them look like a gangsta even though they're not." In discussing conflict between snowboarders and skiers, Eric said: "I guess in a way it's like a gang, the snowboarders and the skiers. You know, skiers get in a fight and some other skiers will help them and boarders' friends help them." The gangsta is popularly represented as a fearless, aggressive, and heterosexual man. Gangsta rap, one medium through which the gangsta image is transmitted, has been criticized by feminist groups for its sexist lyrics, which degrade and objectify women (Alston, 1994; Holland, 1994; but see hooks, 1994a for a discussion of the ways in which this music reflects the values of the dominant White culture).

The snowboarding media blatantly appropriates the gangsta image. One ad describes a trip to the mountain as "another day in da hood" when snowboarders "go hike with da boyz" ("Fifty One Fifty," 1994). A *Snowboarder* feature article compares snowboarders to urban gangstas:

It's weird to note that those things society immediately fears invariably become mainstream. Rap is no longer a fad, it is an integral part of American youth culture. The jib style is no longer an isolated phenomenon; ski areas build entire structures just for this kind of expression session. The concept of a "posse" or extended informal family bonding together for protection and a sense of

belonging runs through both inner-city dwellers and snowboarders. (Graves, 1994, p. 79)

This passage constructs snowboarding as a parallel to gangsta culture, yet it also suggests that snowboarders' forms of "expression" may be more legitimate than those of gangstas. The term *posse* conjures the image of White men gathering to protect the domain of "civilized" society from outlaws (e.g., Native Americans displaced from the land or Black men accused of raping White women), in fascinating contrast to the illegitimate and criminal acts of "gangstas." Yet, by drawing on the gangsta image, boarders construct the mountain as dangerous and suggest that snowboarding requires courage and strength.

In cultural imagery, both the "skater kid" and the "gangsta" are young male delinquents who vandalize, tag, and loiter on city streets. By appropriating these images, snowboarders can construct the practice of riding down the mountain as a "street punk" activity. Ben said that

snowboarders go a different way, they zigzag across the mountain looking for things like obstacles, they ride on railings and wood and whatever, you know, rocks. Things that skiers would traditionally scorn because it ruins your equipment. But snowboarders don't care because they're mostly punks from the street.

This co-optation helps male snowboarders construct their sport as masculine practice. Both skateboarding and gangs are largely homosocial male environments, in which women are discouraged or prevented from full participation. Through their identification with the "street punk" image of skateboarders and gangstas, snowboarders can make the practice of snowboarding appear more masculine and "scrappy"—an aggressive activity in which women should not participate.

STREET-PUNK STYLE

In many youth subcultures, "style [is] the message and the means of expression" (Fox, 1987, p. 345). Style becomes a means of distinguishing group membership, declaring agreement with a belief system, and distinguishing the "posers" from the "pro's" (Donnelly & Young, 1988; Fox, 1987; Lowney, 1995). Snowboarders exhibit street-punk style through their appearance and social interaction. The respondents described this interactional style as exhibiting "attitude," a buzzword in the snowboarding media at the time the interviews were conducted. Fern said that "the attitudes seem to be a lot worse now. [I: What's the attitude?] I don't care about anybody, get out of my way. Indifferent and aggressive I'd say. Self-absorbed, that's a good word." Ben also emphasized that the snowboarding "attitude" is aggressive and superior:

The snowboard attitude is, it's pretty bad kind of, you know, it is bad. Most people have this attitude like "I'm better than you," as in "you" in general. As in "you suck, look at you, you don't know how to ride."

The snowboarding "attitude" conforms closely to the traditional masculine ideals of aggression, stoicism, and confidence. By acting indifferent and superior, male boarders attempt to convey that they can "do it better" than others on the mountain.

Clothing constitutes an important symbolic marker of membership in the snowboarding "posse." Respondents agreed that the snowboarding "look" combines elements of skater and gangsta style. According to Ben, the snowboarding look is "like a street punk, like a skater, baggy jeans, wallet chains." Irving described the origins of the street punk image:

There's so many clothes now that are baggy and that's the look that people are trying to fit into. And whether it's, you know, people wanting to be like gangstas or people wanting to be like skateboarders, and whoever wants to claim that they had it first, that's where everybody's trying to get into.

Yet, beyond distinguishing snowboarders from skiers or other sporting participants, the street punk style identifies snowboarding as a masculine activity. By wearing oversized clothing, snowboarders can look like skaters and/or gangsta's—like men who are part of an exclusively male group. In addition, male boarders exhibit stoicism and strength when they wear clothing that does not protect them from the snow and cold temperatures. Holly noted that male riders obtain street punk style at the expense of comfort:

[I: Is there a specific look that goes with snowboarding?] Definitely like flannels and. . . See, I think snowboarders are crazy. I see snowboarders up there who are wearing pants that sag down to their knees and flannels that are just covered in snow. . . I just look at them and think it's so stupid, they care more about the way they look than if they are freezing their butt off.

Although she has been riding for 5 years, Holly refers to snowboarders as "they" rather than "we." She wears warmer clothing when riding but adheres to the snowboarding style elsewhere. When asked whether her description was a stereotype for a male snowboarder, she replied, "yeah, and girls kind of go along with it. Because if you look in my closet, I probably own about 20 flannels." This suggests that although she can copy the street punk image, Holly does not perceive herself as having an active role in its construction. None of the female respondents reported that they wore the baggy, oversized pants that were the style at the time the interviews were conducted. By adopting the clothing style of skater kids and gangstas—a style most women do not wear—male boarders can look like they are part of an exclusively male group of aggressive, indifferent street punks.

VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSION

The street punk snowboarder likes danger, risk taking, and aggression, according to many respondents. Four of the male snowboarders mentioned participating in, or observing, fights while snowboarding. One particularly colorful recollection from Eric typifies other fights male snowboarders described:

[I: Tell me about the fights you just had.] As a matter of fact, there was one last night. We were about to get in the lift lines, and some skiers came and ran over all our boards. And they didn't say anything, you know, there wouldn't have been a problem if they would have said, "Hey, I'm sorry about that." My brother, my brother and I are both Cuban and we have not very good temperaments, it's a Cuban trait, we're, "Hey man, you ran over our boards, bro, that's not really cool." He came up to us with an attitude about it, "Well, you guys shouldn't have been standing [there]. . . ." And my brother has no patience, none. We went off on the guy. We were smart though, we made sure he took the first swing. And then about five of his friends jumped me and my brother and then all my friends came down the mountain. . . . It just turned into a big brawl.

Violence, threats, and intimidation are common within snowboarding according to the male snowboarders interviewed. Ben reported his experience with a snowboarder with "attitude":

One guy threatened me from the lift line, from the actual lift. There was a snow-blower and I did a trick over it, didn't touch it or anything, and it was fine and I rode away. He's all "do that again and I'll kick your ass."

Historically, violence has been a means of exhibiting masculinity in sport (Messner, 1992b; Smith, 1983). Within street-punk snowboarder culture, as in other sports, violence is glamorized and a means of gaining status and prestige. The conflicts described by the respondents were often caused by perceived challenges to status. The media reinforce this image; a recent magazine article published a list of snowboarders who had been thrown out of a nightclub in a popular snowboarding resort, stating that "invariably, it seems, where there is drink, snowboarders, and dance, there will also be altercations" (Galbraith, 1994, p. 24).

EMPHASIZED HETEROSEXUALITY

Along with many mainstream sport participants, male snowboarders construct masculinity through asserting heterosexuality and subordinating homosexuality (Curry, 1991; Messner, 1992a; Pronger, 1990). Ben said that "skiers are fags" when asked how snowboarding differs from skiing, and he described snowboarding style as "wearing dark clothes to try to look, to off-set skiers, don't be a pretty boy." As Eric put it, "I ain't down with no pink type clothing." In response to the question of why snowboarding is not an Olympic sport, a magazine columnist stated that it was probably because a snowboarder would steal the torch and chase the male figure skaters around

with it (SBIA Minister, 1994b). Heterosexuality is constructed antonymously—as the absence of homosexuality (Sedgwick, 1990). To assert their heterosexual masculinity, boarders imply that other sports are “gay.”

Furthermore, women who excel in snowboarding may be called lesbians, as “real” (e.g., heterosexual) women cannot expect to be as good as men. Ben described the sanctions against talented female snowboarders: “Obviously, a woman’s not going to really power as high as a man. If they do look all burly and buff like a man, then people say they’re a lesbian.” However, several male respondents said that they would like to form a relationship with a female snowboarder. When asked if he ever rode with women, Chris said that “someday I’d like to meet somebody up there who snowboards to hang out with.” Ben, who was teaching his girlfriend to snowboard at the time of the interview said that he encouraged his girlfriend to learn: “I got her a board and everything. She, ah, she expressed a wish to try it. She knew I was super interested and that was the reason she became interested.” Adam expressed his disappointment that his current girlfriend did not want to learn and said that he would like to find a girlfriend with whom he can ride. These comments suggest that women are accepted within snowboarding if they do not try to compete with men and if they are involved in a heterosexual relationship with a male snowboarder—in essence, if they reinforce the masculine image of the sport. The objectification of women within the snowboarding media also reinforces heterosexual masculinity (see below). Within snowboarding as in other men’s sports, “heterosexual masculinity is collectively constructed through the denigration of homosexuality and femininity as ‘not male’” (Messner, 1992a, p. 96).

In contemporary society, the “sporting male” epitomizes the masculine attributes of strength, aggression, speed, and skill (Segal, 1990). Snowboarding adds the element of a deviant subculture to the construction of masculinity within this emerging sport, creating a “street punk” masculinity that connects indifference and image to ideals of strength and skill. Snowboarders do not have the team jersey, the stands full of fans, or the participation in an exclusively male group to evidence their masculine status. Thus, male boarders create a masculine street punk image through copping an attitude, wearing street punk style, emphasizing the violence and danger within snowboarding, and asserting their heterosexuality. These exaggerated social practices provide male snowboarders with an image that sets them apart from skiers and female snowboarders and expresses their masculine difference and superiority.

Not all of the male respondents engaged in all masculinizing practices. The street punk image is an idealized version of masculinity. Yet, because the stereotypical snowboarder is an indifferent, aggressive, masculine “street punk,” male boarders can convey their masculinity through snowboarding. Masculinity is embodied in the image of the street punk, and this idealized image legitimizes the notion that male boarders naturally “do it better” than skiers and female riders (see Messner, 1989, p. 79). However,

like all cultural constructions of masculinity, this construction of a street punk masculinity within snowboarding is fraught with paradox.

AGE, RACE, AND SOCIAL CLASS

Structures of age, race, and class interact in complex and paradoxical ways with the creation of masculinity within snowboarding. Previous research suggests that race and class may support or constrain men's opportunities to engage in social practices that convey their masculinity (Majors, 1990; Messner, 1989). The majority of snowboarders are young, male, and upper/middle class (TransWorld Publications, 1994). These structural circumstances provide male snowboarders with considerable freedom in developing an image for their sport. As young, White, and affluent men, snowboarders are able to construct a rebellious, aggressive version of masculinity with little fear of experiencing discrimination or retribution.

In attempting to be like "street punks," some male snowboarders and the snowboarding media have rejected the emphasis on professional employment, social responsibility, and personal ambition that characterize middle-class masculinity (Segal, 1990). The gangsta image is associated with young, inner-city, Black men who are denied opportunities and resources to gain professional employment. Thus, gangsta culture involves a rejection of middle-class notions that masculinity is linked to corporate or professional success, and instead measures masculinity in terms of aggression and fearlessness. In appropriating the gangsta image, the creators of the snowboarding image similarly reject the connection between masculinity and professional success. In media representations, the snowboarder is presented as a rebel who needs neither material comfort nor professional aspirations. The freedom of snowboarders in contrast to professional men is exalted. For instance, one magazine feature described the difference in the day of a corporate man and a snowboarder:

"Get a real life!" was the comment from some suit on the phone early one deep powder morning. . . . Arriving at my office, to the sight of 3-4 feet of fresh pow [snow], slapping fives with the homies, and waiting for the chairs to begin loading, all of us were forced with the difficult decision of which lines to poach first. Meanwhile that same suit grabbed the boss his first cup of morning coffee and pondered who else he was to brown nose the rest of the day. (Valenzuela, 1993, p. 25)

According to Debbie, the anticorporate image of snowboarding is rebellious: "It's kind of defiant. It's a defiant attitude. It's just against corporations being . . . snowboarders don't want to have to wear a suit and tie." Snowboarders who become sponsored by big corporations risk being labeled "sellouts." One ad pictured an unclothed Ken Barbie doll and the following text: "Some riders are nothing but corporate barbie dolls. Some riders have no balls. Tona-wawa. We sell clothes, we don't sell out" (Tona-Wawa, 1994). The ad suggests that to be corporate is to be less masculine, rejecting the link between masculinity and professional success.

Because of their youth and privileged class position, few snowboarders are concerned about presenting the middle-class cultural capital required for professional employment. Unlike older men, they can adopt a street punk image without concern that this will harm their employment opportunities. However, this rejection of middle-class notions of masculinity creates contradictions for snowboarders. Although their privileged class position enables snowboarders to adopt this rebellious masculinity, at the same time it will provide most snowboarders with the opportunity to achieve professional employment in the future. The media may glorify the antiestablishment rebel, but it is not in the interests of most snowboarders to reject the corporate masculinity that sustains the power they may someday possess. Most snowboarders stand to benefit from the dominance of men in high-paying corporate positions. One letter to the editor exemplifies this paradox. A college freshman wrote to the *Snowboarder* advice columnist, questioning the wisdom of staying in school when he would rather be working in the snowboarding industry. He received the following response:

Finishing college is the best way to get a job in the snowboarding industry. Even I, the Minister, have a college degree. Stay in school and have fun while you can. It's in the snowboarding industry, for sure, but it's still work. (SBIA Minister, 1994a, p. 16)

In this case, the media columnist drops the "anticorporate" image and counsels the snowboarder to pursue a path toward professional employment. Moreover, this passage reveals the paradox of an anticorporate image promoted by the clearly corporate media. The creators of the snowboarding media are generally college-educated corporate men, who do not fit the street punk image.

In addition, street punk masculinity is challenged by ski area operators, skiers, and older snowboarders, as the following letter to the editor in *Snowboarder* demonstrates:

I represent a small, relatively unrecognized group. During the week we can be seen shredding the halls of corporate America. . . . We're the educated, over 30, high-powered, silent snowboarding minority. We are the original snowboard bad-asses. We walk taller, talk louder, spit further, screw longer, drive faster, earn higher, party harder, and recover quicker. . . . Our sport's image has been created by loud-mouthed, disrespectful, lazy, pimple-popping, pre-adolescents. Is it any surprise most resorts dislike snowboarders? . . . Keep up that image you've worked so hard to create, and keep pissing off skiers. Soon you will not be able to snowboard at any resort. As for us, don't worry, we'll always be able to afford to snowboard . . . maybe we'll buy our own resort. (Dondo, 1994, p. 10)

Asserting his greater economic, physical, and sexual power, the author conveys the superiority of his corporate masculinity and challenges snowboarders to compete. As this letter implies, snowboarders do not have the power to construct a rebellious image without consequence. *Snowboarder* magazine

published "An Open Letter to Our Readers" due to a growing concern that more and more ski resorts may be closing their lifts to snowboarders:

It seems, my friends, that ski area operators are not happy with us. It seems that many of them are strongly considering the idea of hucking us off their mountains, regardless of our massive numbers and our money. And, it seems, they blame us, the magazines, for encouraging and glorifying your alleged bad attitudes and gutterish life styles. The source of their contention varies: too much cussing . . . too much attitude . . . too many skiers complaining. (Palladini, 1994, p. 51)

Thus ski-resorts, which rely on the business of middle-/upper-class patrons, are threatening to prohibit snowboarding due to the complaints of their regular customers. Ben expressed his concern that "attitude" would lead ski resorts to ban snowboarding:

Hopefully, we don't get kicked off all the mountains, you know, from attitude and from, I guess, riding styles, you know—ruining all the fixtures at resorts, rails and running into skiers and telling them to screw off, fuck off, whatever.

Ski-area operators and skiers challenge the construction of the street punk image, yet they simultaneously provide validation of this construction. Snowboarders invoke the threat of censor by ski-area operators to foster their image as aggressive gangsta outlaws.

However, the idealized street punk image contradicts the real-life situation of most snowboarders. The rejection of middle-class values is inherently contradicted by the actual class status of most snowboarding participants. Snowboarding is an expensive sport that requires extensive equipment, transportation to the mountain, lodging, and access to ski lifts. As he described how to look like a snowboarder, Ben clearly expressed this contradiction:

You go get like Ben Davis, or like Dickies clothing—like baggy, it's really for poor people or like workmen, you know, gas station jackets and shirts . . . if you have a couple hundred bucks you can become like instant snowboarder.

Structures of class and age, then, both support and constrain the construction of a street punk image within snowboarding. The youth and middle-/upper-class status of most boarders provides them with the freedom and resources to construct a rebellious image. However, these structures also constrain male snowboarders' attempts to be like street punks. As young men, snowboarders are challenged by the older ski-area operators and patrons who dislike the aggression and "attitude" associated with the street punk image. Furthermore, the privileged class position of most boarders inherently contradicts their lower-class street punk image.

The co-optation of the "gangsta" image within snowboarding is similarly contradictory. In one respect, this appropriation represents an attempt to gain access to the extreme version of masculinity created by urban Black youth.

Because the physical practice of snowboarding does not require obvious strength, violence, and aggression, snowboarders must use other practices, such as language, fashion, and "attitude," in creating a masculine identity. Clothing, hairstyles, language, and musical preferences are important topics in the snowboarding media, where there is continuous debate about the appropriate subcultural signifiers of the "snowboarder." Like the African American men who create a "cool pose" masculinity through "unique, expressive and conspicuous styles of demeanor, speech, gesture, clothing, hairstyle, walk, stance, and handshake" (Majors, 1990, p. 111), snowboarders rely on exaggerated and elaborate social practices to exhibit their masculine status.

Yet, taking on a gangsta image has different implications for White, middle-class snowboarders than for the inner-city Black youths who created the image. The dominant race and class position of most snowboarders allows them to appropriate gangsta style with little fear that they will experience the discrimination and hostility faced by Black youths who adopt this image. Interestingly, both of the African American male snowboarders rejected gangsta style although they recognized its importance within snowboarding. The following exchange with Chris demonstrates a contradiction experienced by an African American snowboarder. In reply to a question about how the typical snowboarder dresses, Chris replied,

baggy, yeah, baggy. I made a vow to not be baggy. . . . See my look—like when I first got into it—I wanted to go with the Ninja look, you know, all black scuffy—the scuff look. . . . But, I don't have a problem with it. I mean, I can't say that I'm not gonna look that way, because I might wake up one morning and say, "I'm gonna go get me some baggies and go boarding," but I can't see how you could be warm in them.

When asked about the stereotypical snowboarder, Irving responded in a similar fashion:

The major baggies, let's see, long hair, flannel top. That's the way it is. . . . And you know, me personally, I don't wear the baggy pants as far as the jean look, I go for the board pants with the pads on them, because, I want something that's going to give me protection. And I'm not into the baggy pants hanging down your butt kind of look. You know, I want something that is gonna keep me warm.

Although both boarders define their choice not to be baggy in terms of physical comfort, later in the interview Chris reveals that he does not want to be associated with the baggy image. "[I: So how come you made a vow not to be baggy?] Probably because to me it kind of has that punk attitude, you know, and, well it's like, gossip, that's the only reason." These comments suggest that, for Chris and Irving, adopting gangsta style may have different implications than it does for White snowboarders, who are less likely to experience discrimination or hostility from the predominantly White ski-area operators and patrons. When asked if he had ever experienced

discrimination on the mountain, Chris noted that he has been cut off in lift lines or ignored by skiers: "It's mainly skiers. I don't know if it's because of my color or what, but I think it's a combination of that and the board, for the skiers." If he appeared on the mountain in gangsta style, it is likely that skiers may respond negatively; perhaps watching him carefully and steering clear of him on the mountain. Thus, race may constrain the choice of Black snowboarders to adopt the current snowboarding look.

The half-Asian and Latino male boarders, Ben and Eric, were less rejecting of the street punk image and said that they did not feel that race mattered in the sport. However, their ethnicity was less visually apparent. Gina, the Mexican/Native American respondent, occupied a minority position within the sport in terms of ethnicity, class, age, gender, and marital status. She clearly rejected the street punk image for herself: "I hate it though- it's just real trendy and it makes me sick. It really does, you know. Because there's a lot of spoiled rich kids out there, you know, and we worked hard to be able to snowboard." As Gina notes, the privileged class and the youth of snowboarders enable the co-optation of street punk masculinity. Moreover, the emphasis on style and trends in the sport makes her participation less enjoyable, and she does not feel involved in the creation of snowboarding style.

However, the privileged class and racial/ethnic status that allows White snowboarders to adopt gangsta style simultaneously contradicts some of the "masculine" elements of the image. Black youths created the gangsta style in response to a context of poverty, discrimination, and inequality (hooks, 1994b). Snowboarding "gangstas" do not face the dangers that are common within the daily lives of inner-city African American gang members and do not perform the acts of violence and aggression that give the gangsta image its extreme masculine status. Within snowboarding, the privilege of White race and middle-class position that allows for this appropriation also calls it into question. Segal (1990) writes that

the closer we come to uncovering some form of exemplary masculinity, a masculinity which is solid and sure of itself, the clearer it becomes that masculinity is structured through contradiction: the more it asserts itself, the more it calls itself into question. (p. 123)

The more money and effort exerted by snowboarders to create a street punk masculinity, the clearer it becomes that they are not really street punks. This irony was most clearly expressed by John in response to a question about the drawbacks of snowboarding:

The drawbacks are that you're labeled as an outlaw, you're looked at differently by society. You're looked at as more of a radical, you're not going to get as much respect. . . . [I: Have you ever felt that you're treated differently because of that?] No, not yet, not yet. I've yet to experience that yet.

John suggests that snowboarders are outlaws who face societal discrimination, but his position becomes questionable when he notes that he is not treated as an outlaw. His race and middle-class status provide him with the resources to adopt an outlaw image but also ensure that he will not be treated like a rebel and thus call his image into question.

In sum, the age, race, and class position of most male snowboarders both supports and constrains their ability to construct a street punk image within their sport. As young, middle-class, White men, snowboarders possess the resources to purchase the music, media, clothing, equipment, and other paraphernalia that signify that they are "street punks." They can compare their activities with those associated with gangstas and emphasize that violence and aggression are required in their sport. However, contradictions of race and class are embedded within this appropriation of the street punk gangsta image.

"GIRL-BOARDERS"

Like other cultural constructions of gender, street punk masculinity is formed in relation to various idealized and subordinated masculinities within U.S. culture. The indifferent "skater kid," the aggressive "gangsta," and competitive "sporting man" are appropriated as masculine ideals, whereas the corporate "suit" and the "pretty boy" skier are rejected versions of masculinity. Yet, as Connell (1987) contends, constructions of masculinity must also be formed in relation to women. The successful construction of a street punk masculinity depends in part on how snowboarding handles the presence of "girl-snowboarders."

Women's entry into organized sports during the past century has been controlled and regulated by physical educators and sports promoters, who developed different rules, clothing, and time and spatial dimensions for women's sports than for men's sports (Cahn, 1990). These practices, as Cahn (1990) suggests, "preserved the masculine identity of sport and made women's continued presence a marginal and contradictory phenomenon" (p. 395). Within snowboarding, such overt control strategies are less available due to the unorganized, individual nature of the sport. Male snowboarders, however, use several strategies to define the acceptable and appropriate ways of being a "girl-snowboarder." Within snowboarding as in other sports, female snowboarders are constructed as the "other" against which masculinity is defined. The data suggest that male snowboarders and the snowboarding media rely on two general strategies to differentiate female boarders and retain the sport's masculine image: (a) sexualization and (b) devaluation.

(HETERO) SEXUALIZING FEMALE RIDERS

As defined by male riders and the media, the most legitimate place for women within snowboarding is with a man. In media features of snowboarding trips, if a woman is present, the text often notes that she is the

heterosexual partner of a male rider, even is she is featured as a snowboarder (e.g., England, 1994; Kelly, 1994; Zellers, 1994). One letter to the editor succinctly described the "appropriate" place of female riders: "A lot of men assume that any girl on a board is either: A: looking for a guy, B: there because her guy is there, or C: trying to be 'one of the guys!'" (Blum, 1994, p. 9). As this boarder notes, if women are not viewed as snowboarding due to heterosexual interests, they are constructed as women who want to be men. My observations of snowboarders and the interview data suggest that women often learn to snowboard from a male partner. On the mountain, the most commonly observed patterns were women riding in small groups or pairs and larger groups of male riders with a single woman. Thus, female snowboarders are defined as being there for men, and those who resist this construction risk being labeled unfeminine or lesbian.

Moreover, the snowboarding media depicts female riders (and women generally) in a sexualized manner. Several female boarders criticized the objectification of women in snowboarding films and magazines. According to Debbie,

The ads are very condescending, not condescending but very sexist. [I: How so?] Just really fleshy. Portraying women as not so concerned with snowboarding. . . . You know, there's this one ad I thought was interesting; it was a really small ad advertising women snowboard wear, like girls snowboard wear . . . but it has got the picture of the girl and she doesn't have a shirt on and she's looking over her shoulder . . . and I'm like, this is made for women? . . . I don't care if she has a big chest. At least half the ads have got girls in them draping themselves over snowboards.

The advertisements of one snowboarding company place the company name, "Joyride" and text such as "experience" over photos of women in sexually suggestive poses, sometimes with snowboards representing a phallus (Joyride, 1994). The graphic on the top of a 1993 snowboard (on which the snowboarder stands) pictures a woman standing in a suggestive pose, wearing only a garter and high heels. These ads suggest that women should be "ridden" upon, in both a literal and a sexual sense.

When female snowboarders are featured in the magazines, they are often sexualized. Debbie described one feature: "They had all these, they had four or five girl snowboarders. They were all sponsored, and it was equal amounts of them doing all these Charlie's Angels poses in all these funky clothes and then of them snowboarding." In this case, female snowboarders were pictured in sexualized poses as often as in action shots. Through privileging sexualized images of women and suppressing images of women as active and talented riders, the snowboarding media emphasizes gender difference, a difference that helps to reproduce the masculine image of snowboarding (Cohen, 1993; Duncan, 1990).

DEVALUATING FEMALE RIDERS

In addition to emphasizing women's difference from male boarders as heterosexual objects, the masculinization of snowboarding involves constructing female riders as "naturally" weaker and less skillful than men. Male boarders use several strategies to suggest that women are essentially different from men. First, in both the media and in the interviews, the neutral "snowboarder" is male, whereas women are called "girl-snowboarders." Such gender marking serves to infantilize women and distinguish them as "other," thus supporting the construction of snowboarding as a masculine practice (Messner, Duncan, & Jensen, 1993; Richardson, 1987). In addition, female boarders receive less media attention than male riders. Fern stated that the magazines rarely show women snowboarding:

Like you look at any snowboarding mag and there are hardly any pictures of women and the pictures you do get they are not doing anything. . . . I asked [a top female snowboarder] about why you never see any pictures of women and she said because the mags won't print them. She said she actually took pictures herself and would submit them to mags but they would just never show up.

Male boarders sometimes overtly devalue women. In a magazine interview, an "up-and-coming" rider said that he was sorry he "ever missed a day of riding to hang out with a girl" (Wright, 1993, p. 36). Fern recalled hearing comments such as "pretty good for a chick" from male riders on the mountain. Each of these practices devalues female snowboarders and helps to maintain male snowboarders' positions as different and superior.

The devaluation of female boarders extends into the few organized aspects of snowboarding. Perhaps the most telling example of gender construction within snowboarding came from Holly's description of her attempt to compete in a snowboarding competition:

[I: What were the competitions like that you were in?] Oh, they were so small, it's hard for me to even say I really competed in them. . . . I didn't do very well because there were no other girl snowboarders so they just put me in with the skiers, and so. [I: Instead of the guy snowboarders?] They put me with just the girl category with the skiers. So, I mean, I didn't place or anything because the skiers went down first. [I: So you were competing against the skiers?] Right, because there were enough guys for a guys snowboard competition, but since I was a girl they just wanted to put me in with the girls rather than the guys.

Holly's story illuminates a crucial masculinizing strategy within sport. Through separating Holly from the male boarders, the competition organizers emphasized Holly's "difference," constructing her as "other" on the basis of her sex. The competition became a gendered practice in which the male competitors were assumed to "do it better" than Holly and could participate in an exclusively male event. West and Zimmerman (1987) note that "once differences have been constructed, they are used to reinforce the

essentialness of gender" (p. 137). Thus, when female riders are not given equal attention and sponsorship support within snowboarding, it is because they are "naturally" the weaker riders. A snowboarding filmmaker's comments in response to criticism that his films exclude female riders exemplify this process: "Women have not achieved the same level as men in snowboarding due to body structure, mental attitude, etc." (Dugan, 1993, p. 10). The filmmaker justifies his exclusion of women by essentializing a gender difference that is first constructed through practices of separation and exclusion. Holly's story suggests that, as in other sports, greater organization in snowboarding will lead to gender separation.

Female snowboarders sometimes reinforce the masculine construction of snowboarding through their acceptance and support of gender differences. Holly did not find it problematic that she was not allowed to compete against male snowboarders: "I think I would have rather been with the girls just because I knew the guys would just blow me out of the water anyway." Several of the female snowboarders interviewed supported the construction of snowboarding as a masculine domain. Holly described her perception of a magazine feature on female riders who are sponsored by snowboarding companies:

I think anybody can be that good if they decide, practice with guys, because guys will push them. And I, when I was sitting there reading it, I was sitting there thinking "I bet each one of those girls rides with a guy"—you know—that's really good.

This view of male riders as more aggressive and skillful snowboarders was common in interviews with both male and female riders. Debbie stated that "I would go to a guy to talk about snowboarding before I'd go to a girl. Because you think that more guys do it and more guys know about it." This theme was repeated in a letter to an editor from a woman arguing that the media

will probably always be that way [sexist]. I mean, I know I can learn easier by watching a guy boarder! My advice: it does absolutely no good to sit and complain, go out and show the guys on the snow, and if you can rip it hard in a bikini, better luck to ya! (Sobeteer, 1993, p. 13)

Some female snowboarders, then, participate in their domination by supporting gender difference. These women feel privileged by their access to male power, through which they can gain some of the status of this masculinity (Benjamin, 1988). This is sometimes done through constructing differences between women: Several female snowboarders stated that only some women can snowboard, women who, like themselves, are able to handle the pain and difficulty of learning to ride. Debbie expressed her desire that her female friends learn to snowboard but stated that "there's a certain type of girl I'd want to take. Like, they couldn't be a sissy at all." Thus, only some women are deserving of participation in this masculine sport. The presence

of "girl-snowboarders," then, in some ways facilitates the construction of snowboarding's street-punk masculinity. However, many women (and some men) also resist this gendered construction.

Because gender is ideology that is formed, shaped, and reinforced through innumerable social institutions and cultural practices, it can also be challenged, resisted, and changed (Bordo, 1993). Currently, female snowboarders are forcing the media to recognize gender as an issue. Women are writing letters to magazine editors questioning the lack of coverage on female boarders and the objectification of women in the magazines and films. Two of the female snowboarders interviewed, Fern and Debbie, expressed indignation about the lack of media representation for female riders.

Female snowboarders have also begun to form women's snowboard camps, creating spaces where women can come together to learn in an environment free from objectification and devaluation. In a magazine article describing five women's snowboard camps, the author described her experience: "We never would've [*sic*] ridden like we did without the confidence we'd developed from riding together. With the support of other women, old inhibitions faded fast" (Gasperini, 1994, p. 28). The creation of camps for women challenges the masculine image of the sport and validates female riders' identities as snowboarders, which may aid women in confronting sexism when they ride in other settings.

Moreover, the practices used to construct female riders as "other" contain inherent contradictions. Each of the respondents offered some support for the notion that male boarders are "naturally" better riders, but this construction was also resisted in some ways in all of the interviews. For example, many respondents expressed uncertainty when asked whether male and female riders should compete against each other in snowboard competitions. Eric expressed his contradictory position:

[I: Do you think that male and female riders should compete against each other?] I don't know really. I think that because males usually have the stronger bodies, you know, I think it would be kind of unfair. You know if you're stronger you're going to be able to go higher and a bit farther and that gives women the disadvantage. But I don't know, I've seen some women who can just shred guys.

Fern also expressed both support and resistance to the gendered construction of snowboarding within the same response:

I've often thought it would be really interesting if you took a woman and disguised her as a man and had her compete and see what would happen. And I wish I could get good because I would shave my hair and do it. And I wonder what you would find, because in all the other sports men have stronger times and I don't know, but I think in snowboarding it would be closer. But I do think there's like a mental edge that men have with aggression because women do not seem to be as aggressive and I think it has to do with the risk taking. You

look at that stuff, the airs [jumps] and things like that. I think there is—it's almost intangible—but men seem to have an edge.

Within this passage, Fern moves from the position that women are not given an equal chance to compete to one of explaining reasons for gender differences in snowboarding skill. The contradiction inherent within the gendered structure is revealed; women are not given equal opportunity to compete so we do not know if they are different, yet women must be different in some way because they are not allowed to compete.

CONCLUSIONS

This research suggests that there are different ways of constructing gender within the institution of sport, resulting in many sport masculinities. Sport is often depicted as an institution that creates and maintains male dominance, but the construction of gender differs greatly in the various activities that constitute sport. Snowboarding is developing in a different social and historical context than did organized men's sports, and these contextual differences are salient to the particular ways in which it becomes gendered. The unorganized, individual practice of snowboarding and a context of greater female sport participation have inhibited the ability of male snowboarders to define the sport as an exclusively male practice. Because snowboarding does not involve the sex-segregated teams, regulated structure, and exclusive participation policies of organized sports, male snowboarders must rely on different practices in developing a masculine image than those used in organized sports. To make snowboarding a practice that endows its participants with a masculine status, snowboarders use a variety of exaggerated social practices to create a masculinity symbolized by the "street punk." Through adopting the street punk style, copping an aggressive and superior attitude, emphasizing the violence and danger of their sport, and stressing their heterosexuality, male snowboarders and the snowboarding media attempt to construct snowboarding as a masculine practice.

This street punk masculinity must be formed in relation to other cultural versions of masculinity and to women (Connell, 1987). Snowboarding's version of masculinity is formed in relation to a variety of images of masculinity—the corporate "suit," the "fag" skier, the "sporting man," the "skater-kid" and the "gangsta"—and in relation to the "girl-boarder." The age, race, and class position of most snowboarders influences which masculine images are co-opted and which are rejected. As young, privileged, White males, snowboarders possess the financial and social resources to appropriate extreme versions of masculinity, such as the "gangsta" masculinity, without fear of retribution or discrimination. They have the economic resources to purchase cultural signifiers of the image such as clothing, music, and equipment. They can define snowboarding as aggressive and violent through references to the danger and physical confrontations that they produce

through their activities on the mountain. They can construct female riders as "other" through processes of objectification and devaluation.

Yet, as with other cultural constructions of masculinity, this attempt to link snowboarding to the street-punk image is continually resisted. The rebellious construction is challenged by the ski-area owners and predominantly middle-/upper-class skiers, who have the power to prohibit snowboarding at the resorts if riders do not conform to their rules. Female snowboarders also resist this gendering of their sport, through their presence as well as their voices, which increasingly challenge the dominance of male riders. Furthermore, contradictions between the street punk masculine image created by snowboarders and the actual class, race, and gender of the participants continuously call this masculinity into question.

These findings suggest that, like organized sports, some emerging sports are constructed in ways that reinforce notions of gender difference and masculine hegemony. Snowboarders rely on different practices in creating masculinity than those that appear in organized sports, yet these social practices also serve to legitimize male dominance. The use of extreme strategies to masculinize snowboarding demonstrates the resilience and strength of young men's need to construct a masculine identity. However, gender is a symbolic construct that becomes paradoxical when translated into real-life practices. Sports that take on an idealized gendered form, such as snowboarding, must continually work to perpetuate this image in the face of resistance.

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