

A Sociocultural Analysis of Doping and Gender

The aim of this project is to expand on sociocultural research regarding doping and gender, with emphasis from a philosophical perspective. This study starts with the hypothesis that research on doping in sport tends to focus on quantitative studies regarding the prevalence of drug use among elite male athletes, and the ensuing results tend to be generalized and applied to the athletic population as a whole. Rather than focusing primarily on statistics involving male elite athletes, this study examines the doping practices and attitudes of university-aged varsity athletes of all genders, using semi-structured interviews, to broaden the subject pool and make sure more athletes' voices are heard.

The main research questions investigated in this study are whether doping is a gendered practice and whether gender effects are present and taken into account in the existing doping literature. Using a theoretical qualitative approach, and a liberal feminist framework, this study also examines whether women and varsity-level athletes' experiences with doping correspond to, and are represented by, the norms identified in the literature.

After these questions have been answered, the results will be compared with findings of studies on women and doping conducted in Denmark to see if any identified gender effects are specific to North American culture or consistent with European perspectives. It should be noted that in order to make cross-cultural comparisons, both males' and females' status in society and the ideals of femininity and masculinity in sport will be considered and scrutinized.

This study is motivated by the belief that prior to developing educational programs on doping prevention, it is critical to know if the current data on doping are sensitive to gender differences and are representative of athletes' perspectives and experiences. This project seeks to present a more realistic representation of doping norms in sport to ensure women's voices and experiences are included in doping research.