

The Homosocial World of Intercollegiate Athletics

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A homosocial world is a voluntary social framework created around a pattern of single-sex social networks. Interaction within such a world satisfies human needs - intellectual, political, economic, occupational and social, as well as recreational and emotional. An occupational homosocial network of women physical educators encouraged by Amy Morris Homans and subsequently developed by students of the Boston Normal School of Gymnastics, among others, existed and flourished from 1890 to 1935. This network provides insight into the power contained within a homosocial world and its potential for providing professional satisfaction.

The homosocial world of women physical educators was instrumental in the creation of a distinct pattern of development for women's sport which inhibited the growth of intercollegiate athletics in the same patterns as men's intercollegiate competition. Contemporary problems of meshing women's and men's intercollegiate athletics have developed largely in the context of the independent growth of two separate and not always equal homosocial worlds.