

## Impact case study (REF3)

<b>Institution:</b> University of Winchester		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> C24 Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Changing masculinities and enhancing safety in sport		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2010 to the present		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b> Eric Anderson	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b> Professor of Sport, Masculinities & Sexuality	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b> 2010 to the present
Matthew Smith	Senior Lecturer in Sport and Exercise Psychology	2018 to the present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2016 to the present		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N</b>		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>This research impacts on numerous aspects of the culture of sport by raising awareness of alternative masculinities, and encouraging greater acceptance of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) communities. Perceptions of sport and hegemonic masculinity have also changed, in particular in raising awareness of concussion and Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE) in contact sports, which result from the continuing masculine influence on sport and the unquestioning adherence to the sport ethic. The impact is in three key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Influence on societal understanding and acceptance of alternative versions of masculinity in a sport setting;</li> <li>• Influence on the teaching of sport-related subjects in UK higher education institutions;</li> <li>• Influence on public debate into the safety in contact sports, and promoting the need for greater protection for children.</li> </ul> <p>The research has resulted in numerous instances of media coverage, engagement with government and policy makers and a measurable attitudinal change within the wider population.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Organised team sport remains an avenue for displaying patriarchal structure, physical prowess and heterosexual domination. It has traditionally reinforced an orthodox or hegemonic form of 20<sup>th</sup> century masculinity that is linked to those who are white, middle class, able-bodied and heterosexual. Anderson (Professor) developed the concept of inclusive masculinity to describe masculine performances that view hegemonic masculinity as undesirable with a willingness to embrace femininity <b>(3.1)</b>. Athletes that exhibit inclusive masculinity have been found to be more accepting of both women and gay males in sporting environments <b>(3.2)</b>. There is also evidence for increasing societal acceptance of gay athletes and a softening of media attitudes towards gay male athletes in the United Kingdom, United States of America and beyond <b>(3.3)</b>. Significantly, a shift away from hegemonic masculinity also results in challenges to aggressive competitiveness, toughness and risking the body. Anderson's sustained body of work has underpinned research for this case study in two key areas: sport and masculinities, and challenging blind acceptance of the sport ethic and of sacrificing athletes' bodies.</p> <p>Anderson is one of the world's leading experts on sport, masculinities and sexualities. His development of <i>inclusive masculinities</i> has shaped the thinking of scholars working in this area and has inspired further studies into changing masculinities and homophobia, particularly within</p>		

the sociology of sport. His extensive body of work in this area has been a key element of the UoA since its establishment. His Inclusive Masculinity Theory has been used in contexts such as sport, class, and social media studies and in countries ranging from Australia to the Czech Republic. In particular, Anderson has collaborated with Parry (University of Winchester, 2018-20; Bournemouth University 2020-present) and Muir (Visiting Professor) to further develop this area by investigating the potential for inclusive rugby clubs to increase participation, particularly for gay males. He has also collaborated with scholars such as Gaston (Liverpool John Moores University) and Magrath (Solent University) to examine the shift towards inclusive masculinity in English professional football (3.4).

By drawing attention to the significant role that hegemonic masculinity plays in sport (3.5), this research has also highlighted the barrier to participation and danger to health that it represents. Hegemonic masculinity encourages risk taking and children (especially boys) playing in aggressive contact sports. A change or softening in masculinity lessens societal and parental pressure for boys to be involved in contact sports, and in thus doing reduces injury. Anderson's research has identified a shift to supporting the notion of health over masculine ideals in the United States in particular (3.6). Anderson was also a founder of the Sport Collision Injury Collective, a group of academics raising awareness of the risk that injuries to the head and brain pose, particularly to children. This work has made a strong contribution to the growing debate for removing contact from sport and physical education within the school environment.

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- 3.1 **Anderson, E.** (2011). Masculinities and Sexualities in Sport and Physical Cultures: Three Decades of Evolving Research. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 58(5): 565-578. DOI: [10.1080/00918369.2011.563652](https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2011.563652)
- 3.2 **Anderson, E.** (2014). *21st Century Jocks: Sporting Men and Contemporary Heterosexuality*. Palgrave-McMillan. listed in REF2
- 3.3 Magrath, R. & Cleland, J., & **Anderson, E.** (2019). *The Palgrave Handbook of Masculinity and Sport*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- 3.4 Gaston, L., Magrath, R. & **Anderson, E.** (2018). From Hegemonic to Inclusive Masculinities in English Professional Football: Marking a Cultural Shift. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 27(3), 301-312. DOI: [10.1080/09589236.2017.1394278](https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2017.1394278)
- 3.5 Hargreaves, J. & **Anderson, E.** (2014). *Routledge Handbook of Sport, Gender, and Sexualities*. Routledge.
- 3.6 **Anderson, E.**, & Kian, E. M. (2012). Examining Media Contestation of Masculinity and Head Trauma in the National Football League. *Men and Masculinities*, 15(2), 152-173. DOI: [10.1177/1097184X11430127](https://doi.org/10.1177/1097184X11430127)

### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The impact from this case study is through three key areas: influence on societal understanding and acceptance of alternative versions of masculinity in a sport setting; influence on sport-related subjects teaching in UK HE; and influence on public debate into the safety for children playing contact sport.

#### **Influence on societal understanding and acceptance of alternative versions of masculinity in a sport setting**

Anderson's work on inclusive masculinity has received substantial scholarly attention and he is widely cited in the media, for instance recently in the *New York Times* (5.1). The widespread media coverage of this topic has helped increase society's acceptance of homosexuality and

understanding of alternative masculinities. Anderson has also written a series of articles for *The Conversation* on changing masculinities that have engaged the public on topics such as mental health awareness, paternity leave and domestic violence. These articles have been viewed by over 20,000 unique readers in the UK, India, the USA and Australia. Anderson has consulted with Sport England and with government officials in Catalonia to develop an understanding of alternative versions of masculinity at governmental and regulatory levels. He has also led a series of industry engagement activities involving a mixture of academics and sports organisations such as the English Football Association. Recently, Anderson (with members of the UoA) has been instrumental in setting up a LGBT+ Research in Sport Network with Sport England. He has also delivered professional development sessions for several professional sports clubs to educate their players on inclusivity in sport.

In addition, Parry (working with colleagues at Western Sydney University in Australia) extended the focus on inclusion for sexual minorities to supporters' clubs, working with Cricket Victoria (the governing body of cricket in the Australian state of Victoria) and the Melbourne Stars and Melbourne Renegades Big Bash cricket teams, to study the development of inclusive supporters' groups in the Big Bash League. This project's recommendations were implemented by the clubs and cricket association to provide inclusive, welcoming and safe environments for LGBT+ supporters at Big Bash games in the state of Victoria (5.2). These findings have subsequently been adopted in the neighbouring state of New South Wales, with the Sydney Sixers also developing an LGBT strategy to create a more inclusive environment.

#### **Influence on the teaching of sport-related subjects in UK higher education institutions and beyond**

Anderson's work on inclusive masculinities has also impacted teaching. His textbooks have been adopted by universities in the UK (Bournemouth University, Liverpool John Moores University), and the United States (California State University Chico and University of Oregon). He has supervised 22 doctoral students, of which 11 have gone on to teach at higher education institutions in Australia, the USA and the UK. These students have also incorporated Anderson's research into their teaching, therefore influencing the next generation of scholars and helping shape higher education practice. At institutions such as Oxford Brookes, Wolverhampton, Durham and Southampton Solent, inclusive masculinity now features on sport-related and gender/sexuality-related courses. In addition, the research of Anderson and colleagues (e.g., McCormack) is used as a model answer in the OCR A-Level Sociology paper discussing the part of sexuality in exploring how identity is changing. Furthermore, Anderson has shown that his teaching on masculinities has been linked with decreasing levels of homophobia among undergraduate students (5.3). In this study, student attitudes towards homosexuals were also seen to be significantly more positive after the twelve-week course being taught by an openly gay lecturer.

#### **Influence on public debate into the safety of contact sport and the need for greater protection to be afforded to children.**

Anderson is one of the founders of the Sport Collision Injury Collective (SCIS), a multidisciplinary collective of academics who are highlighting the injuries sustained in youth sport participation. This group published an open letter "Preventing injuries in children playing school rugby" penned by Professors Allyson Pollock (Professor of Public Health Research and Policy, Newcastle University) and Eric Anderson with 71 additional signatories sent to UK and Ireland Chief Medical Officers (CMOs), Children's Commissioners and responsible ministers of state for health, education and sport. In response, the Ombudsman for Children in Ireland took this matter up with the Minister for Education and Skills, the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Minister for Health to make recommendations (5.4). The Children's Commissioner for Wales also responded to both the media attention and the open letter to indicate that participation in potentially dangerous sports such as rugby union should not be compulsory. Anderson has been invited to present the findings of this research to the Royal Society of Medicine, the Minister for Health, and two Members of Parliament. In addition, he has met with Association for Physical Education, the PE Subject Association, to shape the future of school sport in the UK.

The SCIC's website has received over 900 million hits and the letter itself was published by major print and online newspapers such as *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph*, and *The Independent*. Anderson was interviewed by BBC News (3<sup>rd</sup> August 2016 and 27<sup>th</sup> September 2017) and Sky News (15<sup>th</sup> October 2017). There was substantial social media coverage of the letter with over 500 unique tweets on the topic. Overall, this work has contributed to a vigorous public debate on safety in school sport, and a move to change policy to enhance safety. For example, while the initial response to this call on social media was vitriolic, there has been a softening over time and Anderson was invited to present the plenary session within the 24th Annual Congress of the European College of Sport Science, indicating that there is growing acceptance of the significance of head injuries in sport. Recently, public debates have occurred concerning tackling in children's rugby, and announcements made concerning heading in football training being banned for children under 12, and debates on tackling in children's rugby. While debate and policy change comes from a variety of influences, the work (5.5) and lobbying of Anderson and colleagues (5.6) has very likely contributed to these positive changes concerning safety in children's sport.

#### 5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

5.1. Robbins, A. A Frat Boy and a Gentleman. *The New York Times*, 26 January 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/26/opinion/sunday/fraternity-sexual-assault-college.html>

5.2. Developing LGBT+ Inclusive Supporter Groups in the Big Bash Cricket League. <https://researchdirect.westernsydney.edu.au/islandora/object/uws:53512/datastream/PDF/view>

5.3. Batten, J., Ripley, M., Anderson, E. et al. (2018). Still an Occupational Hazard? The Relationship Between Homophobia, Heteronormativity, Student Learning and Performance, and an Openly Gay University Lecturer. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 25(2): 189-204. DOI: [10.1080/13562517.2018.1553031](https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2018.1553031)

5.4. Niall Muldoon letter to Allyson Pollock, 18 May 2016, <https://www.sportcic.com/resources/Ombudsman%20for%20Children.pdf>

5.5. White, A.J., Batten, J., Robinson, S. et al. (2018). Tackling in Physical Education Rugby: An Unnecessary Risk?. *Injury Prevention*, (24): 114-115. DOI: [10.1136/injuryprev-2017-042672](https://doi.org/10.1136/injuryprev-2017-042672)

5.6. Quinn, B. UK Health Experts Call for Ban on Tackling in School Rugby. *The Guardian*, 2 March 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2016/mar/02/uk-health-experts-call-for-ban-on-tackling-in-school-rugby>