

Community politicization of female supporters fans: The case of Nuestra Cruzada

Politización comunitaria de mujeres hinchas de fútbol: El caso de Nuestra Cruzada

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Background

In a context of high politicization of Chilean society and where gender issues have become central in the public debate, spaces of community politicization of women football fans have been created to tackle violence and exclusion towards women both in the football as in society in general. In this paper, the results of an investigation carried out with members of the Nuestra Cruzada group are presented, aiming to understand the community politicization that takes place in said group. Through participant observation and review of group documents, the main results were that the group allows its members to be together both in football and in various socio-political struggles, transforming the stadium and the gallery into spaces of fighting against male chauvinism and patriarchy, but also acting in the streets in various feminist and social struggles in general. In conclusion, we confirm the importance of the community politicization of women in football for the ongoing processes of contestation and social transformation.

Aims

Given the importance that the different political and cultural expressions of feminism have had in recent years, and how it has been a fundamental pillar of community groups of female fans, the present work aims to approach the practices and meanings around the experience of women grouped in Nuestra Cruzada of Club Universidad Católica. In particular, it's interesting to understand the community politicization that develops in this group.

Method & procedures

The research design is qualitative and is methodologically part of feminist research. Participant observation and documentary analysis were used a technique of data collection. The participant observation consisted in observation, participation and registration of the different instances of the group as well as conversations with its members. Likewise, in order to contrast and deepen the results obtained in the participant observations, a documentary analysis was also carried out that included photographs produced in the observation instances, periodic opinion columns published by the group, and transcripts of a podcast in which they participate.

Results & discussion

Nuestra Cruzada is made up of common experiences such as being feminist women fans of the same football team of which the not only share a passion for this, but also share experiences of harassment, abuse and discrimination by the hegemonic masculinity that is present in football. The group develops actions that seek to make visible and question patriarchal patterns within the football culture, as well to generate strategies to eradicate these and generate accompaniment and support networks for those fans who are suffering any type of violence. The fans consider the stadium and galleries as their fighting trench. They understand that being a fan goes beyond cheering a football team, since for them every action is political and, therefore, football and their personal experiences around the club are also political. In this way, the combine the passion of being a fan into the problematization of daily life and social contingencies, to position themselves as fan with a critical and transforming view. Thus, the physical space of the galleries becomes a stage that, besides being used to encourage the team, is also a place to make visible, problematize and expose their interest to eradicate sexism. In this line, the group has been in charge of bringing to the galleries many of the social demands and contingencies of the country in recent years, at the same time that they also participate as a group in demonstrations outside the stadiums, participating in feminist demonstrations and in the mobilizations of the social revolt of 2019. All these actions are developed using symbolic elements that represent their identity as a fan of their sports club, which are always present along with the social and political slogans for which they are mobilized.

In a more general sense, Nuestra Cruzada is part of the problematizations and actions of the feminist struggles of recent years in relation to the appropriation of public spaces, the politicization of personal matters and the importance of spaces for gathering and collaboration amongst women.

Conclusion

The memory enclaves analyzed show how the educational institution goes through the experiences that adolescents and young people narrate from their way of being and feeling it. Their testimonies reveal educational practices and organizational contexts that tend to be not very inclusive and are more aimed at maintaining structural and curricular determinants that reinforce exclusionary dynamics, insensitive to the realities of the students. The narrated memory of educational experiences is presented as a tool for critical analysis and as a powerful way of study, both for school disengagement and for any other educational phenomenon. It is necessary to continue research in this line and to do it from intersectionality. The situated knowledge, sustained in the narrated memory, can help to improve education to guarantee equity and inclusión.

Keywords: community grouping, feminism, football, politicization

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