

The Value of Jumps: commodification and sportization of parkour

Abstract:

The subject of this thesis is a young urban lifestyle discipline called parkour. In the past couple of years parkour gained a lot of popularity in Czech Republic. Connected with that is also the exploration of the ways to get parkour into the state of commodity. At the same time parkour as a sport is finding its place in public discourse. An ethnographic research that is the basis for this thesis is following the flowline of two processes – commodification and sportization. Based on data created using participant observation and semi-structured interviews I describe how these processes are manifested, how they are connected and how they are interpreted by the actors on the Czech parkour scene. I argue that both sportization and commodification influence how traceurs and traceuses make sense of their discipline. Both processes seem to play an important role in the construction of authenticity in parkour. At the end I describe certain trends and changes in parkour that can be considered results of commodification and sportization of this discipline.

Key words: parkour, commodity, commodification, sportization, lifestyle sport