Parkour is a new, and increasingly popular, sport in which individuals athletically and artistically negotiate obstacles found in the urban environment. In this article, I position parkour as a performance of masculinity involving spatial appropriation. Through ethnographic data I show how young men involved in the sport use the city (both the built environment and the people within it) as a structural resource for the construction and maintenance of gender identities. The focus of my research highlights the performance of gender as a spatialized process.

Kidder is with the Department of Sociology, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL.

Abstract

Parkour and the City

In Parkour and the City, cultural sociologist Jeffrey L. Kidder examines the ways in which individuals creatively appropriate urban spaces and engage in everyday risk-taking. The sport's modern development has been closely tied to the growth of the internet, becoming a YouTube phenomenon and exemplifying new forms of globalized communication. Kidder contends that parkour's dangerous stunts resonate with a neoliberal ideology that is ambivalent about risk. Moreover, the book offers insights into informal lifestyle sporting activities and their alignment with postmodern culture.

-- Belinda Wheaton, School of Human Development and Movement Studies, University of Waikato. Kidder's descriptive and engaging text touches on the complex and performative forms of sporting masculinity in parkour and the city.