



TITLE: HOW NEOLIBERALISM DRIVES THE DREAM: AN EXPLORATION OF PASIFIKA MEN AS A GLOBAL SPORTING PHENOMENON

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New Zealand Maori and Pacific Islanders (Pasifika) are in demand as elite sporting athletes. Despite only a very few players actually securing a substantial contract, the dream of international sporting success and the accompanying desire to support large extended families is strong. This paper will examine how the dream of sporting stardom has been promoted to these communities as a path to economic security and social mobility. It will explore how for some, this has indeed been the case, and will also follow the trajectory of those who have not experienced the desired financial outcomes and rewards. For many working class Pasifika families, conventional employment opportunities have been ravaged by neoliberalism. In turn, this has placed considerable pressure on individual young men to achieve sporting success. This paper will argue that the focus on Pasifika athleticism masks other issues of social inequality experienced by these communities in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands of Samoa, Tonga, the Cook Islands and Fiji.