

SEMINARIS ISOR

INVESTIGACIONS EN SOCIOLOGIA DE LA RELIGIÓ

"Knocked out: Ritual disruption and the decline of Spanish boxing"

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Several scholars have written about the emergence of mass sports in modern industrial societies, and the factors that have facilitated the development of "hegemonic sports cultures". Less has been written on how the structure and content of "national sport spaces" change over time, and the reasons that certain sports cultures have failed sustain their popular appeal amid processes of political, social and cultural transformation. This article analyzes the sharp decline in the popularity of Spanish boxing during the 1970s and 1980s. In explaining the crisis of Spanish boxing, we draw attention to a series of developments that disrupted rituals of spectatorship that were key to sustaining the sport's fan base. Our findings highlight the importance of ritual to the reproduction of hegemonic sports cultures and identify "ritual disruption" as a mechanism through which broad societal changes may alter the configuration of national sports spaces.