

Weinberg

## Consensual Violence

Sex, Sports, and the Politics of Injury

In this novel approach to understanding consent, Jill D. Weinberg presents two case studies of activities in which participants engage in violent acts: competitive mixed martial arts (MMA) and sexual sadism and masochism (BDSM). Participants in both cases assent to injury and thereby engage in a form of social decriminalization, using the language of consent to render their actions legally and socially tolerable. Yet, these activities are treated differently under criminal battery law: sports, including MMA, are generally absolved from the charge of criminal battery, whereas BDSM often represents a violation of criminal battery law. Using interviews and ethnographic observation, Weinberg argues that where law authorizes a person's consent to an activity, as in MMA, consent is not meaningfully constructed or regulated by the participants themselves. In contrast, where law prohibits a person's consent to an activity, as in BDSM, participants actively construct and regulate consent. A synthesis of criminal law and ethnography, *Consensual Violence* is a fascinating account of how consent is framed among participants engaged in violent acts and lays the groundwork for a sociological understanding of the process of decriminalization.

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