**Abstract**

This contribution argues that Football as a mirror of society and its discussion in the mass media, which play an important role for the production of consent in society, are also reflections of different hegemonic projects about masculinity. Although the analysis of the *forms* of empty signifiers that are connected to masculinity is important, the forms of these constructions cannot explain their *force*. Building on a combination of the Logics-of-Critical-Explanation-Approach developed by Glynos and Howarth and Erich Fromm’s materialist social psychology, it is argued that we have to connect psychic forces rooted in the human body with semiotic forms in order to understand why specific hegemonic projects “grip” subjects. These theoretical ideas will be used to reconstruct the discussions about football and masculinity in different German media (taz, Welt Focus, Spiegel) in the period between 2000 and 2017 with the help of a corpus-based critical discourse analysis. Corpus linguistic methods – like keyword and collocation analyses – are very well suited to detect semiotic regularities on the linguistic surface of a great amount of textual data. They enable the detection of similarities and differences in the use of empty signifiers that are connected to masculinity in the media with respect to different topics (e.g. Thomas Hitzelsperger’s coming-out or the role of Bibiana Steinhaus in the German referee system) and at different times. These regularities on the linguistic surface will be analyzed qualitatively in order to reconstruct the psychic forces that back the semiotic forms of different hegemonic projects about masculinity.