6D Urooj Shahzadi, University of Toronto
“Complicating Narratives: The Physical Cultural Experiences of Punjabi Women Living in the Greater Toronto Area”

The physical cultural experiences of women from South Asia in the West are often too generalized or sidelined in the literature. With this in mind, this study centralized the voices of young Punjabi women living in the Greater Toronto Area. Punjabi is a specific, yet complex, marker for identity because it crosses linguistic, geographical, religious and ancestral boundaries. Through a series of traditional “Chat and Chat” sessions, five focus groups brought together eighteen Punjabi women to collectively share their experiences. Particularly the complexities between gender, race and class were shared while confronting Whiteness and fatphobia in society. This study concludes by contextualizing anti-racist strategies for Punjabi (and South Asian) women in Canada while highlighting the importance between theory and methods.

6D Adam Ali, Queen’s University
“He Could be Dangerous:” Modern Orientalism in TSN’s Radical Play”

On March 30 2016, The Sports Network (TSN), one of Canada’s leading sports broadcasters, aired a documentary called Radical Play on its popular highlights show SportsCentre, which argued for the utilization of sport as a vehicle for deradicalizing young Muslim men. The story centers upon the Boxout Gym in Hamburg, Germany, where “at-risk” boys, many of whom are Middle Eastern migrants, are recruited from refugee camps and taught boxing by trainers specialized in identifying and deterring “radicalization.” Analyzing this documentary within the context of the endless War on Terror and the European migrant crisis, I argue that reinvigorated Orientalist tropes, first coined by Edward Said (1978), are deployed to reproduce the male Muslim body as what Sara Ahmed (2004) refers to as an object of fear. This justifies the containment of Muslims, and heightened surveillance and securitization within the borders of what are increasingly becoming the “paranoid states” of Europe and North America (McClintock, 2009). Furthermore, the interaction between these could-be terrorists and German boxing trainers catalyze further exploration of how assemblages of race, gender, and sexuality coalesce through sporting endeavors to reinforce hardened dichotomies of cultural difference. Such dichotomies propagate an ostensibly progressive, paternal West, and fundamental, suspicious East.

6D Erin Sharpe, Brock University
“Playful Transgressions: Neighbourhood Boundaries and Sport and Leisure Spaces of Encounter”

This paper considers sport and leisure spaces of encounter in young residents’ negotiation of neighbourhood stigma. For Klocker (2015), neighbourhood stigma is boundary-making; by establishing where racialized bodies are in and out of place, it keeps people ‘in their place’ (Kelaher et al., 2010, p. 386). However, Ahmed (2000) argues that because difference is negotiated in momentary, unpredictable ways, boundaries can be destabilized through encounters that involve subjects coming “face-to-face” with the Other. The notion of spaces of encounter encourages complex and emerging theorizations entangled in Othering and racialization, while “holding open the possibility of destabilizing boundaries and creating new spaces for negotiating across difference” (Leitner, 2012, p. 830). Our presentation draws on ethnographic fieldwork (interviews, field notes, go-alongs) collected over two years spent with young residents of ‘Rosetown’, one of two stigmatized study neighbourhoods. Our findings consider the ways that neighbourhood-based sport and leisure introduced possibilities for ‘playful transgressions’ of social and spatial boundaries. We highlight the role of everyday movement and visceral experience in the
production of spaces of encounter (Noble & Poynting, 2010; Wilson, 2016) and the ways that youthful encounters were mediated through local histories and broader power relations (Ahmed, 2000; Valentine, 2008).

6D Erica Tibbetts, Smith College
“Assessing the Utility of Sport and Exercise for Radical Social Change”

Sport and exercise have emerged as means of empowering individuals of all ages, social positions, and interests. Research and programs dedicated to “Sport for Youth Development” (Fraser-Thomas, Cote, & Deakin, 2005; Holt, 2016), “Sport for Desistance from Crime” (Meek, 2012; Meek & Lewis, 2014), exercise participation as a means to further women’s rights (Paul, 2015; Velija, Mierzwinski, & Fortune, 2013), and countless other causes have proliferated. And, while professional sport has long received criticism for promoting dangerous norms and stereotypes, sport for social change often avoids reproach. However, many dominant white, meritocratic, patriarchal norms are perpetuated through even the most well-meaning sport and exercise programs. Sociology of sport practitioners have a responsibility to critique the utility, potential harm, and areas for improvement of sport and exercise as means for social change. This paper covers work done as part of a mixed-methods dissertation in a women’s prison, examining how stereotypes surrounding gender, race, and incarcerated individuals are combated through participation in an indoor cycling class. Additionally, the dangers implicit in fitness programs will be acknowledged. By using the words of chronically underserved women (both trans and cis gendered) and explicitly examining the mechanisms that can serve to make sport and exercise a place for radical change, this paper aims to lay out the beginnings of a model for creating, evaluating, and improving sport for social change.