8C Aage Radmann, Malmö University
“Gender Struggle at the Terraces and in Social Media”

The historical, economic, sociological, cultural and psychological importance of football (soccer) fandom has been explored and analyzed in European research since the 1960s. Nearly all studies have been based on the premise that the supporter is male, and that supporter culture as a whole is a male phenomenon (Armstrong 1998, Giulianotti 2012). Supporter culture has also been perceived as thoroughly embedded in a hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995). This study has a different focus: issues pertaining to female fandom. The purpose of this study is to map out, analyze, and understand female football fandom. There is a distinct lack of research on female supporters, both nationally and internationally (Hynes 2012). The following questions will be posed: How do the women who are active supporters perceive their role and fandom, gender structures, arena culture, identities, and the role of social media in creating this culture? How do the women choose to enact their fandom in social media? The analysis will be enhanced by sociologist Erving Goffman’s theories of social interaction as well as through Judith Butler’s theories on performative gender. The study is based on media analysis, participant observation and interviews. The study will focus on both lived experiences on the terraces and the interaction through social media.

8C Seo-Im Chung, Hanyang University & Ji-In Woo, Hanyang University
“Female Fan’s Consumption of Male Athletes’ Bodies at Soccer Stadiums”

With the increase of women’s socio-economic power and their strengthened roles as major sport consumers, female soccer supporters have enjoyed different types of commodities including players’ bodies and dance, cheering materials, or music provided in soccer arenas. Some female supporters would consume male soccer players’ semi-naked bodies just after the game and some clubs have events to attract female fans; if the team wins the game, the athletes promise to take off jersey. Using in-depth interviews, this study intends to figure out how female supporters, as the actively empowered sport consumers, perceive male athletes’ bodies at the stadium. The results are as follows: 1) Some fans think that women’s consumption of male bodies can be socially and culturally accepted; 2) As male fans like female athletes’ feminine bodies, female fans are able to enjoy male athletes’ masculine bodies in their own ways at public arenas; 3) Some fans as consumers see male players as being consumed. Finally, this study argues that the increase of women’s social status has enabled women to emerge as active consumers of male bodies or even male sexuality in publicly open space.

8C Sung Jin Cho, Hanyang University & Doosik Min, Hanyang University
“Bringing More Active Female Fans into Sports: Korea Professional Baseball League”

This study attempts to highlight the rise in female fans of the professional baseball league in Korea in terms of women’s social empowerment. The Korean professional baseball league has experienced a steady rise in female fans in past decade. According to Ticketlink, a ticketing agent site, female fans make up about 43.1% of the overall sales. Moreover, female fans in their 20s have higher attendance rate than those of male fans in same age group, 23.6% vs. 23.5%. Female fan’s engagement off the stadium is also on the rise. They show strong activities through social media, making up about 30% of the sports related posts. More surprisingly, 32% of the participants in ‘screen baseball,’ a virtual baseball game arcade, are female users. The rise in female fans have changed the way the league and the teams strategize their marketing plans. This study implemented in-depth interview, survey and date research. Some macro-social data was used: women’s employment rate, women’s average marriage age, female
fans’ diverse consumption styles at baseball parks, and female fans’ attitude toward male sports. The results showed some relationships between women’s social empowerment and their increased consumption and strong involvement regarding professional baseball.

8C Katharine Jones, Philadelphia University
“Using Autoethnography to Examine Attitudes Towards Gendered, Racial, Class and Sexual Discrimination in Soccer Fandom”

In this presentation, I use my experiences interviewing English football (soccer) fans over a 10-year period to offer insight into female fandom, and how gendered, national/local, class, sexual and racial identities intrude upon ethnographic interviews. Many fans felt that most women, non-locals, and middle/upper-class people were inauthentic fans: as one male fan explained, “women may enjoy watching football, but they don’t know much about it.” This attitude extended to me -- a white, female, visiting “American” academic, with difficult feminist questions about discrimination. My “outsider” status might have been a benefit during my interviews, by allowing me to learn what so-called inauthentic fans did “wrong.” However, looking back, I realize that I sometimes presented myself as knowledgeable to avoid making the same mistakes as those less authentic fans. My desire to be seen as a real fan mirrored the struggles of the fans who were excluded from the definition of genuine fandom because of their gender, class, race, sexuality, or attitudes toward discrimination. Using autoethnographic methods, I discuss the attitudes to female fandom by women and men that my strategies highlighted.