"It's an Imaginary Line that Just Exists": The Gendering of Unstructured Sport Spaces in Toronto Neighbourhood Improvement Areas

Sport involvement is suggested to offer a context for health and wellness, civic engagement, economic development and prosperity, and other physical, psychological, and social benefits (Canadian Sport Policy, 2012; Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005); however, sport can also be a site for differentiating, marginalizing and excluding individuals and groups (Spaaij et al., 2014). **Objective:** To explore the lived experience of sport participation among young adults living within two NIAs, which included: (1) understanding sport development pathways; (2) examining the psychosocial factors that influence sport participation; and (3) understanding how neighbourhood spaces facilitate/impede sport participation. **Methods:** Study 1: 16 young adults (n = 8 males, n = 8 females) participated in semi-structured interviews utilizing narrative inquiry to explore participant sport journeys. Study 2: 5 focus groups were conducted with 27 young adults (n = 19 males, n = 8 females) utilizing spatial analysis to understand how local spaces are used/perceived for sport. **Results:** Overall findings highlight a broad range of factors which influenced participation including the social support, perceptions of competence, and access to sport spaces. This presentation focuses on one key emerging theme related to unstructured sport. Unstructured sport was fundamental to sport pathways; however, when examining how gender informed the social construction and use of unstructured sport spaces, participant sport journeys varied greatly due to gender norms. These norms acted as a boundary for many female participants. **Conclusions:** This research highlights the importance of exploring intersectionality within sport contexts, with the purpose of creating more inclusive sport environments and practices.