SPORT, CULTURE & GENDER:
WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Keynote speaker: A/Prof. Kim Toffoletti, Deakin University

8 November 2018
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The Australian Government’s recently released “Sport 2030” national plan refers to those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and women and girls, as ‘less likely to be active’. The plan also states that the government will focus on programs that ‘target inactive Australians’. While perhaps laudable in its aims, there is little in the report to suggest that the government is rejecting the conventional ‘deficit model’ of sports participation. Instead, it seems to be attempting to assimilate potential participants into a traditional, masculinised Anglo-Australian version of sports participation.

The role of sport in cultural and ethnic minority communities is a double-sided coin. On one hand, sport is considered to facilitate social and cultural integration and provide feelings of belonging and identity (Walseth, 2006). On the other hand, sport is also a racialised institution where whiteness is regarded as the norm and minorities are expected to integrate into white sporting culture and institutions (Massao and Fasting, 2010).

Added to these complexities is the concept of gender, whereby sport enables women and girls to construct alternative identities from traditional conceptions of femininity (Walseth, 2006), but can also impose Westernised ideals of feminism upon them. These ideals can manifest themselves in, for example, a headscarf or burkini ban, which are presented as being for women’s own good.

Despite gains in the raised profile of women’s sport, sportswomen and those from non-Western backgrounds, sport remains a largely masculinised, White institution in the West. Women and non-Whites remain mostly on the margins, either as token sporting heroes providing ‘feel good’ stories for the media, or as disadvantaged, even incompetent Others (Samie and Sehlikoglu, 2015) who need assistance from the White majority.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Abstract deadline: 3 September 2018
Symposium date: 8 November 2018
Religion and Society Research Cluster
School of Social Sciences and Psychology
Western Sydney University
Parramatta City Campus
Organiser: Dr Jennifer Cheng
This symposium provides an interdisciplinary arena to explore sport from a cultural and
gendered perspective. Issues to be addressed include but are not limited to:

- How can we discuss sportspeople from minority backgrounds without excessively
  emphasising their “difference” from White norms?
- What innovative projects exist that seek to engage players from minority backgrounds
  that go beyond the ‘deficit model’?
- How can we engage different cultural and ethnic minorities, each of which have their
  own particular values and characteristics?
- What is the evidence that sport assists with social and cultural integration?
- How does sport contribute to women’s conceptions of femininity and masculinity?
- How do ‘race’, culture, ethnicity, religion and gender intersect in the sporting arena?
- What influence does the type of sport have on this intersection?

This symposium seeks to bring together academics, community workers and sportswomen
and men who are interested in engaging with key contemporary sport-related issues in
Australia and across the globe.

**GUIDE FOR ACADEMIC CONTRIBUTORS**

The deadline to submit abstracts is **Monday, 3 September 2018, 5pm**.

To submit your abstract, please email a paper title, a 200 word abstract and 150 word bio note
to **Dr Cemen Polat**, c.polat@westernsydney.edu.au

Inquiries about the event should be directed to: **Dr Jennifer Cheng**, j.cheng@westernsydney.edu.au

**GUIDE FOR NON-ACADEMIC CONTRIBUTORS**

If you are a community worker or practitioner, a sportsperson, or work with diversity in sports in
any capacity, please get in touch with Dr Jennifer Cheng at j.cheng@westernsydney.edu.au or
on 0431 887 106 to discuss how you can contribute to the symposium.