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**Palmer, C. (2008) 'Soccer and the politics of identity for young refugee women in South Australia', *Soccer and Society*.**

**Abstract**

This article explores the ways in which a group of young Muslim refugee women in Adelaide, South Australia, draw upon their experiences of playing in a soccer team as a way of establishing and embellishing a particular cultural identity that both affirms and challenges many of the traditions of Islam. Based primarily on qualitative interviews with the players, this paper examines some of the ways in which they construct notions of self, sameness and difference as young Muslim women growing up in Australia's fifth largest capital city. The article is centrally concerned with the ways in which these young refugee women articulate their social identities through the traditions Islam and the resources of western popular culture. As is argued in the following pages, the soccer team provides a unique site through which to explore the politics of identity for young refugee women in contemporary Australia.

**Introduction**

The embodied politics of identity that surround Muslim women's participation in sport and physical activity is an increasing part of our social and sociological landscape. Strandbrau has explored the ways in which "a sense of doing something that does not fit with what one believes to be moral" [1] may explain the under-representation of Muslim girls taking part in physical activity in Norway. Dagkas and Benn have examined the restrictions posed by religious factors such as Ramadan or veiling on Muslim women's experiences of playing sport in Great Britain and Greece [2]. Palmer has noted some of the practical issues such as transport and cost that frequently act as barriers to participation in sport for refugee communities in Australia, which increasingly include groups from Muslim countries who have re-settled in the West [3]. While Islam as a barrier to participation in sport in primarily Western countries has been a focus for these and other scholars, others have sought to document the nature of participation of sport for Muslim women in Muslim countries, noting the different conditions that women participate under, when compared to the West [4]. While the different positions espoused in these accounts usefully highlight the heterogeneity and fluidity of Muslim women vis-à-vis sport, indeed, "the bodies of Muslim women in sport are experienced and mediated through different ideological interpretations of Islam [and] within the particular political arrangements of specific countries" [5], they nonetheless emphasise that, for Muslim women, their experience of sport involves a number of decisions and statements about their bodies and selves that are both personal and political at one and the same time.

With this as background, this article explores the ways in which a group of young Muslim, refugee women in Adelaide, South Australia, use their shared experiences of playing in a soccer team as a way of establishing and embellishing a particular cultural identity that both affirms and challenges many of the traditions of Islam. Drawing on a series of qualitative interviews with and many hours of field observations of the players at training, competition and in other social settings, this paper is particularly concerned to tease out some of the ways in which these young women negotiate what are, at times, quite complex cultural politics for young Muslim women growing up in Australia's fifth largest capital city. The paper is primarily concerned with the ways in which these young refugee women articulate their social identities through the traditions Islam and the resources of western popular culture. As is made clear in the following pages, the

soccer team in which these young women play provides a unique site through which to explore the politics of identity for young refugee women in contemporary Australia.

### **Context**

The fieldwork which informs this article was carried out between June 2003 and March 2006 in a public housing estate in metropolitan Adelaide that is known as The Parks [6]. As is the case elsewhere, public housing estates in Australia have increasingly become 'problem places' that are home to 'problem people' [7]. The shift over the past two decades from public housing for families and working tenants to public housing as welfare housing has meant that estates like The Parks now feature amongst some of the most impoverished urban areas in Australia.

As well as providing accommodation for those who are disadvantaged through poverty, unemployment or mental illness (among other things), a significant proportion of public housing in The Parks is given over to accommodating newly arrived refugees. Many of the residents in The Parks come from Somalia and Ethiopia, and more recently from countries such as Uganda and Sudan. There are inevitably conflicts along race lines in these communities. Young Anglo Australian men, who struggle to find employment and who bemoan their lack of a 'lucky break' routinely retaliate against the new arrivals in their communities. The broader political discourse of "queue jumpers", "illegals" and indeed "the war on terror" doesn't help to promote congenial relationships within these communities where incidences of violence and conflict are already quite high.

Such stark social realities have drawn recognition from community development workers and others that there is a need to provide 'diversionary activities' for disenfranchised local residents as a way of averting them from drugs, crime and other anti-social behaviours [8]. For many years, young men have been seen as a vulnerable population group, and have been given opportunities to abseil, bushwalk, rock climb and to experience the adrenaline of risk in ways that don't involve substance abuse or violence between themselves or against the women of their communities [9]. Increasingly however, the young women of these communities have recognised that they have been left out of this recreational framework, and while they do not necessarily wish to sky dive or bungee jump, they nonetheless want the same opportunities for recreation that are afforded to the men folk of their communities. It was in this context that the soccer team came to fruition [10].

In 2003, a group of young Muslim women from The Parks are agitated for their local community health service to provide opportunities for them to take part in sport. The women approached the youth worker from the health service who had been working most closely with them on re-settlement issues such as language, employment and education and they argued, quite convincingly, that there was a need to provide culturally appropriate sporting opportunities, namely soccer, for women from the predominantly Muslim Somali and Ethiopian communities now living in The Parks. Soccer was chosen, as it was a sport that many of the girls had expressed a desire to play. They had seen their brothers, cousins and other male relatives playing soccer, both in their country of origin and on re-settlement in Australia, and in a moment reminiscent of Bend It Like Beckham, these young women wanted a similar opportunity to take part in team sport. Following this request, the local health service allocated a community development worker to work closely with the local Somali community (in the first instance) to develop a programme whereby young women could train for and compete in a soccer carnival that is held as part of Refugee Week in Adelaide each October. The first year of the programme (2003) involved roughly sixteen young Muslim women, mainly of Somali background, aged between 12 and 20, who took part in weekly training

sessions and then in the final competition itself. The numbers have since grown and, in 2006, there are now about 40 young women from various backgrounds who compete at the Refugee Week soccer carnival.

### **Methodology**

The data reported in this article is part of a broader study of participation in sport for young refugee women in Adelaide. The focus of this study is on ameliorating the barriers to participation in sport that many refugees face on resettlement in the West. While the broader study has a number of additional research foci and adopts a range of methodological approaches (analysis of secondary data sources, in-depth qualitative interviews with young refugee women and their families, interviews with policy makers and local agencies, a photo-voice component, field observations and interviews with the community development workers in The Parks and other areas), this article reports primarily on the interviews with and field observations of the young women who play in the soccer team.

The methods reported in this article include two reflective discussion groups, each involving thirteen members of the soccer team; ad-hoc discussions with the players during training; field notes of researcher observations during training and competition and four face-to-face interviews with the parents (three mothers, one father) of participating young women. These were conducted through an interpreter to facilitate discussion from Somali to English and vice versa. All of the interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. Each of the interviews lasted approximately 40 minutes, with the exception of the discussion groups, which took about 1 ½ hours each time.

### **Header in a hijab?**

The interview and field observation data suggested that there was great diversity in the ways in which the Muslim women in the soccer team interpreted Islam, and this manifested itself as a constantly shifting tension in which the young women parleyed their multiple, often conflicting, cultural identities as members of a sporting team, as members of the Somali community and as young women growing up in contemporary Australian society.

Some of the players, for example, were relatively unconcerned about the religious import of engaging in sport and physical activity. Others, by contrast, who adhered to a more traditional interpretation of Islam, followed much more closely the religious requirements of concealing their bodies from male view, particularly when engaging in exercise or physical movement. As such, there was a need to accommodate flexible uniform requirements which could both respect these religious beliefs and also preserve the collective identity of the soccer team which wearing a uniform affords. Some of the team elected to wear the shorts and short-sleeved tops of the customary soccer strip, while others chose to wear long sleeved T-shirts and tracksuit pants under their uniform. Some young women wore a bandana in place of their *hijab* (headscarf which covers the hair and neck area). Others wore the *krimar* (which covers the hair and front of the body) during training and competition, while a small number who normally wore the *niqab* (face veil, often worn with the *krimar*), removed it when in the female-only training environment. Still others elected to play entirely bare headed.

The different veils that the women wore clearly signalled different interpretations of Islam, and this had consequences for how the players negotiated their involvement in the

soccer team with their families in particular. In the cases of the women who wore the *krimar* or the *niqab*, it was crucial that they could play and train in settings that were entirely away from the male gaze. One mother notes that:

“Traditionally, there is a strong sense of gender roles, and women’s roles are in the home, and we have the idea of protecting our young women. So, the idea of the veil is about covering their bodies and not having men who aren’t their family seeing their intimate identity as a woman. So, the idea of girls playing sport and having their legs showing was a big issue for me when Aaliyah and Sabah [11] said they wanted to join the team.”

This issue of concealing the body from the male gaze proved particularly problematic at the final Refugee Week competition itself, when the men from the Somali and other communities came to watch the young women compete. Several of the families were happy for their daughters to train in a female-only environment, however they were reluctant to let their daughters then compete in the soccer carnival, where men would be watching [12]. For some of the young women, however, the fact that they would be ‘on show’ and in the company of the young men from their community was a huge motivation for them to play at the carnival. It was a chance, in the words of one of them, to “meet lots of hot guys”; these are, after all young women at an age when sexual exploration is an inevitable part of establishing one’s own identity. Of central concern for this paper however, this conflict between being “a good Muslim girl” (as one of the players described herself) and the open flirtation of teenage romance captures the world of negotiated identity or “identity work”, to coin Walseth’s term, [13] within which these young women continually operate.

The importance of the need to conceal the body from male view was recognised by the players, albeit grudgingly in some cases. For many of the players, this was often voiced in terms of parental disapproval, rather than their own religious beliefs. Habiba, for example, recalls that “my dad didn’t like us wearing the shorts. They’re thinking we’re trying to be masculine, more like a guy than a girl with the shorts and the soccer. For me, I don’t care.” Such comments suggest that, while for players like Habiba, religion played a relatively minor role in their lives, honouring such religious modesty was nonetheless a central concern for her parents. This was a theme that consistently emerged throughout my research. When I asked one of the players how her parents felt about her playing soccer, she replied: “at first, dad said ‘you’re a girl, you’re a Muslim girl, you shouldn’t be doing that. You shouldn’t be wearing the shorts and showing guys your body.’ And later when we wore the pants at the carnival he was like ‘oh, ok.’” This father’s belated acceptance of his daughter’s participation in sport, and indeed, the need for the players to be mindful of the religious modesty which underpins their faith, certainly suggests that, for the Muslim women at the centre of this article, taking part in sport must always be done in culturally prescribed ways. As Hargreaves writes, “the issue of [Muslim women’s] participation in sport is tied to strongly held beliefs about the female body that is embraced by culture, tradition, religion and politics” [14].

While such flexible uniform arrangements were part and parcel of the Muslim women’s soccer team, they nonetheless brought into sharp relief many of the issues that Muslim women encounter in Australian (and other) society more broadly. On the one hand, some of the players expressed frustration and resentment at having to play and train in clothes that were oppressively hot and restricted their movement. On the other, those who wore the *krimar* and the *niqab* relished the opportunity of being in a female-only

environment, for it allowed them to remove their clothing without fear of patriarchal reprisal. Irrespective of their degree of adherence to the traditions of Islam, the players were all mindful of the ways in which their dress limited their performance as soccer players. For some of the better players, this was a source of great frustration. Nadeen, the goal keeper for the team, recalls that:

“There are things like the girls who wear *hijab*,...initially when we started playing, the girls would take their *hijabs* off to header the ball and then they’d put it back on after. It was good that they felt comfortable to do that and didn’t feel as though they [the coaches] were disrespecting our culture, but it made it hard to pass the ball, as the girls weren’t where they should be in position but were putting their veils back on, or whatever.”

Such tensions between the perceived oppression of women and the respect for the tradition of veiling are a common feature in debates about Muslim women in the West [15]. While the veil promotes modesty by protecting the female body from view, it nonetheless restricts movement and symbolises a traditional Islamic culture that is seen (predominantly by Western scholars) as being at odds with the secular West. As Nakamura summarises, “many Westerners consider the practice of covering one’s body to be oppressive, however, for many Muslim women, the *hijab* does not hide but protects their bodies and their ‘moral safety’. These contrasting views of the female body and its role in self-expression have great implications for immigrant Muslim women”[16]. That said, however, the added layer of patriarchal dominance – that men frequently dictate the terms of the veiling – continues to make the veiled woman a symbol of an ideological tug-of-war between Islamic and secular ideologies [17].

Such competing tensions were evidenced in the need for the players to display ‘non-sexualised’ movements in training and competition. Soccer drills such as learning how to ‘chest’ the ball [block a chest-high pass with the front of the body] were directly at odds with the beliefs of some of the players (and their parents) that the body was essentially ‘unphysical’ and not to be used to display overt muscularity, power or sexuality. For the more conservative players, a manoeuvre like ‘chesting’ represented not only an explicit display of physicality but also an intrusion on their intimate selves. For these women, ‘chesting’ was an explicit display of sexuality and, accordingly, they were reluctant to use this technique in training or in competition. Such reluctance created some tensions within the team, with the less conservative players feeling that their more modest team mates were not pulling their weight and using the full range of skills they had at their disposal. As was the case with much of the interactions between the players, these competing tensions around modesty and physicality served to highlight the fluid and contested nature of sport - and identity - for these young Muslim women. Such competing perspectives served to accentuate the diversity of beliefs within the Muslim families involved in the soccer team, underscoring the need to recognise the multiple, negotiated interpretations of Islam, and how this is then brought to bear on a range of cultural practices and processes.

### **Islam or The OC?**

While the diversity of attitudes towards the need to conceal the body at training and competition highlighted most visibly the heterogeneity within the Muslim women in the team, the interview data, in particular, suggested that participation in the soccer team also allowed for the expression and negotiation of some fine-grained identity politics that both affirmed and *challenged* many of the traditions of Islam. For some, religion played a relatively minor role in their lives, and these women embraced a range of

western cultural practices like clothing styles, popular music, television programmes and new technologies such as mobile phones, social networking websites and MP3 players. For others, these were regarded as the pursuit of Western excess which represented a threat to traditional Islamic culture and beliefs.

In many ways, the women in the soccer team embraced aspects of popular culture that may sit at odds with wider perceptions of Muslim women, both within Islamic cultures and in the secular West as well. These young women were highly typical of other girls growing up in a hugely mediated, Western consumer society. They were conscious of their body shape (they spoke of their uniforms 'making them look fat'), mindful of the hottest fashions and obsessed with boys, movie stars and the latest 'spunks' of popular music. Indeed, the version of femininity that these young women acted out shared many of the mannerisms and attributes of adolescent girls in Australia more broadly in terms of sexual exploration, their testing of boundaries and their romantic 'crushes' on the stars of popular film and music [18].

By way of illustration, the girls in the soccer team would often 'play' at femininity. That is, they would often act out several of the more stereotypical roles made available for women in popular culture, such as the 'sexy' back up singer in a music clip; the love interest of Brad Pitt or 'Summer' from *The OC*, a beautiful but doomed character in a popular American television import. On one occasion, for example, one of the young women brought a blonde wig along to training and the girls all took it in turns wearing the wig and pretending to be the "girl in the film clip with Nelly", an R&B artist who was popular at the time of fieldwork. Much attention was given over to head canting, 'mincing' and acting out the highly stylised poses featured in many popular music film clips.

The analytical point to note from this is two fold: first, the girls, in taking on these sorts of female roles, were content to just be in the background. They were happy to be the love interest or the back up singer rather than the leading role. Such positionings make sense when viewed through the lens of the intermeshing and often contradictory domains that the players constantly negotiate. Despite their exposure to a range of other media images that may have provided more powerful role models for young women, these young women nonetheless all fell back on their own culturally mediated conceptions of their own gender roles in which their subservience to men is re-enforced, even within the female-only training environment. In other words, the players could have chosen to be Avril Lavigne or Amy Winehouse. Instead they opted to play the back up singer.

Second, in such accounts, the traditions of Islam and the (post)-modernity of popular culture occupy an uneasy relationship. As Ahmed & Donnan point out: "whereas the post-modern Western world promotes a culture of change, youth and consumerism, embracing noise, movement and speed, traditional Islam discourages change and emphasises calmness and stability" [19]. Yet, for many of the young women, communication – with their parents, siblings, friends and class mates – was done in a split second via blue tooth and text messaging. While there is no place for film stars, music clips or MP3 downloads in the Muslim ideal, the parameters of Islamic thinking cannot be seen as outside of broader cultural processes which increasingly emphasise the commodification and secularisation of social life. It is sport, as a very particular cultural site that brings these tensions to the foreground in highly compelling ways. As Hargreaves writes: "for Muslims across the world there is a conflict in the way in which they live their lives between the Islamic tradition and the pervasive influence of western

culture. Since sport insinuates Westernisation, it presents women with particular bodily and cultural uncertainties” [20].

In many ways, these Muslim refugee women acted out a version of femininity that many women in the West would no doubt be familiar with, for it traces a common trajectory through adolescence. Nonetheless, there were stark differences that were undeniable. These women brought to their enactment of femininity a very particular cultural history that few of us can perhaps appreciate. The young women all spoke of truly traumatic experiences common to other refugee women [21] which they had endured. These included rape and violence, torture and persecution, the loss of family members and other loved ones, as well as periods of time spent in refugee camps prior to settling in Australia and in detention centres on arrival. On re-settlement, these young women then take on additional responsibilities that underscore the gendered hierarchy of Islamic life. With their cultural roles very much defined by their domestic responsibilities as carers and nurturers [22], these women, some as young as twelve or thirteen, are expected to take on the tasks of English translation for their parents or older relatives, cooking, cleaning, and the minding of younger siblings, often in addition to attending school and in some cases holding down part-time jobs as well. These young women are positioned in their own communities in very particular ways that impose definitions and limitations which many in the West find difficult to reconcile [23].

In this context, the existence of an all-Muslim women’s soccer team may appear something of a paradox, yet it serves to underscore the complexity of the politics of identity for young Muslim women who have re-settled in countries like Australia. In their on-going presentation of self as young women, their worlds are constituted by not one but many intermeshing domains or in Bourdieu’s terms ‘fields’ [24]. Being a young Muslim refugee woman in a country like Australia involves an endless series of strategies and readjustments as these women continually negotiate and re-position themselves in a world of fine difference where the similarities are often more revealing of difference than the differences themselves.

Such observations share parallels with those of Kay who notes that “minority ethnic youth have been described as skilled cross-cultural navigators, who draw, not only on their own and the majority culture, but also other minority cultures in the population” [25]. While Kay cautions against the assumption that such navigational processes are unidirectional – that Muslim youths are presumed to move only towards the more progressive elements of other cultures, the findings from this study suggest that the young women do not jettison their Muslim culture, but incorporate it as an “adjustment strategy” [26] into their evolving identity as Muslim women in Australia.

### **Performing identity**

This negotiation of ‘fields’ was made maximally visible in the final soccer carnival that the young women had been training for. When talking to the players, it was evident just how important the performative space of the final carnival was to them [27]. As Jamira notes: “I liked competition because people were showing more effort than they did at practice.” In addition to demonstrating their skills on the soccer pitch, the players could showcase themselves as young women, and most importantly, they could showcase themselves as *Somali* in an environment where a number of other cultural identities were on display through the various teams competing in the carnival. As the community development worker involved in the programme put it: ‘the thing about a multicultural carnival is the whole community comes to watch. You’ve got teams representing their country, and that’s a big deal for them.’ On the day of the Refugee Week Soccer



Carnival, this celebration of culture and homeland was displayed in a sensory feast of colour, sound, movement and language. Proud family members held Somali flags high, many of the parents who had come to watch the team were adorned in traditional African clothing, drum beats rang out from the side lines and an unfamiliar language was carried through the air as the players called out to their parents from their positions on the pitch. The community development worker continues:

“what we saw on the day was that the girls played a game of soccer...and the communities could see that this was a positive experience for them, and from that, there was a sense of pride in the young people from their communities.

The crucial point to note about the soccer carnival was that, in performing in front of other members of their community, many of the more traditional elements of their identity as Muslim women were reinforced. While training had provided a mechanism through which the players could explore the more ‘western’ aspects of their identity (such as music and mobile phones), the carnival brought to the foreground many of the long held traditions of Islam, particularly the need to cover the female body. While there had been considerable flexibility as to what the players wore at training, at the carnival, *all* of the women wore long sleeves and tracksuit pants under their strip as recognition of their Islamic backgrounds. While Walseth [28] reports that when young Muslim women in Norway took part in sport they experienced sanctions and harassment from their community, this does not appear to be the case in the Australian context. If anything, soccer became a means through which the women could present a visible, narrative of achievement on behalf of the broader Somali community. These young women, in other words, became important ambassadors for their community in a broader political and racial environment which seeks to marginalise and ‘Other’ those re-settled in Australia on humanitarian grounds.

### **Discussion: Muslim women, identity and sport**

This article has been concerned to explore how a group of mainly Somali, young Muslim refugee women construct their individual and collective identities through sport. To do this, it has outlined the ways in which these women draw on the traditions of Islam and the resources of western popular culture in, at times, quite contradictory ways. While adolescence is rarely straightforward for anyone, these young women must contend with an additional set of tensions and complexities. As refugee women, re-settled in a new country, the players in the soccer team are ‘out-of-place’ in a number of ways [29]. Displaced geographically, they are also ‘out-of-place’ culturally in terms of the uneasy fit between the traditions of Islam and the excesses of popular culture which they now encounter. As described in this article, social and sporting identities, for these young women, are constructed relationally; through their team-mates, their parents and the broader community alike. In other words, the women in the soccer team are culturally constituted within competing social worlds, as well as through a broader political discourse that positions them as ‘Other’.

This ethnographic study of a Muslim refugee women’s soccer team has served to highlight the complex set of relations which underscore the formation of one’s identity as a social being. For these women, as indeed for other diasporic communities, identity is not fixed, but fluid, affected by changing political, social and cultural conditions. As Hall writes:

identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions. They are subject

to a radical historicisation and are constantly in the process of change and transformation [30].

Through the actions and interactions of the players as they geared up for the Refugee Week Soccer Carnival, we get some sense of how these multiple, intermeshing and contradictory identities are both produced and then *performed*.

While this article has been centrally concerned with the fluid and competing practices and positions through which identities are socially constituted in contemporary times, the political implications of this are never far away. All of the players whose lives inform this paper, also face the burden of *poverty* as well. All of the players live in one of Adelaide's poorest communities, and there is a need to consider this axis of inequality as well. As Hargreaves writes: "these women come from historically marginalised groups who have had to struggle against particularly harsh forms of discrimination and have constructed their own sporting identities in changing and difficult conditions" [31].

As this article has endeavoured to tease out, there is not a 'one size fits all' interpretation of what it means to be a young Muslim woman: indeed, there is great fluidity and difference within this particular cultural category, and this has implications for how Muslim women are perceived and regarded in the West, for "the bodies of Muslim women are regulated within the broader context of local-global relations and in relation to Western femininities and sexual politics"[32].

There is also a great similarity between the version of adolescent femininity enacted by the young Muslim refugee women whose lives inform this article and that embraced by other young women from Anglo-Australian backgrounds. It is these fine distinctions rather than the obvious differences of culture or religion as embodied in language or dress, for example, that may ultimately prove more instructive about the ways in which we come to understand how young Muslim (and other) women construct their identities through social and sporting behaviours. It is this accommodation and negotiation of 'sameness' and 'difference' that is particularly intriguing, for it hits on one of the most enduring themes in sociological and other inquiries: how is identity defined and created; where is it located and how is it communicated? The question of 'how do you know who you are' is at the centre of much critical inquiry, and as presented here, the soccer team provides a unique site through which to explore such questions of identity for young Muslim refugee women in contemporary Australia.

## Notes

1. Strandbrau, 'Identity, Embodied Culture and Physical Exercise, 28.
2. Dagkas & Benn, 'Young Muslim Women's Experiences of Islam and Physical Education in Greece and Britain: A Comparative Study'.
3. Palmer, 'A World of Fine Difference'; Palmer *Evaluation of the New Arrival Young Women's Soccer Program*.
4. For example, Balbou, 'Sporting Females in Egypt: Veiling or Unveiling'; Morgan, 'Hassiba Boulmerka and Islamic Green'; Walseth & Fasting, 'Islam's View on Physical Activity and Sport', Hargreaves, 'The Muslim Sports Heroic'; Hargreaves, 'Sport, Exercise and the Female Muslim Body'.
5. Hargreaves, 'Sport, Exercise and the Female Muslim Body', 74.
6. The Parks' takes its name from the five suburbs in Adelaide's north-west which comprise the estate. It was constructed by the SA Housing Trust between 1945 and 1964, as part of an overall economic development strategy that sought to provide low-cost rental housing for workers and their families which was close to the manufacturing and automotive factories in the area at the time. Economic changes in

The Parks and other public housing estates, coupled with shifts in family structures and progressively tighter restrictions governing access to public housing have “resulted in tenants who increasingly experience problems of unemployment, low-income and poverty and, in some instances, increasing incidences of crime and violence” (Palmer et al. 2004: 412).

7. Arthurson & Jacobs, ‘A Critique of the Concept of Social Exclusion and its Utility for Australian Social Housing Policy’.
8. For example, Drummond, *The Young Males and Socialisation Project: Evaluation Report*; Crabbe, ‘A Sporting Chance: Using Sport to Tackle Drug Use and Crime’, Morris et al. *Sport, Physical Activity and Antisocial Behaviour in Youth*.
9. Much research has documented the positive impacts of recreation programs for ‘at-risk’ youth (see Wilson & White, ‘Tolerance Rules’ for a summary) however this has tended to focus on the experiences of men. In a related vein, many of the classic sociological and cultural studies of ‘youth’, such as those undertaken in the mid 1970s by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (eg Hall & Jefferson *Resistance through Rituals*; Hebdige *Subculture: the Meaning of Style*; Willis *Learning to Labour*) have been critiqued because the experiences of female youth were largely absent from the empirical research.
10. It has been noted elsewhere that women from culturally diverse backgrounds are less likely to participate in sports activities, engage in physical activity or be sports spectators (Acosta, ‘The Minority Experience in Sport’; Armstrong, et al., *Physical Activity Patterns of Australian Adults: Results of the 1999 National Physical Activity Survey*; Collins, ‘Social Exclusion and Sport in a Multicultural Society’; Taylor, ‘The Rhetoric of Exclusion’).
11. All names have been changed to protect the identities of the players involved.
12. While it is beyond the scope of this article, it is worth noting that this created some conflicts between the families within the Somali community.
13. Walseth, ‘Young Muslim Women and Sport: the Impact of Identity Work’, 75.
14. Hargreaves, ‘The Muslim Sports Heroic’, 47.
15. Pfister, ‘Doing Sport in a Headscarf? German Sport and Turkish Females’.
16. Nakamura, ‘Beyond the Hijab: Female Muslims and Physical Activity’.
17. Hargreaves, ‘Sport, Exercise and the Female Muslim Body’, 74.
18. Driscoll, *Girls: Feminine Adolescence in Popular Culture and Cultural Theory*; Bloustien *Girl-Making: A Cross-cultural Ethnography on the Processes of Growing Up Female*.
19. Ahmed & Donnan, *Islam, Globalisation and Postmodernity*: 12-13.
20. Hargreaves, ‘The Muslim Sports Heroic’, 49.
21. Sideris, ‘War, Gender and Culture: Mozambican Women Refugees’.
22. Beishon, et al. *Ethnic Minority Families*; Menski, ‘South Asian Women in Britain, Family Integrity and the Primary Purpose’.
23. See Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*; Hargreaves, *The Muslim Sports Heroic*’.
24. Bourdieu, *The Fields of Cultural Production*.
25. Kay, ‘Daughters of Islam: Family Influences on Muslim Young Women’s Participation in Sport’, 370.
26. Markovic & Manderson, ‘Nowhere is as at home: adjustment strategies of recent immigrant women from the former Yugoslav Republics in southeast Queensland’.
27. A number of feminist scholars have discussed the importance of these sorts of ‘physical moments’ as a means of empowering women through physical activity. See Bell, ‘Knowing What My Body Can Do’; Brace-Govan, ‘Looking at Body Work’; Gilroy, ‘The EmBody-ment of Power’; McDermott, ‘Towards a Feminist Understanding of Physicality Within the Context of Women’s Physically Active and Sporting Lives’.
28. Walseth, ‘Young Muslim Women and Sport: the Impact of Identity Work’.

29. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*.
30. Hall 'Introduction: Who needs 'identity'?', 4.
31. Hargreaves, 'Introduction, I.
32. Hargreaves, 'Sport, Exercise and the Female Muslim body', 74.

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