

## In the shadow of event-led urbanism: Neighbourhood, newcomer youth and TO2015

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Community Partner/s	Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation <sup>1</sup>

### 1. Rationale & Potential Policy Relevance

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The welcoming of an internationally recognized sport mega-event, in demanding the construction of hypermodern sporting facilities, will disrupt material (e.g., neighbourhood infrastructure construction) as well as immaterial (e.g., public policies) urban order. Event-led urban renewal is a moment in which we can better examine the intricate processes involved in, and personalities behind, the (re)building of (allegedly) “global” cities. Rather than uncritically accepting the promises of economic prosperity and (inter)national recognition, more work is needed to ensure that sport/event-led development does not exacerbate the social, economic or environmental inequalities existent within host communities. In hosting the second largest sport mega-event in Canada, Toronto is now a crucial site to interrogate dominant ideologies underpinning rapid, event-led urban development as well as the impact of event construction on local neighbourhoods and communities. By critically examining event processes, we intend to better understand the impact of 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games (TO2015) on youth, their neighbourhoods, and particularly as related to notions of health, citizenship and the body.

### 2. Research Questions

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This research will examine TO2015 event-led construction in order to ask:

- 1) What is the dominant narrative used to rationalize 2015 Pan/Parapan renewal in Toronto, particularly for youth in shadow communities<sup>2</sup> such as St. James Town and Regent Park (i.e., the spatial corridor analyzed in data collection is bounded by Yonge Street, Bloor Street, the Don River and the 2015 Pan/Parapan American Village)?
- 2) How is this narrative interpreted and/or understood by young people living in neighbourhoods within this corridor?
- 3) To what extent do these same youth participate in “host” activities and/or realize legacies associated to the event (i.e., by accessing newly constructed recreational facilities [local neighbourhoods], securing

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1 Although not an “official” BCRP partner, one member of the research team works for Toronto Parks and has, therefore, been granted access to facilities as well as the young people that make use of them for the purposes of this proposed research. As a long-time employee, this member of the research team also has an in-depth knowledge of the programming offered before and after the 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games hosted. It is our hope to offer an “in-kind” donation for their generous use of space/time, something that will be directly used for the benefit of future programming.

2 “Shadow host communities” is a term used to denote communities on the fringe of mega-event publicity in which formally articulated, documented and/or popularly celebrated legacies (often) fail to acknowledge.

employment/volunteer opportunities [municipal/provincial] and observing the event either live or via media broadcast [national/nationhood]])?

- 4) What is the relationship between the “imagined” TO2015 experience and the actual lived realities of (newcomer) youth, particularly in relation to their neighbourhoods, health, citizenship and the body?

### 3. Specific Fit with the NCRP Objectives & Research Questions

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Previous research has documented the extent to which event-led urbanism has unsuccessfully reconciled the extreme inequalities that increasingly affect “global” cities. This literature has enticed us to ask whether the reification of urban disparities – as related to public space, exposure to environmental risk, and autocratic governance – are *inevitable* in event construction and urban development. Examining event-related processes in the context of a relatively deprived and densely immigrant-populated area of Toronto (specific focus on the St. James Town/Regent Park/Parliament St. corridor) will not lend to stories of mass expulsion that so often characterize event construction; however, it will allow us to better understand the more subtle manner in which newcomer youth experience neighbourhood change in relation to sport. The area we have chosen is one of the last remaining low-income/newcomer settlement communities to undergo processes of gentrification in Toronto. With this in mind, our research will use the 2015 Pan/Parapan event as a *gateway* to explore how sport/recreation is implicated in the (re)imagining of this area, and how newcomer youth experience these broader socio-spatial processes of change in the carving out of their own, new communities. Aligning with the broader NCRP research agenda, this research will work to examine neighbourhood restructuring trends and processes (RQ1) as well as the consequences of socio-spatial inequality and polarization (RQ2) to ultimately inform future recreation policies and programs for Toronto neighbourhoods (RQ3).

### 4. Research Design & Methods

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In conducting this research and in order to trace the effects of power in the (re)production of space and its people, several methodologies are required.

1. A document analysis of relevant Pan/Parapan American-related documentation (i.e., relevant media and government-issued documentation, 2015 Bid Book and TO2015/PASO-related material, promotional and adversarial material as well as any relevant information related to youth programming).
2. (Participant) Observations of existent sport/recreation programs available to youth living within St. James Town and Regent Park (i.e., in search of any TO2015-connection or reference to the sport mega-event).
3. Semi-structured interviews conducted with young people (approximately 20) as well as representatives from the community who are directly involved in the design, delivery and/or evaluation of youth programming (approximately 5).

Following the work of Dr. Fusco (2007), in asking young people about spatial discourses and practices of recreation and leisure, we intend to examine how these work (or become embodied) in everyday life.<sup>3</sup> Data collection proposed here will enable us to best tackle each research question listed above. Furthermore, the use of more than one form of data collection (as well as researcher) will allow us to better crystallize the multiple (partial) perspectives between young people and the research team, as we work together to co-produce new understandings of their lived realities.

### 5. Role of Community Partner/s

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Our community partner will be Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation. Having support from staff will:

- Provide background into the facilities (i.e., snapshot before/after the event);

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<sup>3</sup> See Fusco, C. (2007) 'Healthification' and the promises of urban space: A textual analysis of representations of Place, Activity, Youth (PLAY-ing) in the city. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 423(1), 43-63.

- Provide an avenue through which we can contact young people;
- Offer insight into program development/legacies associated to the 2015 event, if any; and
- Offer insight into the collaboration between local staff and the (inter)national event.

## 6. Role of Students / Research Assistants and Contributions to Training

Amanda De Lisio and Greg Yerashotis are PhD students in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health who will be working collaboratively on this project under the supervision of Dr. Fusco. Each student has an interest in understanding neighbourhood change and youth development through sport as related to her/his own work. Amanda is the graduate student lead on the project, and has a research interest in the impact of sport mega-events on host populations. Greg is our liaison with the communities where we wish to focus our research. As a youth worker, with interests in urban poverty immigrant integration and youth development, Greg is a valued addition to our team. Overall, this project will allow Amanda and Greg to learn (through participation) the processes involved in (i) qualitative data collection/analysis, (ii) the publishing of both academic and non-academic material and ultimately (iii) effective collaboration with neighbourhood partners and youth.

## 7. Schedule

REB completed	Effective until December 2016
Document analysis	March – August 2016
Data collection	March – August 2016
Data analysis	August – October 2016
Write and revise final report; deliver to community and submit to <i>identified journal (e.g., Urban Studies, Youth Studies, Children's Geographies)</i>	October 2016 – December 2016
Submit draft report to community partners	November 2016
Present preliminary paper at (academic) conference (e.g., NASSS), and submit and revising for article for publication	December 2016 – February 2017

## 8. Outcomes / Deliverables

- A document summarizing the research will be distributed to the community (and/or submitted to Spacing magazine); and
- At least one academic article will be written, presented at a (international or national) conference and submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

## 9. Budget Explanation

The budget will be primarily directed towards supporting the graduate students conducting the field research, \$12,825 (450hr at \$28.50/hr.). Following the compensation of each research assistant, we also include \$1400 for expenses accrued by community partners (e.g., interview time/compensation, room rental, food/beverage, transit) as well as \$275 for the printing/distribution of resource material (derived from research findings) to participants and their communities, more broadly.

- ☐ Sent to the NCRP's Research Advisory Board for comment: date \_\_\_\_\_ deadline: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Funding approved by the NCRP's Board: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

## SSHRC Budget Worksheet

	Amount requested from NCRP	Contributions (In-Kind / Cash)	Contribution source	Total Project Cost
<b>Personnel costs</b>				
<b>Student salaries and benefits/Stipends</b>				
Masters *	N/A			
Doctorate *(x 2)	\$12,825			
<b>Non-student salaries and benefits/Stipends</b>				
Postdoctoral	N/A			
Other	N/A			
<b>Travel and subsistence costs</b>				
<b>Applicant/Team member(s)</b>				
Canadian travel	N/A			
<b>Students</b>				
Canadian travel	N/A			
<b>Other expenses</b>				
<b>Non-disposable equipment</b> (specify)				
	N/A			
<b>Professional / technical services</b> (specify: includes partner staff time contributed to or paid for by project, translation, editing)				
	N/A			
	N/A			
<b>Other expenses</b> (specify: includes honoraria, data purchase, field costs, printing, supplies, etc.)				
Participant Honoraria	\$750 (20 x \$30) (youth) \$150 (5 x \$30) (staff)			
Facilities Honoraria	\$500			
Printing/Supplies	\$275			
<b>Total</b>				<b>\$14,500</b>