

Racialized Women in Sport in Canada: A Scoping Review

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Background: This scoping literature review examines: What literature exists about the sport and physical activity experiences of racialized cis and trans women, adolescents, and girls in Canada? **Methods:** English language peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, and gray literature published January 1, 2000, up to May 31, 2020, were examined. The databases used were SPORTDiscus via EBSCO, Sociological Abstracts, Sport Medicine and Education Index, and Google Scholar. The 42 studies and 15 gray literatures found included 1430 participants explicitly specified as racialized women/girl participants. **Results:** There was a paucity of literature on the topic overall with none ($n=0$) focused on experiences of racialized trans women. The limited research notes some successful programs that address racialized women's needs. However, the research also shows widespread experiences of discrimination against women based on racial group and language and limited access to culturally relevant or welcoming sporting opportunities, such as women-only programs and spaces. **Conclusions:** Much more research should be done to disaggregate "immigrants" into specific racial and ethnic groups, attend to intersectional identities and barriers, understand a wide range of involvement (eg, including coaching, high performance sport, recreation, exercise, university sport, mentorship programs), document racism and White privilege, and describe the joys of participation in sport for racialized women.

Keywords: race, girl, inclusion, discrimination, leisure

Canada is a White settler colony, built geographically and culturally on stolen Indigenous land and cultures and economically on the enslavement and exploitation of Indigenous, Black, and Asian peoples. Canada's state policies and dominant cultural practices produce the partial incorporation of immigrants, migrants, and refugees alongside their racialization. Racialization is the ascription of ideas of "race" and "racial categories" to specific groups and, on that basis, providing unequal treatment or opportunities. Racialized cis and trans women, adolescents, and girls (hereafter, women) in Canada face intersectional barriers, based on both their racialization as non-White and gender discrimination as non-men, because the structures and systems of participation in cultural practices such as sport are also colonially driven. Sport in Canada was designed for White men's participation, and "studies of sport in Canada largely remain devoid of conversations about race"^{1(p2)}


Racialization includes the invention of racial categories, such as Black and Asian, which refer "to different types of human bodies, to the perceived corporeal and phenotypic markers of difference and the meanings and social practices that are ascribed to these differences."^{2(p111)} Racialization is a dynamic, contradictory, and fluid process. Despite 21.9% of Canada's population being foreign born, with Asia as the top continent of origin, and 22.3% of Canadians identifying in the census as a "visible minority,"³ the national imaginary of the "real Canadian" remains synonymous with Whiteness.⁴⁻⁶ The "definitions of real Canadians as white nationals" have maintained the historical racial power imbalance of the nation state "despite an ever-increasing heterogeneity of the population."^{7(p183)} In this system, some ethnic groups, such as Italian and Irish Canadians, who were once racialized and excluded from many opportunities in Canada, have passed into Whiteness and privileges. Meanwhile, a

foundational culture of Whiteness has formed in which many migrants from the Global South are essentialized, homogenized, and excluded from full participation in Canadian society.^{7,8} Black, Muslim, and other racialized communities experience bias that has significant adverse consequences for their equality, liberty, security, mobility, labor, and access to justice rights.^{9,10} Not all migrants are racialized, but all people who are racialized experience contextual discrimination based on their intersectional identities.

Racialization is complicated by other identity factors. For example, Black women's experiences may shift depending on age, perceived beauty, and generation of immigration.^{11,12} Despite boasting equity, diversity, and inclusion policies, sport organizations often disregard the realities associated with racial disparities, including the barriers that prevent many racialized Canadians from full participation in sports.¹³ Much like other domains, such as education and health, efforts to foster "gender equity in sport in Canadian initiatives have largely focused on White, nondisabled, cisgender, binary women, and girls—and still have yet to reach parity."^{14(p11)} Gender discrimination in Canadian sport has been pervasive.

Gender discrimination in sport limits access to a binary gender system and, within that system, restricts or obstructs participation for women. Despite international successes in a wide range of sports by Canadian sportswomen, sport is still largely considered a man's domain. For decades, scholars have demonstrated the ways the female physique is often deemed too "delicate" for participation in sports with men and boys, and athleticism and muscularity (which are conceived as inherently masculine) are perceived as antithetical to femininity.¹⁵⁻¹⁷ This results in limitations on sports programming, roles in sport participation and leadership, and career advancement for all women who do enter the sports system, and racialized women are especially excluded due to the confluence of sexism and racism.

In addition to gender inequalities, racialized women face other structural and systemic barriers to participation, which frequently remain unnamed and unchallenged. Globally, there is a dearth of

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literature examining the experiences of racialized women and girls in sport. On the one hand, sport is often perceived as a meritocratic institution in which one's natural talent and hard work determine one's level of success; systemic discrimination and barriers that impact individuals' chances for participation and success in sports often go unacknowledged. The general conceptualization of sport as a domain in which social structures (such as systemic discrimination) are irrelevant to experiences and outcomes,¹⁸ combined with the sidelining of women within studies of racialized groups,¹⁹ offers an explanation for the lack of literature on this topic internationally and within Canada. The existing studies on racialized women in sport have primarily focused on Black women in the United States, Black and minority ethnic women in the United Kingdom, and the unfair treatment of celebrity athletes, such as Serena and Venus Williams,^{20,21} Naomi Osaka,²² and Caster Semenya.²³ The gendered racism imbued in the media representation of these athletes speaks to a prevalent problem of racist mockery that Black sportswomen experience. Highlighting the experiences of professional athletes can also undermine or obfuscate the everyday racism experienced at every level of recreational and amateur sport.

Another underresearched group of racialized sportswomen are those who identify with the Islamic faith. Muslim women have been shown to experience greater disadvantage in sport-related areas compared with other groups, including Muslim boys, in many countries, such as England,^{24,25} Denmark,²⁶ Australia,²⁷ and Norway.²⁸ Some Canadian exclusionary sport policies and practices force Islamic religious practices to be in contradiction with the dominant ways of being, creating access and participation barriers for many Muslim women. Due to the lack of research and policy considerations devoted to the equitable transformation of Canadian sport, many Muslim women continue to be excluded.²⁹ Some Islamic religious practices, such as exercise during Ramadan when athletes are fasting from sunrise to sunset, Islamic dress codes (eg, the *hijab* or long sleeves) not being accepted as part of uniforms, and Muslim women requiring no men to be present during the use of public swimming pools, are often seen by dominant groups as in conflict with Western understandings of physical activity and gender organization. Little attention has been paid to the structural barriers that keep women out or the lived experiences of Muslim women.

Specifically, in the Canadian setting, this lack of scholarship may be exacerbated due to mythical depictions of the country as "post-racial" and "multicultural."^{30–35} The first global multiculturalism policy of 1971, codified as the Multiculturalism Act (1985), recognizes the coexistence of racial groups while emphasizing an evenly applied maintenance of cultural heritage by peoples with different racial, national, or ethnic origins; skin colors; languages; and religions. As racialized people identify with or are perceived to be members of groups that experience discrimination based on these factors, multiculturalism is a racialized construct. This Act encourages all ethnocultural groups to be "'doubly engaged' (in both their heritage cultures and in the larger society) . . . [to] receive support and resources from both" and celebrates intergroup "contact and sharing . . . to promote mutual acceptance."^{36(p667)} However, this emphasis on multiculturalism as integration and celebration of Canadian exceptionalism ignores the ways that effective bicultural engagement and sharing require similar economic, political, and cultural status among people. Indeed, status differences can lead "members of the larger society [to] feel threatened by immigration, and when members of particular groups have their rights to maintain their heritage

cultures and/or to participate in the larger society . . . questioned or denied, a mutual hostility is likely to ensue." Lee and Johnstone^{37(p682)} wrote that Canada's dominant "rhetoric honours diversity and difference and supports toleration and the embrace of multiple traditions and customs"; however, these principles do not capture the totality of the experience for racialized immigrants and settlers, who have been in Canada for many generations, in some cases. The authors continued, "There is a politicised 'Canadian ideal', which dictates what is appropriate, desirable and worthy as a Canadian citizen,"^{37(p682)} and that ideal is White. Besco and Tolley's^{38(p292)} analysis of multiculturalism shows that though immigration continues to increase and anti-immigration sentiments are not widely mobilized in Canada, "[A]ttitudes toward racial diversity are also significantly less positive than those toward immigrants, and arguably have not improved significantly in the last three decades." The dominance of Canadian multiculturalism discourses diminishes concerns that people raise about racism and racial inequality as well as reduces researchers' attention to issues of racialization generally and, particularly, in sport.

The total "visible minority" population of Canada labeled as "female" is just over 3.9 million people.³ Racialized peoples' experiences are often reduced to 1 or 2 variables and rarely studied in the ways that they intersect with other social positions. Yet, we know that migration and the process of acculturation as a racialized woman can be quite a challenging and stressful event with negative economic and social outcomes depending on English or French language capacity, age, sexual orientation, and a host of other factors. These factors need to be considered together rather than in isolation. Yet, the reports and studies on inequalities in Canadian sport and physical activity often overlook how racialization intersects with other social identities to play a role in women's (lack of) experiences. For example, the Canadian Women in Sport Rally Report, which provides updated statistics and insights on girls' and women's sport participation in Canada, admits that their published data do not provide insight on "how ethnicity, ability and sexual orientation combine with gender to create additional and unique obstacles to participation in sport."^{39(p9)} This missing information is exactly the sort of data needed to analyze, understand, and devise solutions to eliminate barriers in sport.

Using a critical race theory orientation that demands examining the effects of racialization and power from the perspectives of the marginalized,⁴⁰ this scoping review focuses on Black, Asian, Muslim, and immigrant groups. Based on the census data and the term "visible minority," the Canadian government established that South Asian, Chinese, and Black are the 3 largest racialized groups in Canada, and these 3 groups plus other East, West, and North Asians account for 74% of Canada's non-White population.³ The government of Canada⁴¹ also noted in its antiracism strategy that anti-Black racism "is deeply entrenched in Canadian institutions, policies and practices, such that anti-Black racism is either functionally normalized or rendered invisible to the larger white society."^(p22) A similar concept, "anti-Asian racism, refers to historical and ongoing discrimination, negative stereotyping and injustice experienced by peoples of Asian descent . . . [but] the very term Asian can obscure . . . a wide range of identities."^{41(p21)} Islamophobia is a particular and pernicious type of anti-Asian discrimination affecting Muslims, which Cornelissen⁴² showed is the largest religious minority group in Canada. As such, we have also included Muslims as a distinct group that experiences racialization. The category immigrant is designed to include non-Black, non-Asian, non-Muslim racialized persons (eg, Latinx, Arab) and

to reflect the language used in many of the studies included in the scoping review, although we recognize that immigrant does not always reflect a racialized group and that studies related to being newcomers appear in the studies of other racialized groups.

This scoping review offers a comprehensive understanding of the available sociological data on the involvement of racialized cis and trans women, adolescents, and girls in sport and physical activity in Canada. Given the increasing importance of equity, diversity, inclusion, and antiracism in sport, particularly in Canada, a scoping review is a timely and suitable approach to synthesize the existing evidence of the association between sport and gendered racialization. A scoping review facilitates a more comprehensive understanding because it allows for a broader conceptual scope of the literature and a summary of the type of studies being conducted in a specific area of research⁴³ and can stimulate new research questions that can further advance research in this area.⁴⁴ The studies collected for this report address various historical, social, cultural, and economic factors that influence the participation of racialized women in sport and physical activity. Examining racialized women is important because racialization is a means by which power operates, creating opportunities for some and barriers for others. In Canadian sport, the barriers that racialized women face are particularly profound as sport is a predominantly male and White domain.¹ For the purpose of this review, racialized women were divided into 4 broad categories of (1) Black (eg, African and Caribbean descent); (2) Muslim (ie, religious groups of diverse ethnic heritages); (3) Asian (eg, Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and Sri Lankan); and (4) immigrants (including first- or multiple-generation immigrants/settlers).

Methods

Established criteria and guidelines for scoping reviews^{45,46} were followed with 5 specific steps, including: (1) identifying the research question; (2) identifying relevant studies (including articles and gray literature); (3) study selection; (4) charting the data; and (5) summarizing, collating, and reporting the data and results.

Identifying the Research Question

The main purpose of this review was to explore the available sociological data and literature on the involvement of racialized women in sport in Canada. “Sport” was defined, based on Canadian Sport Policy,⁴⁷ as participation in (un)organized settings of introduction to sport, recreational sport, competitive sport, high-performance sport, and sport for development with objectives encompassing “fun, health, social interaction and relaxation”^(p8) and “organized and regulated [competition] within an agreed upon set of rules and codes of conduct.”^(p11) We also included studies on “fitness” and “physical activity” to acknowledge gendered notions of sport and clarify racialized women’s participation. “Women” was defined as a category including girls, adolescents, and cis and trans women. “Racialized” included 4 broad categories of (1) Black (eg, African and Caribbean descent); (2) Muslim (ie, religious groups of diverse ethnic heritages); (3) Asian (eg, Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and/or Sri Lankan); and (4) immigrants (including first- or multiple-generation immigrants/settlers). The research question that directed this scoping review was: “What literature exists about the experiences of racialized cis and trans women, adolescents, and girls in Canada?”

Identify the Relevant Studies

To find relevant academic studies, we searched 3 databases: SPORT-Discus, Sociological Abstracts, and Sport Medicine and Education Index. The search was limited to English language peer-reviewed publications from January 1, 2000, up to May 31, 2020, using a wide range of free-text terms associated with race (eg, Black, Asian), with women (eg, girls), and with sport (eg, run, jump; see Table 1). In addition, a gray literature search was conducted using Google Scholar and various sport organization and university thesis/dissertation websites. The search was executed by 5 research assistants with guidance from 2 university librarians. Screening of the 3 databases was performed in 3 phases. First, 5 research assistants reviewed a subset of search results for eligibility based on titles and abstracts before, second, reviewing full texts of the potential studies for eligibility. Third, the first 2 authors screened the full texts for eligibility. Disagreement between the first 2 authors was resolved through iterative discussion. A manual search method followed the database search. The researchers collectively brainstormed a list of scholars in the field of sport sociology whose published work discussed or considered data on racialized women in sport in Canada. It should be noted that the first 2 authors studied racialization, sport, and women throughout their research careers, spanning 8 and 17 years, respectively, at the time of the search, and each of the research assistants had between 2 and 12 years of academic and professional experience in studying racialization, sport, and women.

Study Selection

Several additional criteria were followed to identify relevant studies for this scoping review.

Phase 1: Article Screening. Peer-reviewed articles describing research with human participants were sought using the search terms (see Table 1). Studies were excluded if they were (1) not written in English; (2) not available as full texts; (3) published before January 1, 2000, or after May 31, 2020; (4) about men; (5) about women outside of Canada; and (6) duplicates.

Phase 2: Relevant Article Selection. First, we limited the review to racialized women-identified participants of any age due to the documented shifts in sport participation over the lifespan. Studies that included both the experiences of racial identity groups and racialization processes were included. Second, we excluded sport in schools where the focus was physical education settings and the analyses were about education and teacher training rather than sport participation. Third, we excluded clinical, biomechanical, health promotion, and exercise treatment studies (eg, obesity exercise intervention programs) as these studies used biophysical, medical, or psychological research methods and treated race as a variable and physical activity as a research criterion to be manipulated rather than offering a sociological study of racialized experiences. Finally, we included studies that discussed issues facing racialized men and women together wherein women’s issues were clearly defined, recognizing that studies and sport programming of particular ethnic communities may not segregate participants.

Phase 3: Gray Literature Selection. We included gray literatures if they were primary, empirical research, dissertations, theses, or industry reports and available from the databases searched, Google Scholar, or websites devoted to Canadian sport. Notably, the search terms were not as effective for gray literatures, and we relied

Table 1 Search Terms Used From June 2020 to August 2020

Databases searched	Search terms		
	Race	Gender ¹	Sport
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPORTDiscus via EBSCO • Sociological Abstracts • Sport Medicine and Education Index 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • race • racia* • ethnic* • Black • “African-Canadian” • “Afro-Caribbean” • African • Caribbean • immigra* • refugee* • Latin* • Muslim • Arab* • Islamophob* • Oriental* • Hispanic • Asian • “model minority” • “South Asian” • “East Asian” • Sikh • Jewish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gender • woman • women • girl* • femal* • trans • feminin* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • athlet* • coach* • player* • participant* • “physical culture” • “physical activity” • competit* • exercise • fitness • recreation* • leisure • dance • hiking • bodybuild* • cycl* • “martial art” • jump* • run* • swim* • fight* • “sport media”

heavily on our knowledge of researchers in this field. Relevant studies met the all inclusion criteria with a focus on racialized women, Canada, and sport.

Charting the Data

We extracted from the full text of the selected studies the authors, year, title, journal, DOI, racial group, abstract, sport, methodology, study purpose/main findings, and intersecting social categories studied (eg, socioeconomic status, Indigeneity, disability). These characteristics were organized in table format, and the numbers of articles found and selected are presented in Figure 1. The final number of peer-reviewed articles included was 42 and gray literatures was 15.

Collating, Summarizing, and Reporting Data and Results

The data collected from the identified studies inputted into the table were analyzed descriptively and reported as frequency counts. Aligned with scoping review guidelines,^{43,45} the findings were discussed among the first 2 authors with respect to the review purpose along with consideration of implications for research, policy, and practice. It is important to note that, aligned with the guidelines of a scoping review, none of the studies were evaluated for quality, and all reporting in this review was based on direct presentation of results from the authors of the included studies based on our analysis of the research methodologies, findings, and research population.

Current State of Knowledge

Studies on racialized women and girls in Canada are few. Available studies indicate that participation in physical activity and sport generates both positive and negative experiences. The positive

experiences captured in this scoping review fall into 2 general themes of (1) physical/mental well-being and (2) community building and socialization. Unfortunately, many of the sport experiences of racialized women reported in the studies included in this scoping review are negative, and they include (1) lack of provision of appropriate sporting and recreational opportunities (eg, culturally appropriate and female-only spaces and programs) and (2) race, gender, culture, and language discrimination preventing participation in sport and sport leadership. In response to these obstacles, many racialized women actively pursue sports and physical activity in mainstream spaces that are safe and inclusive. Many other racialized women create exclusive (vis-à-vis gender and race) sporting spaces in their communities to suit their inter-sectional needs.

This section is organized to highlight the methodological and theoretical strengths and weaknesses of the 42 studies and 15 gray literatures included in this scoping review. Next, we detail the findings of literature on 3 racial groups plus immigrants that capture the aforementioned themes based on how the literatures were organized.

Methodological and Theoretical Strengths and Weaknesses

The methodological approaches used in the majority (n=38) of studies were qualitative survey, interview, or focus groups; 6 used mixed-method approaches to present their findings, and 7 had unreported methodologies or research methods were not applicable (eg, websites sharing participant experiences). A significant strength of the studies was the primarily phenomenological, ethnographic approaches that depended on interpretivistic framing to capture women’s stories about their physical activity experiences. Because racialized women are under-represented in the literature, rich details about their experiences, joys, and barriers, represented in their own words, are important to understand the breadth of sport in Canada. Only 3 studies were drawn from archival data.^{48–50} The

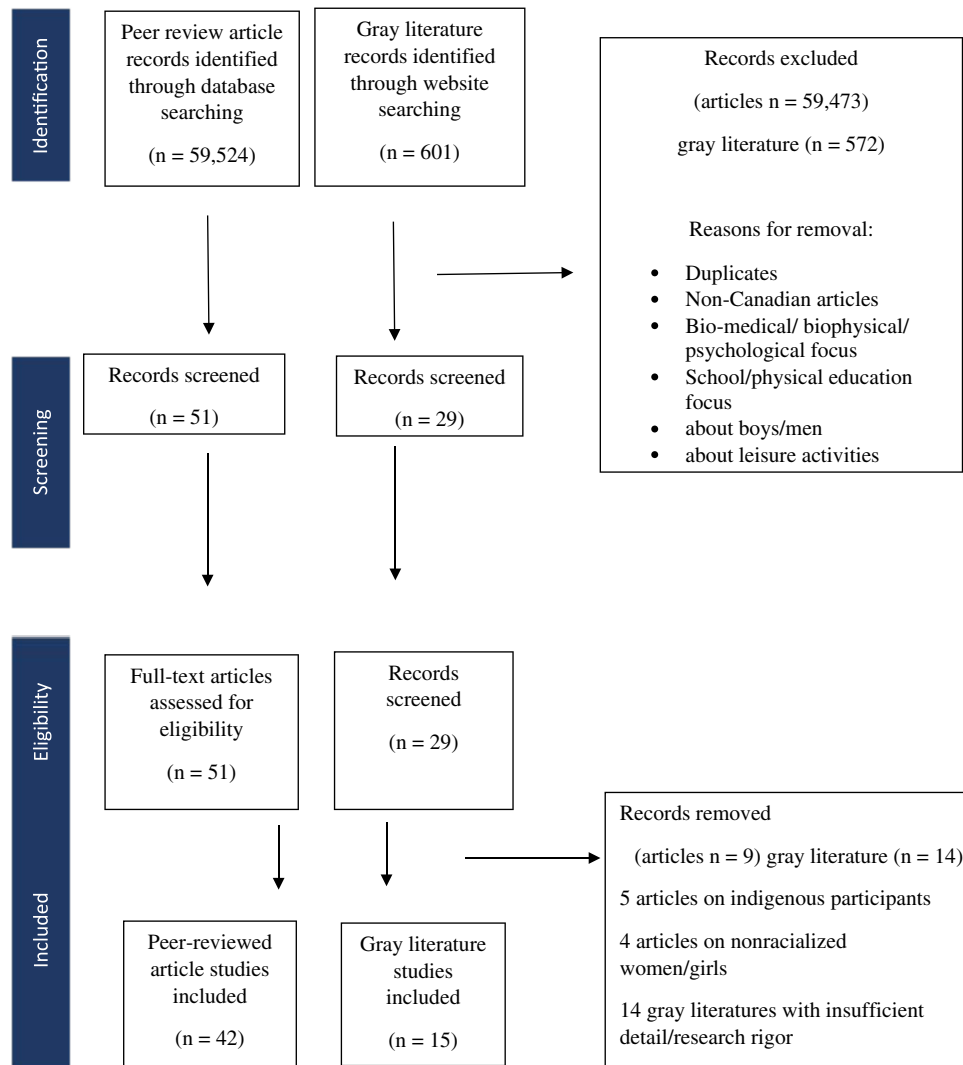


Figure 1 — PRISMA flow diagram with details of included and excluded sources.

strengths of these studies were in the chronicles of Canadian history, demonstrating that racialized women have been participating and facing racism in sport since the early 20th century. A further 3 studies analyzed large-scale cross-sectional surveys.^{39,51,52} The strength of these studies was the simultaneous inclusion of a variety of racial groups, allowing for comparison of participation rates and data across the lifespan. Overall, research cataloged a wide range of racialized women's experiences of physical activities (eg, cricket, swimming, boxing) in various locations (eg, churches, community centers, outdoors) and in spite of diverse barriers (eg, lack of childcare, transportation, or women-only spaces), helping to shift dominant, narrow conceptions of who racialized women are and where their sport and physical activity interests lie.

Many limitations of the studies prohibited deeper and broader analysis of racialized women's sport experiences. The first limitation was that a majority of the studies (n = 21) offered case studies including only 1–10 racialized women participants.^{11,53–61} These studies largely relied on snowball sampling, some reported difficulty with recruitment of participants, and few reported reaching saturation. Small numbers of participants allowed for deep, semi-structured interviews and focus groups to guide the methods, and,

for example, Livingston et al^{59(p406)} were able to create a focus group with “four of the sixteen individuals who had previously completed an individual interview . . . to provide the study participants with an opportunity to review, discuss and elaborate upon [the authors] initial interpretation of the data.” However, the case study approach is not scalable to address the experiences of what is measured by Statistics Canada³ to be Canada's nearly 4 million racialized women.

Second, some studies used a wide age range for the participants recruited. Given that experiences could vary significantly based on age within some samples, this was a potential shortcoming. Taylor and Doherty^{62,63} provided 2 solid examples of how using a specific age group revealed some of the nuances of barriers to participation. In their studies, participants were from an English as a second language program and from 18 different cultural backgrounds, including Afghani, Albanian, Iraqi, Romanian, Muslim, Croatian, Korean, Yemeni, Serbian, Pakistani, Chinese, Iranian, Sudanese, Taiwanese Eritrean, Greek, Kosovar, and Syrian. The authors did not specify the racial identities of the participants; however, they are included here because language and accent are a basis for racialization and discrimination. Honing in on adolescent girls revealed that language, unfamiliarity, and feeling excluded

were the main challenges to participation in sport, recreation, and physical education, but notably, these were bigger barriers for girls than for boys. Adolescent girls also used participation to alleviate depression and negative feelings and were more constrained by work and family commitments that prohibited greater sport participation.^{62,63} The strength of these studies in specifying age was contrasted with their weakness in mixing many ethnic and racial groups within the analysis, a third methodological challenge.

Third, immigration status, nation of origin, and race were sometimes mixed within studies as variables related to participant demographics, not allowing the analysis to account for differences within groups. For example, the English as a second language students of Taylor's and Doherty's^{62,63} studies had the potential to reveal how "newcomers" may be racialized in different ways. Studies that included Blacks, African immigrants, African refugees, Afro-Caribbeans, and African Canadians^{11,50,56,59,64–66} or South Asians^{67–69} inconsistently referenced ethnicity and did not allow for a more in-depth analysis of the specific cultures of the racial groups (eg, Kenyan Blacks vs Haitian Blacks; Pakistani Muslims vs Bangladeshi Muslims) and how their experiences may be similar or different from other groups. The studies also revealed concerns with language barriers among these groups that kept them out of sport. The differences between researchers and participants in terms of racial and ethnic identities and language capacities, furthermore, may have created an unaddressed power imbalance and limited some participants from further engaging or even participating in research.

Related to the mixture of ethnic/racial groups was a fourth methodological limitation, a focus on multiethnic issues, such as social inclusion, people from low-income families, and areas of Canada, such as specific racialized neighborhoods.^{66,70–73} Although the study of these issues/people/places is critically important and involves racialized women and, for example, Black participants from Haitian Canadian communities, they do not center "racialization," and their foci can, thereby, obscure the specific and complex barriers faced by women in these communities. For example, Ponc and Frisby⁷⁴ created a feminist participatory action research project and found that a dynamic interplay between structural determinants and individual agency influenced inclusion in a community-based health promotion project across psychosocial, relational, organizational, and participatory dimensions, but they were unable to clarify how "race" played a role in women's participation despite conducting focus groups with racialized women. When working with "marginalized women" to address their exclusion and related health issues, race and ethnicity differences should be revealed rather than obscured.

Theoretical frameworks included in these studies focused on a range of feminist approaches, including ecological frameworks that took into account the "whole person" and their interpersonal, intrapersonal, and environmental factors. We recommend expanding theoretical frameworks from feminist approaches that understand social inequality through a focus on gender as it intersects with race, ethnicity, and social class to more explicitly include critical race theory, queer theory, Black or transnational feminist theory, Islamic or Asian feminism, and/or decoloniality theory for a more fulsome analysis of racialized women's experiences. Integrating more complex analyses will allow for addressing women's intersectional needs, reflecting a broader range of identities, and interrogating questions of systemic power within and across racial groups and the broader structures of society. For example, a decolonial analysis of racialized women as settlers would prioritize their relationships to the

land and nature and position them as survivors of gendered and environmental violence. A decolonial analysis could extend understandings of low sport participation rates to focus on how systemic barriers limit racialized women's participation, draw attention to efforts to increase outdoor sport participation through urban conservation and nature-based organizations, and explore ongoing feelings of danger in "when nature and the great outdoors are seen as white spaces"^{75(p33)} that a gender/race/class analysis alone will not address. Three industry reports point out the need for more complex theoretical engagement and highlight the importance of addressing needs of racialized women but they offer limited detail about specific needs or experiences.^{39,76,77} Similarly, Razack⁶⁰ and Khalil⁵⁸ specifically call for greater attention to be paid to strategies of inclusion and complex intersectional identities when it comes to racialized and immigrant women to demonstrate how their experiences are unique from their White and male counterparts and to reveal the complexities of their experiences based on other social barriers and identities.

For a full list of academic literature identified through this review, please consult the Gender+ Equity in Sport in Canada Zotero Library (https://www.zotero.org/groups/2511303/gender_equity_in_sport_in_canada?token=c97e2ae1129569f1cc1bd0b2aa73ad05). The findings outlined here highlight the literatures for 4 different racialized groups of women: Blacks, Asians, Muslims, and immigrants.

Black Women in Sport in Canada

The literature on Black women in sport revealed 2 key themes: (1) participation has been limited by racism and sexism, and (2) participation is driven by community. Nzindukiyimana⁵⁰ is at the forefront of what remains limited historical research on Black women in sport in Canada. Even though Black women have been in Canada since the 17th century and despite sport access expanding significantly in the early to mid 20th century, externalized and internalized sexism and racism impacted Black women's experiences of sport in the 1920s–1940s; they were prevented from entering spaces and/or made to feel uncomfortable or unwelcomed when they did.⁵⁰ Moreover Black women have remained largely absent from public archives and written records.⁴⁹ When Black women are excluded, their communities and sport chronicles suffer.

James,⁵⁶ Nzindukiyimana and O'Connor,⁴⁸ van Ingen et al,⁶⁶ and Joseph⁷⁸ each recognized the potential for racism to limit Black women's participation. Joseph⁷⁸ focused specifically on racism as a factor that influences women's engagement with university sport but only went so far as to indicate that more research should be done. Gabay's⁶⁴ study of university sport with 60 Black women participants noted that for some student athletes, experiences of racism and/or sexism were not recognized until participants got older, and many of these instances were dismissed or ignored out of convenience, which is a coping strategy. University sport created opportunities for these Black women to negotiate and navigate Black womanhood, grapple with hypervisibility and invisibility of Blackness, and cope with high academic and athletic expectations.⁶⁴ A strength of this study was the clear differentiation between Black women's experiences from those of White women and Black men student-athletes.

Many of the studies on Black women's sport participation in Canada cited a lack of involvement in sports due to barriers, such as time, transportation, and money^{53,65} or lack of knowledge of the

available opportunities.^{11,59} The key finding from a report by Canadian Women and Sport³⁹ was that, with age, sport participation rates are decreasing for women and girls; 62% of women and girls do not participate in sport at all, and there is evidence of higher dropout rates for racialized girls. However, this report notes that 45% of Black girls are participating in sport compared with 24%–34% of girls identifying as Indigenous Asian, White, and South Asian, which illustrates the important role of sport in Black lives.

Nzindukiyimana and Wamsley's⁴⁹ study of Black communities in the 1940s and Joseph's¹¹ examination of Black Caribbean women in the early 2000s underscored the impact of community on women's participation in sport. The authors identified women's spectatorship in Ontario as an important and understudied dimension of sport involvement and highlighted the positive impact of community and social cohesion on the experiences of Black players, coaches, and umpires, particularly as they adopted sport as a space to fight for gender and racial inclusion.^{11,49} Socializing through sport and feeling a sense of belonging was a critical component for Black women in sport. Hurly⁶⁵ also demonstrated the importance of belonging through an analysis of how movement and the body were tightly bound in the Christian faith community of 3 African women who were former refugees resettled in Canada. They participated in nature-based physical activity for a wide range of reasons, including fitness, fun, solace, restoration, nurturing relationships, and fostering social networks with friends, family, and their ethnocultural racial communities. These activities also served to mitigate traumatic memories and stress. Most of the studies on Black women in sport recognized the dearth of literature and called for more research on this population.

Muslim Women in Sport in Canada

Muslim women enjoy a wide variety of sports and emphasize participation on their own terms. The key themes from this literature were (1) a desire for controlled access to women-only spaces and consequent rejection of mainstream sport and (2) a sense of empowerment that emerged from sport participation. Nakamura⁷⁹ found that one of the main barriers to sport participation for Indian, Pakistani, Gambian, and Lebanese Muslim women in Canada was the predominance of co-ed sport settings. In the absence of having controlled access to physical activity spaces as well as a modest dress code, the participants in Nakamura's⁷⁹ study elected to play exclusively within their religious communities, compromise their beliefs while participating in sports, or stop playing sports altogether. The refusal to play should not be interpreted as a refusal to integrate or a lack of physical ability. Integration and ability were also key themes in a study of hijab-wearing, Shia Muslim women.⁵⁷ These women repudiated the notion that they had to choose between physical activity participation and their faith and chose, instead, to focus on weight loss and mental well-being through participation in fitness rather than sport activities. "The participants were unanimous in their assessment that women-only facilities are rarely available in the larger Canadian society and that, consequently, their own community has to provide them."^{57(p260)} These Muslim women found spaces that worked for their needs.

In contrast, Oleschuk and Vallianatos⁸⁰ found that older Arab women (all but 1 out of 36 identified as Muslim, and 30 of 36 were married with children) did not find appropriate sport, physical activity, or fitness spaces. They, instead, focused on caring for their families, engaging in domestic work, and socializing with other women. For them, not having access to convenient transportation (such as owning a vehicle), particularly in the cold weather months

in Edmonton, Alberta, led to lower physical activity. An interesting finding was that this population perceived their physical activity participation to be lower in Canada as compared with "back home" due to social isolation and individualistic cultural norms in Canada. One way Abdulwasi et al⁶⁷ offered to address this barrier for older Muslim women was to create mosque-based physical activity programs to provide a communal, women-only setting for sport participation. Mosque-based sports could also resolve some transportation and childcare issues as other community members may be traveling to the same place. Muslim women emphasized that sport and physical activity opportunities were key to their physical and social health; however, self-identification of culturally and religiously appropriate settings was key to their empowerment.

The gray literature revealed that there are several organizations in Canada supporting Muslim women's sport that center on themes of antiracist empowerment. For example, Hijabi Ballers (www.hijabballers.com) is exclusively dedicated to Muslim women and girls and to promoting empowerment, confidence, and athletic skills across a variety of sports. Similarly, Muslim Women Sports YYC in Calgary (<https://www.facebook.com/MuslimWomenSportsyyc/>) centers fun, friendships, and playing sport to "defy the stereotypes 'Muslim Women Can't Play.'" Lady Ballers Camp (<https://ladyballerscamp.org>) is another organization committed to defying stereotypes. They provide equitable girls sport and wellness programming that accounts for low socioeconomic status. The basketball program is linked with online tutoring, storytelling activities related to overcoming relational and systemic forms of violence, and a homework club for girls 6–13, recognizing the intersectional needs of the participants. As a result of being offered in Peel Region of Ontario, one of the country's most racially and ethnoculturally diverse regions, Lady Ballers serves a predominantly racialized group of girls and young women, including Muslim girls. These types of organizations suggest that Muslim women and girls can grow in their sport practice and personal empowerment if a supportive environment is made available.

Asian Women in Sport in Canada

Studies of Asian women in Canadian sport generally separated Chinese and South Asian (Indian, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, and/or Sri Lankan) women, Canada's 2 largest racial/ethnic groups, and focused on 2 main themes: (1) participation in comparison with other groups and (2) dynamic culture and intersectional needs. Ramanathan⁶⁸ examined the physical activity participation of South Asian girls using a mixed-methods design of daily diaries and a survey and reported that South Asian girls engaged in lower levels of physical activity than boys. Girls' opportunities to develop physical activity pastimes were impacted by their perceptions of external support (including their fathers' and brothers' influence), family and peer relationships, and cultural and religious identities.^{68,81} Furthermore, according to Bryan et al,⁵¹ there is a significant gap between South Asian women's level of physical activity (34%) compared with their White women counterparts (49%). Rathanaswami et al⁶⁹ suggested that having programs that are affordable, close to home, female only, and flexible enough to allow women their own choice of clothing can support the physical activity participation of South Asian women. The failures of sport organizations to meet many of these requirements mean that many South Asian women are prevented from gaining sport-specific skills. Better strategies are needed to integrate them into elite sport and recreation systems in Canada, according to Razack.⁶⁰ In a

study of women's cricket in Canada, Razack⁶⁰ found that Indo-Canadians (Caribbean and East African heritage) perceived cricket as a cherished sport that represented their culture and family traditions and was currently dominated by South Asians; however, many women experienced "burn out" from trying to increase access in the male-dominated, sexist sport. Their attempts to change "non-inclusive governance, lack of resources, inequitable recruitment strategies, lack of leadership opportunities, and perhaps most importantly, lack of power" were futile.^{60(p142)} In comparison with South Asian men, South Asian women desire more opportunities to participate.

Similar to South Asian women, Chinese newcomer women, who represent the largest immigrant group in British Columbia, expressed desire to increase their civic engagement and physical health through sport and recreation. Frisby's⁸² research with 50 Chinese newcomers provided feedback to local governments and policy makers at federal and provincial levels. To increase their comfort with winter sports and facilitate social connections that enhanced settlement, Chinese women wanted "facility tours and . . . instruction in Mandarin or Cantonese about some [Olympic] winter sports so they would be more knowledgeable about them . . . and also initially wanted to undertake activities with their families and other Chinese people."^{82(p142)} A related study with the same participants⁸³ found that Chinese women experienced downward social mobility after immigration, which was correlated with discrimination in the job market, lack of access to free sport through their workplace or communities, unavailability of multigenerational domestic help, and demanding family responsibilities. Many of these women felt uncomfortable spending money and time on their own sport activities but also did not feel welcomed at some sport facilities. They felt othered, essentialized, and homogenized when assumptions were made about what sports they could, or wanted to, play. Stereotypes about Chinese women's interests (eg, in badminton or table tennis) led to many of their needs not being met.^{82,83} The authors concluded that "[an] essentialized notion of Chinese culture will limit rather than expand the opportunities for Chinese immigrant women's physical culture in Canada."^{83(p160)} Indirectly, the authors alluded to the idea that more sport facility staff, coaches, and leaders with understanding of the Chinese experience could shift the foundation of sport and social policies in Canada.

Policies are made by individual people, always in relation to Canadian power dynamics. In 2016, the federal, provincial, and territorial sports ministers created a working group to recommend ways of increasing girls' and women's participation at all levels of Canadian sports. That group conducted a conference, a pan-Canadian survey, and extensive meetings to generate recommendations related to establishing clear targets; plans for action, monitoring, and evaluating participation and leadership; and a strategy to eliminate gender-based harassment, abuse, and discrimination to ensure that sport was safe and welcoming. The latter recommendation, approved unanimously by the federal, provincial, and territorial sports ministers, became known as the 2019 Red Deer Declaration with commitments to "engage relevant experts to identify effective approaches to prevent and respond to incidents of harassment, abuse, and discrimination."^{84(para 2)} Two years later, in its 2018 budget, the government of Canada "announced a target to achieve gender equity in sport at every level by 2035."⁸⁵ The federal Minister of Science and Sport appointed a Working Group on Gender Equity in Sport to advise her on how to achieve this target. Reporting in December 2018, the working group recommended new programs for underserved communities, including visible minorities, a third-party mechanism to address harassment

and abuse cases, and increasing the number of women coaches, to name a few priorities.

Despite the importance of both working groups, neither fully represented the Canadian population. Although there was one Japanese Canadian on the federal, provincial, and territorial work group, there appeared to be no Asian representation on the 12-member federal Working Group on Gender Equity in Sport, despite South Asian and Chinese Canadians numbering 3.5 million people and women being 45% of those.³ Anti-Asian harassment and abuse is increasing in Canada. Women from those communities should be at the table to address the underrepresentation of Asian women in sport participation, leadership, and research and the exclusions, harassment, abuse, and discrimination they face.

Immigrant Women in Sport in Canada

Migration to a foreign country is a highly significant event, and the process of acculturation and settlement into a new society can be quite challenging and stressful. Sport and recreation are considered an important immigrant integration mechanism by many newcomer settlement organizations in Canada^{61,86} as physical activity participation is known to ameliorate the stresses associated with immigration.^{82,87} However, migration poses challenges to physical activity participation for immigrant women and girls,⁸⁸ and racialized immigrants experience additional barriers. The major themes related to the literature on immigrant girls' and women's sport are (1) language and culture discrimination and (2) recommendations for creating equal sport opportunities.

Studies focusing on immigrant women often used mixed-ethnicity/mixed-gender samples and did not always specify race in favor of a nation-of-origin analysis. For example, in Doherty and Taylor's⁶² study of the experiences of 40 youth, 21 identified as women from North and East Africa; West, South, and East Asia; and Eastern Europe. The women in this study engaged in informal volleyball games and preferred sports and recreation outside of school with family and friends; however, they were constrained by discrimination and exclusion related to their lack of proficiency in the English language, difficulties in communication, and unfamiliarity with the intent/rules of a game.

Participation in sport can be a gendered, racialized experience for some immigrants and should be seen as racial projects⁸⁹ whereby meanings are ascribed and hierarchies are created around language proficiency, accent, appearance, names, clothing, and behaviors. These hierarchies can lead to the name calling, "othering," stigmas around attire, and ostracization reported by immigrant girls and women.^{62,63,88,90} Still, many immigrants and refugees who do partake in sport report positive experiences. Sports and physical activity are identified as a means to build community, socialize, learn English, and have fun.^{55,62,63,65,87,88,90-93} These studies highlight the importance of engagement with members of their homeland communities, who were perceived as sources of guidance, comfort, and empathy. The Whiteness of other mainstream sporting spaces was a factor for the comfort that racial or ethnic community-exclusive sporting spaces offered to refugees and immigrants.

An example from Ramos Salas et al⁸⁸ provides an important contribution to the literature as it is illustrative of how mainstream spaces do not always account for immigrant needs. Their study on Latin American immigrant women in Alberta showed that both recent (< 10 y) and nonrecent (> 10 y) immigrants believed that "discrimination and racism influenced their ability to integrate both economically and socially."^{88(p1242)} Although the women in this

study “considered physical activity an important behaviour for overall health, few engaged in leisure-time physical activity.”^{88(p1248)} They needed physical activities that included spiritual and social components, and reflected the wide spectrum of Latin American cultures and socioeconomic statuses, and that recognized the importance of Latin American women’s family roles and gender expectations. Notably, Latin American women may experience racialization differently, and some may be considered White in Canada and enter into higher socioeconomic statuses than Blacks and Asians, which can influence acculturation and differential access to various forms of involvement in sport and physical activity.

Canadian Women in Sport³⁹ also recognized discrimination as a hindering factor in girls’ and women’s sport participation, though they did not study particular immigrant or racial groups. Disability, perceptions of cost, access, confidence, belongingness, feeling welcome, or being from rural communities, lesbian, gay, polysexual, bisexual, pansexual, queer, questioning, or asexual were all reported as likely barriers to a woman’s engagement and participation in sport.^{39(p15)} All of these factors may be amplified for immigrant or racialized women. The report recommended the review of policies, practices, and norms related to gender and proactively addressing harassment and antidiscrimination. The organization published a study more specific to racialized immigrant girls’ and young women’s experiences with sport, physical activity, and healthy living.⁹⁴ Focus groups (n = 19) and interviews (n = 6) across Toronto, Brampton, Ottawa, London, St. Catharines, Windsor, Hamilton, and Thunder Bay in Ontario, Canada with sport participants and service providers found that competition and/or fun made participation in sport enjoyable for racialized immigrant women and girls. At the same time, fundamental to enhancing their services was learning the similarities and differences among racialized immigrants, racialized women who were born in Canada, or racialized people who have been there for many generations through “understanding the needs and building relationships with the family as whole . . . increasing direct engagement with racialized communities; and educating service providers and decision-makers about race, racism and discrimination.”^{94(p42)} Addressing the needs of immigrant and racialized women and girls in sport must be a multipronged approach.

Several industry reports are clear that there is an underrepresentation of racialized and immigrant women and girls in sport in Canada or that supporting “diverse” women is a priority.⁹⁵ The International Working Group on Women and Sport⁹⁶ created a resource that emerged from the 2002 World Conference on Women and Sport in Montreal and included in its resolutions: “Equal opportunity to participate and be involved in sport . . . the right of every girl and women [*sic*], regardless of race, colour, language, religion, creed, gender/sexual orientation, age, marital status, disability, political belief or affiliation, national or social origin”^(p17) and “tools for changing organizations, systems and structures.”^(p23) Though the conference was hosted in Canada, the recommendations do not specifically address racial discrimination that immigrant women and girls face, and serve to highlight the drastic limitation in research and recommendations with a focus on immigrant racialized women in sport in Canada.

Discussion

Gaps and Future Directions

There is little research documenting how systemic racism and White privilege operate in Canadian sport to affect racialized women. To

address this methodological and theoretical gap, a critical race theory approach to this topic would suggest scholarly attention highlight the spatial and cultural logics of Whiteness in Canadian sport.^{66,97} Studies on racialized women should articulate the ways in which the prevalence of White, neoliberal discourses of health, respectability, and meritocracy structure sport and recreation spaces and subcultures and limit those who wish to be involved in sports both as participants and as leaders. Relational research that interrogates White sport participants and leaders about what they experience will help to name the invisible privileges that maintain the status quo. Without recentering White people, who have been normalized in Canadian sport, we must develop a deeper understanding of the histories of colonialism and cultures of Whiteness that keep racialized women out to inform how to change racist systems.

There is little research outside of race–class–gender on the multiple and intersectional identities and barriers experienced (eg, racist 2SLGBTQI+ sport, ableist Muslim sport) and wide-ranging sport-related needs (eg, childcare, eldercare, church-, mosque-, or social-group embedded) of racialized women. Beyond narratives of inclusion versus exclusion, comparative and intersectional research on how age, language, accent, skin shade, and other characteristics may play a role in the experiences and perspectives of immigrant and racialized women on sport and physical activity can provide more insight. This requires a theoretical approach that foregrounds intersectionality, transnationality, and settler colonialism and places structural barriers (as opposed to kinds of racialized people) at the center of the analysis. Because racialized women may or may not be mothers, new immigrants, or religious, we must think carefully about how to do research that recognizes their experiences that result from racism while aiming to transform sexist or other discriminatory practices that could also benefit other women with whom they are in community. Fast and Female (<https://fastandfemale.com>) is one of few organizations to draw from industry reports on women and girls in Canada, to share information on their website, and to highlight solidarity with racialized 2SLGBTQI+ communities, recognizing the intersectional identities of racialized women and girls with respect to gender and sexuality. However, it is unclear how this solidarity translates to their programming. Much more research should be done to acknowledge and understand the specific experiences of queer, nonbinary, and trans women athletes and leaders in Canada.

There is a dearth of scholarly knowledge on the various forms (eg, coaching, spectatorship, reporting), levels (eg, recreational, varsity, high performance), and types (eg, team sport, martial arts, dance, fitness) of sport participation among racialized women. It is important to note that experiences may vary by geographical location across Canada, which can greatly impact access and cost.

The most significant gap is the little overall research on racialized women and their preferred physical activities. The small number of studies and their small numbers of participants indicate that there is a large gap in knowledge of racialized women’s sporting experiences. Future directions and recommendations for research include further analyzing the intersections of social identities through focusing on specific racial and ethnic groups independently, looking at more specific and smaller age ranges, and also expanding to all provinces (urban centers in Alberta, British Columbia, Quebec, and Ontario were primarily represented). As community-based physical activity was found to be a driver for racialized women to meet others similar to themselves and to be motivated to continue to participate, more research could focus on cultural centers, religious centers, and ethnic-group-specific sport opportunities.

Limitations and Strengths

This scoping review has some limitations. One limitation is our use of the Sport Canada definition of “sport,” which required us to exclude the majority of the studies that focused on dance and leisure activities that may be physical but not “sport.” It may well be that the low number of studies on racialized women in sport both reinforces and reflects the stereotypical notion that women are not as athletic as men and attests to the social exclusion of racialized people from formal sport participation and sport leadership opportunities. However, it may also be true that non-Western sports (eg, capoeira, kabaddi) and leisure practices (eg, heritage tourism walks) are valuable sites of physical activity for some racialized women that are not sites of “sport” research. For example, in Ontario, Vahabi and Danba⁹⁸ studied a Bollywood dance exercise program among South Asian women, and Dhillon et al⁹⁹ explored a drumming and dancing program among convention refugees. Excluding experiences such as these from studies of racialized women limits the understanding of broad-based physical activity participation in Canada. A study of literatures based on a broader definition of leisure-time physical activities, including sport, among racialized women in Canada should be addressed in future research.

A further limitation of this scoping review is the focus on English language peer-reviewed published academic articles and non-peer-reviewed gray literatures. Publications in other languages may reveal differences in sport participation in other racialized women’s communities, particularly francophone communities in Canada. Although this scoping review identified important literature on racialized women in sport, scoping reviews are limited in that they do not assess the overall quality of evidence.⁴³ As such, future research in this area should include systematic reviews to understand better the themes that emerge from research on differently positioned women. In addition, we could not make definitive statements regarding the conceptual, theoretical, and/or methodological frameworks and models used in the included studies or even on the racial groupings of the women participants, in some cases (eg, studies of “immigrants”), if they were not explicitly stated or discussed by the authors.

The scoping review also has a wide range of strengths and recommendations based on the current state of knowledge about racialized women in sport in Canada. This scoping review provides scholars with a single source cataloging literatures on sport experiences and barriers to participation among Black, Muslim, Asian, and immigrant women in Canada. It will likely be helpful for researchers and sport practitioners as it articulates gaps in knowledge and areas for extended research that will help women improve their participation. Another strength of this scoping review is its revelation of the need for more mixed-methods approaches that may prove to be beneficial in collecting data from a broader range and greater number of racialized women. Larger surveys can be paired with qualitative and arts-based approaches to gain a more in-depth understanding of the experiences of racialized women and the ways they are already theorizing their experiences. A last strength of this scoping review is a recommendation to renew focus on knowledge translation and sharing with policy makers, sport and recreation facility operators, and educators. Researchers and sport leaders must prioritize additional efforts to share findings, make research more accessible, and educate key stakeholders on the pleasures and joys that racialized women experience in sport while also working to change and improve the barriers to full and equitable participation.

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