

EXPERIENCES OF EMBODIMENT: ANALYSIS OF MUSLIM WOMEN'S
PARTICIPATION IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

(Spine title: Muslim Women's Participation in Physical Activity)

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by

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ABSTRACT AND KEYWORDS

This dissertation examines the relationship the ‘lived body’ experiences of veiled Muslim females in sport and physical activity. When considering the relationship between religious requirements and participation in sport and physical activity, the discussion of the conflicts that have occurred with some veiled Muslim female athletes can support the examination of the articulation of sport and religion. In this dissertation, I will explore the application of logical and philosophical discussion as an analytic framework in the evaluation of social, cultural and religious discourse. The application of this framework will contribute to the evaluation of epistemological premises that have contributed to the definition of: i) the experiences of women in sport; and ii) the impact of the institutional requirements on female embodiment.

Rooted in the development and promotion of group and individual rights within a community, ‘Ishraq: Safe Places to Learn, Play and Grow’, currently utilizes sport and physical activity to encourage young girls and women living in rural areas to build upon their educational experience and learn about health care, citizenship rights, and seeks to encourage full participation in all aspects of public life. Through the evaluation of an applied case example, this dissertation examines the implementation of a physical activity program as a vehicle to support changes in the local community.

Keywords: embodiment, sport, religion, veiled Muslim women, phenomenology.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Ash'arites*	School of early Muslim speculative theology. The view that the comprehension of unique nature and characteristics of God were beyond human capability.
Āyāt***	Sign: used for verse of the Qur'án.
Burka***	The <i>burka</i> is usually associated with the strictest kind of veiling where a cloak is worn over the clothes and covers the head, body and legs. Often there is only a slit for the eyes.
Dayas**	Traditional birth attendants.
Dīn***	Religious faith conceived of as a way of life.
Falsafa*	Philosophy. <i>Faylasūf</i> , pl. <i>Falāsifa</i> : philosopher.
Fatāwa****	Religious ruling or verdict.
Fitra***	Intrinsic nature.
Hadith*	Traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, collected in the <i>Sunna</i> .
Hijab***	Veil covering the head.
Jilbāb***	Cloak.
Khumūr***	Shawl.
Kufr*	Infidelity, unbelief. <i>Al-kāfir</i> : the infidel. <i>Takfīr</i> : accusation of infidelity, bring with it condemnation to death. For this reason, the doctors of law generally avoid encouraging the pronouncement of such a serious sentence.

Mutakallimūn*	The term <i>kalam</i> has usually been translated as 'word' or 'speech', but a more appropriate rendering in this context would be 'discussion', 'argument' or 'debate'. Those who engaged in these discussions or debates were referred to as <i>mutakallimun</i> (those who practise <i>kalam</i> or debate).
Nafs***	Self, person.
Niqab***	A form of veiling referring to covering the face.
Rabb***	Cherisher and Sustainer; a commonly used Qur'ānic word for God.
Sharia***	Islamic law.
Tawhīdi***	Doctrine of God's Unity.
Zawāj***	Mate, pair.
Zulm***	Doing harm to others by transgressing their rights.

* Definitions are borrowed from:

Arnaldez, Roger. *Averroes: A Rationalist in Islam*. Translated by David Steet. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000.

** Definitions are borrowed from:

El-Zanaty, Fatima and Way, Ann. "Egypt Demographic and Health Survey." Ministry of Health, 2009.

*** Definitions are borrowed from:

Barlas, Asma. "Believing Women" in *Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an*. Texas: University of Texas Press, 2002.

**** Definitions are borrowed from:

Husain, Ibn Maqbool. *Fatāwa: Essential Rulings for Every Muslim Woman*. Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, 2005.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

It would be fitting to begin a discussion about the relationship between sport and religion with a reference to Ancient Greece. Reaffirmed by scholars who examine Ancient Greek society, competitive sport and religion were in fact intertwined and interdependent with one another,

The Olympic Games were held in honor of Zeus, king of the Greek Gods; the Pythian games took place as a festival in honor of Apollo; the Isthmain games were held in honor of the god Poseidon; and the Nemean games were held in honor of Zeus.¹

D. Stanley Eitzen and George H. Sage in their work argue that given the interconnected relationship between beauty, athleticism and religious observance, it is difficult to concretely delineate and define the spheres of sport and religion in Ancient Greek society, “The strong anthropomorphic conceptions of gods held by the Greeks led to their belief that gods took pleasure in the same things as mortals – music, drama, and displays of physical excellence.”² In the 21st century, the relationship between sport and religion is vastly different compared to its Greek origins. Eitzen and Sage note that the evaluation of the current symbiotic relationship between sport and religion in North America yields examples of cases where religion uses sport and sport uses religion as a vehicle. This relationship can range from bolstering individuals’ commitment to religion in cases such as, a church that sponsors sports for social service and integration, to the use of prayer and rituals to enhance team cohesion.³ These accounts highlight the multidimensional and dynamic relationship between two socially valued institutions. However, what is missing is an examination of the impact of the relationship between sport and religion on

human embodiment. This is an especially relevant concern when both the institutions of sport and religion have a prescriptive impact on the body of the athlete and are in conflict with one another. In particular, this tension can be highlighted through examples of veiled Muslim female participants.

Further evidence for the need of philosophical analysis of veiled Muslim female participants is supported by a gap in the current literature examining the sociology and philosophy of sport. In her work, Jennifer Hargreaves notes that although important work with respect to women in sport has been supported, the fact that a majority of these kinds of analysis have been based in a Western context is problematic,

Since the dominant female sports culture is assumed to be White, Western, middle-class, heterosexual and able-bodied, women who come from minority groups and from countries outside of the West have been marginalized, and their experiences, problems, struggles, and achievements have been excluded from mainstream history and practice.⁴

Hargreaves' claim is supported by Eitzen and Sage because their analysis only evaluated the relationship between sport and religion in a Western context. In this dissertation, it is the relationship between sport and religion that begs the inclusion of the religion of Islam and an international perspective. In order to contribute to the gap identified by Hargreaves, an analysis of selected veiled Muslim female's experience in sport will be evaluated. This analysis will also include a discussion of the relationship between sport and religion that is based on the examination of the impact competing institutional structures may have on veiled Muslim female embodiment.

A discussion of the concept of female embodiment is addressed by Iris Marion Young. In her book, On Female Body Experience: "Throwing like a girl and other

essays”, she reflects on the impact of using the notion of the ‘lived body’ instead of gender to describe the phenomenological experiences of women.⁵ Young bases this examination on the conception of the ‘lived body’ offered by Toril Moi.⁶ According to Moi, the idea of the ‘lived body’ can be defined as,

To consider the body as a situation...is to consider both the fact of being a specific kind of body and the meaning that concrete body has for the situated individual. This is not the equivalent of either sex or gender. The same is true for “lived experience” which encompasses our experience of all kinds of situations (race, class, nationality, etc.) and is a far more wide-ranging concept than the highly psychologising concept of gender identity.⁷

Young finds the concept of the ‘lived body’ intriguing and believes that it can be used in conjunction with feminist theory when exploring and understanding embodiment of both men and women. In her evaluation of the female and feminine experience, Young considers the perspective employed by Christine Battersby to be rooted in feminist philosophical evaluation and useful to the discussion of existential qualities of female experience,

Battersby proposes a different philosophical framework arising from this female embodiment. The starting point, she suggests, acknowledges that the subject lives as flesh, and that there are inevitable dependencies between self and other. These in turn engender power inequalities that cannot be abolished but should be acknowledged if each of us is to receive due respect.⁸

Young’s assessment of this concept has a great deal of merit. Although theoretical frameworks are useful in discussing and analyzing the impacts of social and cultural discourses on embodiment, there is no satisfactory mechanism in place within these frameworks that can account for personal phenomenological experiences. The utilization of ‘lived body’ accounts, in conjunction with theoretical analysis can result in a deeper understanding of embodiment. Fundamentally, these accounts can assist in the evaluation

of ontological claims that are largely informed by social, cultural and religious conceptions. This in turn, can assist in the evaluation of epistemological premises that are used to largely define women's embodiment, especially in cases where women's experiences have not been studied.

Statement of Ethical Issue and Purpose

This study expands upon my Master's thesis research, which involved an examination of how Muslim women living in Egypt experienced their participation in sport and physical activity in a variety of forms ranging from traditional games to structured sport activities. Findings from this research showed that Muslim females' experiences in physical activity were largely influenced by Western definitions of sport. The doctoral research completed for this dissertation has extended this line of inquiry by examining in greater depth the assumptions about gender and culture, with particular reference to religion that inform Muslim female's experiences in physical activity, and how these assumptions function to support and prevent women's participation in sport and physical activity.

Recently, any global attention towards veiled Muslim females has been conceptualized as a battle over religion and women's rights. One of the specific goals of this dissertation is to bring forth the 'lived body' experiences of Muslim females who participate in the 'Ishraq: Safe Places to Learn, Play and Grow' program in Egypt.⁹ Through a discussion and analysis of the participants' experiences, I hope to challenge epistemological premises that are currently used to define: i) women's experiences in sport and physical activity; and ii) religious requirements and female embodiment. Furthermore, I hope to contribute to the development of refined epistemological premises

which may in turn impact veiled Muslim women in a positive manner. At the core of this thesis, an attempt to link the discussion and development of patterns of identity with the discussion and development of epistemological premises is made.¹⁰

Justification

Additionally, in the 1993 Presidential address for the Philosophic Society for the study of sport, Joy T. DeSensi stated, “There is an obvious void regarding the concept of feminism in the philosophy of sport literature as well as a critical need for the exploration of theoretical undergirding to valuable questions and issues regarding gender issues, relations, and feminism in society and in sport.”¹¹ Drawing attention to previous conference presentations, DeSensi noted that the goal of this address was to expand upon the claim that it is paramount that the epistemological premises of women be explored in order to understand women in sport. This statement was based on her acknowledgement of gaps in the philosophy of sport literature landscape.

The philosophical evaluation of ‘lived body’ experiences will complement the research that has been conducted in the areas of sport history, sociology of sport and sport management. Broadly speaking, the research conducted within these disciplines contributes to the challenging sport structures that limit women’s participation in sport. In the area of sport history, the role of women, many considered to be pioneers, provides much needed contextual stories and examples that inform our understanding of the roots of women’s participation in sport. Through the exploration of the relationship between gender and sport, traditional views of male and female embodiment are dissected and patriarchal influences on female sport participation is unpacked by sport sociologists.

Finally, in the field of sport management, the exploration of the impact of women in leadership positions in sport, leisure and recreation provides important perspectives. This description provides a snapshot of the multiple approaches required in order to fully evaluate women's participation in sport.

A second area of concern were misunderstandings and generalizations that plague applications of feminist theory and how this may be an additional stumbling block for the inclusion of feminist research in the field of philosophy of sport. To address this void, DeSensi argued that it is essential that further research include the development of feminist frameworks in conjunction with the exploration of women's participation in sport, "I am suggesting two areas be given consideration. First that the concept of "women's voice" and the "absence of women's voice...I am also suggesting that we accept this approach as a feminist challenge within social-philosophy."¹² DeSensi also acknowledged that although women may have similar experiences, there are important differences among groups of women that have also not been addressed. To support the use of feminist frameworks that highlight women's voices in sport, DeSensi also explored how filling in this large hole can be a foundation for the development and discussion of epistemological premises. She argued that without the discussion of epistemological perspectives, the potential for understanding how women can interpret ways of knowing, understanding, authority and truth cannot be realized,

As a perspective from which women viewed reality and came to understand truth, knowledge and authority, we can acknowledge a different epistemological approach: This particular approach is particularly for women and most appropriate for women in sport.¹³

Fundamentally, DeSensi was advocating for research that considers the development of epistemological premises that can occur through various channels and are not confined to traditional philosophical studies of epistemology. This involves the consideration of plurality in the definition of self and identity. This is a departure from forms of philosophic inquiry such as Aristotelian forms of essentialism:

For Aristotle, the essence of a thing is linked to its ‘substance’ or ‘being’ (ousia), and to the timeless and necessary element in the species of genius which persists across change. Essence is bound up with the minimal necessary and sufficient conditions that enable us to identify and reidentify entities as belonging to the ‘same’ kind.¹⁴

DeSensi was not advocating for the complete removal of philosophical investigation that includes traditional forms of analysis, rather she was finding fault with the sole reliance on traditional conceptualizations which greatly limit the possibilities of the examination of women and feminist frameworks in conjunction with philosophy.

Due to the time and length constraints of the Presidential Address, DeSensi did not expand upon which forms of philosophical inquiry can be used to develop, explore, or challenge current epistemological premises. Although such a framework is not provided, DeSensi did provide a clue that is useful in identifying how to approach addressing these gaps. She noted that:

In sport, questions such as the meaning associated with being a woman and how such a concept has changed over the years might be particularly relevant along with how participation in sport has helped us gain knowledge and understanding, how power/authority is perceived by women, and how women athletes handle ethical/moral concerns in sport.¹⁵

Incorporating the link between ‘lived body’ experiences and understanding women’s perceptions provides a platform for the introduction of phenomenal accounts of women’s experiences in sport. In this thesis, I will work from DeSensi in the following ways by: i)

briefly building upon DeSensi's claim that the traditional adversarial method commonly employed in philosophical inquiry does not provide an adequate forum for the explanation of women's experiences in sport; ii) further exploring the development of epistemological premises with respect to veiled Muslim females; and iii) attempting to answer DeSensi's call for research that builds upon women's voices in sport through an examination of the participants' experiences in the 'Ishraq: Safe Places to Learn, Play and Grow' program in the rural areas of Upper Egypt.

Building upon this large body of work, the development of research in the area of philosophy of sport, will provide additional perspectives that ultimately support the study of women in sport. Furthermore, the integration of theoretical analysis with the inclusion of an applied case example in this dissertation, will integrate methods used in the areas of sociology and philosophy. This approach further exemplifies the need for unique and collaborative methods in the analysis of women in sport.

Dissertation Methodology

Two main methodological frameworks have been applied in this dissertation. In order to facilitate both the discussion of the relationship between sport and religion and the impact of tensions between these two institutions on the veiled Muslim female body, a feminist framework was used. This framework was built from layering three interconnected forms of evaluation that have grown from postmodern developments in feminist theory. There are numerous forms of theoretical frameworks that have arisen from the feminist streams of evaluation. Typically, researchers select one form of feminist theory to use as a foundational framework. This form of selection is usually based on a harmony between the area of research and the tenets of the feminist theory

selected. The first and somewhat broad framework selected for this dissertation falls under the category of feminist philosophy. As noted by Ann Garry and Marilyn Pearsall in the book, Women, Knowledge, and Reality: Explorations in feminist philosophy, academic forms of feminist philosophy are predominately influenced by traditional philosophical methods, which are rooted in forms of normative dualism.¹⁶ In order to address these problematic forms of evaluation, feminist philosophers such as Judith Butler, Iris Marion Young, Christine Battersby, and Elizabeth Grosz have sought other methods by which forms of traditional philosophic inquiry can be infused with feminist forms of evaluation. In different ways, these authors follow what Garry and Pearsall outline is the formula for modifying traditional forms of philosophical inquiry,

Feminist philosophers examine and criticize the assumptions and presuppositions of the ideals and institutions of our culture. We write about a wide range of topics, from the most overtly political issues such as job discrimination, rape and the use of sexist language, to the subtle underlying metaphysical and epistemological assumptions of our culture and our philosophical traditions.¹⁷

Fitting with the broader goal of this dissertation, the evaluation of epistemological assumptions, the perspective of existential phenomenology was selected as an analytic lens employed in this dissertation. Young defines this as,

An existential phenomenological approach aims to speak from the point of view of the constituted subject's experience, in ways that complement but do not duplicate the observational or interpretive methods of Foucault, Butler, and Bourdieu.¹⁸

By employing this method, the framework is based on understanding and interpreting a 'lived body' experience while theorizing and discussing the underlying epistemological assumptions of how these experiences are largely informed by social and cultural presumptions.

Layered on the framework rooted in existential phenomenology is the analytic perspective informed by feminist metaphysics. Rooted in the tenets of phenomenological exploration, Christine Battersby acknowledges that the word ‘phenomenal’ has two different and distinct meanings within traditional forms of metaphysical investigation,

In the history of western metaphysics ‘woman’ is phenomenal in a double sense. She’s something wonderful, amazing, astonishing, and peculiar. But she’s also just a surface deviation; mere ‘appearance’; unrepresentative of that distinctive, underlying ‘essence’ of humanity that philosophers have associated with ‘truth’. She falls outside ‘essence’ – or the defining characteristics of species or a think – in ways that have been supposed to make it a mistake to look for an essence of female nature or experience.¹⁹

Dubbed by Battersby as ‘fleshy metaphysics’, she argues that by developing a metaphysical account of identity through the exploration of phenomenological discussions, we can incorporate personal accounts of feeling and ‘lived body’ experiences. This in turn can be useful in the discussion and evaluation of epistemological premises.

This approach is also valuable because it allows for the identification of several interconnected features that must be considered when exploring phenomenological accounts of women. The first feature relates to the identification of the female body as being associated with the ‘flesh’ rather than the soul or mind that may or may not be considered part of the flesh,

The ‘female’ subject-position is linked to fleshy continuity, rather than to an autonomous and individualized ‘soul’ or ‘mind’ that merely inhabits the flesh. However, the dominant model of the human in Western modernity is disembodied: a ‘spirit’, a ‘soul’, ‘consciousness’ or ‘cogito’ whose ‘personhood’ is bound up with rationality and soul, rather than flesh.²⁰

The utilization of ‘fleshy metaphysics’ assists in flushing out the woven relationships between the physical body and moral capacity. This perspective informs the discussion of the impact of religious Scripture on how the physical body is defined in a social context. This highlights the relationship between moral capacity and the female body which will be examined with respect to governance over the female form. Lastly, the use of this framework allowed for the theoretical and the personal narratives to be intertwined and therefore each area was considered.

This feature is particularly important in the field of philosophy of sport because it allows for the development of philosophical discussion and evaluation that is linked to the individuals who are physically participating in sport and physical activity. Research that attempts to join conceptual discussions with experiential illustrations is also notably absent from the philosophy of sport literature. In this dissertation, a discussion centered on the female-subject position of the veiled Muslim female athlete through a conceptualization of the essences, which are linked to patterns of identity will be included. In addition, personal narratives will be examined through an application of Battersby’s approach to ‘fleshy metaphysics’. Through the integration of a case study, the work in this thesis sought to bridge philosophical and feminist theory with a discussion of patterns of identity.

The second and final methodological framework utilized in this dissertation is drawn from qualitative methodology. In order to move beyond theoretical discussion and explore the ‘lived body’ experiences of veiled Muslim females in physical activity, a case study was conducted. The primary focus of this study was to further understand and

unpack the phenomenological expressions of personal experience. The non-formal education program, 'Ishraq: Safe Places to Learn, Play and Grow', currently utilizes physical activity to encourage young girls and women living in rural areas to build upon their educational experience and learn about health care and citizenship rights. This program was initiated in August 2001 in the villages of Al Minyā, located just outside Cairo in Upper Egypt. The program uses educational and physical activity modules to develop the participant's educational skills, self-confidence and decision-making skills.

This study was approached through the use of critical theory as the paradigm framework. Fitting with this paradigm, the methodology selected is rooted in dialogic and dialectical interactions. Giroux defines this approach as an attempt to uncover subjugated knowledges of the participants in order to understand their experiences.²¹ Through the use of a focused ethnography, this study addressed a smaller micro perspective to uncover the impacts of social structures through the experiences of the participants of the 'Ishraq' program. Fitting with the critical realist paradigm, the theoretical assumptions that are considered in this study include the identification of how social structures impact human actions, and in turn, how social structures are reproduced or changed through human actions.²² Drawing on sociological and anthropological traditions, ethnographic research is based on the theoretical assumption that the behaviours and actions of the participants are reflections of the participants' experiences with social structures.²³ Although this study was based on a focused ethnography and individual interviews, it has added to foundational research conducted during the exploratory study completed in 2007.

This current study used a two-part qualitative research format in the form of semi-structured focus group style interviews and document analysis of the program curriculum. The development of this framework was influenced by understanding the ‘lived body’ perspective and considered an account of Battersby’s fleshy metaphysics. By taking these two approaches into account, the framework shifted away from the solid parameters of qualitative ethnographic research,

Feminist metaphysics may start by deconstructing – but can also move on to reconstruct – such notions as ‘self’, ‘person’ and identity itself, taking female (not feminine) embodiment as its point of departure.²⁴

The new framework incorporated semi-permeable boundaries that integrate phenomenological experiences with the assessment of epistemological premises.

Case Study Methodology

Prior to the commencement of fieldwork data collection, the research paradigm used was identified as being located in the critical realist paradigm. Research examining the relationship between quantitative and qualitative methods has allowed for individuals and researchers to explore and identify set features that are linked to these areas of study. Through the exploration of inter-paradigm critiques, Egon G. Guba and Yvonna S. Lincoln note that several alternative paradigms have been established and are essentially built upon the critique of received view.²⁵ The notion of received view, employed in quantitative research methods describes, “the inquirer as standing behind a one way mirror, viewing natural phenomena as they happen and record them objectively. The inquirer (when using proper methodology) does not influence the phenomena or vice versa.”²⁶ This understanding does not allow for the consideration or understanding that researchers do in fact bring assumptions and values into their work. It also does not

consider that these assumptions or values may ultimately have a deep impact on the research. In order to address and develop a method for a researcher to engage in further understanding of this process, paradigms have been created within the field of qualitative methodology. A paradigm is defined as a set of basic beliefs or metaphysical understandings, “it represents a *worldview* that defines, for its holder, the nature of the ‘world’, the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts.”²⁷ In order to further understand that paradigm best describes the researcher’s world outlook, Guba and Lincoln note that understanding one’s ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions is crucial.²⁸

The ontological question targets the researcher’s view of ‘what is real’.²⁹ Ontologically, a critical realist believes that social structures have significant power over individuals’ lives and thus have an impact on their autonomy.³⁰ The impact of these social structures extends to the public and private domains of the individuals living within the society that functions to propagate these structures. The epistemological question seeks to identify how one can come to understand and integrate academic experiences or research into personal knowledge. Linda Finlay notes that an epistemological outlook illustrates how the researcher understands the knowledge that will be generated through the study, and how the information collected through the study will contribute to the development of knowledge.³¹ This greatly influences how the researcher understands their own impact throughout the study. The knowledge that is produced through research that is situated in a critical realist paradigm identifies and examines the impact of social structures on individuals’ lives. The researcher can come to

understand the nature of reality through examining how individuals are impacted by the social structures.³² The epistemological feature of the critical realist paradigm supports the integration of reflection on the part of the researcher. Donna Haraway notes that all knowledge is influenced by the individual's age, gender, ethnicity, religious belonging, residential area and personal interactions.³³ This involves the researcher recognizing and acknowledging the influence in both the formation and execution of research initiatives.³⁴ As the primary researcher, I acknowledge the impact of personal understandings and perspectives on this study. This acknowledgement is also supported by the use of reflexivity. Finlay notes that reflexive accounting within the research process includes, "being prepared to engage in careful, systematic, and in-depth self-evaluation."³⁵ In order to account for this, Finlay suggests the use of a field journal which incorporates reflections of the researcher's experiences and the impact that understandings derived from formulated perspective will have on the overall study. This form of reflexivity was incorporated in this analysis.

Pairing with the ontology of critical realism is the identification of the epistemological outlook that is integrated in this study. This differs slightly from the ontological position of critical realism, because although, as a researcher, I claim that social structures exist, the way I come to know and understand the impact of these structures, the epistemological thrust, is imperfect as a form of complete knowledge. The information communicated by the participants is relative to their experiences in life. The methodological approach integrated into this study is complimentary to the ontological and epistemological tenets identified in the research paradigm. Guba and

Lincoln note that the methodological approach differs from just being able to identify the methods used in the study and is largely dependent upon the ontological and epistemological outlooks.³⁶ Through focused ethnographic research and phenomenological approaches, it is argued that we can identify and discuss how social, religious and cultural structures underpinning the 'Ishraq' participants, mentors, and program developers, can influence their experiences in sport and physical activity programs. Further, the analysis of impact of these influences can provide information that, in turn, could support changes to the epistemological premises in a favourable way for Muslim women's experiences in sport.

The strengths of this approach can be found in the definition of the epistemological and ontological features. Critical realism is based on the understanding that, "reality is assumed to exist but to be only imperfectly apprehended because of basically flawed human intellectual mechanisms and the fundamentally intractable nature of phenomena."³⁷ Barriers that are linked to languages exist in this study. Difference in languages, what is spoken about in a community sense, and the use of translator, may limit my understanding.

Fitting with this qualification is the epistemological outlook. Aligning with the dialectical relationship outlined with respect to ontological understanding, the parameters of this feature are linked to values. Guba and Lincoln note that there is a relationship between researcher and participant, "what can be known is inextricably intertwined with the interaction between the *particular* investigator and a *particular* object or group."³⁸ This outline of the epistemological features of this paradigm compliments the

methodological approach linked to critical realism. Given the transactional relationship,

Guba and Lincoln define the goals of this methodological approach as,

to uncover and excavate those forms of historical and subjugated knowledge that point to experiences of suffering, conflict, and collective struggle...to link the notion of historical understanding to elements of critique and hope.³⁹

The analyses in the preceding chapters serve to create the elements of historical evaluation and critique that fit with this methodology.¹

Case Study Participants

A significant change in the structure of the ‘Ishraq’ program occurred after the completion of the pilot phase in 2006. The separation of the Population Council from Save the Children, the Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) and Caritas resulted in the creation of a curriculum that differs slightly between Beni Suef and Al Minyā program sites.⁴⁰ In order to capture the changes in programs, the program coordinator for the Al Minyā program, working with the Population Council, and the program coordinator from Save the Children, who is responsible for the Beni Suef program, were interviewed. Interviews were also conducted with the participants of the Beni Suef program. These focus group style interviews were conducted at the recreation centre, after the physical activity class, with three to five participants at a time. Individual interviews were also conducted with two program instructors, one of whom had successfully completed the ‘Ishraq’ program during the pilot phase, and upon completion was certified as an instructor. The ‘Ishraq’ participants interviewed were also

¹ The course work I completed throughout my graduate terms also serves as an important foundation from which I, as the primary researcher, am able to think reflectively about the relationship between researcher and participants.

observed during the health, literacy, and sport classes. In total, 14 program participants, two program coordinators, and two program developers were interviewed. The focus group style interviews followed a semi-structured format and were 45 to 60 minutes in duration. Prompts were used to help facilitate the interviews. See Appendix A and B for the interview questions designed to facilitate discussion and additional discussion points that were included as probe questions. Due to the difference in language, a translator was present at the interviews. All interviews were recorded and the English translation transcribed verbatim.

Case Study Design and Methods

The theoretical approach used for this study is based on phenomenological exploration and feminist metaphysics. Broadly speaking, the concept of the live world, which includes the lived body, has been explored by Heidegger, Husserl, and Merleau Ponty. The abstract notions of phenomenology that do not integrate smoothly into research methodology in the area of qualitative research have been translated and incorporated into qualitative frameworks. Max van Manen has advocated for the use of a ‘life world’ perspective in studies examining personal experience. van Manen describes the life world in this sense as,

...the world in which persons live their daily lives. It is related to a person perceiving the world, but is also the world in which persons live together with others. Generally the life world is taken for granted and in everyday life it is most often not questioned.⁴¹

van Manen, a scholar in the health sciences who specializes in phenomenological qualitative research, further contends that understandings aimed at incorporating a focus on an individual’s life world, must attempt to locate and integrate the ‘lived body’

experience, “People know things through their bodies and through relations with other people as well as through interactions with things in the world.”⁴² Building upon van Manen’s conceptualization of the ‘lived body’ is the work of feminist scholars Iris Marion Young and Christine Battersby who argue that understanding the ‘lived body’ in this form can reveal some forms of experiences; however, when addressing female embodiment there are additional layers that should be considered.⁴³ For example, Young argues that attention must be paid to forces that are imprinted on bodies, “the lived body is a unified idea of physical body acting and experiencing in a specific socio-cultural context; it is body-in-situation.”⁴⁴ This definition serves to address notions of sex and gender in discussions within feminist research. In this study, however, the connection between the lived body and body-in-situation plays a significant role. Whereas the phenomenological approach emphasizes the descriptive features communicated by the participant, the incorporation of Young’s focus allows for a more complete discussion of how the body is impacted by socio-cultural factors such as those outlined in previous chapters. The work of Christine Battersby, which supports the blend of van Manen’s qualitative approach with Young’s focus on female embodiment, lends further theoretical support that accounts for the philosophical themes of metaphysical representation that have been identified in earlier discussions. For example, the connection of female morality linked to the flesh is a central issue identified by Battersby in her analysis of ‘fleshy metaphysics’.ⁱⁱ This feature highlights two important relationships: i) the

ⁱⁱ This claim aligns with Asma Barlas’s critique of Scriptural interpretation that has been used to support understandings of female inferiority. Both authors base their analysis on the connections between the female body, reproduction and inferiority, which differs from understandings of the male body.

dominant model present in philosophical lines of thinking, that privileges rationality and the mind over the flesh, which can lead to exclusion of women; and ii) the dominant model present in patriarchal lines of thinking that associate women with biology and men with rationality. Additionally, the use of phenomenological accounts is centred on the inclusion of personal narratives. This feature is vital in the discussion of patterns of identity and ‘lived experiences’ as directly communicated by the participants. This approach lends further support to the goal of this dissertation, which is to address the gap identified by DeSensi, and include an examination of ‘lived experiences’ of veiled Muslim women in a sport context.

Case Study Data Analysis

All of the interviews were recorded with a digital audio recorder. The whole interview, which also included the interviewer’s questions and dialogue with the translator, was transcribed verbatim. Upon the completion of the transcription, the documents were examined to look for key phrases that were linked to the participant descriptions of their experiences with the ‘Ishraq’ program. van Manen notes that there are three methods that can be used to isolate thematic statements: i) the holistic or sententious approach; ii) the selective or highlighting approach; and iii) the detailed or line-by-line approach.⁴⁵ The first method was selected and integrated a holistic approach to the analysis of the interview transcripts. Upon the completion of this analysis, the relationship between the experiences of the participants and the overall theme of the lived body as it pertained to the themes of community development, empowerment, and the use of the physical body, was examined. During observation of the participants of the ‘Ishraq’ program, a set of field notes based on my observations was

created. This process assisted in the generation of additional descriptions that would provide richer insight into the ‘lived body’ experiences of the participants. The field notes were compared and contrasted with the interviews. A final component included in this study was the use of a personal reflection journal, completed prior to, during, and after the data collection period. This journal contained personal reflections and experiences during the data collection phase of this study. Analysis of these three sections of data was integrated, interpreted, and infused into a larger data transcript, in order to solidify themes and discussion points. This analysis completed by the researcher resulted in the identification and naming of three themes which are discussed in the analysis section of this chapter.

Case Study Limitations

Max van Manen notes that the phenomenological method requires the researcher to develop, “the art of being sensitive - sensitive to the subtle undertones of language, to the way language speaks when it allows for the things themselves to speak.”⁴⁶ Given this consideration, there are four limitations that I must identify. The first is a broader, yet important reflection that applies to all phenomenological research endeavours. Perhaps best articulated by Ludwig Wittgenstein, who identified the existence of a, “language-game [which] is meant to bring into prominence the fact that *speaking* of language is part of an activity, a form of life.”⁴⁷ As part of the ‘language-game’ there are gaps in the use of language that prevent full expressions. This consideration addresses the notion that there are limitations to what an individual can express verbally. Although this universal problem is one that cannot be remedied, it is important to be cognizant of it in this study.

The second, third and fourth limitations have a narrower focus, and arise from the nature of this study. The second limitation is based on the consideration of the fact that the participants were being asked to comment on their lived experiences and describe intricate features to an individual who did not share their socio-cultural and religious environment. van Manen refers to this an 'epistemological silence', "This is the kind of silence we are confronted with when we face the unspeakable."⁴⁸ In order to address this gap in the description and attempt to gain insight into the daily experiences that are not witnessed by the researcher, probe points were introduced among the interview questions. These points served to expand on items or elements of the participant's response. Additionally, it is important to note that the time spent in Cairo, Egypt during the data collection period is the third visit made to the country.ⁱⁱⁱ This amount of time allowed for immersion in the culture and understanding of some of the social nuances that may not necessarily be communicated in an interview.

The third limitation is linked to the use of a translator. My knowledge of the language of Arabic is very limited, thus fluent and competent conversation was not possible. Similarly, the participant's knowledge of English was limited. Opportunities for them to learn English were few, if not nonexistent, due to the limited access to education in the rural areas. Therefore, a translator was required in order to conduct interviews. In order to ensure that the translator was not paraphrasing the participant's response, the translator was asked to translate both the questions and responses as close to verbatim as the English to Arabic conversion allows.

ⁱⁱⁱ The period of time spent in Egypt for this study was significantly longer than the previous visit where I conducted research for the exploratory study outline in my Master's thesis.

The aim of this case study is to understand the ‘lived body’ experiences of the ‘Ishraq’ participants. In order to capture these experiences, interviewing the ‘Ishraq’ participants is critical. These interviews provided individual accounts and personal perspectives. A fourth and final limitation of this study and analysis is the exclusive focus on the ‘Ishraq’ participants. Interviews were not conducted with the participant’s family members or the males who may also use the community recreation centre.

Review of Literature

In a recent article titled, “Islam, Hijab and Young Shia Muslim Canadian Women’s Discursive Constructions of Physical Activity,” Nisara Jiwani and Geneviève Rail highlighted that within the sport scholarship there have been few contributions to the literature that address Muslim female’s participation in sport while concentrating on stereotypes that have been associated with Muslim female athletes.⁴⁹ Stemming from this identification, literature examining Muslim female’s participation has either focused on the evaluation of the experiences of elite level Muslim athletes or explored, through case studies, the participation of Muslim females in physical education programs in North America or Europe. In the book Heroines of Sport: The politics of difference and identity, Jennifer Hargreaves explores the concept of the “Muslim female heroic” through the examination of elite level Muslim female athletes such as Nawal El Moutawakel and Hassiba Boulmerka.⁵⁰ Through the experiences of El Moutawakel and Boulmerka, Hargreaves addresses the tension between local and global sports participation and the impact of Muslim female’s participation in elite level sport.⁵¹ In her evaluation, Hargreaves explores the relationship between sports, politics and religion while considering the opportunities for Muslim women to participate in elite level sports.⁵²

Building upon Hargreaves analysis, Agnes Elling and Annelies Knoppers explored the participation of Muslim women in elite level sport by examining, “symbolic inclusion and exclusion processes in sport” which included a focus on gender and ethnicity.⁵³ Elling and Knoppers argued that participation was largely influenced by “dominant, normative, gendered, and racial/ethnic images” and this in turn impacts overall participation of Muslim women in elite level sport.⁵⁴

A second area of concentration with respect to the literature examining Muslim female’s participation in sport and physical activity, has documented Muslim female’s participation in physical education programs in North America and Europe. For example studies conducted by Tansin Benn, Symeon Dagkas, Tess Kay, Tracy Taylor, Kristine Toohey, Nisara Jiwani, Geneviève Rail and Kristin Walseth examine the relationship between Muslim females, participation in physical activity and education programs and identity. These studies focus on how first or second generation immigrants may experience changes in identity that coincide with participation in physical activity.⁵⁵ In these studies, the exploration of the influence of family, religious perspectives and patterns of identity are included but are compared to North American or European concepts of physical activity and education. Consequently, the themes explored in these articles are based upon tensions linked to perceptions of veiled Muslim females as being oppressed and unable to participate in sport and physical activity.

A third example linked to the area highlighted above includes examples extending beyond North America and Europe. Muslim female’s participation in sport and physical activity are based on the exploration of case studies focused on specific national

perspectives.⁵⁶ Edited by Tansin Benn, Gertrud Pfister and Haifaa Jawad, the book Muslim Women and Sport, explores theories, discourses and practices in Bahrain, Oman, Iran, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Iraq and North Africa.⁵⁷ At the core of these articles is recognition that negative stereotypes linked to Muslim women in physical education and sport need to be addressed and through a wide breadth of perspectives, a discussion of Muslim female's experiences can contribute to understanding and the development of knowledge that in turn can support Muslim female's participation in sport.

Given the differences between national perspectives that are linked to Muslim female's participation in physical activity, Dagkas and Benn note that issues linked to, "fluid cultural and religious interpretation that contribute to the development of different cultures of physicality where movement and participation have different levels of significance and meaning" is vital to extend the overall discussion of the experiences of Muslim females.⁵⁸ The evaluation contained in this dissertation seeks to contribute to the work of the authors described above by exploring Muslim female's experiences in the Ishraq: Safe Places to Learn, Play and Grow program operating in the rural areas in Upper Egypt.

In addition to the inclusion of an examination of Muslim female's experiences, this dissertation has expanded upon research conducted for my Master's thesis, which research was based on the argument that the effects of sport and physical activity tend to rely on Western definitions of sport. This in turn leads to particular assumptions about how one should relate to one's body. Western definitions emphasize the physique of the

body and reinforce a prescription of the athletic appearance. Such definitions, however, are at odds with Islamic ideology which dictates particular social customs about how Muslim women should act and dress in public areas, customs that tend to be seen by North American society as oppressive and as denying women the opportunity to engage in sport. The exploratory study previously conducted was centrally focused on answering the question: does a religion like Islam affect the participation of Muslim women in sport? Stemming from this analysis I argued that: i) there is a relationship between themes of power and the human body which overlaps with sport and dominant cultural ideologies that needs to be addressed in an examination of participation of Muslim women in sport; ii) understanding factors that influence contemporary feminism in Egypt can provide information on how female embodiment has been influenced historically; iii) the implementation of a feminist framework is necessary in order to identify some of the factors affecting the embodiment of Muslim female athletes in Egypt; and iv) religion does impact female embodiment, although not uniformly, and should be discussed in an analysis of Muslim female athletes in Egypt.⁵⁹ When considering the role of the body in the examination of athletes, an association between the 'flesh' and the female body may be considered to be beneficial. However, female sport bodies are further disadvantaged because similar to what Battersby argues this type of association is rooted in a hierarchical relationship where the female 'flesh' is devalued.

Broadly speaking, the connection between powerful dominant social and cultural ideologies and surveillance is manifested both through external methods and subtle social interactions. Through participation in sport, the relationship between surveillance,

discipline, and dominant social ideologies prevalent in society is further reinforced.⁶⁰ This perspective included examining different opportunities for participation in sport, ranging from elite level sport to the recreational level.

In my Master's thesis, I sought to integrate the research collected during this exploratory study with an examination of social influences which included an evaluation of colonialism, social and political structures, and the separation of church and state in Cairo, Egypt. In the conclusion of my Master's thesis, it is noted that further research that evaluates the embodiment of Muslim female athletes in conjunction with religious doctrine and the rules and regulation of sport that develop as a result of social and cultural influences must be conducted.⁶¹

This identification was primarily based on the broad evaluation of the 'Ishraq: Safe Place to Learn, Play and Grow' program. This initiative currently utilizes sport and physical education to encourage young girls and women living in rural areas to build upon their educational experiences and learn about health care, citizenship rights, and seeks to encourage full participation in all aspects of public life. The implementation of a physical activity program as a pedagogical tool, in communities where women's public mobility is significantly limited, highlights the use of community development, empowerment and the physical body in order to break down social barriers for women in these rural communities.

As noted in the first section, there is a gap in the philosophy of sport literature with respect to the inclusion of 'lived body' experiences of women in sport. One of the underlying reasons for this absence can be linked to the typical methods employed in

philosophical investigation. Janice Moulton notes that the main paradigm employed in philosophy is the adversarial method.⁶² Although this method is effective in creating strong argument structures through highly charged debates and discussions, it can be considered to be primarily objective,

it is assumed that the best way of presenting work in philosophy is to address it to an imagined opponent and muster all the evidence one can to support it. The justification for this method is that a position ought to be defended from, and subjected to, the criticism of the strongest opposition; this method is the only way to get the best of both sides; that a thesis that survives this method of evaluation is more likely to be correct than one that does not; and that a thesis subjected to the Adversary Method will have passed an “objective” test, the most extreme test possible, whereas any weaker criticism or evaluation will, by comparison, give an advantage to the claim to be evaluated and therefore not be as objective as it could be.⁶³

Moulton argues that an examination of the adversarial method reveals a paradigm structure that is akin to scientific reasoning. She argues that it is largely reliant on using a fact-value distinction,

On this view, all philosophic reasoning is, or ought to be deductive. General claims are made and the job of philosophic research is to find counterexamples and produce counterexamples to opposing views.⁶⁴

The fundamental problem with this approach is its reliance on objective, value-free, and deductive claims. Since this paradigm is predominantly used, research that examines the subjective experiences of individuals and seeks to develop arguments based on these experiences is rarely addressed or is considered to be significantly weaker. In line with the work contained in this dissertation, Moulton raises the potential for problems with respect to the application of this paradigm and evaluation of religion,

Philosophers debate and revive old arguments about whether God exists, but leave all current discussions about what the nature of God would be to divinity schools and religious orders.⁶⁵

The adversarial method paradigm does allow for the development of strong argument structure; however, it should not be the only method used in philosophical research.

An implication of a reliance on this paradigm is evident in how essentialism is used in forms of philosophic evaluation. Battersby notes that Platonic and Aristotelian notions of essence are predominately static,

The essence of a thing is linked to its ‘substance’ or ‘being’ (*ousia*), and to the timeless and necessary and sufficient conditions that enable us to identify and reidentify entities as belonging to the ‘same’ kind.⁶⁶

Stemming from this definition, Battersby argues that philosophical investigations that are rooted in essentialism are solely concerned with the identification of properties. This is problematic because the underlying logic suggests that there is both a way to identify these substances and that these substances are part of every individual.⁶⁷ To address this concern, Battersby has one foot in a Kantian form of essentialism and the other in feminist metaphysics. The strength of the Kantian approach is that it is centrally focused on understanding the ontology of being. The rationale behind Battersby’s attempt to marry this approach with feminist metaphysics is that according to Kant there exists a level of gender neutrality that removes the need for consideration of differences between men and women.⁶⁸ While this perspective removes the consideration of a gendered form of evaluation, in this approach the unique differences between men and women are also removed. This is problematic according to Battersby who argues that an analysis based on essentialism and the use of ‘fleshy metaphysics’ can account for the evaluation and re-development of epistemological claims in connection with female embodiment.

Although her argument is focused on natality and she is concerned with providing an

account of identity, personhood and essence in connection with the examination of pregnancy, her underlying framework is important to consider,

If strategically we need to talk about the female subject position in order to change it, then we need a mode of conceptualizing essences which offers the imagination of new models of thinking of identity at an epistemological level.⁶⁹

It is through the use of ‘fleshy metaphysics’ that female essences can be best discussed.

A second gap in literature is the lack of research examining the interconnected relationship between religion and sport. The relationship between religion and sport reveals a complex intersection of values and requirements that are prescribed through both religion and sport creeds, rituals, and codes of conduct. In this dissertation, the relationship between religious requirements and the veiled Muslim female athletic body will be explored. The application of logical and philosophical discussion used as an analytic framework in the evaluation of religious discourse is integral in understanding the impacts of religious discourse on the embodiment of veiled Muslim female athletes.

In current literature the relationship between sport and religion is discussed in two specific ways: i) religion and sport; and ii) sport and spirituality. In his examination of the links between sport and religion, Charles Prebish notes that over the past couple of decades, there has been a decline in the power and influence of religion and institutionalized church in North America.⁷⁰ During this same time period, the popularity of sport has increased, and Prebish argues that the increased interest in sport opened the door for religious and sport values to become intertwined in some cases.⁷¹ Although his analysis is largely based on the examination of secular sport and Christianity, the argument that there is a connection between sport and religion is valid in this

examination. Even though this broad connection requires further analysis of the impact of this relationship; it is not the sole focus of this evaluation. However, underlying all of these connections is the overlap of values, sport and religion that is important to consider,

The two institutions [sport and religion] use similar means to respond to their members' needs. They try to enforce and maintain through a strict code of behaviour and ritual a strict belief system that is typically adopted and internalized by all involved in that particular institution. They serve as cohesive, integrative, and social control functions for their members, giving them meaningful ways to organize their world. Because of sacredness nurtured by these systems, both religion and sport resist social change, and, in this way, support the status quo.⁷²

Howard Slusher argues that the interaction between the institutions of sport and religion has a common point, manifested through demands on facets of human life.⁷³ Slusher notes that both institutions have specified customs, level of organization and require the participant to undertake specific actions to demonstrate belonging and support for either institution.⁷⁴ Interestingly, and perhaps the most important connection between the institutions of sport and religion, is the articulation of intersection points through rules used to support internal and external structures,

The paradox of this activity, of appearing change, is relative to internal and external alteration. In religion, the church edifice might alter its appearance or even move to another locale; perhaps clergy will even be reassigned. But the structure remains constant with the basic ideology and purposes of the institution. So it is in sport... Similar to religious institutions, the world of sport is slow to make internal alterations.⁷⁵

This link is important with reference to this discussion because it supports the recognition that when the internal or external structure of sport conflicts with that of a religious institution, the negotiation between these groups requires a significant introspection on part of the participants who are forced to make a choice between the institutions. It may be the case that conflicts between external structures can be resolved easily; however,

clashes between the rules that govern internal structures require further negotiation. In order to engage in this type of negotiation, a conceptual framework is required. Through the application of a framework, a critical examination of the rules that govern internal structures can occur.

In order to discuss the embodiment of veiled Muslim female athletes in relation to the articulation between the institutions of sport and religion, the scope of an examination must consider two different areas. The first is the complex and interconnected relationship between female embodiment and the interpretation of religious texts. This broad area of discussion involves the interpretations of religious text, and the integration of these interpretations into social and cultural expectations of veiled Muslim women. The complexity of these relationships cannot be outlined in simple forms because there are differences in how religious texts are interpreted and applied between countries, cities and communities. There is, however, the possibility for the development of models at the theoretical level that can be applied in different situations. The second area highlights the relationship between the application of religious interpretations and the articulation of religious structures and institutions with sport structures and institutions. For the purpose of this examination, the focus will be on applying a theoretical model in an attempt to create a new evaluation of religious texts and interpretations that impact Muslim female embodiment. Specifically, it will entail the application of a combined theoretical model building upon the work of Averroes, which targets the use of allegory in the Qur'án, in conjunction with my critical examination of the articulation of institutions of sport and religion.

One of the most influential philosophical thinkers that explored the relationship between faith and reason in connection with Islam is Ibn Rushd (Averroes). Even though Averroes was a judge and is considered to be a rationalist by modern schools of thought, Roger Arnaldez notes,

For Averroes, a philosopher, this rationality is sufficient to make the Law obligatory; but for the common man, subject to the passions, another guarantee and authority are needed. These are supplied by the Qur'an, with its promises and its threats, with rewards and punishments of an all-powerful and omniscient God, Whom not one of man's actions escapes.⁷⁶

Averroes worked to develop philosophical arguments against the *Ash'arites*⁷⁷ whose interpretation of *sharia* and Islam resembled the divine command theory.⁷⁸

Averroes' work was largely informed by the examination of the *Ash'arite kalam*. This school of thought, although connected to literalist theology, supports the development of a happy medium of belief between rational theology and literalist theology.⁷⁹ Averroes believed that harmony between the study of philosophy and religious text could be attained, and he believed that this would account for problems that may occur when religious texts are unable to provide answers.⁸⁰ The crux of Averroes' argument is based on an application of demonstrative reasoning. He argued that through demonstrative reasoning the premises are established to be true prior to their application, "When we talk about law and theology, through, using theological and legal premises as our starting position, we are limiting the scope of argument to the scope of the premises."⁸¹ Broadly speaking, Averroes noted in The Decisive Treatise, that there is a deeper ontological connection between religion and philosophy that must be acknowledged,

it is actually not a case of bringing a rationalist view of things into harmony with a religious view, but of discovering whether or not there is a subjective parentage between the way of life according to the wisdom that philosophy has as its goal, and the way of life according to Religious Law, which is revealed.⁸²

Averroes' examination of this parentage occurs in his assessment on whether the law (Qur'án) makes philosophic studies obligatory. According to Averroes, since Religious Law calls for the reflective examination of individuals in order to create better understanding, and this coincides with the goal of a teleological study of philosophy, therefore the two areas have a common starting point which supports the introduction of philosophical inquiry with the examination of Religious Law.

Drawing from the discussion of the literature contained in the section above, descriptions of conflicts between sport and religious requirements and the experiences of Muslim females, living in rural areas in Egypt, warrant further investigation. The following chapters will explore both a theoretical discussion of potential conflict between sport and religion and include an evaluation of the experiences of Muslim females living in Beni Suef, Upper Egypt.

Delimitations

Previously identified in the introductory sections of this chapter, the examination of women's experiences in sport that extends beyond the Western context requires further attention. Although the thrust of this dissertation is to address this gap, the examination of veiled Muslim female participants is limited to case examples in Canada and the 'Ishraq' program in Upper Egypt. The case examples included in Chapter III highlight narratives of the veil that illuminate the tension between sport and religion for veiled Muslim women in a Western context. The study of the 'Ishraq' program included in

Chapter V was selected based on the articulation of sport and religion in an international perspective, specifically in a country that is predominantly Muslim. Together, these examples provide a wider depth of representation that is required in order to facilitate this discussion. Even though the 'Ishraq' program has since expanded to the governorates of Assuit and Fayoum, these areas were not included in the study.

The examination of religious Scripture, specifically the Qur'án, was deliberately limited to the evaluation of Scripture that is commonly referred to in the evaluation of the origin of mankind and veiling requirements. Additionally, the evaluation of the interpretation of Qur'ánic Scripture was limited to the work of Muhammad Asa, a recognized Islamic scholar.

Dissertation Limitations

The goal of this thesis is to explore the 'lived body' experiences of veiled Muslim females in physical activity. The research conducted for this analysis bridges qualitative methods with the development of philosophical discussions and evaluations. Pairing philosophical evaluation with qualitative methods is a somewhat unique approach. The strength of integrating the 'lived body' experiences with the development of philosophical arguments is that it creates the possibility to evaluate and re-interpret epistemological claims that largely define the opportunities for Muslim females to participate in physical activity. Although this pluralistic approach can be considered to be an important feature and strength of this study, it can also be considered to be a limitation. In both research communities of philosophy and qualitative methodology, studies are conducted using specific analytical frameworks that differ from one another. In the case of philosophy, as previously mentioned, the adversarial method is utilized.

Under the umbrella of qualitative methodology, there are set formulae in place that govern a researcher's collection and formation of data. The blending of features from both research paradigms could be considered to be a limitation of this study.

Additionally, the selection and creation of a multifaceted layered feminist framework can be considered to be a second limitation. The extensive body of work contained within the feminist movements offer numerous forms of foci, each grounded in a rich background of literature and analysis. The decision to draw from various feminist scholars may offer the best framework to discuss the 'lived body' experiences of the participants', however; the result is that it does not readily fit within the standard models of feminist research.

Chapter Overview

The remaining chapters of this thesis intertwine case examples with theoretical development. Chapter II begins with an examination of a historical example. Founded in 1919, the American University in Cairo (AUC) has had a profound impact on the development of education and physical activity. Part of the innovative programs offered in 1930, was a lecture series open to all students and members of the community. In February 1930, Dr. Fakry M. Farag offered a lecture on women's role in society that resulted in a large scale conflict between the AUC and the community. This disruption also led to the temporary imprisonment of Dr. Farag. The root cause of the disruption is based on the fact that Dr. Farag argued that the current status of women in society was repressive and needed to be drastically changed. Fitting with understanding a historical context of silence of women in Egypt and a close reading and analysis of the lecture presented by Dr. Farag, this chapter will explore and evaluate the themes that are at conflict with epistemological premises of silence and discuss how this impacted

understandings of female embodiment. The discussion of the role of AUC and the lecture on women's role in Egyptian society is important to consider with respect to the broader themes addressed in this dissertation. For example, the lecture offered by Dr. Farag is an example of how through the application of philosophical evaluation, the evaluation of women's rights can be conducted without the possible negative influences of social, cultural and religious perspectives. Based on this historical example, Chapter III extends the discussion of religion and social institutions. Through a critical evaluation of the relationship between sport and religion, broader theoretical themes related to faith and reason will be explored. This evaluation will be applied to a discussion of the interpretation of religious Scripture as it relates to the field of philosophical inquiry and Muslim women's embodiment.

In the remaining chapters, the focus will be narrowed to include specific case examples of veiled Muslim females. In Chapter IV, narratives that are in turn used to define the veil will be discussed in reference to case examples of conflicts between sport rules and religious requirements that have occurred in Canadian sport. This discussion will also include an examination of social, cultural and religious dimensions that influence tensions between sport and religion. This chapter will be based on an analysis of these tensions that includes Western perspectives. Chapter V will expand on this discussion through the use of an international development perspective. This chapter will include a case study conducted with the participants of the 'Ishraq Safe Places to Learn, Play and Grow'. These chapters are intended to provide a holistic approach to the evaluation of 'lived body' experiences of veiled Muslim women in sport contexts.

Throughout all of the chapters, the use of concrete examples and theoretical discussion are meant to demonstrate the interplay of philosophical analysis and concrete application.

Summary

This dissertation explores the impact of the implementation of the ‘Ishraq’ program on the embodiment and attitudes of veiled Muslim female participants. The integration of a phenomenological approach to understanding the participant’s experiences in the ‘Ishraq’ program is rooted in a desire to better understand the use of the physical body, in conjunction with the removal of social barriers that can limit individuals’ movement in public spaces. The rationale behind the need of an in-depth evaluation of this program is the ethical weight of the implications of integrating community development, empowering the physical body through the development and implementation of a physical activity program that seeks to change public spaces for veiled Muslim females.

This examination seeks to philosophically investigate and evaluate these structures in conjunction with an analysis of the ‘lived body’ experiences of the participants of the ‘Ishraq’ program. My intention was to develop a philosophical argument that can be used as a supporting rationale to encourage the participation of veiled Muslim women in physical activity. It is my intention that this framework be used in two respects; the first, in situations where the interpretation of religious doctrine limits or prevents participation in sport and physical activity, and secondly, where the rules and regulations of sport limit or prevent participation because of conflicts between arbitrary ‘auxiliary’ rules and religious clothing.

Endnotes

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- ³⁶ Guba and Lincoln: 2004, 22.
- ³⁷ Guba and Lincoln: 2004, 25.
- ³⁸ Guba and Lincoln: 2004, 26.
- ³⁹ Guba and Lincoln: 2004, 26.
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⁵⁹ Natalie V.K Szudy, "Towards an Understanding of the Scientific, Cultural and Religious Influences on the Embodiment of Female Athletes," (Master's Thesis, The University of Western Ontario, 2007), 31.

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⁶¹ Szudy: 2007, 91.

⁶² Janice Moulton, "A Paradigm of Philosophy: The Adversary Method," in *Women, Knowledge and Reality: Explorations in Feminist Philosophy*, ed. Ann Garry and Marilyn Pearsall (New York: Routledge, 1996), 14 – 15.

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⁶⁴ Moulton: 1996, 15.

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⁷⁰ Prebish: 1993, 90.

⁷¹ Prebish: 1993, 47.

⁷² Prebish: 1993, 101.

⁷³ Prebish: 1993, 186.

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Roger Arnaldez, *Averroes: A Rationalist in Islam* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 9.

⁷⁸ Oliver Leaman, *Averroes and his Philosophy* (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1998), 4.

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CHAPTER II

“Shall Women have Rights and Obligations Equal to Men?”

This chapter explores the silenced voices of Muslim women living in Cairo, Egypt during the 1920's. This examination begins with an evaluation of how the establishment of educational initiatives offered opportunities for dialogue, among students and the community, regarding the impact of religion. This chapter also includes an example of one approach to the evaluation of Muslim women's place in public spheres. The selection and integration of historical data collected from the archives of the American University in Cairo (AUC) was based on the work of two influential individuals, Dr. Charles R. Watson and Dr. Fakhry M. Farag. The historical information included in this chapter tells the story of how the architect and first president of AUC (Watson) and a medical doctor (Farag), specializing in the examination of venereal diseases in Egypt, went to great lengths to cultivate opportunities for discussions of how religious and cultural values impact the social perception of women. Specifically, these influential men advocated for the expansion of public spaces for women. This chapter begins with the examination of the role Watson played in the development of the AUC. As the founding president of the University, Watson was integral in developing opportunities for the evaluation of religion and character development. The role the AUC consequentially played in the social landscape of Cairo between the 1920's and 1930's was greatly influenced by the lecture series offered by the Division of Extension. Open to the university student body and members of the community, it was through this avenue that Farag was able to engage a broader audience and initiate a discussion on the social freedoms of women in Egyptian society.

The second part of this chapter explores the argument offered by Farag in his lecture given on February 4th, 1930. In this talk, Farag seeks to create a platform for the entrance of Muslim women into the public arena. In this section, it is my intention to demonstrate that, by building on the ideal of the development of the human mind and body, Watson and Farag argued that there should be equal opportunities for education for both men and women in Egypt. This line of thinking also contributes to the development of the claim that, through open dialogue, society as a whole can come to agree that men and women, although different, should not be placed in a hierarchical social standing.

The inclusion of this historical analysis is important with respect to the evaluation of the development of patterns of identity linked to Muslim women. Dr. Farag's use of philosophical inquiry in the evaluation of Muslim women's rights and obligations highlights the need for the integration of a framework that removes barriers linked to social, cultural and religious values. The discussion of the influence of social, cultural and religious values on Muslim female embodiment will be further evaluated in chapters three, four and five.

Additionally, there is a relationship between the limited public mobility experienced by the Muslim women living in Cairo between 1920 and 1930 and the experiences of 'Ishraq' participants living in the rural area of Beni Suef. Both the Muslim women living in Cairo during the 1920's and the 'Ishraq' participants experience limited social mobility. In this chapter, Dr. Farag engages in the evaluation of the root causes linked to limited public mobility. In Chapter V, the participants, supported by the program developers and coordinators are engaged in an evaluation of the structures

linked to their limited public mobility. In both cases, a movement towards the evaluation of the social, cultural and religious structures is included.

A final consideration with respect to the relevance of the lecture offered by Dr. Farag is based on the fact that the lecture material is still applicable to evaluations of female embodiment in current society. The lecture offers useful approach to discussions and evaluations of women's rights and this in turn can be used to assess the relationship between public mobility and female embodiment.

Origins of the American University in Cairo

Founded in 1919, AUC was both a secondary and university level institution placed delicately in the Egyptian landscape.¹ In the preface of the book The American University in Cairo: 1919 -1987, author Lawrence R. Murphy notes,

The history of AUC gains significance because of the university's international status. In one sense, it reflects, as would hundreds of independent colleges in America, the many changes that higher education has undergone during the twentieth century. Even more significant, however, because the university serves a student body drawn primarily from Egypt and other Middle East countries, its development has related directly to changing needs in the Arab world. The multi-national character of AUC has also resulted in frequent intertwining of AUC's history and relations between the United States, Egypt and other Middle East countries. This is, as a result, an unusual history of a unique university.²

Although the idea for the foundation of a university in Cairo arose from the missionary movement in Egypt, the selection of Dr. Charles R. Watson as the first president of the AUC had a significant influence on the development of the university.³ The child of missionaries working in the Valley of the Nile, Charles R. Watson was born on July 17th, 1871 in Cairo, Egypt.⁴ Fluent in Arabic, French and English, Watson gained valuable experiences growing up in Cairo that shaped his understanding of Egyptian culture and

the religion of Islam.⁵ After completing a degree in divinity at Princeton Theological Seminary, Watson travelled back to Cairo and initiated the development of a proposal to establish a high level educational institution in Cairo, Egypt.⁶

In Cairo, during the early 1900's, two higher educational institutions were in operation. Al-Azhar International Centre for Muslim Learning and Cairo University, also known as Egyptian National University, were both privately run and offered educational opportunities in religion and science.⁷ It is important to note that these institutions were only available to upper class Egyptian men. Al-Azhar focused on religious education, while Cairo University offered programs in science and engineering. Watson's proposal was based on the development of an educational institution that offered professional training in education, engineering, commerce, journalism, theology, and law and would serve as a bridge between Al-Azhar and Cairo University.⁸ In order to support this privately run institution, Watson submitted a proposal to the United Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, who accepted it and granted approval for the University in 1915.⁹

Although Watson had the support of the United Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, between 1915 and the official opening of the University in 1920, he faced several challenges. The first challenge was with the High Commissioner in Cairo, Sir Reginald Wingate, who was appointed to review Watson's proposal for the university in Egypt.¹⁰ The High Commissioner initially rejected the proposed location of the university based on the concern that the establishment of an American sponsored university would be problematic for Egyptians,

Committee members also questioned use of the term 'university' for such a modest institution; objected to the word 'Cairo,' since it erroneously suggested municipal sponsorship; and criticized the project's religious

emphasis, which they claimed might provoke adverse reaction from Egyptians.¹¹

In 1917, Watson was finally able to address these concerns and appease Sir Wingate with additional support from the United Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions and by making several concessions. For example, in order to receive approval, Watson abandoned the preferred building site for the AUC, just below the Pyramids.¹²

The second organizational challenge in the establishment of the AUC was the recruitment of a teaching staff that included both Egyptian teachers and American educators, all of whom had to be approved by the Presbyterian Board of Trustees. During this time there were only a small number of missionaries working in Egypt and few were certified as teachers. With the support of Robert S. McClenahan, the former Principal of Assuit College in Egypt, and Wendell Cleland, an English professor from The Ohio State University, Watson was able to establish a teaching staff of 20 for the opening of the university in 1920. This required teachers to move from America to Egypt.¹³ Murphy notes that there was a blend of motivations that drew teachers to the campus during the 1920's,

despite meagre salaries, the university found many qualified men desirous of serving. Some were inspired to work abroad by religious idealism of men like Watson; others wanted to travel and live in a foreign country.¹⁴

In addition to teachers travelling from the United States, the university also employed teachers from the Coptic Orthodox, Christian and Catholic communities.¹⁵ The multid denominational background of the teachers further contributed to the development of the diverse university campus that Watson had included in his proposal that was accepted by British officials in Cairo. Although the university was heavily subsidized by the American Presbyterian Mission, it was Watson's goal to avoid any specific religious

influence of the student body. It was clearly Watson's intention to create an environment where discussions about religion and differences between religious groups could occur. The decision to create a multid denominational environment came at the cost of disrupting the relationship between the AUC and the American Mission that was connected to the United Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions.

Although the School of Oriental Studies strengthened the university in some ways, it also contributed to a further deterioration of relations with the American Mission. Suspicions had arisen as soon as Watson had concluded that the college should be independent and multid denominational, not an adjunct of the mission.¹⁶

The relationship between the AUC and the American Mission was finally severed in 1923.

AUC had essentially modeled itself after other missionary universities with regard to its goals, curriculum, staff organization, and personal policies. The critical difference was that the American University was not directly responsible to any one religious organization.¹⁷

Murphy argues that, this marked a significant change in the development of the university and most importantly, it impacted how the AUC was situated in the Egyptian landscape.

The Division of Extension

During the first ten years programs offered at the AUC expanded dramatically. A driving force behind the expansion of the programs was the desire to create a curriculum that would facilitate the development of philosophical discussions about values and, most importantly, create a forum for debate and further education. In order to fulfill this mission, Watson, Cleland, McClenahan and Theodore Yoder created the Division of Extension,

In asking people to speak in its program, the Division of Extension has carefully stated that it is in search of and seeking to share what has already been discovered of truth, beauty and goodness – the values which contribute to the highest development of the individual and society.¹⁸

During the creation of this program, Watson, Cleland, McClenahan and Yoder formulated a mission statement and goals for the programming that would be supported by the Division of Extension. This would be used as a selection rubric for programming,

The University firmly believes that true success in life can be attained only in so far as it works in harmony with an Almighty God in carrying out His divine plan...The institution however, recognizes the right of every man to his own beliefs, and respects every man's opinions on religious as well as other matters. It does not seek to change any man's denominational affiliation, but it does urge upon every man the prime importance of a right relationship with God.¹⁹

Although this mission statement broadly outlines a link to the inclusion of guidance by religion through a relationship with God, an important feature with respect to the development of university programming is the facilitation of discussion about values and religion without the promotion of specific Presbyterian or Islamic theology. This multidimensional approach would be instrumental in the selection of lectures offered by the Division of Extension.

In the developmental years of both the AUC and the Division of Extension, I argue that two central goals were woven into the fabric of both the university programs and community outreach programs. The first goal, central to the development of the university, was the growth and fostering of philosophical discussions and debate through university classes and lectures. I argue that courses offered at the AUC were specifically developed with this in mind and were therefore listed as mandatory for all students regardless of the degree selected. The second goal expanded upon the development of

philosophical debate and challenged religious requirements and interpretations through discussions offered at the community level. I argue that the creation of the Division of Extension was an attempt to extend beyond the university and include members of the community at large in fostering debate and discussion of contentious issues such as health, poverty and religion. Given the somewhat delicate development of an American university in a British colonial society - that had transitioned into a post-colonial society during the developmental period of AUC - programming and lectures that were offered between 1920 and 1930 would ultimately result in significant events -- for the university administrators, educators, students, and the community as a whole. Specifically, the Division of Extension lecture series promoted by the AUC would play a significant role in shaping the university landscape.

Emphasis on the Development of Philosophical Critical Thinking Skills

By 1926, the university had reached its full level of operation and offered accreditation and courses in three areas: i) the College of Arts and Sciences, ii) the School of Oriental Studies and iii) the Extension Division.²⁰ Given the diverse areas of study, it is clear the school curriculum was created to not alienate possible Egyptian Muslim students. Through an examination of his correspondence to the United Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, it is evident that Charles Watson was mindful of the diverse student body and sought to ensure that all students could engage in fruitful learning, “It has always been the plan to make this School one of the most authoritative centres for the study of Islam and one of the best equipped Schools for Christian missionaries to Moslems.”²¹ Even though the AUC was in the early stages of operation, in a letter to the Presbyterian Board of Trustees extolling the recent virtues of being able

to offer such a diverse selection of courses to students, Watson also proudly remarked on the ethnic background of the student body,

The College has run an enrolment of about fifty more students than last year. We still hold our own in a Moslemⁱ enrolment that slightly exceeds one-half of our total constituency, a unique record for any institution under Christian auspices in the Near East, a solemnizing opportunity and trust also!²²

Commenting on the percentage of Muslim students would be repeated in future correspondence, in the form of monthly reports to the Presbyterian Board of Trustees. Student demographics were also included in official AUC handbooks given to both prospective and current students. Interestingly, in the 1929-1930 student handbook, the record of students not only outlined the ratio of Muslim to Christian students, but also included a specification of all religions represented in the student body, “record of students: Religious Affiliation: i) Moslem – 39, ii) Orthodox (Coptic) – 22, iii) Protestant – 17, iv) Catholic – 2, v) Jewish – 2.”²³ The representation of numerous religious affiliations is evidence that school programming did not privilege one group of students over another.

Although Watson completed post graduate work that specialized in missionary outreach, the expansion of university programming targeting the development of philosophical discussion and debate seems to suggest that Watson was essentially attempting to bridge two different worlds – Muslim and Christian. Evidence to support this claim is found in a promotional pamphlet from 1929 titled “Why: The American University at Cairo”. In this pamphlet, Watson expands on how the relationship between Western Christianity and the Islam can be best described as ‘The Bridge of Friendliness’,

ⁱ Variant spelling of ‘Muslim’ commonly found in historical documents.

The American University at Cairo is a Bridge of Friendliness between America and Egypt, between the English-speaking world and the Arabic-speaking, between Western Christianity and Moslem lands. The bridge of Friendliness is barely a footpath as yet, but its service is real, its methods sound, its influence penetrating. At one end of the Bridge stands Egypt and other Moslem lands, eager to help in solving the new problems of their new day. At the other end of the Bridge is America with its great resources of practical knowledge and of dynamic Christian ideals. Slowly but surely the two are drawing closer together.²⁴

Keeping in mind that there was some level of hierarchical thinking rooted in the understanding that ‘dynamic Christian ideals’ added value to other religious perspectives, the ‘Bridge of Friendliness’ does acknowledge that at either end is a level starting point. Furthermore, one perspective, or religion in this case, does not need to be sacrificed for a ‘better’ understanding. Evidence of Watson’s attempts to continue to build upon ‘The Bridge of Friendliness’ can be found in the course syllabuses contained in the 1929 student handbook. Entitled a ‘Modern Progressive School’ by Watson, the first few pages contain a broad description of how AUC, as a modern progressive school, was defined, “it stands unique. It may be among the lesser of educational institutions of its size – but none greater in its actuating Idea and in its potentiality.”²⁵

Centrally, differences at either end of the ‘Bridge of Friendliness’ were considered to be that of religious faith and belief and questions regarding the role faith plays in actuating belief. Opportunities for students to engage in discussions about these central differences were established through courses in social ethics, philosophy and moral and religious development and were compulsory for the entire student body.²⁶ The topics covered in these courses were aimed at moving beyond the acceptance of religious dogma and facilitated an opportunity for students to engage in tough philosophical discussions

that were then to be used in practical social settings. As noted by Howard L Rubendall, an instructor at the College, "... It stresses practical and useful knowledge against theoretical and bookish knowledge. It seeks to develop originality and initiative rather than mass complacency."²⁷

Under the auspices of a modern progressive school, Watson, Cleland, McClenahan and Yoder were largely responsible for creating course outlines and selecting the topics that would be included in compulsory classes. At the forefront of the compulsory courses was the philosophy and ethics program. A central focus of these courses was to develop and foster critical thinking and reasoning skills among the student body,

The College frankly includes morality and religion in its curricula. It holds that a progressive school should stimulate freedom of religious inquiry among its mature students. At the same time it safeguards such study as so that no unfair advantage may be taken by any teachers of immature students. The aim is to lay a rational and scientific foundation for religious belief and to relate religion to life so as to make it a force for intelligent social reconstruction and the service of humanity. The College is a Christian education institution, yet no religious attack is permitted on anyone's faith and no verbal or other confession of faith is required.²⁸

The aim to infuse philosophical tools of analysis and critical evaluation into discussions of religious faith and belief highlights the debate between notions of faith and reason. Rooted in the summary of the course on moral and religious development, students were being asked to engage in navigating through the difficult relationship between faith and reason.

Historically, questions about the relationship between faith and reason have fostered several different themes and discussions. One of the main themes that have been explored by Thomas Aquinas, Blaise Pascal and Soren Kierkegaard is whether it is

possible for the ‘truths’ of religious beliefs to be proven through philosophical inquiry. In the book, Philosophy of Religion, authors Michael Peterson, William Hasker, Bruce Reichenbach, and David Basinger compiled a set of selected readings to further explore the relationship between faith and reason. In the introduction, the authors identify three main approaches that have been used in the somewhat contentious debate about the relationship between faith and reason. The first is ‘strong rationalism’. This approach is defined as the view that an individual or group cannot be considered to be rational in accepting religious beliefs unless the beliefs can be shown to be convincingly true. It is obvious that the very meaning of this approach carries the weight of constructing a definition of what would be considered to be ‘convincingly true’.²⁹ In direct contrast to this perspective is the second approach, ‘fideism’. The main crux of this approach is: “... Fideists typically say that the ‘truth’ that is essential to religious faith is more a matter of subjective, inner commitment than an objective matter of reasoned argument.”³⁰ Underpinning this assertion is the acceptance of faith as a standalone concept that does not require additional support from rational investigation. The third and final approach blends some of the features of both strong rationalism and fideism. ‘Critical rationalism’ is aligned closely with ‘strong rationalism’; however, this approach acknowledges that the pursuit of a conclusive argument may not always be possible. Philosophers who subscribe to this approach seek to create and develop a, “cumulative case to show that their belief-system does a better job than its rivals of explaining the “total evidence” provided by life in all its complexity.”³¹ Although one can conceptualize the relationship between strong rationalism and fideism as opposing poles of understanding and interpretation of religion, there is a spectrum that flows between the two poles.

In an interview conducted by a representative of the Presbyterian Board of Trustees, Watson clearly noted that the approach employed at AUC was to foster the development of ‘critical rationalism’ in the philosophy and ethics courses. This is exemplified in Watson’s description of the university’s approach to philosophical discussions built on religious difference,

Religion – of course, our program is a very broad one. We do not attack other religions. We come at the question of religion from the point of view of values – what values do different religions have for you? Have they contributed real values to the history of mankind? What countries with what religions have stood out to the front? Has religion been a factor in their development? I have had in the senior year this subject to discuss and of course the laying aside of fanaticism is one of the biggest things we achieve. To be able to discuss religion without flaring up and getting angry is a great achievement in the Orient.³²

Following the tenets of critical rationalism, Watson highlights the importance of shifting the focus in discussions of religious difference, from one religious belief being better than the other, to an evaluation of what different religious beliefs mean in the context of society. This focus moves beyond the consideration that an individual must be accepting of all the religious tenets and requirements that may be part of a set belief and supports the opportunity for the evaluation of these features. In a sense, Watson was hoping to initiate a discussion centred on the ethical systems that are part of each religious group. Ultimately, the goal was to examine the impact of religious values on the lives of individuals.³³

Philosophical Application and the Development of the Division of Extension

This approach to the development of conversations that examine religious values was not only fostered in the philosophy and ethics courses. It was further replicated in the formation of the Division of Extension. The fundamental goal of the Division of

Extension was to offer lectures that would expand on courses offered in the university programming that focused on the development of philosophical discussion. Created in 1924, the Division of Extension was the third department of the university.³⁴ The main purpose of this department was to integrate the aims and purposes of the university into the development of lecture series and community programs,

The fullest realization of these aims and purposes makes it necessary to discover some means which will enlist the sympathy and cooperation of the community in which the university is located. In other words, the University must in a tangible and practical way meet the needs of 'Mr. Public'. To do this adequately and thereby take advantage of its unique location, it was felt necessary to create a special department of the University, which is known as 'The Division of Extension', or, in Arabic, 'The Department of Public Service'.³⁵

What had started out as a department that served as a liaison between the university faculty and students with the community, had turned into an expansion of the discussion, built on a 'critical rationalism' and infused with the intention to educate the community. In order to develop a program that would attract members from the community, a space was required. AUC was centrally located in Cairo, near the Nile, and was therefore a location accessible to many people living in the city. As a result of a generous donation, Ewart Hall, which was able to seat 1150 people, was constructed.³⁶ The next task was the development of a program. In an interview about the Division of Extension, conducted in 1934, Watson highlighted the need for careful consideration when developing the program,

The program had to reckon with fanaticism, political, and religious. So we started with a non-flammable subject – health. And had the Health of the Eye as our first program with a campaign on the care of the eyes.³⁷

The first initiative of the Division of Extension was a success and word of the programming offered by the AUC spread among the community. The audience attending the public lectures expanded from the student body to include influential members of the broader community. Watson noted, in correspondence to the United Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, that this was an important development for the Division of Extension, "...So we established a confidence, a sense of solidarity in the mind of the public. Also we played very fair in the matter of liberty of speech."³⁸ One of the most interesting features of this department was the focus on bridging the university with the local community. Following the aims of the progressive university, as outlined by Watson; by way of example, the Division of Extension was meant to be another link in the 'Bridge of Friendliness'.

Coinciding with the creation of the Division of Extension was the acceptance of female students in 1929. The first women allowed entrance into the university were only allowed to take secondary preparatory courses. This changed in the following year when female students were officially enrolled in the college level program.³⁹ To ensure that the female students were considered to be equal to their male counterparts, a statement was included in the AUC student handbook,

As part of a modern progressive program, the College is conducting an experiment in co-education. A limited number of young women are admitted to certain classes on the same condition as men. The men and women have their class work together and the women also participate in the extra-curricular activities.⁴⁰

During the formative period of 1929-1930, many changes were occurring at the AUC. In addition to the development of compulsory courses in philosophy and ethics and the entrance of women into the university landscape, the force behind the development of the

Division of Extension also experienced a shift in focus. Watson elaborates on this change in an interview,

As I say, first we dealt with health. Then we pushed up to social problems which were not supposed to be difficult, inflammable I mean from the point of view of public feeling. And followed it up again with education. We then took in the position of women.⁴¹

Prior to the development of a program that would expand on the discussion of women in Egypt, the following lectures were given, “i) The Value of Public Health Teaching; ii) The Effect of Alcohol on the General Health; iii) Personal Hygiene; iv) Insect-borne Infections; v) The Spread and Prevention of Infectious Diseases and vi) Responsibility of Men in Matters Relating to Maternity and Child Welfare.”⁴²

In 1930, both the AUC and the Division of Extension made significant progress in an examination of the placement of women in Egyptian society. AUC would be the first post-secondary educational institution in Egypt that allowed women to enrol. In a letter to the Presbyterian Board of Trustees, Watson commented on the continued inclusive nature of the AUC,

Now let me turn to the College, which again this year broke all records for enrolment during the first term. We had 355 enrolled of whom three were women: one the Egyptian girl...Our Moslem enrolment is almost 60% of the total, but seven other religions are represented. The nationalities represented are; Egyptian, Palestinian, Armenian, Syrian, Greek, American, Arab, French, Moroccan, Persian, Sumatran, British, Indian, Japanese, Maghrabi, Russian, Turkish, and Yemeni.⁴³

Coinciding with the expansion of the student body to include representatives from various cultural and religious backgrounds, the inclusion of women in the student body supported by a lecture series offered by the Division of Extension would contribute to challenging widely held values in the community pertaining to women’s role in society.

In February 1930, Watson sent another update to the 'Friends of the American University' that outlined the development of a lecture series that would further challenge public opinion,

Present conditions contribute to a certain alertness and activity of the public mind on almost every subject. Our lectures deal with eyes and hookworm, with immorality and social hygiene, with children and mothers, with standards of living and livelihood, with women and the social order, - in short with all that pertains to human life in the Will of God. So we have been having in our splendid auditorium, Ewart Memorial Hall, some lectures on woman's position in society.⁴⁴

The selection of lectures examining the position of women in Egyptian society was made by Watson, Cleland, McClenahan and Yoder. The decision to select lecturers was based on the development of discussion among the students and the community. In an interview, Watson commented on the decision making process that was used in selecting speakers,

Of course we selected our speakers – we did not get some wild Indian to speak, but we got responsible leaders and once we invited them, they could speak on the subject in any way they wanted to. But the point is that there was a discussion. There was an awakening of the mind on the subject, and that is better than total inertia.⁴⁵

Setting the stage for the development of discussion that would challenge popular social opinion on the status of women in Egyptian society, the lectures selected for the 1930 series were the following: i) The National Unit-The Home; ii) Young Criminals; iii) Treatment & Reform; iv) Egyptian Economic Enterprises; v) Literature and its Influence upon Social Life of the Community; vi) Egyptian Womanhood and vii) Economic Reform the Basis of Social and Religious Reform.⁴⁶

The Status of Women's Rights in Egypt 1920 – 1930: Huda Shaawari

In order to fully understand why and how a lecture series that included an examination of Egyptian womanhood would be considered to be progressive, it is instructive to examine the status of women's rights in Egypt between 1920 and 1930. From 1919 – 1924, a few women had become involved in the political demonstrations that supported independence from British rule. Although they were allowed to march alongside their male counterparts protesting the British government rule over Egypt, women were largely limited in educational opportunities,

In 1924, the first secondary school for girls opened in Shubra and before the decade had ended the first women had entered the Egyptian University. They were required to sit in the front row in class – a vestige of segregation.⁴⁷

One central figure who fought for women's rights in Egypt in the 1920's was Huda Shaawari. Her remarkable actions played a central role in raising the profile of women in Egyptian society. It is helpful to further examine why AUC and the Division of Extension would be considered to be progressive with respect to women's rights by exploring the life of Huda Shaawari, Egypt's first and most publically known feminist and Egyptian nationalist.

Born in Al Minyā, Huda Shaawari founded the Egyptian Feminist Union in 1923. She led it until her death in 1947.⁴⁸ Shortly after her birth, Huda moved into a Haremⁱⁱ in the Ismailiyya district in Cairo, near to the Nile.⁴⁹ In her book, Harem Years: the memoirs of an Egyptian feminist, translator and editor Margot Badran notes that notions of what living in a Harem meant are somewhat sensationalized by Western accounts,

ⁱⁱ Margot Badran notes that Muslim women living in Harems in Cairo were required to wear both the hijab and niqab in public settings. Huda's mother was also raised in the Harem of a wealthy relative.

the word harem, which to Western eyes usually conjures up a host of exotic images, was simply the portion of the house where women and children conducted their daily lives. Harem also signified a man's wife or wives, and connoted respect. In Egypt, as elsewhere in the cities of the Middle East, among the upper and middle classes in the nineteenth and early twentieth century (and even today in some places) women and men were kept apart. Women lived their lives within the private enclosures of their domestic quarters. When they went out they veiled their faces, thus taking seclusion with them.⁵⁰

Based on this description, Badran traces Shawaari's experience growing up in a Harem and links it with her passion for feminism and nationalism,

The *Memoirs* provide valuable clues as to why Huda was the first to emerge publicly as a militant feminist. She came from a class eager to exploit the advantages of modernization in everyday life, hence supporting innovation, yet a class also eager to maintain its privileges and apartness. Controlling women was seen as crucial to this. Maintaining *visible* honour was dependent upon the seclusion of women and honour had important political implications. Female seclusion separated women from men but also distanced women from different classes. Early Egyptian feminism not only challenged the patriarchal order but was an ideology that superseded class and was all the more threatening to the old order because it was grounded in Islam".⁵¹

The anguish and isolation that Shaawari felt at the inconsistencies of educational and development opportunities between her and her brother are clearly communicated through her memoirs. Even within the walls of the Harem, girls and boys were treated unequally. This was especially the case with respect to education. In her early years, Shaawari commented on the pain she felt as a result of being prevented from receiving the education she so desired,

Of all the subjects, Arabic was my favourite. One day when I asked the teacher why I was unable to read the Koran without making a mistake he said, 'Because you have not learned the rules of grammar.' I pressed him, 'Will I be able to read perfectly once I have done so?' When he said yes, I asked him to teach me. The next day, when he

arrived carrying an Arabic grammar under his arm, Said Agha demanded arrogantly, ‘What is that?’ to which he responded, ‘The book Mistress Nur al-Huda has requested in order to learn grammar’. The eunuch contemptuously ordered, ‘Take back your book *Sayyidna Shaikh*. The young lady has no need of grammar as she will not become a judge!’ I became depressed and began to neglect my studies, hating being a girl because it kept me from the education I sought.⁵²

This example was one of many examples of unequal treatment that Shaawari includes in her memoirs. Badran argues that Shaawari was unable to bear the weight that the expectations of living in the Harem placed upon girls and women and this in turn fuelled her desire to advocate for women’s rights.⁵³ The most painful requirement of living in a Harem was that of isolation, “Around the age of nine or ten, at the onset of puberty, upper and middle-class girls in Huda’s day would begin to wear a veil and cloak when going out of door. From that time, Huda’s childhood companionship with sons of family friends and neighbours ceased. Huda registers pain over this separation.”⁵⁴ The inequalities suffered as a result of living in the Harem, the lack of education, and her marriage at the age of thirteen to a man whom she thought of as an uncle were also instrumental in her desire to support feminist and nationalistic causes.

In her thirties, to further support feminist initiatives, Shaawari joined the *Wafdist*ⁱⁱⁱ movement.⁵⁵ Her role in the *Wafdist* Women’s Central Committee was based on the idea that, through emancipation from British rule, women would be able to add women’s rights into the formation of a new constitution. In 1920, a proposal for independence was drafted between the British government and the *Wafdist* male leaders.⁵⁶ When the

ⁱⁱⁱ The *Wafd* (delegation) Party was considered the main opposition parties in Egypt. This party was instrumental in challenging the British occupation of Egypt.

Wafdist women's group received a copy of the proposal, they were outraged and Shaawari sent the following letter to the leader of the Wafd party,

We are surprised and shocked by the way we have been treated recently, in contrast to previous treatment and certainly contrary to what we expect from you. You supported us when we created our Committee. Your congratulatory telegrams expressed the finest hopes and most notable sentiments. What makes us all the more indignant is that by disregarding us the Wafd has caused foreigners to disparage the renaissance of women. They claim that our participation in the nationalist movement was merely a ploy to dupe civilized nations into believing in the advancement of Egypt and its ability to govern itself. Our women's renaissance is above that as you well know. At this moment, when the future of Egypt is about to be decided, it is unjust that the Wafd, which stands for the rights of Egypt and struggles for its liberation, should deny half the nation its role in that liberation.⁵⁷

The use of the women's support as a ploy to gain international support for Egypt's independence was the ultimate betrayal. The resulting strain between the men's and women's groups allowed for Shaawari and fellow feminist union members to concentrate on the women's movement in Egypt.⁵⁸

Isolated from the *Wafdists*, Shaawari and the Feminist Union continued to rally for women's rights. One specific event that demonstrated Huda's effort to move the question of women's rights into the public sphere was the removal of her face veil (*niqab*) in public. This occurred after a trip to Rome to attend the National Feminist meeting,

At Cairo station one spring day in 1923, a crowd of women with veils and long, black cloaks descended from their horse-drawn carriages to welcome home two friends returning from an international feminist meeting in Rome. Huda Shaawari and Saiza Nabarawi stepped out on to the running board of the train. Suddenly Huda – followed by Saiza, the younger of the two – drew back the veil from her face. The waiting women broke into loud applause. Some imitated the act. Contemporary accounts observed how the eunuchs guarding the women frowned with displeasure.⁵⁹

After this public act, Shaawari and some of her fellow members of the Feminist Union would venture out in public without the *niqab*: the veil over their hair remained. Badran notes that, although this public display did not result in the removal of public restrictions, it was considered a visible rejection of the Harem system and women's confinement,

Veiling and the harem system were social conventions connected with economic standing. They had nothing whatsoever to do with Islam. Even those in Egypt who knew better were usually loathe to admit it publicly, however, honour was at stake. In Egypt, as in other Mediterranean societies, the honour of men and the family rested upon the sexual purity of women. A way to guard purity was by keeping women secluded. In Egypt during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Jewish, Christian and Muslim women in the cities all veiled. Lucie Duff Gordon, a perceptive Englishwoman who lived in Egypt in the 1860's, remarked that the Christians she saw in Upper Egypt were more fastidious than the Muslims in veiling.⁶⁰

From 1920 to 1930, Shaawari and her fellow members of the Feminist Union fought for the inclusion of a new constitution that declared, "All Egyptians are equal before the law. They enjoy equally civil and political rights and are equally charged with public duties and responsibilities without distinction of race, language, or religion."⁶¹ The result unfortunately ended in suffrage being given to Egyptian men only. Badran also notes that the Egyptian Feminist Union fought for changes in family law, divorce, polygamy and for increasing the age of marriage. Unfortunately these efforts did not result in changes to legislation, "the transition of Huda and other feminist pioneers was fraught with contradictions. While active in feminist meetings and nationalist politics and participating in international feminist meetings abroad, the women in their everyday life continued to face restrictions."⁶² Although the efforts of the Egyptian Feminist Union and Shaawari seemed to have not resulted in increased public freedom for Egyptian women, Badran argues, "through her feminism Huda had taken charge of her life and had

broken through barriers dividing gender and class upheld by the old harem system.”⁶³

During her life as a political activist Shaawari, along with the members of the Feminist Union, challenged the status of women’s rights in Egypt. Although there was no change in the legislative systems that governed broader social values such as the right to vote and laws on polygamy and divorce, this example provides a useful description and context with respect to the status of women’s rights in Egypt between 1920 and 1930.

“Shall Women have Rights and Obligations Equal to Men?”

The Dr. Fakhry M. Farag Lecture

Mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the work of Farag had a significant impact on AUC and the community. Fakhry Mikha’il Farag was a medical doctor and member of the Coptic Catholic Church in Cairo.⁶⁴ In addition to being involved with the Division of Extension, Farag gave lectures on sexual hygiene and sexually transmitted diseases to the police training school and students from Al-Azhar, a religious school.⁶⁵ Although there is no evidence to suggest that Farag was directly involved in Missionary work in the rural areas of Cairo, the backlash from the controversial lecture linked his work to Muslim anti-missionary activism.⁶⁶ On February 4th, 1930, Fakhry M. Farag delivered a lecture that would challenge current beliefs and understandings of the general community and students studying at the AUC and ultimately, the response to which would contribute to his untimely death. In his personal memoirs, Robert McClenahan retells his account of the decision to include the topic of women’s rights in the lecture series,

These lectures first conducted in the main college building became so popular that the splendid opportunity offered by the new Ewart Memorial Hall enabled hundreds, up to as many as one thousand or more to be present at addresses by distinguished Egyptian citizens in questions of national

welfare, public health, history, science and national problems other than politics or religion. We were not able to present these two lines of extension of the public mind less we would create an exposition and an outburst of not easily controlled public feelings; these problems however were discussed with freedom and both the students and staff realized that we were pursuing these suggestions academically whether in national affairs or questions of ethics or basic religious conflicts but not identification with some definite body.⁶⁷

The lecture given in 1930 was the second presentation given by Farag, who had previously presented on the prevalence of venereal disease. Although the first lecture on venereal disease had been accepted by the audience in Ewart Hall, the second lecture resulted in a different reaction. In a letter dated February 26th, 1930, Dr. Charles R. Watson recounts the audience reaction to Farag's lecture,

In his address he argued for her sharing equally with man in the matter of inheritance and denounced as antiquated the laws that relegated her to a position of inferiority to man. This was felt to be an attack on Islamic law which still controls the social order in Egypt. A few shouts of protest followed, which grew from bad to worse. Then pandemonium broke loose. For twenty minutes the crowd surged about in the hall before even a semblance of order could be restored. Then the meeting adjourned and the fanatical element repaired from our grounds to the newspaper offices.⁶⁸

Robert McClenahan was also instrumental in managing the disgruntled audience and he included this experience in his memoirs,

I at once felt unrest in the audience, the very large part of the audience being Mohammedan. Within a few minutes the feelings arose and men were standing in the audience shouting criticism and demanding that Dr. [Farag] stop what he was saying. Within a few minutes the turmoil increased until the whole audience were standing on their feet shouting, and some even coming to the rostrum and demanding me to bring the meeting to an end which I refused to do. I addressed the audience, in Arabic, of course, insisting that they were to resume their seats or withdraw from the auditorium since the lecture had a message which they could either accept or not without any further demonstrations or violence. A half-dozen men were on the platform shaking their fists and threatening Dr. [Farag] and myself but I called them to order, dismissed these men from the rostrum and proceeded with the lecture. After something like ten minutes more Dr.

[Frag] brought his address to an end and then it was a confusion worse confounded in the entire auditorium. The men were in genuine mob, angry over what they said was an attack on their Mohammedan religion and tradition and life. I quietly slipped Dr. [Frag] out of the side door to an automobile and sent him home and then came back to quiet the frenzied mob. I insisted to them that they had been free to come and leave but not to control our lectures. Finally they dispersed, angry and ready for trouble.⁶⁹

This lecture resulted in severe problems for AUC and Frag. Shortly after the lecture, Frag was arrested and charged for defamation of Islam. Charges were laid by the King and enacted through the Public Prosecutor.⁷⁰ In an interview conducted after the incident, Watson expands on the nature of the charges laid against Frag,

The lecturer was an Egyptian who was not Moslem and he was backing fair dealing to women. Under the law of inheritance it allows a daughter only one half of what a son will get. He made the remark that “you will only say that this is against the religious law because the law of inheritance is outlined in the Koran”, but he said, “you have made many changes” and quotes three or four that had already been made and it irritated them as though he were jibing them for inconsistency, and some fellow yelled out, “you are attacking our religion”.⁷¹

Immediately after the lecture and subsequent public outrage, newspapers and journals in Egypt reported on the story. The public interpretation and re-telling of the information contained in Frag’s lecture spread quickly, “The journal *Kawkad al-Shaq*, for example, expressed its surprise that the Americans had allowed this man to ‘preach’ in a way that ‘veneralized’ and ‘syphilized’ his hearers and disgraced Islam.”⁷² The members of the Division Extension Board convened a meeting on February 28th to discuss what, if any, actions would be taken to resolve this matter. In the minutes of this meeting, the approach taken by the members the Division of Extension were revealed. It is clear in this record that there was a separation between the members who felt that it was the university’s responsibility to support Frag and those who felt that he had intentionally

angered the audience. Amir Eff, a member of the Division of Extension at large, argued that it was in fact Farag's intention to incite the audience, "I was interested to hear Amir Eff say that Dr. Fakhry's lecture was intended to stir up trouble as was evidenced by the way in which the statements were worded and arranged."⁷³ Although there was disagreement between the members of the Division of Extension, ultimately all of the members agreed to preserve the work of the Division and continue with the lecture series. In an attempt to dampen the negative attitudes that had developed towards the University because of inaccurate media reports, Theodore Yoder prepared guidelines for all future speakers.⁷⁴ This list included references to permissible length of lecture times, advertisement of lecture material and controlling the audience.⁷⁵ One significant requirement included in these guidelines was the limitation of what topics would be included in the lecture series, "Statements on Political and Religious topics which are calculated to antagonize people should not be made before the average public gathering."⁷⁶ It is interesting to note that, despite the regulation of lecture material for the large public gatherings that was established, the minutes of this meeting included the following statement made by Dr. Charles R. Watson, AUC President, "Dr. Watson indicated the necessity of differentiating between the more popular lectures and the more limited and selected lectures which will draw selected audiences."⁷⁷ The acknowledgement that certain material was not ready for public consumption demonstrates the desire for material that was not as popular to still be included. The members of the Division of Extension, however, would ensure that these lectures would not result in what had been dubbed by Theodore Yoder as the 'Dr. Farag Affair'.⁷⁸

Contrary to the members of the AUC Division of Extension that did not support Farag, Robert McClenahan, Dr. Charles R. Watson and Theodore Yoder were staunch believers in the message conveyed by Farag. In a letter to the Presbyterian Board, Watson outlined his interpretation of the lecture and the impact it had on the audience,

What does it mean? (1) Mr. Public Opinion out here is a very excitable gentleman; you must handle him with care; we need to study his psychology very carefully. (2) He is evidently very touchy on religious questions; he wants to be known as a correct Moslem. (3) He wants to be progressive and up-to-date but his traditions and training make this very difficult for him, so you must allow Father Time to lead him forward. In this he probably does not differ much from you and me. (4) He does need a friendly hand to help him formulate his ideas and ideals on individual, social, and national standards of life. Ours is the opportunity to render a unique service along these lines, if we will only do it in a truly Christian spirit, with good judgment, sincere sympathy, infinite patience and a practical regard for existing conditions.⁷⁹

Whereas Watson's support was motivated by encouraging a dialogue that would challenge widely held beliefs by members of Egyptian society, Theodore Yoder was compelled to support Farag because of his relationship with AUC,

Let me make my own position in this matter perfectly clear. It is simply this: Fakhry has been an excellent friend of our institution. He has worked hard for us, defended us, and generously donated both time and funds. He has never asked for anything for himself through eight years, except for opportunities to do more work. Furthermore, he is an Egyptian of energy, enthusiasm, courage and devotion, and intelligence – not devoid of faults, some personal, native that we have hoped to find and push forward. Now in the course of his enthusiastic prosecution of his social aims, he makes a mistake of judgement and lands in hot water.⁸⁰

To show their support for Farag, Yoder and Watson arranged for a gift of £1000, which was meant to assist with bail and other legal fees. In addition to the monetary support, Theodore Yoder remained in close communication with Farag and in a further attempt to gather support, contacted members of the University community in hopes that they would attend Farag's trial. The following was a letter sent by Yoder to the 'friends of AUC',

We have asked Dr. Fakhry what we could do to help him in this trial and his reply was that we would help him greatly if we could influence Europeans and Americans to attend the trial, thus showing that this case is not fought in some dark corner, but that it is one of international concern. Especially he would like to have as many women as can arrange to get there.⁸¹

Yoder went so far as to include an offer to arrange transportation for any who could attend the trial.⁸² Even though Farag was acquitted, the Egyptian government appealed the verdict and it was re-tried.⁸³ It took an additional three months to have the charges dropped by the King.⁸⁴ Unfortunately, after the trial was over, Farag was deeply affected by the public persecution, “American sources observed that he emerged from the trial a broken man, ‘nearly flattened out by the experience,’ and died soon thereafter.”⁸⁵

The Lecture

It is of interest to note that Farag’s lecture comes just seven years after Huda’s public removal of her face veil. Even though there is no direct link that would suggest that Farag and Huda Shaawari consulted with one another about women’s position in Egyptian society, news of her involvement in the Feminist Union was published in newspapers and, consequently, would have been widely discussed. It is important to outline a few significant considerations before proceeding to the evaluation of Farag’s lecture. These factors contribute to the unique and complicated reaction to a discussion on women’s role in Egyptian society in 1930.

Farag’s lecture comes at a time when recent events have set the stage for women’s roles in society to be further challenged. It is clear that the topic of women’s rights is being discussed in small groups among the Egyptian elite class. Farag refers to these discussions at the beginning of his talk,

The same subject has been discussed quite recently in a debate in one of the Egyptian University Clubs. Unfortunately I could not attend the debate

because of the pressure of my work with my patients. But I have read a resume of the debate in the *Ahram* written by the able journalist Ahmed Eff. Essawy Mohamed. A short time after, I was asked by some educated ladies and gentlemen, friends of mine, to lecture (not debate) on this subject.⁸⁶

Complementing these discussions are the recent struggles for independence that have been secured by the Wafd party and the social activism of Huda Shaawari. Discussed earlier in this chapter, Shaawari's work with respect to women's rights provides an illustration of what had been discussed in the public arena as well as the current environment and attitudes towards Muslim women in Egypt between 1920 and 1930. This reference also established a benchmark of what had been accomplished with respect to women's liberation in Egypt. The frustrations conveyed by Huda at the unequal treatment, lack of educational opportunities and social restrictions linked to veiling practices and living in a Harem system, all provide concrete examples and an important frame of reference.

A second consideration that is important to note is the role of the university. The decision to include lectures that examine the position of women in society is both demonstrative of the intention to support progressive lectures through the development of a program that challenges common social and religious understandings, and the desire to ensure that both women and men are afforded equal opportunities with respect to education.

The third consideration is the background of the lecturer. A medical doctor by trade, Farag has previously presented on physiological development and reproduction. I consider the transition from scientific research and analysis to social evaluation a unique shift for a practicing medical physician's professional work. The lecture given by Farag

is significant because of the method that he uses to evaluate the role of women in Egyptian society. He approaches this evaluation by unpacking the current structure of society and, based on this analysis, produces a recommendation of how obligations or rights would enhance women's position in society and ultimately support equality. After a brief explanation of the motivations for this evaluation, Farag argues that the approach taken in the lecture is not one that would advocate one side over the other, meaning that he does not want to lecture on how women should be considered to be better than men or vice versa.

With this perspective in mind, Farag proceeds to outline three assumptions that he believed laid the foundational framework for his evaluation of the role women should have in society. The assumptions outlined are: i) the placement of men and women should be at an equal level; ii) an argument for equality can be developed through an examination of rights and responsibilities; and iii) social development can only occur once this level of equality is reached. Farag carefully notes that these assumptions underpin the examination of which rights and responsibilities ought to be considered when discussing the equal treatment of men and women. In addition, he establishes that this philosophical examination considers these rights and responsibilities without interference from social and religious values,

Let us study carefully and systematically this vital problem towards either of the two sexes without prejudice. Let us take into consideration our local circumstances without being enchanted by the institutions of the West or influenced by our decisions or traditions.⁸⁷

Farag attempts to establish a starting point that is removed from links to certain 'ideal' standpoints. For example, his discussion is not linked to the obtainment of a Western ideal of how women 'ought' to be treated nor is it based on premises that are influenced

by cultural or traditional customs. This is significant to both the lecturer and the audience. It reveals Farag's intention to create a discussion that is aimed at examining the values that should be considered when speaking about women's public roles. I find this statement quite an interesting and a telling example of Farag's intention to engage in a discussion about the rights of women in a society that was experiencing a transition from being a British colony to an independent country. I believe it is also indicative of Farag's intention to create an argument that considers social and religious values as they are linked to the notion of Egyptian identity. This is significant because it attempts to create a commonality between all members of the audience based on being 'Egyptian' rather than based on their religious affiliation. After establishing these assumptions and parameters, Farag began his analysis by exploring illustrations of current social structures and answering the question of how the revolt of women who demanded equality began,

Revolt in most cases is the result of persecution. Man in all ages has dictated his commandments to women by reason of his authority and power. Woman endured his tyranny as long as she could, until finally she revolted not merely to demand some of her own rights but to also dispute some of his.⁸⁸

This answer further highlights the experience of Huda Shaawari that was explored earlier in this chapter. At this point, although he considers the revolt to be necessary, the demands that were argued for by the women are categorized by Farag as unjust,

Our next step will be to examine how her just claims are to be realized. Then we have to check with kindness and prudence all her unjust demands; those demands which were put forward because of bitterness in the face of tyranny and oppression and her hatred of despotism.⁸⁹

Farag noted that women had every right to mobilize against the conditions that they were living in. He argued, however, for these conditions to be examined first and the framework for how women ought to be treated be created from the philosophical

evaluation of individuals' rights and responsibilities. This changes the focus of the discussion from the use of specific examples of harmful treatment of women to the evaluation of how rights and responsibilities should be upheld.

Through the use of illustrations, Farag highlights three different social structures that he argues served as examples of the harmful treatment of women in Egyptian society. These structures are: i) clothing requirements; ii) social customs and iii) social authority. Farag argues that all of these structures contribute to men's authority over women's bodies, movement in public spaces, autonomy and freedom.

Clothing Requirements

The first illustration explores religious requirements that, in Farag's opinion, limit women's freedom in both public and private spaces. He argues that these requirements are fundamentally limiting and lead to further problems for the development of women intellectually. It also cements women's role as uneducated members of society. Farag begins by examining the relationship between veiling and social interaction. His first illustration explores the practice of veiling,

Woman was compelled by man to put on dress and leave that, to conceal this organ of her body and show the other. She was ordered to cover this part of her body and uncover that, to keep her nose away from people's sight and show her eyes. In short, man was the final authority and gave himself as absolute authority in setting the fashion for women's dress. She had to obey his dictates and orders as to her body and dress. His will was hers.⁹⁰

As previously noted in this chapter, at this time veiling was practiced by both Muslim and Coptic women in public spaces in Egypt. Although the public removal of her face veil by Huda Shaawari occurred in 1923, seven years later, it was still raised as a problematic issue by Farag. It is important to note that the focus of this example is not centred on the veil as a religious practice; rather it focuses on the

relationship between the veil, body, and ultimately the governance of the female body by men.

Linked to the first illustration and continuing with the theme of governance is the second example presented by Farag,

She was ordered not to show herself in the street. She was shut up in her home. When these orders seemed to him impracticable, he had to allow her to go out escorted. But by whom? By a man-servant or a maid-servant as if she was less respectable in his sight than a servant.⁹¹

At this time, women were not allowed to explore public space unless they were accompanied by male family members or servants. Women were also not permitted to expand their social circle to include individuals outside of their immediate family.⁹²

Farag argues that, stemming from the public veiling governance, and ultimately seclusion, which conjures images of the Harem system described by Huda Shaawari; women are unable to grow and develop as individuals because of the severely limited social interaction. Through the first two illustrations, Farag's comments on the relationship between women's freedom in public and private spaces. He argues that women's movement is bound by rules and expectations that govern Egyptian women physically and psychologically. The role of physical limitation is important to consider in this assessment. Farag identifies the husband as occupying the role of authoritarian and being in charge of regulating the female body, "We must confess that chastity thus forcibly preserved gives no credit to the wife's devotion or the husband's love. She is fed at his home as a most contemptible dog or cat living on the crumbs that fall from his table."⁹³ Since there is no link or reference to specific religious doctrine, the argument

that is being offered by Farag in this first section of the lecture, links these forms of governance to culturally and socially constructed beliefs drawn from religious practices.

Social Customs

The second area explored through the illustrations outlined in the lecture focuses on social customs. After exploring examples that focus on women's physical bodies, Farag argues that social customs that govern interaction further compound how women are treated, "Exchanges of visits was strictly prohibited. Thus a woman is shut up in her husband's home from the day of her wedding until she leaves it for her grave."⁹⁴ Stemming from little to no social interaction, Farag argues that the growth and development of women is deeply impacted. After outlining this brief example, he explores how spatial limitations can have negative impacts on women's development. Farag argues that there are connections between the levels of freedom a human experiences and personal development. Farag argues if women are not able to explore society and have access to educational opportunities, then personal development is severely limited, "Despotic unreasonable orders have, through the lapse of years, taken the form of obligations binding upon women. These false obligations have led to her moral and mental and social degradation."⁹⁵ Farag does not specifically name or define the social customs he refers to in this section of his argument. However, through these illustrations he focuses on those customs that have been used to permit the public seclusion of women. These examples again are akin to those of living in a Harem, as outlined by Huda Shaawari. In this case, the example of the limits placed on how much education girls are allowed to receive is echoed by Farag,

Man, in order to keep woman in complete subjugation to his authority, and in mean serfdom to his desires, found no better way or stronger weapon than keeping her in total ignorance. He reached such a conclusion after long thinking. He heard of the common saying that knowledge is light. So woman and her daughters were doomed to complete darkness. She and her sex were doomed to entire ignorance.⁹⁶

Farag argues that, since education starts in the home, a mother's lack of education will impact the children as well, thus creating a domino effect. This is another example of the unequal treatment constantly reproduced through public and private values and systems. Farag argues that the replication of these values is necessary so that man's superiority over woman could be secured.

The third set of illustrations is based on an examination of how the limitation of physical expression and spatial freedom is fundamentally linked to demonstrations of authority, "Lastly, out of a personal desire to secure for himself a position of complete superiority in regard to her, by keeping her in a place of secondary importance, he thought of making his position more secure and impregnable."⁹⁷ Farag argues that there is a relationship between knowledge and authority and this relationship plays a large role in the discussion of which rights and obligations should be considered in the evaluation of women's role and placement in society, "Man, in order to keep women in complete subjugation to his authority, and in mean serfdom to his desires, found no better way or stronger weapon than keeping her in total ignorance."⁹⁸ Through examples of how men selected the women they would marry and the prevalence of polygamy occurring in Egypt at the time, Farag argues that authoritative relationships that are based on the male governance of females are deeply problematic. Furthermore he argues that if not addressed, women will be impacted further,

Man's despotism had not yet reached its summit. Knowing that matrimony was society's final solution of the problem of the relations of sexes, he began to draft laws of matrimony for his own personal interest and brutal passions and sex-haughtiness.⁹⁹

Although in this example, Farag seemingly violates one of his defining structures to not advocate one side over another, he is ultimately pointing to an important relationship between governance authority and the permeable boarder between private and public structures in Egyptian society. Farag also notes that these relationships have a larger negative impact in development of a legal system that effectively limits the women's voices. Through these illustrations and this first section of the lecture, Farag lays a foundation for an evaluation of current private and public structures revealing problems with how women are treated. It is important to note that, although through some of illustrations Farag introduces requirements such as veiling and specifically refers to covering the face; he does not specifically identify Islamic or Coptic Christian religious literature or referenced belief systems. He makes vague reference to practices that can be argued to have strong religious connections. He also concludes this section of the lecture with the acknowledgement that some men, having realized that this was harmful treatment, attempted to support and help women in their revolt.¹⁰⁰ As noted earlier, Farag argues that the revolt against the harmful treatment of women in Egyptian society was not successful because not all of the rights and responsibilities of women were discussed or even realized. The second half of the lecture addresses the evaluation of these missing areas.

Farag begins this half of his lecture with the premise that there are some specific responsibilities that are laid upon women by their nature. He argues that there are set

responsibilities that are linked to physiological capabilities, “Nature has invested man with certain offices and duties and installed woman with certain offices and duties. None of them can violate the rules of nature without exposing himself or herself to the greatest danger.”¹⁰¹ In an attempt to intertwine scientific with philosophical and ethical discussions of the differences between men and women and the male and female body, Farag focuses on what he called the sole purpose of existence, propagation. Although I have argued that an association of women and nature can have profoundly negative impacts on the public understanding of women’s physiological capabilities, which impacts epistemological premises that govern what women can and cannot do, the second premise in this section addresses this concern. Farag argues that, if we are to consider that motherhood is the natural role that women are able to fulfill, then social structures should not conflict with this role, “since motherhood is the primary and most sacred function with which woman is invested by nature, undoubtedly all other duties undertaken by woman should in no way conflict with the main function...moreover she should enjoy all the rights that go along with these duties.”¹⁰² This premise is based on a connection between the duties and rights of women and reproduction. Although there has been a great deal of discussion within the catalogue of feminist literature that argues against the conflation of the value of women with reproductive capabilities, the argument that Farag develops based on this premise does not limit women’s place in public and private domains to reproduction.

In his lecture, Dr Farag outlines seven rights that he believes contribute to and supports an argument for equality between men and women in Egypt. The seven rights are: i) physical rights; ii) right to education; iii) rights within a family unit; iv) social

rights; v) fiscal rights; vi) political and public rights and vii) workplace rights. This list contains both private and public rights, although it is largely dominated by the evaluation of public relationships.

Physical Rights

Farag begins the evaluation of physical rights by an exploration of the physiological requirements that must be achieved in order to be considered healthy, fit and physically capable for motherhood. Considering Farag's occupation, it is of no surprise that this evaluation would be the starting point for a discussion of women's rights. He argues that a young woman should be in perfect health and focuses on both internal health and the consideration of overall physique,

A young lady before her marriage should be in perfect health. This means that her digestion should be regular. Her appetite for food should be very good. Her sexual organs should be sound and regular in her monthly period. This will never take place unless her blood is normal and her blood circulation unimpaired. Her muscles should neither be so slack as to be weak and sluggish, nor so strong as to affect the whole system in time of conception and birth. Perfect physical beauty in a woman necessitates grace of posture, an upright carriage and steadiness of gait. She should neither be too fat as a result of sluggishness nor too thin and bony because of excessive energy and sport.¹⁰³

It is interesting to note that Farag considers the entire body in this evaluation. The definition of perfect health includes the participation in physical exercise such as sport to ensure that the body is in good physical form. He also includes physical description of movement such as an 'upright carriage' and 'steadiness of gait' which conveys images of strength and self-confidence.¹⁰⁴ Echoing Aristotelian values of living a balanced life and not being ruled by excess or laziness, Farag advocates for a well balanced lifestyle that includes sport and physical activity. To support the inclusion of physical activity and sport, Farag includes a story about a *Sheikh* in this section of the lecture,

It was very funny to me to hear what a Sheikh who attended the sorts of a girls' school said to his neighbour. On seeing the graceful movements of the girls in their drill he said, 'I wonder where we are going to. The girls drill like soldiers with such audacity, without being ashamed of themselves in the presence of an old man like myself'. His neighbour answered him saying, 'We are arriving at one thing by these exercises. It is this, to educate our girls so that an old man like yourself will never find a coward girl at the age of sixteen among these girls who will give him her hand in marriage like the girl you were married to three years ago'. On hearing this, the Sheikh's hand stroked his beard and he was silenced.¹⁰⁵

Through the use of this illustration, Farag argues that there are two benefits that are received from participation in physical exercise. The first is the strengthening and overall conditioning of the body. He argues that this is necessary for health and it further supports reproduction.¹⁰⁶ The second benefit is subtly referred to, as it has a specific link to social values. Through a connection between physical exercise and movement in public spaces, Farag argues that young girls and women will develop a sense of confidence and self-respect, "After such comprehension, she will refuse entirely to be bought or sold in the marriage market to an aged man or to any other whom she does not know well."¹⁰⁷ Farag also argues that this new found level of confidence and self-respect is instrumental in the development of positive relationships that include cooperation and teamwork.¹⁰⁸

Right to Education

After establishing physical parameters, Farag continues to outline the relationships between social life and motherhood. He notes that he is pained to see examples of social isolation that women are experiencing. The example he refers to is the placement of women in a separate pavilion on the day that the first Egyptian pilot landed in Cairo. This separation of men and women meant that the women contained in the, 'open-air Harem', were not able to see the airplane or be a part of the celebration.¹⁰⁹

Farag argues that, through this example, the injustice of separation is obvious and that this type of behaviour should not be tolerated,

This will show you that if men liberate women, they will be first to gain from it. Women, too, will gain much through their liberation. By accompanying their husbands, they realise their own personality. She who feels the will knows how to respect herself and respect her husband by keeping herself pure. But the neglected despised woman who is shut up in her home has no right to her personality, no respect for herself, and her chastity is without the sanctity of her personal choice.¹¹⁰

At this point in the lecture Farag transitions to the use of the veil as a metaphoric tool which supports his claim that if women are not allowed the benefit of personal freedom, education and social interaction then, both women and men will be stunted intellectually and socially. This in turn will lead to problems in Egyptian society. Farag argues that, through increased social freedom, interactions between men and women can be improved and ultimately result in respect,

Some think emancipation of woman means unveiling her face. No, no. What we desire is the unveiling of her brain, of her mind. This is the true unveiling. The school in which a woman learns to use emancipation is a man's companionship: in his goings out and comings in, in his salon-reception room and visits, in his theatres and places of worship. There woman's mind is unveiled and her intellectual life unfolds. There she educates him and he, her. There she learns how to conduct herself among men and men learn how to respect women.¹¹¹

Farag argues that, along with social interaction comes a development of respect for both men and women and, from this, women can learn to be active and integral members of society. He also argued that a level of common respect and understanding can be created between men and women through education. Once this occurs, Farag argues, physical forms of veiling can be addressed,

And [believing] that the only remedy for such a condition is to supplement the unveiling of woman's face by unveiling of her mind and brain without which it will be far better to send her back to her former seclusion which is preferable to her present condition of semi-emancipation.¹¹²

Farag concludes this section by noting that this significant change requires the support of all, and cannot be achieved unless everyone commits to the process of breaking down social barriers, "As an educated mother she will render greater services to herself and society than a learned weak, barren woman."¹¹³ The remaining five rights should be considered public rights and are linked and dependent upon one another. The ability to access the legal system is extremely important and factors highly in the support and monitoring of the rights advocated for by Farag.

Rights within a Family Unit

The discussion of women's rights within a family unit is based on the conditions that Farag argues must be present in order for women to support their families. Through the use of the illustration provided in the explanation of why women revolted, described earlier in this chapter, Farag argues that a woman's rights within the family unit include her right to live in a safe environment and to not be under threat of being removed from the home upon her husband's bidding, "If man insists on keeping his right of driving away his wife, and no means is found of convincing him that he must abandon this right there is no other solution for the problem except to grant the wife the right to claim an indemnity for such cruel treatment."¹¹⁴ This discussion of rights to property and ownership is linked to the ability of women to seek justice and compensation through the court system. This right is linked to the ability of women to move freely in public spaces and access the support they may need through court systems.

Social Rights

Farag is short but extremely clear as to the definition of social rights that he argues should be granted to Egyptian women. He argues that, “The social responsibilities of motherhood make it inevitable to grant woman all the social rights of man, in her visits, receptions, movements, travel and journeys, and in the formation of societies and clubs and the establishment of different social foundations.”¹¹⁵ Although he refers to the social responsibility of motherhood in this description, it is important to note that in this section he argues that the responsibility of motherhood should not be forced on all women. Farag distinguishes between the use of education for married women and unmarried women, “Consequently there is no danger to society in providing higher education for girls. Society will be greatly benefitted by such an education because the married university girl will be a better mother. The unmarried graduate will render services to her society.”¹¹⁶ Considering the year that this lecture was given, it is remarkable that support for educated women who were not expected to be married and become mothers was offered. This lends support to the overall claim that women should be allowed to fulfill their role in society as publically working in the same capacity as their male counterparts.

Fiscal Rights

This discussion of women’s fiscal rights was built upon the claim that women should not be held by the threats of abandonment and poverty if they should act in ways that are disagreeable to their husbands. Farag argued, “If you desire to grant woman her financial rights in our age you render a great service to justice and humanity.”¹¹⁷ He also noted that a significant obstacle that needed to be addressed with respect to fiscal rights is

the application of religious law.¹¹⁸ It is important to note that when Farag refers to religion, it is not that he finds fault with a certain religion or set of beliefs, it is the problems in the interpretation and application of religious law that he argues are troubling. In this section, Farag is referring to inheritance law which he argues does not allow women to benefit from the same treatment as men receive,

I cannot understand then, why man desires to give her one half of her share in inheritance, while she is a human being like him and she has a perfect right to enjoy her inheritance exactly like her brother, the man. She has her own responsibilities towards motherhood, which are not less important than his own responsibilities towards his wife.¹¹⁹

Farag argued that there is a problem with the legal system because it applies religious law in some, but not all, legal matters. Ultimately women are not afforded the same benefits as their male counterparts because of this fractured application of legal reasoning. Based on this inequality, Farag highlights the plurality that is applied in common law, which he defined as ‘native law’ and religious legal doctrine. Farag argued for the creation and use of a common legal system that is not based on the application of both religious laws,

Certainly the confusion of different laws under which personal status are administered in Egypt points to the necessity for one Egyptian law pertaining to personal status. The state of confusion and disorder as between the various creeds calls for the protective activity of an Egyptian national law, the creation of which would rid us of the evil consequences from the co-existence of such various administrative systems as the Shariah law courts, Church Councils, and Patriarchates.¹²⁰

It is interesting to note that Farag’s argument for the creation of one common law by legislators is not linked to the removal of one religious doctrine over another. His argument applies equally to both Muslim and Christian legal doctrine. Furthermore, he

argued that this legal system can then be used to support all individuals by providing fair assessment and legal rulings,

He who is authorised to decide in the greatest cases of indemnity against the [Government] and the individual should be empowered to give his decision in a simple case of damages such as the monthly support for a wife. He who give the oppressed his right from his oppressor is able to give the women her right from the man if he is the oppressor and vice versa.¹²¹

The creation of a central legal system would in effect eliminate the unwanted influence of religious law that prevents the application of fair evaluation and support for all rights whether they pertain to men or women.

Political Rights

At the end of her time as an activist, Huda Shaawari attempted to secure women's and men's ability to vote in the negotiation of Egypt's independence from Britain. She was not successful. Although Egyptian men secured the right to vote, it would not be until 1956 that Egyptian women would be allowed to vote and act as Members of Parliament. Considering the timeline, it is easy to understand why Farag would not include women's suffrage in his discussion of political rights, "If, in the civilized countries, it is permissible to discuss woman's political rights, I think we in Egypt have not reached the stage in which we should waste our time in discussing such a subject."¹²² Instead he argues that, once educational equality is reached, women will have experienced the development required to support political development,

Before the Egyptian woman should think of gaining the right of franchise, or membership in local councils or Parliament, she should remember her miserable social and educational condition. She should struggle hard to remedy these defects first, then she will have plenty of time for her constitutional dreams.¹²³

Farag is wise to note that the lack of educational opportunities must be addressed prior to the ability for women to demand the ability to vote. This is based on the consideration that opponents to women's suffrage would surely identify women's ignorance of the political issues as a rationale for not granting women the right to vote, without linking it to the prevention of opportunities for women to learn and understand that are behind this lack of comprehension. In order to strengthen the argument for women's suffrage, Farag argues that women must be able to access education. From this foundation, proponents for women's suffrage will have a solid base of support for their cause.

Workplace Rights

In this last section of his lecture, Farag argues that there should be a distinction between labour intensive and professional employment. Unfortunately, it is in this section that Farag's misunderstandings of what the female body is physically capable of achieving are revealed. He argues that there is a link between hard industrial labour and women's ability to bear children. Farag does advocate for the inclusion of women in the professional level of employment, "As to woman's working in higher professions, it is permissible in professions which do not require great physical effort."¹²⁴ Considering Farag's incorrect evaluation of the physical capability of the female body, it would seem to be the case that the argument against the inclusion of women in the work-force could have some leverage against Farag's overall stance on women's employment rights. Although I would disagree with Farag's position, I am encouraged to see the final commitment made in his lecture,

This is my opinion concerning the problem of equality of man and woman. Men have to show their sympathy, and women have to expend effort in a practical way and not by mere talking, in improving their condition. If woman is sincere in her efforts and labour, the near future will see her desires and aspirations realised.¹²⁵

Concluding with the idea that, once the rights of women are woven into the social fabric of Egyptian society, Egyptian women will be able to achieve levels of public freedom, access to education and personal accomplishments, solidifies the overall intention of this lecture.

Summary

There are both strengths and weaknesses that can be found in the examples of Huda Shaawari and Farag. Both individuals sought to challenge the status quo and raise the profile of women's rights. Through different avenues, both Huda Shaawari and Farag approached the examination of women's rights by unpacking the relationship between the seclusion of women, the limitation of education and interaction, and visible honour that men in Egyptian society coveted. The overall weakness of this approach was the conflation of honour achieved by segregating women and keeping them isolated with what was required in order to be considered pious Muslim or Christian. This type of confusion is particularly dangerous because it immediately places individuals in a defensive position when women's rights are being challenged. Instead of being able to engage in a discussion about the merits of these rights, anger and outrage are felt because the perception of the audience is that religion is being attacked.

Another weakness that is linked to this type of conflation is the evoking of a military-like counter attack against the individual challenging the status quo. In the case of Huda Shaawari, the only way to have her voice heard by the members of society who

were opposed to her effects was to engage in public demonstrations. These ultimately earned her the title of ‘militant feminist’. In the final section of her memoirs, Shaawari outlined her ‘militant feminist’ approach,

Exceptional women appear at certain moments in history and are moved by special forces. Men view these women as supernatural beings and their deeds as miracles...When they saw the way blocked, women rose up to demand their liberation, claiming their social, economic, and political rights. Their leap forward is greeted with ridicule and blame, but that would not weaken their will. Their resolve led to a struggle that would have ended in war, if men had not come to acknowledge the rights of women.¹²⁶

Evoking images of war and battle further illustrates the passion the women felt towards this cause and how it was considered necessary for women to engage in battle for the acknowledgment of her rights.

It could be argued that the nature of what was occurring in Egypt during the 1920’s could be responsible for the development of metaphors linked to war. Public demonstrations and uprising against British rule can be linked to military themes. However, the case involving Farag included the same type of military characterization. Upon being tried twice by the Egyptian Government, Farag was further demonized by Muslim nationalists and activists,

Fakhry Farag was neither Protestant nor an evangelist, while the institution where he spoke, AUC, was not formally part of the American Presbyterian mission. But Muslim nationalists and activists were not interested in, or convinced by, such fine points. Detecting a unitary threat from *mubashshirin* (an Arabic word that was able to cover foreign missionaries and local evangelists) and making few distinctions among “Christianizers” (*munassirin*), where of the Protestant or Catholic variety, they connect Fakhry to the American missionary enterprise.¹²⁷

Referring to Farag as a *mubashshirin* and a threat to not only all Muslims but to Egypt as a whole, evokes images of war on the part of the Muslim nationalists and activists who would have to engage in battle to protect their religion and country. Although I would

ultimately argue that the work of Watson, McClenahan, Yoder, Huda Shawaari, and Farag was instrumental in changes to the landscape of women's rights in Egypt between 1920 and 1930, the defensive nature that resulted in a 'military-like' backlash prevented a concrete discussion about women's rights.

I now turn to the strength of the efforts made by Huda Shaawari and Farag. The strength of an approach to women's rights lies in an appeal to the development of rational argument. Huda Shaawari's work with the *Wafdist* party and subsequent work with the Feminist Union involved an appeal to political discussion. For example, she appealed to the Labour Office in hopes that they would hire a female investigator to examine how women were being treated in the workforce.¹²⁸ Evidence of an appeal to rational argument can be best exemplified by the lecture presented by Farag. In this lecture, Farag included specific examples of what rights he was referring to, and how these contributed to the overall claim that, through education and social interaction, all members of Egyptian society could be positively impacted. Along with the use of illustrations, Farag presented ways in which women's rights could be integrated into the current system of legislature and in society. His well reasoned argument also provided a platform for discussion. Both opponents and proponents could now discuss the merits of women's rights based on the seven rights identified by Farag. The use of this starting point is extremely important. An example of the usefulness of this approach is found in the memoirs of Robert McClenahan,

We did not regret the incident for it was bringing the question of right to think and measure matters to a head, and we know that this was the function of AUC. It did cause a great deal of discussion however and revaluing of all that was involved, self-determination, inquiring mind and modern thinking etc.¹²⁹

Even though the impact of the lecture was felt strongly by the university, discussions among the university staff and students were fruitful, and subsequent public discussion did result in some changes. In a letter to the United Presbyterian Board, dated November 15, 1930, Charles Watson commented on a visual change he personally observed,

Those of us who have lived in Egypt and who have touched its life during the past twenty or thirty years note with amazement the changes that are taking place in its life. Coming back this fall and going through the native quarters of the city, I was startled to see the number of women going about with unveiled faces. No single lecture or method of work may be seen to bring results, but the cumulative effect of the presentation of higher social and moral ideals is to cause a disintegration of the old ways and the adoption of the new. Like the coming of spring, it is first one blade of grass, then two, then suddenly spring is everywhere.¹³⁰

I agree with the idea that no one single event or lecture resulted in the change in attitudes towards women's rights or roles in Egyptian society. I do believe that an accumulation of factors would have contributed to the subtle change observed by Watson. I argue that, in order for a wide-scale adoption of ideals and values that support women's rights and freedom to occur, the opportunity to engage in discussion and deliberation must exist. The example of Huda Shaawari's efforts, the work of AUC, and Farag's efforts supported the option for men and women to engage in discussions about the status of women in Egyptian society between 1920 and 1930.

Endnotes

¹ Lawrence R. Murphy, *The American University in Cairo: 1919 – 1987* (Cairo, Egypt: The American University in Cairo Press, 1987), 20.

² Murphy: 1987, 2.

³ Murphy: 1987, 2.

⁴ Murphy: 1987, 2.

⁵ Murphy: 1987, 2.

⁶ Murphy: 1987, 2.

⁷ Murphy: 1987, 14.

⁸ Murphy: 1987, 5.

⁹ Murphy: 1987, 12.

¹⁰ During the time of Watson's proposal Egypt was considered a British colony.
Murphy: 1987, 2.

¹¹ Murphy: 1987, 13.

¹² Murphy: 1987, 2.

¹³ Murphy: 1987, 14.

¹⁴ Murphy: 1987, 20.

¹⁵ Murphy: 1987, 35.

¹⁶ Murphy: 1987, 34.

¹⁷ Murphy: 1987, 35.

¹⁸ Minutes of the Division of Extension, American University at Cairo, 1924-25, "Division of Extension: Aims and Purpose," American University at Cairo Archives, Cairo, Egypt (hereafter cited as Minutes, Division of Extension), 1.

¹⁹ Minutes, Division of Extension: 1924-25, 1.

²⁰ Charles Watson, "To the Friends of the American University at Cairo" (American University in Cairo Archives: Cairo, Egypt, April 21, 1926), Watson Correspondence, 1.

²¹ Charles Watson, "To the Friends of the American University at Cairo" (American University in Cairo Archives: Cairo, Egypt, April 21, 1926), Watson Correspondence, 1.

²² Charles Watson, "To the Friends of the American University at Cairo" (American University in Cairo Archives: Cairo, Egypt, April 21, 1926), Watson Correspondence, 1.

²³ "American University in Cairo Student Handbook," (Cairo: Egypt: American University in Cairo Archives, 1929-1930), 60-61.

²⁴ American University in Cairo, *Why: American University at Cairo* (Cairo, Egypt: American University in Cairo Archives, 1926), 1.

²⁵ "American University in Cairo Student Handbook," (Cairo: Egypt: American University in Cairo Archives, 1929-30), 12.

²⁶ "American University in Cairo Student Handbook," (Cairo: Egypt: American University in Cairo Archives, 1929-30), 12.

²⁷ "American University in Cairo Student Handbook," (Cairo: Egypt: American University in Cairo Archives, 1929-30), 12.

²⁸ “American University in Cairo Student Handbook,” (Cairo: Egypt: American University in Cairo Archives, 1933-34), 8.

²⁹ Michael Peterson et. al., *Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 65.

³⁰ Peterson et. al.: 2001, 65.

³¹ Peterson et. al.: 2001, 66.

³² Charles Watson, interviewed by Mr. Campbell, 1934, interview transcript, Division of Extension Papers, American University in Cairo Archives, Cairo, Egypt, 12.

³³ Although I have argued that Charles Watson was determined to develop a school curriculum that focused on philosophical analysis, it would appear that given his upbringing in a missionary family and his education (theological seminary) that Watson may have used Christian values as a point of reference to which individuals should aim to embody.

³⁴ Murphy: 1987, 35.

³⁵ Minutes, Division of Extension: 1924-25, 1-2.

³⁶ Charles Watson, interviewed by Mr. Campbell, 1934, interview transcript, Division of Extension Papers, American University in Cairo Archives, Cairo, Egypt, 3.

³⁷ Charles Watson, interviewed by Mr. Campbell, 1934, interview transcript, Division of Extension Papers, American University in Cairo Archives, Cairo, Egypt, 3.

³⁸ Charles Watson, interviewed by Mr. Campbell, 1934, interview transcript, Division of Extension Papers, American University in Cairo Archives, Cairo, Egypt, 5.

³⁹ American University in Cairo Student Handbook,” (Cairo: Egypt: American University in Cairo Archives, 1929-30), 61.

⁴⁰ American University in Cairo Student Handbook,” (Cairo: Egypt: American University in Cairo Archives, 1929-30), 14.

⁴¹ Charles Watson, interviewed by Mr. Campbell, 1934, interview transcript, Division of Extension Papers, American University in Cairo Archives, Cairo, Egypt, 4.

⁴² Minutes, Division of Extension: 1924-25, 2.

⁴³ Charles Watson, “To the Friends of the American University at Cairo” (American University in Cairo Archives: Cairo, Egypt, April 6, 1927), Watson Correspondence, 4.

⁴⁴ Charles Watson, “To the Friends of the American University at Cairo” (American University in Cairo Archives: Cairo, Egypt, April 6, 1927), Watson Correspondence, 4.

⁴⁵ Charles Watson, interviewed by Mr. Campbell, 1934, interview transcript, Division of Extension Papers, American University in Cairo Archives, Cairo, Egypt, 5

⁴⁶ Minutes, Division of Extension: 1924-25, 5.

⁴⁷ Huda Shaarawi, *Harem Years: The Memoirs of an Egyptian Feminist (1879-1924)* trans. and ed. Margot Badran (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 1998), 134.

⁴⁸ Shaarawi: 1998, 134.

⁴⁹ Shaarawi: 1998, 17.

⁵⁰ Shaarawi: 1998, 3.

⁵¹ Shaarawi: 1998, 21.

⁵² Shaarawi: 1998, 40.

⁵³ Shaarawi: 1998, 41.

⁵⁴ Shaarawi: 1998, 17.

⁵⁵ Shaarawi: 1998, 112.

⁵⁶ Shaarawi: 1998, 130.

⁵⁷ Shaarawi: 1998, 122.

⁵⁸ Shaarawi: 1998, 131.

⁵⁹ Shaarawi: 1998, 1.

⁶⁰ Shaarawi: 1998, 10.

⁶¹ Shaarawi: 1998, 129.

⁶² Shaarawi: 1998, 132.

⁶³ Shaarawi: 1998, 137.

⁶⁴ Heather J Sharkey, *American Evangelicals in Egypt: Missionary Encounters in an age of Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 116.

⁶⁵ Sharkey: 2008, 116.

⁶⁶ Sharkey: 2008, 116.

⁶⁷ Robert S. McClenahan, Personal Memoirs, 1919 – 1944, American University in Cairo Archives, Cairo, Egypt, 32-33.

⁶⁸ Robert S. McClenahan, Personal Memoirs, 1919 – 1944, American University in Cairo Archives, Cairo, Egypt, 32-33.

⁶⁹ Robert S. McClenahan, Personal Memoirs, 1919 – 1944, American University in Cairo Archives, Cairo, Egypt, 33-34.

⁷⁰ Charles Watson, interviewed by Mr. Campbell, 1934, interview transcript, Division of Extension Papers, American University in Cairo Archives, Cairo, Egypt, 9.

⁷¹ Charles Watson, interviewed by Mr. Cambell, 1934, interview transcript, Division of Extension Papers, American University in Cairo Archives, Cairo, Egypt, 5

⁷² Sharkey: 2008, 17.

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- ⁷³ Theodore Yoder, letter to Charles Watson, April 22, 1930, Yoder Papers, American University in Cairo Archives, Cairo, Egypt, 1.
- ⁷⁴ Minutes, Division of Extension, February 28th, 1930, 1.
- ⁷⁵ Minutes, Division of Extension, February 28th, 1930, 2
- ⁷⁶ Minutes, Division of Extension, February 28th, 1930, 2.
- ⁷⁷ Minutes, Division of Extension, February 28th, 1930, 2.
- ⁷⁸ Theodore Yoder, letter to Charles Watson, August 8th, 1930, Yoder Papers, American University in Cairo Archives, Cairo, Egypt, 1.
- ⁷⁹ Charles Watson, "To the Friends of the American University at Cairo" (American University in Cairo Archives: Cairo, Egypt, February 26th, 1930), 1.
- ⁸⁰ Theodore Yoder, letter to Charles Watson, August 8th, 1930, Yoder Papers, American University in Cairo Archives, Cairo, Egypt, 1.
- ⁸¹ Theodore Yoder, letter to Charles Watson, November 8th, 1930, Yoder Papers, American University in Cairo Archives, Cairo, Egypt, 1.
- ⁸² Theodore Yoder, letter to Charles Watson, November 8th, 1930, Yoder Papers, American University in Cairo Archives, Cairo, Egypt, 1.
- ⁸³ Sharkey: 2008, 117.
- ⁸⁴ Sharkey: 2008, 117.
- ⁸⁵ Sharkey: 2008, .117.
- ⁸⁶ Dr. Fakhry M. Farag, "Shall Women have Rights and Obligations Equal to Men?" February 4, 1930, Watson Papers, American University in Cairo Archives, Cairo, Egypt, 1.
- ⁸⁷ Farag: 1930, 5.
- ⁸⁸ Farag: 1930, 5.
- ⁸⁹ Farag: 1930, 5.
- ⁹⁰ Farag: 1930, 6.
- ⁹¹ Farag: 1930, 6.
- ⁹² Farag: 1930, 6
- ⁹³ Farag: 1930, 7.
- ⁹⁴ Farag: 1930, 6
- ⁹⁵ Farag: 1930, 6.
- ⁹⁶ Farag: 1930, 7.
- ⁹⁷ Farag: 1930, 8

⁹⁸ Farag: 1930, 8.

⁹⁹ Farag: 1930, 9.

¹⁰⁰ Farag: 1930, 11

¹⁰¹ Farag: 1930, 11.

¹⁰² Farag: 1930, 14.

¹⁰³ Farag: 1930, 15

¹⁰⁴ Farag: 1930, 15

¹⁰⁵ Farag: 1930, 20.

¹⁰⁶ Farag: 1930, 19

¹⁰⁷ It should be noted that it appears that Dr. Farag intended for participation in physical exercise to be considered to be instrumental in the overall development of women.

Farag: 1930, 19.

¹⁰⁸ Farag: 1930, 20

¹⁰⁹ Farag: 1930, 22

¹¹⁰ Farag: 1930, 23.

¹¹¹ Farag: 1930, 25.

¹¹² Farag: 1930, 27.

¹¹³ Farag: 1930, 36.

¹¹⁴ Farag: 1930, 37.

¹¹⁵ Farag: 1930, 37.

¹¹⁶ Farag: 1930, 18.

¹¹⁷ Farag: 1930, 38

¹¹⁸ Farag: 1930, 38.

¹¹⁹ Farag: 1930, 31.

¹²⁰ Farag: 1930, 33.

¹²¹ Farag: 1930, 34.

¹²² Farag: 1930, 38.

¹²³ Farag: 1930, 38.

¹²⁴ Farag: 1930, 39.

¹²⁵ Farag: 1930, 39.

¹²⁶ Shaarawi: 1998, 131.

¹²⁷ Sharkey: 2008, 117.

¹²⁸ Shaarawi: 1998, 135.

¹²⁹ Robert S. McClenahan, *Personal Memoirs, 1919 – 1944*, American University in Cairo Archives, Cairo, Egypt, 34.

¹³⁰ Charles Watson, “To the Friends of the American University at Cairo” (American University in Cairo Archives: Cairo, Egypt, November 15, 1930), 2.

CHAPTER III The Physical and the Spiritual

I want to compare faith to running in a race. It's hard. It requires concentration of will, energy of soul. You experience elation when the winner breaks the tape...I have no formula for winning the race. Everyone runs in her own way, or his own way.¹

Some athletes pray for assistance in the game they are about to play. Others dedicate their athletic achievements to their religious beliefs. For some athletes, sport is their religion. Given these multiple interpretations, how are we to navigate and interpret the relationships between sport and religion? The plurality of intersections highlights the need for further discussion and evaluation. This is especially important when sport and religion conflict, and the tensions reverberate through the body of the athlete.

An interesting link can be made between sport and religion through the concept of faith. The movie *Chariots of Fire* illustrates one perspective of this relationship. Based on a true story, the movie highlights the relationship between sport and religion through the main character Eric Liddell. A devout Scottish Missionary, Liddell believes that in order to please God, he must run. A conflict occurs when he is asked to participate in the 1924 Olympic qualifying race, for the British Olympic team, and unfortunately the race is scheduled for Sunday. Liddell refuses to participate in the race despite pressure from his team mates. In recent years more examples demonstrating a similar tension between sport and religion have occurred. One example can be found in the story of Tamir Goodman. Nicknamed the “Jewish Jordan” by Sports Illustrated Magazine, Tamir, an Orthodox Jew, was a successful high school basketball player.² Resulting from his success at the secondary level, he earned a spot on the University of Maryland’s basketball team, which at the time was considered to be in one of the top basketball teams

in the country.³ Unfortunately, neither Goodman nor the University of Maryland would finalize this agreement. Goodman was unable to play because the University of Maryland was not able to rearrange their game schedule which included weekly games held on the Sabbath. In an article for SLAM Magazine, Goodman explains his decision to break the proposed contract with the University of Maryland, “It really had nothing to do with them. It was from above, and the whole situation just made me a better and stronger person and a better player.”⁴ The example of Tamir Goodman illustrates the potential for clashes between the structures of sport and religion. In this case, Tamir Goodman believed that committing to piety outweighed his participation in sport.

In what sense was Tamir made better through this tension? One way to try to answer this question in relation to religion is to look at the concept of piety. In the Euthyphro, Socrates explored the possible definitions of piety in order to further unpack the relationship between human actions and divine doctrine. Although a concrete definition of piety was not offered, the philosophical inquiry initiated in the Euthyphro provided a starting point for the examination of religious doctrine and human actions. Socrates’ argument highlighted the necessity to include logical and philosophical tenets in the discussion of religious discourse. This is further supported by an argument offered by Ibn Rushd (Averroes). Rooted in the examination of logic in Islamic philosophy, Averroes argued that the integration of logic and philosophy is essential when examining Islamic religious requirements. Averroes argued that if Islam is to be considered a rational faith, then it is to be expected that followers will seek to use reason in a quest for the understanding and application of religious guidelines and tenets. Fundamentally,

both of these approaches run counter to the explicit acceptance of divine command as paramount and infallible, and support the application of philosophical discussion of religious structures and requirements.

The relationship between religion and sport reveals a complex intersection of values and requirements that are prescribed through both religious and sport creeds, rituals and practices. The articulation of the relationship between sport and religion is not easily defined. In the book, Sport and Spirituality: An Introduction, edited by Jim Parry, Simon Robinson, Nick J. Watson and Mark Nesti, the articulation between sport and religion is titled 'spirituality and sport'. The authors define this category as an athlete's experiences in sport that follow the model of religious experiences. Specifically, these experiences can be described as phenomenological expressions of spirituality. Another discussion of the relationship between sport and religion can be found in the book, Religion and Sport: the Meeting of the Sacred and Profane. Charles Prebish offers a categorization that can be used to discuss the relationship between sport and religion that differs from Perry, Robinson, Watson and Nesti's discussion. This category is given the title 'religion and sport', and refers to the relationship of mimicry of rituals and creeds that can be demonstrated in both religion and in sport. Although both categories highlight important features with respect to the connections between sport and religion, in this chapter a third category of articulation will be explored. This category is titled 'sport and religious requirements'. It is in this category that the conflicts between institutions of religion and sport can be best discussed.

When considering the relationship between religious requirements and participation in sport and physical activity, the discussion of the conflicts that have occurred with some veiled Muslim female athletes can support the examination of religious doctrine and how it can have an impact on Muslim female embodiment. For the purpose of this analysis, the institutional structures that are an integral part of both sport and religion will be used. The institutions of religion and sport can be loosely defined as external and internal structures that support operational rules.⁵ The relationship between religion and sport reveals a complex intersection of values and requirements that are prescribed through both religion and sport creeds, rituals, and codes of conduct. This chapter will explore the relationship between religious requirements and the Muslim female athletic body. I argue that the application of logical and philosophical discussion used as an analytic framework in the evaluation of religious discourse is integral in understanding the impact of religious discourse on the embodiment of veiled Muslim female.

Sport and Religion

To date, there has been limited discussion about the relationship between religion and sport in the Philosophy of Sport literature. In the Journal of the Philosophy of Sport one article, written by Anthony J. Kreider, briefly touched upon the relationship between sport and religion. However, this article was in reference to the question of whether it was 'unsporting' if an athlete prayed for assistance from God in order to be successful in a sporting event. Kreider ultimately argued that in fact praying for assistance was 'unsporting' behaviour.⁶ In order to uncover additional work on the relationship between

religion and sport, a broader net was cast to include literature rooted in the examination of sociology and sport.

The evaluation of the many facets linked to the relationship between sport and religion have been conducted by Michael Novak, Shirl James Hoffman, Charles Prebish, Robert J. Higgs, Jim Parry, Simon Robinson, Nick Watson, Mark Nesti, and Richard Hutch. Many of these authors were compelled by their own personal experiences to explore the relationship between sport and religion. For example, Higgs notes that his desire to examine the relationship between sport, religion and culture was rooted in his personal experiences growing up in rural Tennessee. The clash between the baseball pitch and observing a “peaceful Sunday afternoon” after church led Higgs to contemplate the following questions,

For many years now I have been wondering just what the relationship between sports and religion should be in our culture. There seem to be several options:

1. Sports are a form of adiaphora (things indifferent), a theological concept that would mean that sports have no effect on cultural values and deserve little consideration.

2. Sports belong entirely to what Howard Cosell called the Toy Department of Life, not really a serious part of our lives but nevertheless a value worth holding on to.

3. Sports, as Robert Frost proclaimed, lie near the soul of culture, displaying and even proving all that we hold dear.

The history of the relationship between religion, sports, and education leads me to suspect that the answer may be “all of the above,” depending on the context; but others seem to believe that sports parallel or even join religion in significance. All this needs further study.⁷

In order to further flush out the relationship between religion, sports, and education, Higgs explores the connections between Christianity, Western Civilization and American culture. Hoffman also explores the relationship between sport and religion through perspectives linked to Christianity in the book Sport and Religion, which is a compilation

of various works evaluating sport as religion, sport as a religious experience, religion in sport, and sport, religion and ethics.⁸ In 2010, Hoffman published Good Game: Christianity and the Culture of Sports, which is an in depth analysis of the relationship between sport and Christianity and an evaluation of the conflicts that have developed with respect to sport and Christian values,

The problem for the Christian community, then, is that having launched a rudderless boat into the roiling waters of popular sport, they are adrift, possessing neither a clear sense of what they want out of their sport experiences nor a coherent philosophy to guide them in achieving it.⁹

In the evaluation of the relationship between sport and religion, both Higgs and Hoffman base the overall discussion on the evaluation of sport and Christian and North American values.

A majority of the literature examining the relationship between sport and religion uses Christian or North American values as a frame of reference. Recently, Christopher J. Anderson and Gordon Marion recognized of the need for additional perspectives and values to be added to the literature examining sport and religion. While this area of inquiry is receiving more attention, for example in 2009 the first volume of the International Journal of Religion and Sport was published, contributions to the evaluation of sport and religion from a multidisciplinary perspective are still required. In the description of the journal, the editors note that there are “complex boundary lines and intersections” with respect to the relationship between religion and sport and note that the scope of discussions included within in the journal should not be limited to discussions on Christianity and sport.¹⁰

A second area of evaluation with respect to sport and religion, mentioned in the previous paragraph, is the relationship between spirituality and sport. In this area, Perry et. al. and more recently Richard Hutch, explore the concept of spirituality as it relates to participation in sport. These authors examine the interconnected relationships between the development of personal spirituality, value-based meanings of physical expressions and psychological understandings. This line of inquiry allows for the contemplation of the relationship between physicality and spirituality, “spirituality is not simply about fine ideas and aspirations, but about the embodiment and the lived experience of beliefs and values that inform and provide the backdrop to people’s lives.”¹¹ Although important and complementary to a discussion on embodiment, the accounts offered by Parry, Robinson, Watson, and Nesti assume that the athletes who cultivate a sense of spirituality in sport do so in a supportive space. They are allowed to explore these forms of expression and are not limited by structures in their spirituality, religion or sport. The relationships contained within this category do not actually consider specific religious beliefs and structures that underpin these beliefs. Therefore, the spiritual relationships discussed by Perry, Robinson, Watson and Nesti do not provide any useful illustrations to this specific discussion and will not be included in this evaluation.

A fundamental question, instrumental to the discussion of the conflicts between sport and religious requirements is linked to the claim that sport can be considered to be a religion. The evaluations completed by Higgs and Hoffman, briefly touch on the aspect of whether sport can be defined as a religion. In these discussions, a reference to

Novak's assessment of sport as religion entitled, "The Natural Religion" is included. In the book The Joy of Sports, Novak argues that sport can be classified as a civil religion,

I am saying that sports flow outward into action from a deep natural impulse that is radically religious: an impulse of freedom, respect for ritual limits, a zest for symbolic meaning, and a longing for perfection. The athlete may of course be pagan, but sports are, as it were, natural religions.¹²

Novak argues that sport, as a natural religion, differs from religions such as Presbyterianism and Catholicism however, due to the features found in both sport and religion, it can be defined as a natural religion,

Sports are religious in the sense that they are organized institutions, disciplines, and liturgies; and also in the sense that they teach religious qualities of heart and soul. In particular, they recreate symbols of cosmic struggle, in which human survival and moral courage are not assured. To this extent, they are not mere games, diversions, pastimes. Their power to exhilarate or depress is far greater than that.¹³

Building upon the work of Novak exploring the similarities between sport and religion, in his examination, Prebish seeks to move beyond traditional roles of sport in Christian contexts. Prebish notes that over the past couple of decades there has been a decline in the power and influence of religion and institutionalized church in North America.¹⁴ During this same time period, the popularity of sport has increased, and Prebish argues that the increased interest in sport opened the door for religious and sport values to become intertwined in some cases.¹⁵ Although his analysis is largely based on the examination of secular sport and Christianity, the argument that there is a connection between sport and religion is valid in this examination. The categorization and discussion of the relationship between religion and sport offered by Prebish will not be used as a complete framework for the analysis discussed in this chapter. However,

several instrumental discussion points in his account contribute to the discussion of the institutions of sport and religion.

Prebish begins his examination by discussing important assumptions and approaches to the analysis of religion. Although his book was published eighteen years ago, it can be argued that the first chapter, which examines approaches and underlying assumptions based on the work of Novak, is still applicable and relevant to discussions about religion today. It is useful to note that this chapter is based on the assumption that the reader has already accepted the fact that discussions about religion have been neglected in education. This perspective is also held by Prebish and is based on the claim that, unlike academic approaches to science, mathematics or other basic subjects, approaches to the study of religion have not benefited from the development of a systematic analytic tool within education.¹⁶ Unlike the examples of the Pythagorean Theorem or the scientific method, Prebish argues that most individuals receive education about religions in their homes or in religious institutions that focus solely on one religion.¹⁷ He also notes that this form of education continues throughout childhood and into early adulthood. But Prebish argues that because of the lack of formal education it does not progress from a 'child-like understanding'.¹⁸ Prebish goes on to link this form of religious instruction to the education in sport that many individuals receive, stating:

What all this seems to mean is that sport, like religion, is supposed to be learned early in life, cultivated in an increasingly more sophisticated level of understanding and participation as life progresses, and maintained until old age and/or death interrupts the process.¹⁹

In the preface of his book, Prebish also argues that given the link between sport and religion, the need for systematic analysis is required in order to properly assess the relationship between the two areas.

Fundamentally, Prebish argues that sport can be considered a religion. It is at this juncture that Prebish moves away from the work of Hoffman, Higgs and authors who seek to focus on the culture of sport its connections to religious contexts. Both Novak and Prebish are interested in understanding the connection between sport and religion and how it is linked to the individual through the following evaluation,

It progresses through an examination of the identity in language and terminology between religion and sport, the sacred time and space in each discipline, the sacraments of sport religion, the theology and ritual activity in sport religion, and the implication of sport religion for the future.²⁰

Given this claim, the development of a systematic approach to examine this relationship is critical. By asserting that sport can be considered a religion, Prebish is attempting to move beyond Novak's claim, "sports are a form of religion. This aspect of sports has seldom been discussed. Consequently, we find it hard to express just what it is that gives sports their spirit and their power."²¹ Prebish argues that both sport and religion can be categorized by an individual as belonging to a 'sacred' world. The reason why these two areas should be evaluated is because of the potential impact on an individual's life. The development of a systematic approach to the evaluation of this 'sacred' world, offered by Prebish, is largely based on the work of philosophers in the area of religion. This relationship between religion and the development of the 'sacred' world is described brilliantly by Robert S. Ellwood, as quoted by Prebish in his book, "Religion is the raft that ferries us all from profane reality to the world of the 'sacred' that enables us to

transcend ordinary reality and directly apprehend the extraordinary.”²² Rooted in the connection of the ‘sacred’ worlds of religion and sport, Prebish introduces reasons and arguments supporting why the study of religion as a whole is important. He refers to the work of Fredrich Streng, a philosopher and religious studies scholar. The four reasons for the study of religion as outlined by Streng are: i) to gain specific information about other people’s religious activities; ii) to study this information in relation to other cultural forms; iii) to place one’s own religious life in an universal perspective, and iv) to gain a new awareness of oneself in a religious context.²³ Streng fundamentally believed in the transformative nature that knowledge and insight into these areas of religion and religious understanding can have on the individual and society as a whole.

The definition of ‘sacred’ included in Prebish’s assessment is instrumental in the discussion of both sport and religion. This is the case because the features that are included in the definition of ‘sacred’ can be found in examples of sport and religion. Prebish relies on Mircea Eliade’s discussion and definition of the ‘sacred’ in his assessment of the articulation between sport and religion. In his book, The Sacred and Profane: The Nature of Religion, Eliade notes that the definition of the ‘sacred’ requires an understanding of the interplay between the ‘sacred’ and profane, “The reader will very soon realize that ‘sacred’ and ‘profane’ are two modes of being in the world, two existential situations assumed by man in the course of his history.”²⁴ This first feature is based on the work of Rudolf Otto and his book, Das Heilige (The Sacred), published in 1917. Eliade uses Otto’s analysis of religion and ‘sacred’ meaning because he argues that work exploring religion has been primarily preoccupied with examining ideas about

God and religion. Otto's work however, focuses on outlining the context and specific characteristics of religious experience.²⁵

A result of Otto's focus on religious experience, Eliade argues, is the creation of a two-fold definition which includes features that can be used to define 'sacred'.²⁶ The first component includes a focus on individual experience. This includes three features that are, as Otto argues and Eliade supports, experienced by the individual: i) awe-inspiring mystery (*mysterium tremendum*); ii) overwhelming superiority of power and majesty (*majestas*) and iii) fascinating mystery (*mysterium fascinans*).²⁷ Otto argues that an individual experiences these sensations: "man becomes aware of the 'sacred' because it manifests itself, as something wholly different from the profane."²⁸ Eliade uses this as a foundation for the second part of the definition, the creation of 'sacred' times and places. Defined as 'hierophany', Eliade argues, "It could be said that history of religions – from the most primitive to the most highly developed – is constituted by a great number of 'hierophanies' by manifestation of 'sacred' realities."²⁹ Essentially the definition of 'sacred' is built from the identification of individual experiences and the manifestation of 'sacred' times and spaces.³⁰ The interplay between 'sacred' and 'profane' can be described through the paradox that exists with respect to 'hierophany',

By manifesting the sacred, any object becomes something else, yet it continues to remain itself...A sacred stone remains a stone; apparently (or, more precisely, from the profane point of view), nothing distinguishes it from all other stones...In other words, for those who have religious experience all nature is capable of revealing itself as cosmic sacrality.³¹

Hinging on Eliade's infusion of Otto's analysis of religious experiences with his definition of 'hierophany', Prebish argues that the definition of 'sacred' applies to sport, when he states,

What we are indicating here is that the sport structure, not less than traditional religious edifice, is infused with sacredness as a result of its location as the meeting point between earth and heaven, from which the experience of ultimacy becomes readily accessible.³²

Through the definition of 'sacred' offered by Otto, Eliade and Prebish, the exploration of the articulation between sport and religion can be discussed.

I agree with Prebish's claim that there is a 'sacred' world that is developed by individuals, which typically arises from religious belief and I believe this occurs in the world of sport as well. An example of this can be found in experiences of states of flow. This psychological experience occurs for athletes, who are in the moment of a sports 'performance',

Within the movements of the athlete a wonderful mystery of life is present, a mystical experience that is too close to the religious to call it anything else. The meaning of life arrives in the culmination of the possibilities. In this, experiencing of the mystical, the athlete becomes aware of that which is beyond reality. To *the* athlete this is a personal sensation. It is more than *fascination* or *interest*. It is a form of dynamic voluntarism that extends *beyond* the powers of rational mind and physical body.³³

Examples of similar experience can also be found among different religious groups. This is demonstrated by Sufi dancers who believe that they achieve a state of religious experience when dancing and spinning.

Streng's analyses are important to consider, with respect to the discussion between sport and religion, because the insightful connections Streng offers underline why this 'sacred' world should be analyzed. Following these reasons, Streng claims that

knowledge of the ‘sacred’ world, whether it is in a religious or athletic setting, can have transformative features. It is also important to consider Prebish’s claim that the analysis of the ‘sacred’ is often neglected. I argue that the examination of the impact of the ‘sacred’ world on the life of an individual should be examined because of the value individuals place on their involvement and interaction with the ‘sacred’ world.

The reasons outlined by Streng and employed by Prebish in his analysis, are also a good fit for the foundation of this chapter. Throughout this chapter, it is my intention to engage in an evaluation of the relationship between religion and sport. My aim is to broaden an understanding of the relationship between the religion of Islam and Muslim women’s participation in sport and physical activity. The four reasons, identified by Streng, which outline why we should engage in this analysis, provide the bedrock upon which this chapter builds.

Fitting with the theme of transformation, Prebish turns again to Streng’s discussion in order to address the question of how one can study religion. Streng argues that there are three different dimensions that can be included in how one approaches the study of religion. The first is through a personal account. This dimension includes the individual’s perspective on his or her relationship to religion, in addition to understanding how this view either differs from, or is similar to, others.³⁴ The second dimension involves the examination of cultural parameters. According to Streng, this dimension provides breadth and includes the multiple influences or factors that contribute to an individual’s ‘sacred’ world.³⁵ The third, and final, dimension is referred to as the ultimate category and it includes the, “sensitivity for that to which one gives one’s loyalty

as the true character of life.”³⁶ By taking these approaches and utilizing them together, Prebish argues that the relationship between the ‘sacred’ world of religion and sport and the profane world of the ordinary is clarified.³⁷ Additionally, these dimensions are used by Prebish to support the claim that sport can be considered to have ‘sacred’ world status. For the purpose of this chapter and the evaluation of the relationship between religion and sport, an analysis of the cultural dimension will be included. Exploration of the personal dimension will be addressed in Chapter V which examines the ‘Ishraq: Safe Places to Learn, Play and Grow’ initiative.

The third question addressed by Prebish, includes an explanation of why it is important to develop a systematic approach that seeks to examine multiple relationships rather than focusing on a specific religion. Even though it is clear that the main religion that is used as a reference point in this examination is Christianity, Prebish includes a guideline for the development of a tool that captures a broad picture that can include multiple perspectives. He once again refers to Streng when noting that the extrapolation of broad themes from an analysis of social, cultural and religious values must be able: “1) to describe as objectively as possible the conditions and elements of a historical situation and 2) to recognize that the changes in religious life result from interactions with many cultural conditions surrounding a religious event.”³⁸ The first condition identified by Streng is discussed in broad terms in Chapter II of this dissertation. The second condition, although not through a reference to a single religious event, is considered in this chapter and Chapter IV.

Having established the methodology of how to extend this line of analysis to include an examination of a specific relationship between sport and religion, Prebish moves on to discuss the relationship between sport and religion and offers reasons to support his argument that sport can be considered a religion. At this point, it is useful to examine the features that Prebish argues sport and religion share. I argue that these features contribute to his overall argument that sport can in fact be considered to be a religion and share 'sacred' status. Overall, Prebish bases this claim on thirteen features that were first identified by sport sociologist, Harry Edwards,

i) has a body of formally stated beliefs, accepted by faith by great masses of people; ii) calls on people to provide a testimony of the beliefs obtained from a continual commitment; iii) traditions maintained essentially by men; iv) saints personify a specific ideal on representation; v) there are ruling patriarchs; vi) there are gods; vii) the presence of high councils at which the rules are interpreted and applied in cases of conflict; ix) people seek the ultimate kingdom or representation of a higher level; x) there are existence of shrines; xi) there are the existence of symbols of faith; and xii) colour symbolism has a dominate role.³⁹

Prebish argues that these thirteen features can be found in both worlds of religion and sport. The compelling force behind the weight of these features is the creation of a 'sacred' world, "The sport structure, like the traditional house of worship is set apart from the ordinary, profane world."⁴⁰ It is in this world that, for both religion and sport, the body functions as both the visual representation and a mirror which reflects the qualities of the 'sacred' world it belongs to, "Thus, the passage from the profane to the sacred is a cosmicization, and in so passing, the athlete sacralises his or her own body as an expression of holiness manifested throughout the universe."⁴¹ This relationship can be seen when one compares norms and social systems that guide our behaviour in general

society, or the profane world, with a sport context, a 'sacred' world. Take for example, legal infractions that would apply to a bar fight but seem not to apply to a bench-clearing fight during a hockey game. Prebish notes that similarities between religion and sport exist in such 'sacred' spaces, whether it is Maple Leaf Gardens or a traditional house of worship. There are 'sacred' relics in both areas which usually involve the human body. For example, in the case of religious relics, they are the preserved pieces of flesh.⁴² Similarly, the relics in the sport world could be body shapes that have been sacralised through hours upon hours of training. Referring to the definition of 'sacred' outlined at the beginning of this chapter, I argue that, forms of training an athlete endures, and the development of physical features, whether it is with respect to speed, strength or skill, can be categorized as a transformation of 'hierophany'.⁴³

From the thirteen features, two are useful to consider in the context of the discussion in this chapter. Reference to a body of formally stated beliefs and calling on individuals to provide testimonies, are integral to the examination of the conflicts between sport and religion that some Muslim female athletes have experienced in Canada. These conflicts will be discussed in the latter part of this chapter.

I agree with Prebish's assessment of the connections between religion and sport, specifically his argument that outlines the reasons why sport can be considered a 'religion'. However, the purpose of this chapter is to move beyond this understanding and consider what occurs when sport that has 'sacred' status conflicts with religion, which also holds a 'sacred' status, specifically the religion of Islam. Although Prebish does in fact identify this potential problem, since he is concerned with demonstrating that

sport can have ‘sacred’ status, he does not examine the possibility of an athlete who holds sport and his or her religious beliefs at a similar level. Furthermore, his response to a potential conflict is to argue that one cannot have multiple religious affiliations and beliefs held at the same level. This ultimately allows Prebish to move away from this potential problem,

When an individual declares that he or she adheres to sport as a formal religious tradition, this means that he or she is referring to a *consistent pursuit* that is also the *most important pursuit* and a *religious pursuit*. If this individual were to then state that he or she is also a Jew or a Protestant or a Catholic or whatever, he or she would be referring to a *cultural heritage* only, to the complex series of factors that are essentially ethnic and locational rather than religious.⁴⁴

I argue that Prebish is incorrect in this evaluation. He is not incorrect in stating that there cannot be the existence of competing adherence of the same intensity to multiple understandings of the ‘sacred’ world. Rather, he is incorrect in the assumption that the structures of sport and religion, both holding a spot in the ‘sacred’ world of the individual, cannot co-exist in a mutually beneficial manner without one set of beliefs conceding to a lesser status. Furthermore, it is the evaluation and articulation of these structures that can contribute to new understandings and as Streng argues, contribute to the fostering of the transformative power that comes from an understanding of one’s ‘sacred’ beliefs in a universal perspective and developing an awareness of oneself as a religious person.⁴⁵

Faith and Reason

I would like to expand on the first characteristic that Prebish includes in support of his claim that sport can be considered a religion, which outlines a body of “formally stated beliefs, accepted by faith, by great masses of people.”⁴⁶ While embarking on a

discussion that examines the relationship between faith and reason in great depth is beyond the scope of this chapter, and ultimately, this dissertation, I do believe that it is useful to begin with a brief examination of the relationship between faith and reason. Questions about the relationship between faith and reason have fostered several different themes and discussions. One of the main themes that have been explored by Thomas Aquinas, Blaise Pascal and Soren Kierkegaard is whether it is possible for the 'truths' of religious beliefs to be proven through philosophical inquiry. A brief introduction of the relationship between 'strong rationalism', 'fideism' and 'critical rationalism' was included in Chapter II. I would like to extend the discussion about 'critical rationalism' because it can be used as a framework from which discussions about tension between competing values in a 'sacred' world, including both sport and religion, can be evaluated. As noted previously, 'strong rationalism' and 'fideism' by definition alone do not allow for the development of a discussion about conflicting values. Individuals who ascribe to 'strong rationalism' cannot be convinced that it is rational to accept religious beliefs unless God's existence (in any form) is proven to be true by rational means. Therefore, they are unable to engage in a discussion about conflicting religious beliefs. 'Fideists' argue that faith stands alone without any support from arguments or rational evaluation. This group of individuals would not accept a competing value system. 'Fedeists' would also not accept Prebish's argument because the 'sacred'-status could not be given to any other belief than the religious one they privilege.

Given the same situation, a third category of understanding, critical rationalists would engage in a form of evaluation,

Critical rationalists are more likely to see the problem as one of mutual adjustment and accommodation, with the aim of formulating a worldview in which both kinds of truth are accommodated without distortion or undue compromise on either side.⁴⁷

Although the critical rationalism seems to be a blend of the first two approaches, the discussion of the relationships between faith and reason is further burdened by the weight of reaching the goal of explaining the articulation between truth and knowledge.⁴⁸ As Roger Arnaldez identifies, philosophers who explore the relationship between faith and reason face a daunting task,

Reason cannot go beyond that knowledge; that is, it can never go beyond the world of perception and representation. Religious thought leaves it to philosophers to research and explain the nature of the relationship between the spiritual universe and the material universe, between the One and the many, between being and becoming, between external and the temporal. And, because it is religious thought, it concerns itself with only the first – the spiritual – universe.⁴⁹

As noted previously, several philosophers have attempted to explore and discuss the relationship between the spiritual and material. Further complicating these explorations are the differences between religious schools of thought. Christianity, Judaism and Islam have been interpreted, re-interpreted and dissected in several different ways. This has resulted in the production of multiple perspectives and understanding about the articulation between faith and reason.

I believe that the ability to engage in difficult and uncomfortable philosophical discussions is an essential feature of moral deliberation and one that is supported by critical rationalism. In order to navigate the potential conflicts that may occur between the rules and requirements that are part of both sport and religion, the ability to critically evaluate when there are conflicts between values involves the understanding that rational

discussion can be instructive and useful. William J. Abraham argues that ‘soft rationalism’, a form of ‘critical rationalism’, can be applied in a global context. He argues that, among the virtues of this approach, the ability to involve individual reflection and understanding in an assessment of conflict highlights the need for a well-rounded evaluation.⁵⁰ Abraham’s evaluation of critical rationalism is in the context of addressing questions of faith, rather than tensions between rules that are part of a religion. However, I argue that his assessment of the virtues of this approach support the inclusion of this perspective in this evaluation,

This approach to the rationality of religious belief shows considerable promise. To begin, it would seem to capture and articulate the kind of reasoning which has a clear place in disputes between different belief systems. Thus it shows how interminable religious disputes can be, for they range over a whole network of phenomena and thus require a great patience if they are to be understood and resolved.⁵¹

The decision to include Averroes’s work in the evaluation of religion was based on the need for an analytic framework in order to evaluate religious requirements while including the features of critical rationalism. The use of this framework is also essential because it provides a foundation from which the interpretation of religious Scripture can be evaluated in a productive manner. The goal of this evaluation is to examine the interpretation and application of religious text with respect to how the Muslim female body is defined by religious structures. It is not to critically argue what is right or wrong with religion, in this case Islam. With respect to the first area of examination, the use of Averroes’s ‘critical or soft rationalist’ approach will be instrumental in the examination of the interconnected relationship between Muslim female bodies and the interpretation of religious text.

In order to discuss the embodiment of Muslim female athletes in relation to the articulation between the institutions of sport and religion, the scope of an examination must consider at least two different areas. The first is the complex and interconnected relationship between female embodiment and the interpretation of religious texts. This broad area of discussion involves religious texts, the interpretations of religious text, and the integration of these interpretations into social and cultural expectations of Muslim women. The complexity of these relationships cannot be outlined in simple forms because there are differences in how religious texts are interpreted and applied between countries, cities and communities. There is, however, the possibility for the development of models at the theoretical level that can be applied to different situations. The second area highlights the relationship between the application of religious interpretations and the articulation of religious structures and institutions with sport structures and institutions. For the purpose of this examination, a focus on developing a theoretical model in an attempt to create a tool that can be used in the evaluation of religious texts and interpretations that impact Muslim female embodiment will be included. Specifically, I will work to create a theoretical model that builds upon the work of Averroes which supports the use of philosophical inquiry with the evaluation of the Qur'án. This analysis will be instrumental in the examination of the articulation between the institutions of sport and religion.

Averroes

One of the most influential philosophical thinkers that explored the relationship between faith and reason in connection with Islam is Averroes.⁵² During his life (1126 – 1198), Averroes was appointed to the role of *Cadi* (a judge) because of his knowledge of Islamic law in Seville. He was later appointed to the role of Grand *Cadi* of Cordoba.⁵³ Although some scholars have argued that there is a strong link between Averroes and ‘strong rationalism’, Roger Arnaldez argues that with respect to religious interpretation, Averroes applied a ‘critical rationalist’ approach. At the age of seventy, the conflict between Averroes and the Caliph, who supported the *Ash’arites*, culminated in Averroes’ banishment from Cordoba.

[*Ash’arites*]...emphasizes the power and influence of God over all things, an emphasis which leads them to abandon the objectivity of causality, ethics, and the world as an eternal entity.⁵⁴

The Caliph also issued an official proclamation,

Forbidding people to study philosophy...[Averroes] had earned the reputation as a bad Muslim, and on one occasion was actually driven from the mosque in Cordoba by an angry crowd of worshippers.⁵⁵

Averroes’ work was largely informed by the examination of Greek philosophy, especially Aristotle. The application of this school of thought supported his claim that the development of a happy medium of belief between rational theology and literalist theology was possible.⁵⁶ Averroes believed that a harmony between the study of philosophy and religious text could be attained. Furthermore, he believed that this would account for problems that may occur when religious texts are unable to provide answers.⁵⁷ The crux of Averroes argument is based on an application of demonstrative

reasoning. He argued that, through demonstrative reasoning, the premises are established to be true prior to their application,

When we talk about law and theology, though, using theological and legal premises as our starting position, we are limiting the scope of argument to the scope of the premises.⁵⁸

Broadly speaking, Averroes noted in The Decisive Treatise, that there is a deeper ontological connection between religion and philosophy that must be acknowledged,

It is actually not a case of bringing a rationalist view of things into harmony with a religious view, but of discovering whether or not there is a subjective parentage between the way of life according to the wisdom that philosophy has as its goal, and the way of life according to Religious Law, which is revealed.⁵⁹

Averroes's evaluation of this parentage occurs in his examination on whether Qur'anic law makes philosophic studies obligatory.

Averroes begins this assessment by identifying a common element between philosophic investigation and Religious Law. Averroes argued, "If teleological study of the world is philosophy, and if the Law commands such a study, then the Law commands philosophy."⁶⁰ According to Averroes, since Religious Law, *viz.* Qur'anic Scripture, calls for the reflective examination of individuals in order to create better understanding, and this coincides with the goal of a teleological study of philosophy, then the two areas have a common parentage. This supports the introduction of philosophical inquiry with the examination of Religious Law.

This crucial argument presented by Averroes lays the foundation for the evaluation of how philosophical investigation can occur given the relationship between reason and religion. This argument also establishes a specific tone that is important to consider. By establishing the fact that there is a harmony and complementary

relationship between the use of philosophic evaluation and the Qur'án, Averroes is creating a foundation for cooperation. This is instrumental in the development of a critical rationalist approach and framework. It is, however, a point that I believe gets missed in many discussions about religion and reason. When one introduces a conversation about religion or the interpretation of rules, there is almost an instant reflex to ensure that the religion is not being slandered or attacked. I believe that this was the case when Averroes introduced his arguments, and consequentially was banned from Cordoba, and with Dr. Farag who was imprisoned after his lecture at AUC. I argue that the intention of both Averroes and Dr. Farag to discuss the interpretation and application of religious requirements was to move beyond a defensive reaction and engage in a critical discussion. Additionally, it is my intention to engage in a critical evaluation, a discussion that is not aimed at discrediting Islam.

In his assessment of Averroes and his many philosophical works, Oliver Leaman lends support to the claim that, in many discussions about reason and religion, the conflict cannot be properly discussed because of the immediate defensive positions that are taken to protect religion from a 'potential attack'. Leaman argues that it should be considered a conflict between different methodologies rather than a conflict between different propositions.⁶¹ Leaman notes that 'strong rationalism' and 'fideism', considers their own stance valid and therefore a discussion between them would require one side to concede to the other,

The discussion of Islamic philosophy has tended to concentrate upon the different propositions which philosophy and Islam seem to establish, and while this is a very important aspect of the confrontation, it is the clash between different approaches which is more significant. The opponents of *falsafa* could provide a variety of arguments to support their position. One is to rule out philosophy as bluntly as *kufir*, as unbelief, because it proves propositions counter to Islam...Another strategy is to deny the validity of philosophical methods themselves, given the clear and all-embracing doctrine of Islam itself.⁶²

Leaman also notes that responses to these arguments on behalf of the *falsafa* (the Arabic word for philosopher) claim that these approaches essentially ignore the limitations that religion experiences in addressing questions that are not clearly explained in Scripture.⁶³

In an attempt to bridge the work of the *falsafa* and theologians, Averroes turns to Scripture to support his claim that there is in fact a relationship between reason and religion and this does not require one side to concede to the other. To support this starting point, Averroes argues that the Law (Qur'anic Law) does in fact support the use of philosophy,

That the Law summons to reflection on beings, the pursuit of knowledge about them, by the intellect is clear from several verses of the Book of God, Blessed and Exalted, such as the saying of the Exalted 'reflect, you have vision' (Koran, LIX, 2): this textual authority for the obligation to use intellectual reasoning, or a combination of intellectual and legal reasoning.⁶⁴

Averroes argues that additional calls for the use of reflection and study are communicated by verses of the Qur'an and together these provide a strong case for his argument. This framework includes both consideration of religion and reason. The second argument Averroes presents is how one can use philosophy to study the relationship between Islam as well as the world. He argues that the best form of reasoning that will allow the study of the Law, world and philosophy to exist in a mutually beneficial manner is demonstrative reasoning,

Since it has now been established that the Law has rendered obligatory the study of beings by the intellect, and reflection on them, and since reflection is nothing more than inference and drawing out of the unknown from the known, and since this is reasoning or at any rate done by reasoning, therefore we are under an obligation to carry on our study of beings by intellectual reasoning. It is further evident that this manner of study, to which the Law summons and urges, is the most perfect kind of study using the most perfect kind of reasoning; and this is the kind called “demonstration”.⁶⁵

Averroes believes that this form of reasoning needs to be learned and cultivated in order to be used in a proper sense.⁶⁶ From this, he argues that through demonstrative syllogisms, the study of beings and the Law can occur. Given that demonstrative syllogisms employ the use of both illustration and deductive logic, Averroes argues that this field of inquiry would blossom through these forms of investigation. This argument can be linked to Averroes’s concern over the *Ash’arites* who used only literal interpretation. Interestingly, this argument also addresses concerns identified by Prebish, some 775 years later. Both Averroes and Prebish refer to developments in arts, law and mathematics as areas they believed benefitted from this form of cooperative investigation. Averroes argues that those well versed in the use of demonstrative reasoning could extend this knowledge to evaluate works of literature previously banned by religious law,

From this is evident that the study of books of the ancients is obligatory by Law, since their aim and purpose in their books is just the purpose to which the Law has urged us, and that whoever forbids the study of them to anyone who is fit to study them i.e. anyone who unites two qualities, (1) natural intelligence and (2) religious integrity and moral virtue, is blocking people from the door by which the Law summons them to knowledge of God, the door of theoretical study which leads to the truest knowledge of Him; and such an act is the extreme of ignorance and estrangement from God the Exalted.⁶⁷

At this point, a possible objection to Averroes last argument may be raised. It is highly unlikely, from a practical application that all men and women would be able to achieve the level of knowledge and understanding required for demonstrative syllogisms.

Averroes responds to this potential counterargument by arguing that, due to the differences of the ‘nature of men,’ there ought to be different forms of philosophic inquiry.⁶⁸ He argues that, in addition to demonstrative reasoning, dialectical and rhetorical arguments can also be employed.⁶⁹ The realization that there are different paths of learning underpins this consideration,

For the natures of men are on different levels with respect to [their paths to] assent. One of them comes to assent through demonstration; another comes to assent through dialectical arguments, just as firmly as the demonstrative man through demonstration, since his nature does not contain any greater capacity; while another comes to assent through rhetorical argument, again just as firmly as the demonstrative man through demonstrative arguments.⁷⁰

Although Averroes establishes a method by which different levels of inquiry can be used by all Muslim followers, it should be noted that this would require significant alteration to religious structures. The allowance for contemplation and evaluation on the part of the individual could greatly reduce the need for the interpretation of religious texts via Imams and religious schools. This threat to structures that held a lot of power and influence in the community may have been another reason why Averroes was banished from Cordoba.

The development of methods by which individuals would be able to engage in the evaluation of the Law does not necessarily mean that all individuals would have to interpret religious texts in order to be able to have a spiritual relationship with God. Additionally, it is not the case that every interpretation would be granted equal weight.

Averroes argues that, in connection with the development of the methods by which individuals could engage with religious texts, these interpretations must also be discussed, debated and evaluated as a whole. As he says, “summon to the way of your Lord by wisdom and by good preaching and debate them in the most effective manner.”⁷¹ Additionally, to prevent the production of interpretations that are based on the misuse or incorrect application of reason, Averroes offers a way to deal with potential conflicts. He begins by noting that demonstrative truth and Scriptural truth cannot conflict,

Now since this religion is true and summons to the study which leads to knowledge of the truth, we the Muslim community know definitely that demonstrative study does not lead to [conclusion] conflicting with what Scripture has given us; for truth does not oppose truth but accords with it and bears witness to it.⁷²

In the event that there is a conflict, Averroes argues that these tensions usually pertain to cases where Scripture does not refer specifically to the item or situation.⁷³ Accounting for the times where there is some confusion about a relationship between demonstrative and Scriptural truth, Averroes argues that the use of allegorical interpretation is required.⁷⁴ He defines allegorical interpretation as the “extension of the significance of an expression from real to metaphorical significance, without forsaking therein the standard metaphorical practices of Arabic.”⁷⁵ The claim that allegorical interpretation can be used in conjunction with philosophy and logic is a marked departure from the way religion was discussed during Averroes’ time. The claim that Scripture can have a double meaning, one literal and one revealed through deep evaluation, could be troubling in current times.

To support the use of allegorical interpretation, Averroes argues that all Muslims have accepted the principle of allegory. However, they disagree on the application of it,

In the light of this idea the Muslims are unanimous in holding that it is not obligatory either to take all the expressions of Scripture in their apparent meaning or to extend them all from their apparent meaning by allegorical interpretation. They disagree [only] over which of them should and which should not be interpreted.⁷⁶

Averroes also argues that the reason for plurality in meanings is because of the need for evaluation and debate. This echoes Leaman's identification of the concern being based on a question of methodology,

The reason why we have received a Scripture with both apparent and inner meaning lies in the diversity of people's natural capacities and the difference of their innate dispositions with regard to assent. The reason why we have received in Scripture tests whose apparent meanings contradict each other is in order to draw the attention of those who are well grounded in science to the interpretation which reconciles them.⁷⁷

The relationship between demonstrative and Scriptural truth was considered to be one of reconciliation. Averroes argues that, in order to properly evaluate Scriptural text and use the interpretations in one's daily life in a religious sense, philosophic inquiry is essential. Furthermore, Averroes advocates for those who are able to use demonstrative reasoning and developed forms of philosophic inquiry. They should assist others who may not be able to engage in these levels of thought or contemplation. The individuals that Averroes considers properly equipped for this task are the *falsafa*,

They possess demonstrative skills which are capable of resolving difficulties as they arise in a clear and final manner, whereas theologians get involved in constructing theories surrounding these difficult passages which are neither faithful to the meaning of Islam nor compatible with the faith of the majority of the community of believers.⁷⁸

The root of Averroes' criticism of the theologians, *mutakallimūn*, is that he believes that the interpretations of Scripture are not easily accessible to the majority of the community of believers and they also include more 'innovation' than arguments developed by

falsafa.⁷⁹ Averroes believes that bad arguments presented by *mutakallimūn* can have further negative impacts which would put the members of the community of believers in a dangerous situation,

The sort of case which Averroes has in mind can be illustrated by taking an example from the realm of everyday morality. Most people believe that they ought to follow certain moral rules, and do not think deeply about the basis which such rules have in reason, nature, or whatever. They operate perfectly acceptably in society and in their dealings with their family and friends using these rules, and might even be incapable intellectually of comprehending arguments which try to ground them in something more solid than just the feeling they are to be obeyed. Then someone comes along (like the theologian) and presents them with a battery of bad arguments which try to show how those rules are grounded in something more solid, when they did not even think about the necessity for grounding them in anything at all. This might lead to a weakening in acceptance of the rules, and a falling off in moral behaviour.⁸⁰

Leaman argues that it is important to note that this does not mean that the common believer should not be considered to have an imperfect view and therefore can be easily swayed; rather Averroes is arguing that a *falsafa* can create arguments that offer a secure basis for the interpretation of rules.⁸¹ Ultimately, Averroes argues that all believers are obliged to satisfy the basic requirements specified by Scripture. It is by this method that one comes to understand these meanings that vary depending upon the level of the understanding of the individual.

It is evident that there was a unity between the roles Averroes undertook in life and his literary work. As a jurist and a *falsafa*, Averroes attempted to bridge the interpretation of religious texts with the use of philosophic inquiry, specifically rational evaluation. The arguments presented lead to the support of three main claims: i) there is a relationship between reason and religion; ii) the three methods by which common believers can come to understand scriptural interpretations include demonstrative

reasoning, dialectical reasoning and rhetorical reasoning; and iii) *falsafa* are best equipped to use demonstrative reasoning, such as allegorical explanation, as an interpretive tool. The use of reason and other forms of philosophic inquiry in conjunction with the interpretation of Scripture were highly contentious topics during Averroes' time. It can be argued that this tension still exists today. Arnaldez argues that Averroes' work is insightful and is still relevant to the evaluation of Scripture in current times,

it seems unquestionable that his openness of mind, his rigorous method, the perspicuity of his analyses, not to mention his innovations, several of which have meaning for us or put us onto the path of new research, and finally, and perhaps especially, the frank and direct manner in which he approached difficulties and attempted to solve them while avoiding the slightest fraudulent sophism (*khābīth*), are examples that deserve to be pondered and which can still be profitably utilized today in the teaching of philosophy and in planning for the education of young thinkers of our time.⁸²

The argument presented by Averroes is instrumental in moving beyond 'strong rationalist' or 'fideistic' points of views. It provides a strong theoretical framework from which the use of demonstrative reasoning can be employed in the interpretation of Scripture. Most importantly it is rooted in the very Scripture that it has been created from in order to assist with interpretation. In the context of the discussion of Muslim female athletes, this framework can be used to evaluate the relationship between female embodiment and the interpretation of religious texts. The next section builds upon this framework established by Averroes and explores the interpretation of Qur'anic Scripture in conjunction with philosophical analysis. I will also explore the possible impacts these inferred meanings can have on Muslim women.

Examination of the Qur'án

*Those who listen,
To the Word,
And follow
The best (meaning) in it:
Those are the ones
Whom God has guided, and those
Are the ones eluded
With understanding.⁸³*

In the prologue of the translation of the Qur'án, entitled The Message of the Qur'án, Muhammad Asad notes the following,

It is axiomatic from the Islamic perspective that the Qur'án cannot be translated because the *form* of God's revelation, that is Arabic itself, is not merely incidental to its meaning, but essential to it. The Arabic of the Qur'án does not, however, limit the Qur'án to one "literal" interpretation but by virtue of the power of its vocabulary allows for a depth of meaning that would be lost in any translation. A rendering into another language, therefore, is not and never can be the Qur'án as such, but merely an interpretation of it.⁸⁴

In this passage, Asad captures the difficulties between Scripture and interpretation of meaning with respect to the nuances between languages. This complicated relationship between interpretation and translation was at the heart of Averroes' work, outlined in the previous section, and is discussed by religious scholars throughout the world. The consideration of Averroes' approach to interpretation of religious Scripture, specifically the Qur'án, is instrumental to the discussion of Muslim female embodiment. In the context of Muslim female participation in sport and physical activities, interpretation of religious Scripture that may prevent Muslim women's participation must be examined. Although there are not specific references to women's participation in sport and physical activity in the Qur'án, it is the interpretation of Qur'ánic verses that have been included

in both *Hadiths* and *Fatāwa's* that can be considered to provide religious and jurisprudence foundations for unequal treatment of women.

The word *al-qur'án* is derived from the word *qara'a*, which means to 'read'. Muhammad Asad notes that when the prefix 'al' is removed the word changes to 'recitation' and 'discourse'.⁸⁵ This slight change in prefix seems to illustrate the tensions described by Averroes, between literal reading and deriving meaning from interpretation. This dynamic relationship is the reason why an examination of religious requirements based on Scripture must begin at the root of the debate, namely, the interpretation of the Qur'án. In the forward to his interpretation of the Qur'án, Asad recognizes this important consideration and notes,

In both notes and the appendices I have tried no more to elucidate the message of the Qur'án and have, to this end, drawn amply on the works of great Arab philologists and of the classical commentators. If, on occasion, I have found myself constrained to differ from the interpretations offered by the latter, let the reader remember that the very uniqueness of the Qur'án consists in the fact that the more our worldly knowledge and historical experience increase, the more meanings, hitherto unsuspected, reveal themselves in its pages.⁸⁶

Asad argues that Qur'ánic Scripture is a dynamic text and the inclusion of his assumptions regarding the interpretation of Qur'ánic verses are very important. This follows closely the argument offered by Averroes and supports the notion that there is a relationship between social and cultural viewpoints and knowledge and meanings derived from the Qur'án. It also supports the claim that although there are three methods by which a believer can interpret meaning from the Qur'án, the use of forms of philosophic inquiry is important in order to prevent incorrect or confused interpretations.

For the purpose of this discussion, the claim that the evaluation of religion involves forms of interpretation has been established. The evaluation of the impact interpretation has on individual embodiment will now be explored. As noted by Asad, our “knowledge and historical experience” contribute to our understandings of Scripture.”⁸⁷ In order to discuss the impact interpretation can have on the understanding and treatment of women, I turn to Asma Barlas. In her book, Believing Women in Islam: unreading patriarchal interpretation of the Qur’án, Barlas begins by identifying an important question and distinction,

The central question I have posed in this book, whether or not the Qur’án is a patriarchal text, is perhaps not a meaningful one from the Qur’anic perspective since its techniques are not framed in terms of the claims made by either traditional or modern patriarchies. However, since the Qur’án was revealed in/to an existing patriarchy and has been interpreted by adherents of patriarchies ever since, Muslim women have a stake in challenging its patriarchal exegesis.⁸⁸

Barlas begins her analysis of the Qur’án’s patriarchal exegesis by addressing two claims. The first is whether the Qur’án itself is a misogynistic text.⁸⁹ This includes the evaluation of whether the Qur’án is responsible for establishing a binary relationship that places women in the role of the, “weak, unclean or sinful” sex.⁹⁰ Following from these questions, do these binary relationships establish a hierarchy by which men are “divinely ordained” as guardians and rulers of faith.⁹¹ Barlas responds to this by noting that it would be very easy to say that the Qur’án as a text is misogynistic and should be treated as such. She notes, however, that this view, often held by non-Muslim societies, is incorrect. Barlas argues that the text itself is not misogynistic and that it is ultimately a problem of interpretation,

I argue that descriptions of Islam as a religious patriarchy that allegedly has ‘God on its side’ confuse the Qur’án with a specific *reading* of it, ignoring all texts, including the Qur’án, can be read in multiple modes, including egalitarian ones. Moreover, patriarchal readings of Islam collapse the Qur’án with its exegesis (Divine Discourse with its ‘early realization’); God with the languages used to speak about God (the Significant with the signifiers); and normative Islam with historical Islam. Thus, Islam and Muslims are confused on the one hand, and texts, cultures, and histories are collapsed on the other.⁹²

Barlas argues that there are multiple interpretations that can be pulled from Qur’anic verse. What is problematic is the assumption that Divine Discourse supports only one interpretation and it seems to contain patriarchal conclusions about women and their bodies. This is linked to the claim that Muslim men are divinely ordained as rulers of faith and are expected to govern over all believers, including women.

This line of reasoning is connected to the second claim identified by Barlas. In the remaining chapters of her book, she examines how interpretations of Qur’anic Scripture ultimately contribute to establishing and reinforcing patriarchal exegesis. Barlas notes that proof of these misinterpretations can be found in recent academic research and literature that suggests that some conservative readings of the Qur’án have negatively impacted interpretation of Scripture,

Recent scholarship increasingly makes clear that conservative readings of the Qur’án are a function of methods Muslims have used – or have *failed* to use – to read it. In particular, argue critical scholars, Muslims have not read the Qur’án as both a ‘complex hermeneutical totality’ and as a historically situated text.⁹³

Barlas notes that the common method employed in reading the Qur’án can be described as a ‘linear-atomistic’ method that considers verses in isolation.⁹⁴ The main problem with this approach is that relationships between verses and sections within the Qur’án are ignored.⁹⁵ This in turn, leads to the issue that Barlas raises,

By ignoring the fact that the Qur'án is a 'unified document gradually unfolding itself' in time, classical exegetes have also ignored that in the Qur'án, content and context possess one another such that one cannot grasp the significance of the Qur'án's teachings without considering the contexts of their revelation.⁹⁶

Barlas argues that the Qur'án as a Scriptural text is polysemic. A feature of polysemy is the multiple interpretations that can be unpacked from parts of one piece of Scripture. Echoing Averroes's claim, this does not mean that each interpretation is weighted equally, some are better than others. Barlas argues that meanings of *āyāt*, (the Arabic word for a verse from the Qur'án), may be interpreted through the use of allegory and hermeneutics. The main crux of Barlas's argument reinforces Averroes's claim that the use of forms of logic and reasoning can be useful in determining which interpretations are better than others.

Before proceeding with the analysis of the interpretation of *āyāts* which have been identified as patriarchal, Barlas argues that there are two considerations that must be highlighted. The first is that accepting the claim that there are multiple interpretations that can be considered in the evaluation of the Qur'án, does not mean that this method is supporting moral relativism.⁹⁷ As noted in the previous section, the creation of Scriptural interpretation does involve the use of rigorous philosophical inquiry, and the evaluation of these interpretations will ultimately lead to the argument that one evaluation may be better, or more probable, than the other. Additionally, Barlas argues that if there is disagreement on which interpretations are legitimate, there should be a consensus on which interpretation should be ruled out completely. This is supported by the consideration of *zulm*. The concept of *zulm* is defined as, "meaning to act in a way as to transgress the proper limit and encroach upon the right of some other person, and God."⁹⁸

By referring to the concept of *zulm*, Barlas is arguing that regardless of disagreements between which interpretations of the Qur'án should be accepted, those that can be considered employing *zulm* should be immediately dismissed, “Theologically speaking, whatever diminishes and denies the full humanity of women must be presumed not to reflect the Divine or an authentic relation to the Divine.”⁹⁹ In addition, because *zulm* is defined by passages in the Qur'án, Barlas is effectively employing Averroes's claim that Scriptural and demonstrative truth need not conflict with one another.

Expanding upon the use of Averroes's framework and Barlas's 'discussion of patriarchal interpretations of Scripture, I turn to her evaluation of *āyāts* which have been used to define positions on sex or gender that are greatly limiting to women. This discussion is important in the overall evaluation of Muslim female bodies with respect to sport and physical activity because assumptions that underpin categorizations of the female body as “lesser or defective men” ultimately have an impact on the ability of women to use their bodies in places where the male form is privileged.¹⁰⁰ Barlas's intention is not to argue that the Qur'án provides a basis for a theory of equality. Rather her claim is that through the critical evaluation of Qur'anic verses, it is possible to arrive at a position that can be used to support equality and refute social and cultural definitions of women as the weaker sex.¹

Barlas begins her examination by exploring how the Qur'án describes the creation of the human form. This is a familiar starting point for a discussion about the human body and descriptions of how the female body came to be created,

¹ Asma Barlas approaches this evaluation through a feminist framework.

As the Qur'án describes it, humans though biologically different, are ontologically and ethically-morally the same/similar inasmuch as both women and men originated in a single Self, have been endowed with the same natures, and make up two halves of a single pair.¹⁰¹

In order to support this claim, Barlas refers to the following passage in the Qur'án,

Reverence
Your [*Rabb*]
Who created you
From a single *nafs* [“person”]
Created, of like nature,
[its] *zawāj* [mate] and from them twain
Scattered (like seeds)
Countless men and women;-
Reverence God, through Whom
Ye demand your mutual (rights).¹⁰²

The argument that men and women should in fact be considered born from one whole and are a complementary pair is significant. As Barlas argues, the relationship between man and woman, as outlined in the Qur'án, precludes the opportunity for the development of hierarchical structures that are ultimately supported by the description of how human creation occurred. She correctly argues that this is significant, and the association between descriptions of creation and the development of hierarchical structures that are used to reinforce women's position as below her male counterpart, can be seen through comparisons to other religions,

The radical significance of the Qur'anic teachings, especially its creation narrative, becomes apparent if we recall that in Christian traditions, sexual (and racial) hierarchies derive from their temporalization, that is, from the belief that superiority of creation is a function of its priority. This posited “hierarchy of being” is critical in biblical texts, for example, “For man is not out of woman but rather woman out of man”. Because also man was not created for the sake of the woman, but rather woman for the sake of man.¹⁰³

Barlas argues that the description of human ontology contained within the Qur'án and outlined by the verse above, also contributes to a foundation for the ethical-moral

dimension for both men and women.¹⁰⁴ The ethical-moral dimension outlined in the Qur'án contains both individual and social requirements. Barlas explains that, contained with the definition of *dīn*, viz. faith; the *āyāt*, which outlines behaviour which is counter to *dīn*, demonstrates the relationship between morality and social responsibility,

The things that my [*Rabb*]
Hath indeed forbidden are:
Shameful deeds, whether open
Or secret; sins and trespasses
Against truth or reason; assigning
Of partners to God, for which
[God] hath given no authority:
And saying things about God
Of which ye have no knowledge.¹⁰⁵

In her analysis, Barlas has advocated for the consideration of the relationship between the creation of man and woman and the concept of *dīn* in the interpretation of the ethical and moral responsibility for both men and women. She demonstrates that if we accept the interpretation of the creation of men and women from one, viz. *naḥ*, then it logically follows that men and women would have the same level of ethical and moral capacity. In conjunction with the definition of what is considered to be unlawful, human nature (*Fitra*), as outlined in the Qur'án, locates individual morality within a social setting as balancing between two means,

it is the extremes between good and evil that provide the natural tensions for appropriate moral praxis, which consists in following the Qur'anic ideal of the mean: 'that moment of balance where both sides are fully present, not absent, integrated, no negated.'¹⁰⁶

Barlas argues that just as man and woman are defined as a pair, the ethical-moral requirements outlined in the Qur'án can also be considered to be a coupling. Thus, through social responsibility, individuals have responsibility for themselves, their

relationship to God, and for others. In another comparison between the Qur'án and Christian Scripture, Barlas argues that once the creation of man and woman has been used to establish patriarchal understandings of the qualities that belong to man and woman, the application of these hierarchal relationships extend to the understandings of moral capacity. Barlas notes that, as feminists have argued, the relationship between Eve and man's fall from grace is one that is also employed to justify women as flawed beings. It also contributes to claims concerning women's moral ability,

Such views then serve to establish women's sinful and weak natures and the legitimacy of their subordination to men. Historically however, Christian traditions that make such claims, or that assert the 'moral imbecility of women' or deny them 'full capacity for moral responsibility' upon which Muslims draw, themselves are flawed.¹⁰⁷

Problems arise, according to Barlas, when Scriptural interpretations do not include philosophical assessment or intentionally left out social contexts, which in turn negatively impacts Muslim women,

It is the *Tawhīdi* (Islamic) perspective that leads to defining the 'community as a moral entity...[whose] purpose is to achieve moral balance within and between a network of relationships.'" How these relationships are realized in practice and "translated into particular pattern of living is the function of a *dīn*" (130). To separate the moral from the social, as Muslims do when they concede equality to women in the moral sphere while discriminating against them in the social/legal sphere, thus runs counter to *Tawhīdi* perspective and it, to that extent, un- Qur'anic.¹⁰⁸

Even though Barlas has included comparisons between Muslim and Christian interpretations, it is important to note that the acceptance of equality with respect to ethical and moral capacity in the Muslim community extends beyond the individual, or private, to a social or public level. One feature of religious observance in the Muslim community involves public service. If an understanding of men and women as equal is

accepted, this level of equality would be further reinforced in public settings.

Fundamentally, Barlas argues that interpretation of Qur'anic *āyāt*, outlining *dīn*, supports the claim that moral and social praxis do not differ between men and women. This claim lends additional support to the argument that interpretations of the Qur'ān, in conjunction with 'linear-atomistic' readings of verses in isolation, have led to incorrect 'readings'.

The third and final example employed by Barlas to demonstrate how the Qur'ān can provide a foundational framework for the ontological definition of man and woman as an equal coupling, is rooted in the examination of sex and sexuality. Barlas begins by arguing that the prominently held ideal that the female body is fundamentally flawed can be linked to several historical examples. She traces the relationship between the 'defiled female form' from Ancient Athenians to Christian and Orthodox Jewish traditions,

Women were barred not only from temples but also from studying the Torah...and were excluded from "public expressions of piety." They also were exempt "from nearly all of the positive precepts whose fulfillment depended upon a specific time of the day or of the year," as well as from daily affirmations of faith because of their seclusion and alleged uncleanness. And, "Throughout their lives, women's personal vow of valuation to God was reckoned at roughly half that of men."¹⁰⁹

Barlas's argument is based on the claim that similar to previous examples, the relationship between the female body and the lack of purity is based on a flaw in understanding which can also be connected to social values instead of religious interpretation,

And yet, Muslim patriarchies have managed to read into Islam ideals that once were specific to Judaism and Christianity due to the peculiar nature of their "inter-religiously shared 'worlds'" (Wasserstrom, 1995, 209). Among these is a tendency to view sex as unclean and dangerous and women as sexually corrupt/ing and insatiable. In fact, on some accounts, it is Islam's desire to curb "active female sexuality" that is at the base of many of its "family institutions" (Nicolaisen, p.6). At the same time, most Muslims also

adhere to the view that men have been endowed with a hyperactive libido whose satisfaction necessitates polygyny, a view that leads them to see women as passive receptacles for men's sexual pleasure and release.¹¹⁰

Barlas argues that the "sexual ethics of Islam" are in fact based on misinterpretations fostered by Sufis and other religious belief systems.¹¹¹ She argues that these interpretations are clearly problematic because the Qur'án does not recognize a difference between the sexual natures of men and women. Interpretations from the Qur'án, however, are being used as a basis for the development of patriarchal structures rooted in the sexuality of women.¹¹² She argues that the pairing of men and women with respect to the notion of purity is clearly communicated by the following *āyāt*,

Women impure are for men impure,
And men impure for women impure
And women of purity
Are for men of purity,
And men of purity
Are for women of purity.¹¹³

This *āyāt* demonstrates an equal level of expectation for both men and women. The only distinguishing feature is with respect to purity. It is important to understand that, given the relationship outlined in this passage; both men and women can achieve the same level of purity.

According to Barlas, the relationship between one's chastity and morality is one of personal decisions. This is rooted in the claim that both men and women have autonomy and can exercise individual choice. This in turn changes the focus from a question of the 'natures' of men and women to the individual's choice.¹¹⁴ This third area of consideration provides another example to support the claim that expectations of men and women with respect to their ethical and moral capacity do not establish or contribute

to hierarchal structures. The ontology of men and women, as defined according to Qur'anic Scriptures, are based on the assumption of an equal starting point. Based on the examples presented by Barlas, there is no evidence to suggest that the nature of women is, at the core, flawed in comparison to men.

Barlas presents a convincing case. At the root of her argument is the connection between the Qur'an and ontological claims about men and women. The shift from the consideration of the similarities and differences of the male and female body and morality from gender symbolism, allows for a coupling of man and woman equal to one another. Most importantly, Barlas has provided useful examinations of *āyāts* that can in turn be employed in discussions about Muslim women's embodiment. Overall, the argument offered by Barlas connects the creation of man and woman to ethical and moral capacities, requirements for the demonstration of faith (*dīn*), and social responsibility. Through these relationships and the analysis of how the nuances of these requirements are defined by the Qur'an, Barlas identifies supporting claims for equality. These claims of equality are further highlighted when they are compared to Christian interpretations, specifically the creation of Adam and Eve and original sin. Most importantly, the argument offered by Barlas provides a foundation for further evaluation of patriarchal interpretations. For example the discussion of the *Hijab* which will be addressed in Chapter IV.

The interpretation offered by Barlas also aligns with the framework developed by Averroes. The evaluation presented by Barlas is a working example of how the interpretation of Qur'anic Scripture can be discussed in a way that does not diminish

religious meaning; it highlights the validity of philosophic inquiry. The reflexive interpretation offered by Barlas embraces the use of intellectual reasoning and exemplifies Averroes's argument. Additionally, Barlas's examination addresses the gaps in the argument presented by Dr. Farag. The examination of the rights of women in a society where the separation between religion and state is not clearly defined needs to include a discussion of rules and requirements that are based on Scriptural references. I argue that this evaluation offered by Barlas is complimentary to the argument presented by Dr. Farag. The understanding that interpretations of the Qur'án reinforce a woman's ability to govern her own religious path, while at the same time considered to be equal to her male counterpart, allows for the qualities of both men and women to flourish in mutual cooperation. This was at the heart of Dr. Farag's lecture and considering both approaches together provides a compelling argument.

Structural Systems

Up to this point in the chapter, discussions concerning the relationships between sport and religion that has been evaluated in the literature have been offered. The need for the further evaluation of a third category of articulation, the relationship between rules and structures of both sport and religion, has been identified. The first part of examining this third category involved the evaluation of religious requirements. Based on this discussion, the need for a framework to evaluate religious Scripture was identified and addressed through the work of Averroes. Using Averroes's framework, Barlas offered insight into how patriarchal interpretations of the Qur'án can be addressed. This

evaluation provided a way to address the religious interpretations that limit women's capability to exercise autonomy in both public and private settings.

With respect to the examination of the internal structures of religion, the arguments offered by Averroes and Barlas have demonstrated the creation and application of an analytic framework. Specifically, the work of Barlas has established the existence of patriarchal interpretations of the Qur'án and has offered non-patriarchal interpretations that establish claims for equality. An extension of this application is included by Barlas in the post-script of her book. She notes that moving beyond patriarchal interpretations and engaging in discussions about religious interpretation, "as a brand of human knowledge, religious knowledge also is 'incomplete, impure, insufficient, and culture-bound'."¹¹⁵ As a result, Barlas argues that all women have a stake in combating oppressive readings of the Qur'án,

This means that 'all Muslims may qualify' as interpreters of religious knowledge or *mujtahid*' (Esposito 1982, 126). Although I do not claim to be a *mujtahid*, like one, I believe that knowledge (*Ilm*) can originate from revelation and reason, 'observations as well as intuition...tradition as well as theoretical speculation'.¹¹⁶

Barlas notes that this perspective is currently not embraced by the majority of Muslims. This is problematic, according to Barlas, because of the 'medieval epistemologies', such as those outlined above, that many misinterpretations are rooted in.¹¹⁷ As a final thought, Barlas quotes Iranian philosopher, Abdolkarim Soroush, in saying that "the stunning beauty of the truth...lies beyond the veil of habits, and too many of us are enmeshed in this veil to see it."¹¹⁸

From this, the claim that individuals have a responsibility to engage in challenging medieval epistemologies can be asserted. With respect to an individual who

is experiencing the clash between sport and religious structures, the evaluation of religious structures is dependent on the individual, family, friends, and others who may have a large level of influence on religious understandings. Ultimately, the individual has a large amount of control and can engage in the form of introspection outlined by Barlas. For example, in the 2010 documentary *The Calling*, which follows seven Muslims, Catholics, Evangelical Christians and Jews on their journey to become professional clergy, Tahera Ahmed, a 25 year old Muslim woman, explains her experience balancing sport and religious requirements,

In high school I was a three [sporter], basketball, volleyball and track. The coach said, ‘you’re telling me that you are going to play wearing all of that?’. And when I was praying in the locker room while the other girls laughed it took a strong head to ignore all of that and continue to pray, but that was what I wanted to do.¹¹⁹

As a student studying to be an Islamic Chaplain at Hartford Seminary, Tahera is also the organizer and referee for a basketball league. The rules of this league include no boys in the gym and a prayer before the game. Other scenes in the documentary show Tahera playing table-tennis in the basement of her family’s home against males and females. This example highlights the ability of Muslim women to participate in sport and physical activity without having to make a choice between religious and sport requirements. The remaining sections of this chapter explore the institutional structures of sport and how the rules enforced through these structures impact veiled Muslim women.

An Account of ‘Ethos’

When considering the ‘sacred’ world model offered by Prebish, it is important to address the relationship between the structures of sport and religion. The ability to navigate the tensions between the requirements of sport and religion includes the

examination of sport structures. Fundamentally, there are at least two different ways that the evaluation of the institution of sport can be approached. In the philosophy of sport literature, discussions surrounding the ontology of play, games and sport can be roughly divided into two different accounts. A formalist account, based on the definitions offered by Bernard Suits, and a descriptive account provided by Fred D'Agostino. Formalist accounts provide us with a definition of play, games, and sport that are based on the act itself.¹²⁰ This account considers the rules, goals, and attitudes required of the players participating in the game.¹²¹ Although this assessment provides important analysis of the structure and what comprises play, games, and sport, D'Agostino argues that these definitions do not consider the other social and political values that have an impact on the individuals who play sport,

the formal rules of a game distinguish between behaviour which is permissible (in the game) and behaviour which is impermissible. In a formalist account of games, this distinction is interpreted as a distinction between behaviour that is part of the game and behaviour that is not part of the game at all.¹²²

A formalist account requires the interpretation of behaviour that is counter to the rules of the activity to occur with the understanding that the participants are no longer playing the same game.¹²³ This prevents any introspection into why the behaviour or conflicts are occurring in the first place. Most importantly, these definitions do not provide us with a way to account for how conventions impact the rules and structure of sport, "The standard formalist account of games, according to which various game-derivative notions are to be defined solely in terms of the formal rules of games,"¹²⁴ is insufficient in the examination of the conflicts between religion and sport because it fails to recognize the connection and influence between these two institutions.

The analytic goal of this chapter is to examine the articulation of the connection between religion and sport with reference to the rules and structure of current sport systems in North America. This analysis is important for the work in this dissertation because it allows for the discussion of the rule structures that impact the athlete to consider broader relationships between sport and social values that the formalist account does not consider. The integration of an account of the ‘ethos’ of sport is also important with respect to the narratives of veil discussed in Chapter IV. D’Agostino argues that the application of a formalist account is not a sufficient conceptual framework because it fails to account for how the rules of games are applied, “I have suggested that formalism is defective because its advocates ignore the role of the ‘ethos’ of a game in defining that game.”¹²⁵ Adhering to a non-formalist account, D’Agostino argues in favour of an ‘ethos’ approach based on the acknowledgement of the relationship between social conventions and the rules in games. In this dissertation, I argue that a conceptual framework rooted in a non-formalist account is necessary because it moves beyond the rules pertaining to the activity and considers the social framework that has an impact on the rules governing who is eligible to play. Therefore, this assessment considers the relationship between religion and sport through the application of the model of the ‘ethos’ of games, offered by D’Agostino,

The ethos of a game G is that set of conventions which determines how the rules of G are to be applied in concrete circumstances. The ethos of G should thus figure in the definition of various game-derivative notions in the following way. Where, according to formalism, ‘is an instance of G’ means ‘is activity in accordance with the formal rules of G’, our nonformalist account suggests that ‘is an instance of G’ should be understood as meaning ‘is activity in accordance with the formal rules of G as these are interpreted by the ethos of G’.¹²⁶

The assumption underlying this argument acknowledges the fact that rules in games are continually being evaluated and reformed. In games that have a refereed-component, the rules are being continually evaluated throughout the contest. This is important to understand with reference to the examples that are presented in this dissertation, because it is related to an evaluation of how rules in games can be considered to be contextually dependent,

To determine the conventions which guide game officials in their application of the formal rules of the game, it does not suffice simply to consult the formal rules of that game: One must make this determination empirically, by investigating the actual practices which these conventions sanction.¹²⁷

Building on D'Agostino's argument outlining the 'ethos' of games, Jim Parry offers a broader definition in developing an account of the 'ethos' of sport.

The ethos of sport, then is: i) based on experienced interdependence, at team level or beyond; ii) inclusive, moving out of the experience on the field to the wider community of supports and stakeholders; and iii) always being tested, either by problems on the field or by potential value conflicts with related groups.¹²⁸

This definition integrates D'Agostino's account of the 'ethos' of games in addition to acknowledging that the 'ethos' of sport and games can be changed through conflict.

Parry notes, that the more the 'ethos' of sport is challenged, the more the values that have an impact on the creation of the 'ethos' can be clarified and evaluated.¹²⁹ Furthermore, Parry argues that an 'ethos' that is closed to interpretation will embody some form of exclusionary practice.¹³⁰ In conjunction with, and in support of, Parry's claims, I argue that it is important to examine how the 'ethos' of sport can conflict with the institutions of religion in order to eliminate the negative impact of exclusionary practices in sport,

Practices like sport can offer arenas where ethical discourse can flourish and where a morally and psychologically binding consensus, based on both tradition and the more or less tacit knowledge of how to play the game, can come under the scrutiny of all practitioners. Moreover, we believe that the morality of particular sporting games is being presented, challenged and negotiated, not always in articulate forms, but in terms of embodied interaction throughout sports performance.¹³¹

The application and integration of the ‘ethos’ of games and sport within a conceptual framework, used to evaluate the conflict between rules in sport and religion, provides a foundational piece in a broader conceptual framework. It offers support for: i) the connection between society and the interpretation of the formal rules in sport, and ii) the critical evaluation of what the correct interpretation and application of these rules should be. In order to further facilitate a discussion that examines the interpretation and application of the pre-contest rules in sport, I now turn to Klaus Meier’s discussion of ‘auxiliary’ rules. The examination of auxiliary rules can provide the avenue for a practical evaluation of moral considerations linked to the conflicts between the institutions of religion and sport.

Auxiliary Rules

Similarly motivated by concerns with formalism, Meier argues that there are additional sets of rules that have an impact on the participants in sport which move beyond the rules that govern the activity itself.

Whereas such rules and regulations may be certainly deemed to be instances and the embodiment of the basic nature of that particular activity, and therefore analyzed as such, not all rules that influence entrance into and the levels of performance within a sport are similarly constituted.¹³²

The ‘regulative’ rules that Meier is referring to are defined as a subset of constitutive rules which provide an account of how the game or sport should be played.¹³³

Constitutive ‘regulative’ rules are defined as,

regulations which stipulate a framework within which it is possible to ascertain what it is to play properly or improperly (through the incorporation of a subset of penalty rules), to score, and finally to win, are also integral to the identification of the basic, essential nature of the particular activity at hand.¹³⁴

Although Meier understands the need for ‘constitutive’ and ‘regulative’ rules that govern the structure and play of games and sport, he argues that many sports have a set of pre-contest rules that place additional regulations and limitations on participants,

It is my contention that this type of rules, which specifies and regulates eligibility, admission, training, and other pre-contest requirements, is of a different colour or nature than constitutive rules and, as such, has *nothing whatsoever to do with the essence of sport*.¹³⁵

To account for these types of pre-contest limitations, Meier defined this additional category as ‘auxiliary’ rules. Recognizing that these forms of rules represent different pre-contest considerations, such as eligibility and safety requirements, Meier created three categories for ‘auxiliary’ rules: i) rules based on participants safety and physical stress; ii) rules based on empirical restrictions; and iii) rules based on arbitrary restrictions.¹³⁶ The first category includes rules that are meant to govern athletes’ safety, for example, rules that ensure that no unnecessary harm will come to the athletes.¹³⁷ The second category accounts for rules that dictate regulations based on empirical categories such as age and weight limitations.¹³⁸ The third and final category, rules based on arbitrary restrictions, includes rules that Meier argues are created through social and political values, “This last category incorporates a vast number of restrictions, ranging

from very minor to major international proscriptions.”¹³⁹ Meier argues that acknowledging the connection between auxiliary rules and ethical concerns linked to sport allows for important information about the intersection between social values and sport to be examined:

these auxiliary rules may indeed reveal a great deal about the regulative superstructure that dictates the particular manifestation of a specific sport occurrence – and as a consequence demonstrate certain manifest and latent values as well as additional institutional parameters of the bureaucratic structure.¹⁴⁰

An analysis that takes into account the relationship between social and political values is important to consider in this examination because it allows for a discussion about the impact these values can have on athletes:

any movement in an axiological direction – such as asserting that training procedures should not jeopardize the safety, health, or emotional well-being of the athlete, or that performance enhancing techniques such as blood doping should be prohibited – proceeds considerably beyond the descriptive and prescriptive nature and function of the constitutive rules of a sport.¹⁴¹

The assertion that auxiliary rules have axiological considerations reinforces the need for the evaluation of the consequence these rules can have on participation in sport. Most importantly, acknowledging that auxiliary rules have no effect on the constitutive rules removes the possibility of discussions evaluating auxiliary rules being conflated with questions about the nature of sport, or how the actions of participants in sport should be governed.

A framework that applies and utilizes the ‘ethos’ of sport in conjunction with the examination of auxiliary rules is important in this analysis because, i) it provides a way to account for the link between society and the formation of rules in sport; ii) it can

illuminate how arbitrary social values, that have nothing to do with the constitutive rules of sport are interpreted and enforced in sport contexts; and iii) through an application of this framework, a way to negotiate the conflicts that occur when the institutions of sport and religion clash can be realized.

Examples of Conflict

Recently there have been clashes between the institutions of sport and religion. Specific examples involve the internal structures of sport, including auxiliary rules that govern eligibility, that have clashed with internal structures of Islam. Based on recent conflicts, there has been a call for the evaluation of pre-contest rules in the sports of soccer and taekwondo, for example, by the members of the respective provincial sports associations. These conflicts were between Muslim female athletes and the interpretation of eligibility rules supported by the Alberta Soccer Association (ASA) and the Quebec Taekwondo Association (QTA). The conflicts occurred as the result of interpretations of auxiliary rules that prevented Muslim female athletes from participating because they were wearing a *Hijab* during competition. It is my intention to critically examine the concept of the 'ethos' of the sports in conjunction with the auxiliary rules of these sports in order to determine how these issues can be resolved in a way that supports inclusion. The first example that demonstrates this tension is based on a conflict that occurred in December 2007. During a soccer game the referee asked a 14 year old female player to leave the field based on the concern that the *Hijab* she was wearing posed a safety risk to the athlete.¹⁴² Although the athlete was wearing a 'sports' *Hijab*, a veil that had a Velcro strap at the neck area, the referee did not believe that it would safely detach in the event that it was pulled during the game. This resulted in the athlete being told that she must

either remove the *Hijab* or leave the playing field.¹⁴³ The athlete chose to leave the playing field.¹⁴⁴

In a news release dated December 18th, 2007, the ASA clarified its stand on the issue of athletes wearing traditional Muslim headscarves during soccer games. The new ruling supported by the Board of Directors endorsed the following guidelines:

The Board of Directors of the Alberta Soccer Association (ASA) has approved the wearing of the sports type *Hijab* upon inspection by the referee prior to the start of any game, who must determine that it complies with the FIFA rule four. This decision is effective immediately.¹⁴⁵

Shortly after the initial conflict on the soccer field, the Calgary Minor Soccer Association had appealed to the ASA in search of clarification with regard to this issue. The ASA appealed to the international governing body for further direction:

All items of clothing or equipment other than the basic equipment must be inspected by the referee and determined not to be dangerous. Modern protective equipment such as headgear, facemasks and knee and arm protectors made of soft, lightweight padded material are not considered dangerous and are therefore permitted. If an item of clothing or equipment that has been inspected at the start of the match and determined not to be dangerous becomes dangerous or is used in a dangerous manner during the match, its use must no longer be allowed.¹⁴⁶

The ASA noted that this official ruling was based on extracts from the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) Rule Four.

A second example of a conflict between religious and sport rules occurred within the QTA. On April 15, 2007 five Muslim girls from ages 8 to 13 were barred from competition in a Taekwondo tournament because the *Hijab*'s that the girls were wearing were considered to be a safety risk that violated competition rules.¹⁴⁷ This decision was based on Taekwondo Canada's rules pertaining to contest uniform and protective equipment:

The contestant shall wear the trunk protector, head protector, groin guard, forearm guards, shin guards, gloves and a mouthpiece before entering the contest area. The groin guard, forearm guards and shin guards shall be worn beneath the Taekwondo uniform. The contestant shall bring this WTF (World Taekwondo Federation) approved protective equipment, as well as the gloves and the mouthpiece, for his/her personal use. Wearing any item on the head other than the head protector shall not be permitted.¹⁴⁸

In response to this decision, further research into the interpretation of contestant rules upheld by other taekwondo federations revealed that women from Indonesia, Iran and Egypt were permitted to wear the *Hijab* underneath the mandatory helmet.¹⁴⁹ To date, there have been no additional rulings or changes that would permit athletes wearing *Hijabs* to participate in Canadian taekwondo contests.

Although these conflicts occurred in two different sports, soccer and taekwondo, I will argue that the reasons behind the clash are rooted in the interpretation of the auxiliary rules. At the heart of these examples lie two interconnected issues: i) the use of the body as a battleground; and ii) a conflict between identity as an athlete versus identity as a Muslim. It is important at this point to note that it is not my intention to critically discuss the religious doctrine of Islam or religious doctrines that have been used to support a rationale requiring females to wear a *Hijab*. I am interested in discussing the conflict between arbitrary auxiliary rules that govern eligibility and the internal structure of the institution of Islam.

This analysis begins with an examination of the rules that were cited in reference to the above examples. In both cases, I argue that the rules used to support the exclusion of the athletes can be considered what Meier defined as auxiliary rules. These rules govern who can participate in the sport contests and have no bearing on the actual sport.

These auxiliary rules can be defined as ‘contestant uniform and protective equipment’ by each sport organization, and are requirements that are adjudicated prior to the start of the contest. When referring back to Meier’s categorization of auxiliary rules, it may appear to be the case that these stipulations also fit within the first category: rules based on ensuring the participants’ safety. I argue that this is not the case. In his analysis, Meier defined this category of auxiliary rules as: “rules pertaining to the participants’ safety or exposure to physical stress, such as, “all football players must wear a helmet with a fixed face guard” or “no player may pitch more than three innings in any one age-group baseball game.”¹⁵⁰ This category of rules, specifically when referring to rules governing protective equipment outlines what forms and types of equipment are permissible for the athlete to wear. In the first example, although the rule does mention clothing, it specifically addresses the use of headgear, facemasks and other protective equipment. In the second example, the rule clearly states the types of protective equipment that are to be worn in order to participate in the contest. If the conflicts in both of these examples were based on a type of helmet or face-shield that did not clearly conform to these standards, it would be clear that the auxiliary rule in question was based on ensuring the participants’ safety. Although the sections of the rules pertain to safety requirements, I would argue that supporting the claim that these conflicts are based on concern for ensuring participants’ safety is a red herring. However, I argue that considerations of participant’s safety would be warranted if the veiled athletes were wearing *Hijabs* that are commonly worn in non-athletic settings. These types of *Hijabs* generally use pins to secure fabric beyond the shoulders and are worn over top of the shirt. This type of *Hijab* worn in a

sports setting could pose a choking hazard. Additionally *Hijabs* that are made from heavy fabric may pose an additional threat to an athlete's safety due to concerns over heat exhaustion. Even though this warrants consideration, this is not the case for the athletes discussed in the example. These athletes were wearing sports specific *Hijabs* which are made from microfiber material and used Velcro instead of pins to secure the fabric.

I argue that the auxiliary rules, and the interpretation of these requirements provided in these examples, actually can be placed into the third category of rules offered by Meier, listed as arbitrary auxiliary rules that are based on social and political values.

To support this claim, I refer back to the examples of such rules offered by Meier.

This last category incorporates a vast number of restrictions, ranging from very minor local to major international proscriptions, including the following representative examples: (a) a ban on all-black or one-piece tennis outfits at Wimbledon; (b) the exclusion of any athlete who has ever participated professionally in one sport from engagement in any other amateur sports championship.¹⁵¹

Contained within these examples are references to what Meier calls 'proscriptions'.¹⁵² In both sports, the proscription of uniform requirements through these rules extends beyond what is required in order to adhere to the team uniform, same team logo, colours, or type of clothing and touch on evaluations of clothing worn to represent religious beliefs. This is particularly evident in the first example. Although the final decision enforced by the ASA permits the participation of veiled athletes, it does so by only allowing the use of only 'sports' *Hijabs*. In addition, permission is granted on the basis of the referee's adjudication on whether the *Hijabs* meet their individual safety requirements. As demonstrated in this example, although the athlete was wearing a 'sports' *Hijab*, it did not satisfy the referee. Based on this assessment, it is clear that these arbitrary auxiliary

rules present a problem for Muslim female athletes who participate in sport wearing a *Hijab*.

Summary

In the introduction of the chapter, I noted that two of the thirteen characteristics outlined by Prebish which can be found in both sport and religion, would be useful to the discussion within this chapter. I would now like to return to these characteristics, namely: i) formally stated beliefs; and ii) calling on individuals to provide a testimony. Ultimately, these characteristics served as links to support the claim that both sport and religion can achieve a level of ‘sacred’ status for the individual. Achieving this level of status is considered to be above the everyday or ‘profane’ world. Both of these characteristics are also instrumental in the evaluation of the conflicts that were included in this chapter. In these examples, the negotiation between a body of formally stated rules was the first point of tension and conflict for the athletes. On the part of religion, athletes were able to reconcile the religious requirement of wearing the *Hijab* with their ability to participate in the sport. Similar to Tahera Ahmed, the athletes wore additional clothes underneath their sport uniform and wore a ‘sports’ *Hijab*. It is clear that in this case, the athletes were able to negotiate the requirements from both a religious and sport context. Although the sports organizations initially attempted to defer to formally stated rules in response to the conflict, it was clear that the rule structures did not preclude athletes wearing the appropriately modified ‘sports’ *Hijabs* from participating.

It seems to be case that, with respect to the second characteristic, calling on individuals to provide a testimony, the ability to negotiate with the sport structure was not

achieved. I argue that this occurred because of the rigid resistance to accepting Muslim female athletes who were wearing both symbols of religious and sport affiliation. This conflict seems to mimic the claim Prebish made with respect to the possible relationship between holding sport and religious values in a 'sacred' world. These conflicts also demonstrate that Prebish is incorrect in his claim that sport and religion cannot co-exist in the 'sacred' world. The very fact that members of the soccer team left when their teammate was asked to choose between wearing the *Hijab* and playing in the game, shows the disapproval of the referee's decision.

In summary, in this chapter I have presented a discussion of the relationship that exists between sport and religion. I have accepted Prebish's argument that sport can achieve 'sacred' status and I have included a discussion of a third category of articulation between sport and religion. I specifically focused on the conflicts which involved Muslim female athletes. In order to adequately discuss potential conflicts, I argued that the application of a modified analytical framework was required. The first framework that was discussed was developed from the work of Averroes. This framework was centrally focused on how the evaluation of Islamic Scripture can include the use of reason and philosophic forms of inquiry. Application of this framework was illustrated by the evaluation of the Qur'án and the work of Asma Barlas. Through these examples, the claim that the Qur'án as a text should not be considered patriarchal was argued. Through the interpretation of *āyāts* included in Barlas's examination, the claim that the Qur'án establishes an equal starting point for both men and women was supported. Following from this, the capacity of women ontologically, ethically, and morally was asserted. This

framework allows for all Muslims to critically assess interpretations of the Qur'án. This is very important for women who have been limited due to patriarchal interpretations of religious Scripture. The main feature of this framework includes a great deal of introspection on part of the individual.

The second framework that was discussed in this chapter focused on the evaluation of sport structures. Since these structures are not as open to individual interpretation as the previous framework allowed for, the evaluation and creation of an assessment that included universal features is necessary. In this chapter, I have argued that arbitrary auxiliary rules that conflict with rules supporting the internal structures of religion require critical examination. This argument stems from recent clashes that have prevented Muslim female athletes from participating in soccer and taekwondo contests. To support my argument, I employed the use of D'Agostino's concept of the 'ethos' of games and sport, modified by Parry. These definitions provided support for the claim that the interpretation of the rules that limited participation was influenced by social values. To support the claim that it is important to conduct an examination of the intersection of social values and the influence these values may have on the interpretation of structural rules in sport, I employed Meier's definition of auxiliary rules. With this framework established, I embarked on a critical examination of the examples presented in this paper.

Through my examination, I revealed that the interpretation and application of rules in the examples demonstrated that there is a battle over the governance of the body that underpins the conflicts between the institutions of religion and sport. This discussion

was particularly interesting because the examples also demonstrated a clash between North American assumptions regarding women, Islam, and the *Hijab* manifested through disagreements on the sports-field. Conflicts between the institutions of religion and sport touch on an important issue. Essentially, a discussion of how the interpretation and application of auxiliary rules in sport contests that limit the eligibility of participants based on religious clothing requirements highlights concerns of segregation. Although there are opportunities for Muslim female athletes to participate in specialized sport events, such as the Pan Arab Games, these opportunities exist because of exclusionary practices that limit the participation of Muslim female athletes in North American sport. Not all exclusionary practices are enforced by arbitrary auxiliary sport rules; however, it is through the examination of rules that limit participation that challenges the assumptions contained in the 'ethos' of games and sport. Auxiliary rules that prevent participation on the basis of wearing a 'sports' *Hijab* are problematic and discriminatory and should not be a part of a society that purports to be multicultural. It is these challenges that strengthen the credible social values that are a part of the 'ethos' of sport and contribute to inclusivity.

In this chapter two frameworks that can be used to evaluate a conflict between religion and sport were included. The complexity of discussing conflict between two institutions is highlighted by the fact that for an individual both religion and sport can hold 'sacred' status. Given this connection, both frameworks can be used to locate links between social values and the formation of rules that are part of either institution. Additionally, the application of these frameworks can be used to illustrate any arbitrary

rules, or uses of rules that may be harmful and prevent the freedom of an individual, whether it be the freedom to make personal choices or the ability to participate in sport. Finally, these frameworks provide the foundation for the negotiation between conflicting structures.

Endnotes

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⁷ Robert J. Higgs, *God in the Stadium: Sports & Religion in America* (Kentucky, The University Press of Kentucky, 1995), xvii-xviii.

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¹⁴ Charles Prebish, *Religion and Sport: The Meeting of Sacred and Profane* (United States of America: Greenwood Press, 1993), 90.

¹⁵ Prebish, 1993: 47.

¹⁶ Prebish, 1993: xii.

¹⁷ Prebish, 1993: xii.

¹⁸ Prebish, 1993: xiv.

¹⁹ Prebish, 1993: xiv.

²⁰ Prebish, 1993: xvii.

²¹ Novak, 1993: 162.

²² Prebish, 1993: 3.

²³ Prebish, 1993: 4.

²⁴ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1961), 14.

²⁵ Eliade, 1961: 9.

²⁶ Eliade, 1961: 11.

²⁷ Eliade, 1961: 10.

²⁸ Eliade, 1961: 11.

²⁹ Eliade, 1961: 11.

³⁰ Eliade, 1961: 11.

³¹ Eliade, 1961: 12.

³² Prebish, 1993: 73.

³³ Prebish, 1993: 69.

³⁴ Prebish, 1993: 4.

³⁵ Prebish, 1993: 5.

³⁶ Prebish, 1993: 5.

³⁷ Prebish, 1993: 5.

³⁸ Prebish, 1993: 11.

³⁹ Prebish, 1993: 56-61.

⁴⁰ Prebish, 1993: 73.

⁴¹ Prebish, 1993: 74.

⁴² In the book, Rag and Bone: A journey among the world's holy dead, Peter Manseau explores the notion of relics. Through a historical evaluation of the nature of relics and their purpose in current times, Manseau argues that relics serve an important role in many faiths,

What they are, of course, are remnants of saints, prophets and sages: the keepsakes and castoffs of consecrated women and men, and most of all their bodies. The word itself – at the root, the Latin *reliquus* – refers to “something left over or kept behind.” Considered this way, relics are also one of the very few things that truly connect the religions of the world. Every religion is a banquet of holy lives; these are the leftovers. Another possible translation of *reliquus* sums up the objects’ meaning and power succinctly: relics are simply “what remains.”⁴²

The most concrete connection between the relics explored by Manseau and the sporting world can be seen in the museums that hold sports paraphernalia from the great sport legends in baseball, basketball and hockey.

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⁴³ Prebish, 1993: 69.

⁴⁴ Prebish, 1993: 72.

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⁴⁷ Michael Peterson et. al., *Philosophy of Religion, 2nd Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 66.

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⁵⁰ Peterson et. al., 2000: 105.

⁵¹ Peterson et. al., 2000: 105.

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⁵⁴ Oliver Leaman, *Averroes and his Philosophy* (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1998), 4.

⁵⁵ Leaman, 1998: 4.

⁵⁶ Arnaldez, 2000: 9.

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⁵⁸ Leaman, 1998: 166.

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⁶⁰ Peterson et. al., 2001: 72.

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⁶⁴ Peterson et. al., 2001: 72.

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⁶⁷ Peterson et. al., 2001: 74.

⁶⁸ Peterson et. al., 2001: 74.

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⁷⁰ Peterson et. al., 2001: 75.

⁷¹ Peterson et. al., 2001: 75.

⁷² Peterson et. al., 2001: 75

⁷³ Peterson et. al., 2001: 75.

⁷⁴ Peterson et. al., 2001: 75.

⁷⁵ Peterson et. al., 2001: 75.

⁷⁶ Peterson et. al., 2001: 75.

⁷⁷ Peterson et. al., 2001: 77.

⁷⁸ Peterson et. al., 2001: 77.

⁷⁹ Leaman, 1998: 187.

⁸⁰ Leaman, 1998: 189-190.

⁸¹ Leaman, 1998: 190

⁸² Arnaldez, 2000: 120.

⁸³ Qur'an (39:18) in Asma Barlas, *"Believing Women" in Islam: unreading patriarchal interpretations of the Qur'an* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2003) back cover.

⁸⁴ Muhammad Asad, *The Message of the Qur'ān* (Bristol: The Book Foundation, 2003), i.

⁸⁵ Asad, 2003: xii.

⁸⁶ Asad, 2003: xii.

⁸⁷ Asad, 2003: i.

⁸⁸ Barlas, 2003: xi.

⁸⁹ Barlas, 2003: 1.

⁹⁰ Barlas, 2003: 1.

⁹¹ Barlas, 2003: 1.

⁹² Barlas, 2003: 4-5.

⁹³ Barlas, 2003: 8.

⁹⁴ Barlas, 2003: 8.

⁹⁵ Barlas, 2003: 8.

⁹⁶ Barlas, 2003: 9.

⁹⁷ Barlas, 2003: 18.

⁹⁸ Barlas, 2003: 19.

⁹⁹ Barlas, 2003: 19.

¹⁰⁰ Barlas, 2003: 138.

¹⁰¹ Barlas, 2003: 133.

¹⁰² Qur'án (4:1) in Barlas, 2003: 133.

¹⁰³ Barlas, 2003: 138.

¹⁰⁴ Barlas, 2003: 140.

¹⁰⁵ Barlas, 2003: 140.

¹⁰⁶ Barlas, 2003: 142.

¹⁰⁷ Barlas, 2003: 139.

¹⁰⁸ Barlas, 2003: 141-142.

¹⁰⁹ Barlas cites the work of Judith S. Antonelli, In the Image of God: A Feminist Commentary on the Torah and L.E. Goodman God of Abraham as supporting references for this description. Barlas, 2003: 150.

¹¹⁰ Barlas, 2003: 151-152.

¹¹¹ Barlas, 2003: 152.

¹¹² Barlas, 2003: 152.

¹¹³ Qur'án (24:26) in Barlas, 2003: 154.

¹¹⁴ Barlas, 2003: 156.

¹¹⁵ Barlas, 2003: 209.

¹¹⁶ Barlas, 2003: 210.

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- ¹²⁰ Prebish, 1993: 187.
- ¹²¹ Fred D'Agostino, "The Ethos of Games," *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* 8, no.1 (October 1981), 18.
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- ¹²⁴ D'Agostino, 1981: 13.
- ¹²⁵ D'Agostino, 1981: 13.
- ¹²⁶ D'Agostino, 1981: 13.
- ¹²⁷ D'Agostino, 1981: 12.
- ¹²⁸ Jim Parry, "Sport, Ethos and Education" in *Sport and Spirituality: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2007) 91.
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CHAPTER IV

Representations of the veil

The main goal of my doctoral research is to examine how social, cultural and religious ideologies influence the opportunities available for veiled Muslim females to participate in sport. This line of inquiry will be extended by examining the assumptions about gender and culture that inform Muslim women's experiences of sport and physical activity. Specifically, how these assumptions function to support and/or prevent women's participation in sport and physical activity will be addressed. Jennifer Hargreaves notes that previous research on the effects of sport and physical activity tend to rely on Western definitions of sport, which make particular assumptions about how one should relate to one's body.¹ These Western definitions also emphasize the physique and reinforce a prescription of the athletic appearance.² Such definitions, however, are at odds with Islamic ideology, which dictates particular social customs about how Muslim women should act and dress in public areas, customs that tend to be seen by North American society as oppressive and as denying women the opportunity to engage in sport. The clash between Western and Islamic value systems has been realized in recent cases where the rules governing participation in amateur sport prevented Muslim female athletes from participating.³ These clashes in value systems highlight the need for a critical analytic approach that draws on veiled Muslim women's own experiences of sport, and that seeks to balance (Western) values of participation in sport with considerations of social, cultural and religious values. Currently, in order to participate in sport, it appears that the Muslim female body must be disconnected from the cultural ideologies that conflict with participation in sport. This fact may also be problematic in countries that may not understand and accept these differences.

In addition to the cultural variations that exist, there are differences between the opportunities that men and women have to participate in physical activity. There have been several examples of debate and controversy with respect to the alteration of uniform requirements. Some examples of this were identified in the previous chapter. It seems to be the case that the back and forth fight for the approval of wearing the *Hijab* or long sleeves and pants underneath sport uniforms has occurred within several different sport federations and organizations. Ultimately, a battle over uniform requirements has the greatest impact on female athletes because the athletes are being asked to remove the *Hijab* in order to participate. Interestingly, there appear to be an equal number of examples of sport organizations that have allowed athletes to play with adjustments to their uniforms, as there are examples of athletes who were forced to leave a game. This was the result of the inability to appeal the decisions that prevent athletes from wearing the *Hijab* during a sport contest. It is important to note that these conflicts have been fought by veiled Muslim female athletes. Although there are religious requirements rooted in modesty for both male and females, female athletes bear the burden of challenging assumptions and requirements in a sport context.

The fact that it is veiled Muslim female athletes, who are engaged in conflicts centered upon their body, highlights the need for an evaluation of the underlying assumptions and understandings that lead to the different decisions with respect to *Hijabs* and sport. My previous research highlighted the interconnected relationship between social, cultural and religious perspectives with respect to veiling practices and interpretations.⁴ These relationships enrich, and add complexity to, discussions about the veil and veiling practices. This plurality contributes to the development of narratives

that, in turn, have been used to create binary representations and understandings of the veil and veiled women. Jennifer Heath explores the development of narratives of the veil in her book, The Veil: women writers on its history, lore and politics. As an introduction, Heath includes a chapter entitled: “Invisible and Visible Spaces”. This first chapter highlights a broad spectrum of definitions, histories and narratives that can be roughly organized into historical and political categories. Heath refers to these classifications as the “whens and whys”.⁵ I have already commented on one historical evaluation of the veil in Chapter II. I now would like to turn to the evaluation of the ‘whys’ and include a discussion of various social values, including the politicization of the veil, that impact social and cultural understandings. In addition to identifying significant occurrences and events related to practices of veiling, I argue that, for the purpose of this chapter and a discussion of narratives of the veil, this evaluation includes three main categories. These categories are social, cultural and religious. I believe that the best way to illustrate this is to employ the visual representation of a Venn diagram.

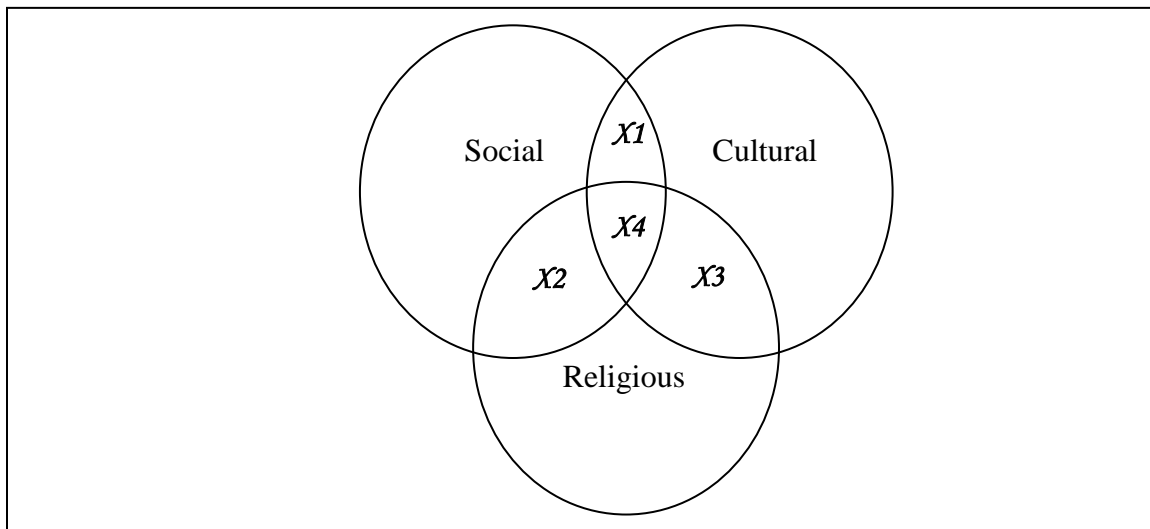
Named after the nineteenth century philosopher/logician John Venn, these diagrams have commonly been used in philosophy, specifically in the discussion of relationships and connections. Venn diagrams, “offer a system for representing whether there is something or nothing in an area of logical space. Logical space is represented in circles and parts of circles.”⁶ Contained within the branch of categorical logic, through the use of Venn diagrams an individual is able to illuminate relationships based on the logical terms of ‘all’, ‘some’, ‘none’ and ‘not all’.⁷ Through the use of Venn diagrams the relationships based on particular affirmative, ‘some’, and particular negative, ‘not all’, are highlighted through the discussion of narratives of the veil and veiling practices.

Figure 4.1 included below, illustrates the interconnected relationship between social and cultural narratives. Figure 4.1 also contains the symbols for the relationships between narratives. The interconnected relationships visualized through the Venn diagram (figure 4.1) are reiterated by Heath in her justification of why she selected twenty-one works of different authors to contribute to her book,

These contributors' nonfusty, vivacious, sometimes humorous, always perceptive accounts occasionally overlap. In describing the forms and origins of and reasons for veiling in assorted places and times, repetitions naturally and necessarily occur. Thoughts and events echo and intersect, and often the recurrence of an idea serves to underscore how flawed – and ethnocentric – received wisdom can be, how it can slide into wearisome clichés.⁸

$\mathcal{X}1$ identifies narratives that contain both social and cultural components. Value $\mathcal{X}2$ is narratives that contain social and religious values. Value $\mathcal{X}3$ is narratives that contain cultural and religious values and value $\mathcal{X}4$ identifies narratives that contain social, cultural and religious components.⁹ These values will be discussed further throughout the chapter. The selection of Venn diagrams as a visual representation is not based on the development of categorical syllogism; rather it is to illustrate the dynamic relationships and multilayered perspectives that are part of the narratives discussed in this chapter.

Figure 4.1 Venn diagram



The relationships between the circles of the Venn diagrams, separate yet overlapping, is echoed in the poignant description of the her veil offered by Mohja Kahf, an Associate Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Arkansas,

I am wearing a long, loose over garment, burqa, sari, abaya, jilbab, milaya, haïk, chador, manteau, tobe, safsari. Call it by its beautiful small name in each land, for it is many garments, not one overarching. I am wearing a foulard, shayla, ghatweh, khimar, dupatta. Sometimes I love to cast it off, layer after layer, like a revelation of my heart. And sometimes I love to draw it around me and gather its folds like insights. The play of veiling and unveiling, neither possible without the other.¹⁰

It will become clear in the discussion and evaluation of these narratives that there are qualities and properties that can be a part of the characterization of the veil that touch upon social, cultural and religious perspectives. It will also become evident that some of the values that are associated with the narratives discussed in this chapter conflate social, cultural and religious qualities. This may ultimately have an impact on how narratives of veiling practices are accepted or rejected in sport contexts. This last point is particularly important for the analysis in this study and will be explored in the sections examining social and cultural narratives.

In order to explore the three categories of narratives identified in this chapter, it is instructive to outline how each category is defined. With respect to the first category the social narratives included in this discussion touch on socio-political aspects. The examples included in this category highlight a connection to politics, social values and legal systems.¹¹ The second category, culture, is linked to themes of multiculturalism, nationalism, and fashion. The third and final category, religion, includes narratives that are linked to religious practices and Scripture. As mentioned earlier, some of the narratives discussed touch upon multiple categories. Evaluation of these understandings

plays a significant role in the overall perception of the veil and veiling practices. This, in turn, can contribute to the development of discussions that examine veiling in a sport context.

Social Narratives

In my earlier evaluation of veiling practices and sport participation, I referred to Earle Zeigler's description of the relationship between social ideologies, culture and sport. I previously argued that, based on the connections identified with respect to participation in sport and physical activity, further research that examines the values and norms within social and cultural systems would be instrumental in exploring cases of conflicts endured by Muslim female athletes who wear the *Hijab*. I will begin this examination with a discussion of social values. The basis for the sociological aspects category included in this chapter is the social system as defined by Zeigler.¹² The category of sociological aspects represents a broad understanding of the external environment.¹³ Zeigler argues that the external environment can be understood as being an 'open-system' which involves subsystems.¹⁴ In a real sense these subsystems have developed to, "divide up the work".¹⁵ Zeigler notes that there are four subsystems which include: i) culture system; ii) social system; iii) psychological system; and iv) behavioural-organic system.¹⁶ In his analysis of the relationship between social systems and cultural systems Zeigler argues that there is an "action system" that works between social and cultural subsystems.¹⁷ The definition offered by Zeigler is based on the identification of four levels,

There appears to be four levels within the subsystem that has been identified as the social system or structure. These levels, proceeding from ‘highest’ to ‘lowest’ are (1) values, (2) norms, (3) the structures of collectivities, and (4) the structure of roles. Typically the higher levels are more general than the lower ones, with the latter group giving quite specific guidance to those segments or units.¹⁸

It is in the social system that the universal application of values and norms is enforced via legal requirements and political forces. Given this consideration Zeigler notes,

these four levels of social structure themselves also compose a hierarchy of control and conditioning... the higher levels of ‘legitimate guide and control’ the lower levels and pressure of both a direct and indirect nature can be – and generally is – employed when the infraction or violation occurs and is known.¹⁹

Drawing from these relationships, the narratives I have included in this category are based on political and social systems. I argue that throughout these examples the influence of political structures, collectives and roles can be illustrated by looking at case examples from Iran, France, and Canada. Their impact on the social narratives linked to the veiled Muslim female body will be made evident.

Iran

Included as a chapter in Jennifer Heath’s book examining the history and lore of the veil, Professor Ashraf Zahedi includes an analysis of how the veil became a political tool in contemporary Iran. Zahedi begins her analysis with the claim that it is ultimately the female body that has been centrally used as a political image and symbol for Iran,

Iranian political regimes, past and present, have constructed ideal images of Iranian women congruent with their ideology and presented women as symbolic of the country – modern or Islamic. In constructing new icons, each regime has used encouragement, legal measures, and physical forces to impose its political will on Iranian women. The compulsory nature of unveiling and re veiling has deprived women of the right to choose individual

identities and violated their human rights. These violations have politicized Iranian women and inspired them to challenge authority.²⁰

Zahedi argues that the connection between political meanings and veiling is equivalent to other markers of social structures and meanings that can be found across the world.²¹

However, in this example, the politicized nature of the veil differs slightly because of the various social systems that are enacted to enforce political will. Zahedi notes that Iran has had a long history with respect to the politicization of the veil. Beginning in 1935, Reza Shah Pahlavi established *Kanoun-e-Banovan* also known as a 'Ladies Centre' and in 1936 officially abolished the veil along with other secular mandates.²² This official decree did not allow for public discussion or debate and Zahedi notes that disagreement with the decree was matched with public scrutiny and sometimes violence,

Unveiling was a progressive measure and provided many women with the choice of public attire. This choice, however, was for unveiling proponents only. Advocates of the veil were left with no choices. Unveiling was an important part of Reza Ahah's modernization efforts and he was not to be deterred by conservatives' strong opposition. He employed the use of physical force, ordering soldiers to remove women's veils, sometimes tearing them off in public.²³

Reza Shah was succeeded by his son Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, who overturned compulsory unveiling.²⁴ Although the end of compulsory unveiling was politically supported, Zahedi notes that between 1941 and 1978, the social and political narrative about veiling developed in the 1930's remained, "Though veiled women were seen in public, unveiled women had social and political 'presence'. The issue, however, was not just the veil. The physical indicator of modernity was 'revealed' hair. Women in scarves and with 'concealed' hair wearing modest fashionable Western clothes were still viewed as 'traditional'."²⁵

In the 1970's a shift in the social fabric resulted in further conflict between secularism and religion.²⁶ According to Zahedi, the notion of cultural authenticity was at the root of the conflict and women's bodies were once again being used as a visual representation of this tension,

Iranian women, veiled and unveiled, played an important role in the revolution and its victory. Though they did not participate in the revolution as women advancing their own cause, they hoped to benefit by supporting it. But their symbolic use of the veil came to haunt them as a post-revolutionary regime of the clerics set into motion the Islamization of Iran.²⁷

Following the conflict over cultural authenticity, in the 1980's the Islamic regime implemented "compulsory veiling".²⁸ Zahedi argues that the justification offered by the Islamic regime linked morality and Islamic virtue to veiling.²⁹

Zahedi's account of the political narrative of veiling developed between 1930 and 1980 outlines the political justification and institutions that were responsible for the connection between the veil control over the female body and public society. In order to account for the inclusion of a personal interpretation and to provide an example of personal experience, I turn to the author Marjane Satrapi and her graphic novel The Complete Persepolis: The Story of Childhood. In this novel, Satrapi illustrates her experience of her childhood in Iran during the Islamic Revolution and the Iran-Iraq war.³⁰ The Complete Persepolis is an international bestseller and has been translated into over 25 different languages.³¹ In the book, Graphic Women: Life, narrative and contemporary comics, author Hillary L. Chute highlights the woven fabric of personal narrative and feminist perspectives that are included in this graphic novel,

The stylization of *Persepolis* suggests that the historically traumatic does not have to be visually traumatic. And, while its content is keenly feminist, in *Persepolis* – as with all of the works discussed in *Graphic Women* – we may understand the text as modeling feminist methodology *in its form*, in the complex visual dimension of its author’s narrating herself on the page as a multiple subject.³²

In addition to the international acclaim, Chute notes that The Complete Persepolis appears on over 250 university syllabi in the United States alone.

Satrapi traces her experiences of childhood into adulthood in this graphic novel, which spans the time period between 1978 and 1994. In her assessment of Satrapi’s work, Chute notes a difference from other graphic authors because Satrapi includes personal accounts,

While Sacco and Spiegelman present themselves as visible narratives, embodied on the page, the testimonies that anchor their major work belong to others. Conversely, Satrapi’s and Barry’s work is driven by their own experiences – including their own traumas – and establishes a temporal structure in which multiple selves exist graphically; they visualize both their childhood selves and their present-day narratorial selves on the page. This visualization of the ongoing procedure of self and subjectivity constructs ‘ordinary’ experiences as relevant and political, claiming a space in public discourse for resistance that is usually consigned to a privatized sphere.³³

Satrapi’s experience and account of the veil in Iran during the 1980’s is interesting in that the description of the veil is the first image that the reader is exposed to as the starting point of the novel,

Next page: Figure 4.2 The Complete Persepolis, “The Veil” (continued on page 178-179).³⁴

THE VEIL

THIS IS ME WHEN I WAS 10 YEARS OLD. THIS WAS IN 1980.



AND THIS IS A CLASS PHOTO. I'M SITTING ON THE FAR LEFT SO YOU DON'T SEE ME. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: GOLNAZ, MAHSHID, NARINE, MINNA.



IN 1979 A REVOLUTION TOOK PLACE. IT WAS LATER CALLED "THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION".

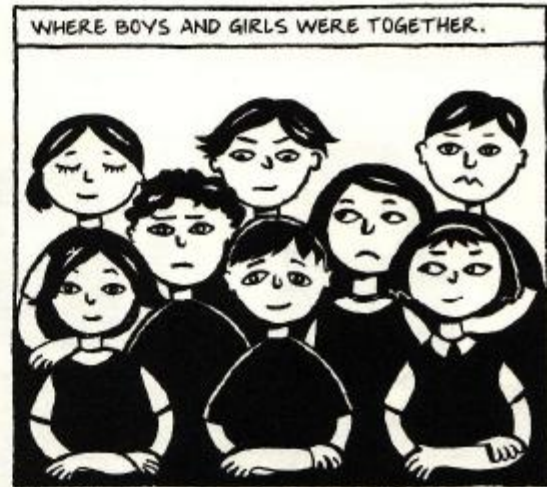


THEN CAME 1980: THE YEAR IT BECAME OBLIGATORY TO WEAR THE VEIL AT SCHOOL.



WE DIDN'T REALLY LIKE TO WEAR THE VEIL, ESPECIALLY SINCE WE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY WE HAD TO.





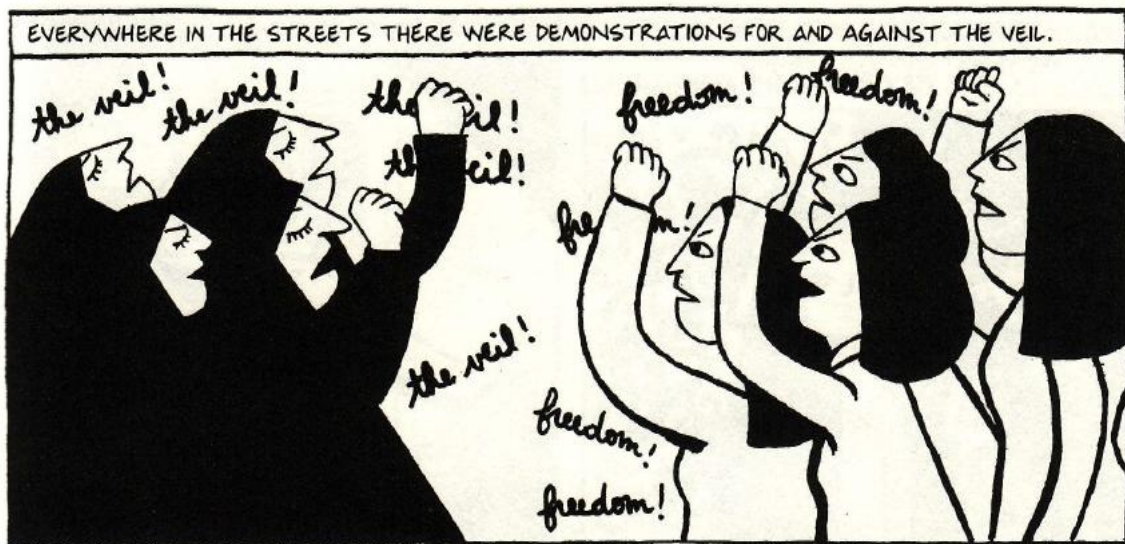
Chute notes that in the first couple of pages of the book, Satrapi's "characterological presence" is defined,

We do in fact, clearly 'see' her – just not all of her – but her self-presentation as fragmented, cut, disembodied, and divided between frames indicates the psychological condition suggested by the chapter's title 'The Veil'.³⁵

Satrapi's interpretation of her experience during the compulsory veiling in Iran communicates feelings of confusion and misunderstanding. In the first frame of figure 4.2, Satrapi separates herself from her classmates indicating the need to identify herself when many girls and women ended up looking the same because of the strict veiling regulations. Figure 4.2 also illustrates the impact of the political values that were being projected onto the bodies of girls and women.

In addition to her personal account and experience of veiling in 1980's, Satrapi includes a description of society's response that supports Zahedi's account of the tensions that remained despite the change in veiling requirements,

Figure 4.3 The Complete Persepolis, "The Veil."³⁶



Throughout the remaining chapters of the book, Satrapi traces the changes in social structures that resulted from the Islamic Revolution and the Iran-Iraq war. The description she includes in the remaining sections outlines the ‘uniform’ expected to be worn by citizens in Iran. Even though the description includes mandated ‘uniforms’ for both men and women, the most significant change was felt by women who were subjected to public scrutiny and evaluation by the morality police responsible for ensuring that women were properly veiled.³⁷ It is also interesting to note that Satrapi includes the subtle nuances between individuals, who were considered fundamentalist verses modern,

Figure 4.4 The Complete Persepolis, “The Trip” (continued on page 182).³⁸





Chute argues that Satrapi's account is significant because of the visualization techniques that come naturally from graphic representation, "Satrapi's project of bearing witness, specifically of giving voice to what she sees and knows from the Tehran's political and personal landscape by *visualizing* these events and moment."³⁹ Chute notes that the images included in Satrapi's account also provide a public voice for the women of Iran.⁴⁰ I argue that in addition to Chute's analysis, the images in the novel illuminate how narratives linked to outward appearances of the female body are used as a tool for representation. In conjunction with these images, the text highlights the political themes that are linked to women's bodies,

These images are useful to a discussion about narratives of the veil and veiling practices because these narratives are based on visual representation. The ability to look at the images while contemplating the narrative adds a contextual layer to the discussion and echoes Chute's description of graphic novels as 'visual-verbal'.⁴¹

It also allows for an individual's visual expression of their experience to be included in discussions about women's lives and experiences. The inclusion of 'visual-verbal' elements in the discussion of political narratives is significant because compulsory

veiling used the female body while at the same time muting the voices of women. Zahedi correctly argues that the function of these politicized narratives of veiling has had a larger impact on women's identities as a whole, "compulsory unveiling and reveiling and revealing and concealing of female hair have deprived Iranian women of choice about their identity, self-presentation, and place in society."⁴² Additionally Zahedi argues that the conflict over female bodies and identities will continue to be contested in the Iranian political system. The work of Zahedi and Satrapi demonstrate features of value *X1* and demonstrate the overlap between social and cultural components (figure 4.1) linked to the veil. This relationship and use of Satrapi's perspective allows for the dynamic elements of the political narrative to be illustrated. Through the images depicted in figure 4.2, the reader is able to see the blend of social and cultural values linked to veiling practices. This is vital for a discussion of the social structures and roles and the interplay between these structures and Muslim female bodies. Instead of simply describing the links between social values, in this case political mandates and cultural themes, the images included in figures 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4 highlight Satrapi's personal experiences.

France

The development of political narratives about the veil and veiling practices has been occurring recently in Europe. For example, over the past few years the issue of veiling has been highly publicized in Europe. In September 2010, the French Senate voted 246 to 1 in favour of a bill that would make it illegal for women to wear the *niqab* and *burka*, both incorporating the veiling of the face, in public.⁴³ The bill also outlines a 150 Euro fine for women who break the law and a 30,000 Euro fine in conjunction with a one year jail term for men who force women to wear either the *niqab* or *burka*. The law

went into effect on April 11th 2011 following a six month period which allowed for French citizens to be informed of the ban.⁴⁴ In response to domestic and international criticism over the new law, the French government has released the following statement,

Given the damage it [*niqab*] produces on those rules which allow the life in community to ensure the dignity of the person and equality between the sexes, this practice, even if it is voluntary, cannot be tolerated in any public place.⁴⁵

In an effort to have the law overturned, opponents appealed to the French Constitutional Council. The scope of the French Constitutional Council is limited and can only assess if the proposed law violates constitutional rights of French citizens. Although the basis for this appeal was centred on the debate over religious freedom, the following was the stance and ultimately the decision of the Constitutional Council,

The French Constitutional Council said that the Law did not impose disproportionate punishments or prevent the free exercise of religion in a place of worship, finding therefore that the law conforms to the Constitution.⁴⁶

The current law bans the *niqab* and *burka*. It does not include the *Hijab*, which covers the hair and neck of women.

Although there has been much discussion and debate over France's steps to develop and enact a bill that bans women from wearing the *niqab* and *burka*, other countries in Europe have followed this example. Currently Belgium, Norway, and Germany have legislation in place that limits women wearing forms of the *Hijab*, *niqab* and *burka*.⁴⁷ Several other European countries have either drafted or are in the process of creating legislation that addresses the issue of the veil and veiling practices. It is of note that in addition to countries that have legislation either in progress or in place, limiting

and/or banning forms of veiling, there are countries that have legislation in place that enforces veiling practices similar to the example of Iran discussed in this chapter.⁴⁸

Canada

Three years after 11 year-old Asmahan Manasour was told that she could not wear a 'sports' *Hijab* to participate in a soccer game in Laval Quebec, Bill 94, the first legislation in North America to place "a defacto ban on any religious face coverings," was introduced to the Quebec Legislative Assembly.⁴⁹ A recent article in Maclean's magazine, noted that the debate over Bill 94, and its anticipated impact, have resulted in a surprising turn of events,

Quebecers have risen in support of the bill, and in a rare show of national unity rivalling even that seen during the recent Olympics, the rest of the country is largely behind them, according to a recent Angus Reid poll, which found that 95 per cent of Quebecers, and three out of four non-Quebecers approved bill 94.⁵⁰

The legislation initiated by Jean Charest was based on consideration of the secular nature of Canadian society in Quebec. Bill 94 was introduced in the Quebec Legislative Assembly on March 24, 2010. Justice Minister Kathleen Weil labelled the bill a "common sense piece of legislation"⁵¹ and supports the "right to equality between women and men and the principle of religious neutrality of the state."⁵² If the bill becomes law, all Muslim women who wear the *niqab* or *burka* would be required to "show their face during the delivery of [government] services, denying them accommodation if reasons of security, communication, or identification warrant it...it requires women (faces uncovered) to be the same as men (bare-faced)."⁵³ Debate over Bill 94 has included discussions about tolerance, multiculturalism, and 'reasonable accommodation'. Even though the rationale offered by Premier Charest and representatives of the Quebec Legislative Assembly who support the bill is linked to concern over public security and

equality, opponents argue that the bill violates the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and is a demonstration of xenophobia. As a result, in Quebec, the notion of ‘reasonable accommodation’ has been discussed and debated. Recently, the town council of Hérouville, Quebec enacted a “code of conduct for immigrants, which along with the banning of practices of stoning, burning or circumcising women, also forbade religious face coverings in public.”⁵⁴ Two Quebec intellectuals, Gerald Bouchard and Charles Taylor, argue that debate over reasonable accommodation and religious adjustments, “have spawned fears about the most valuable heritage of the Quiet Revolution, in particular gender equality and secularism.”⁵⁵ These discussions highlight narratives that are connected to both social and cultural categories, thus highlighting the value of *X1* identified in figure 4.1. The social values included in these discussions and debates are based on a concern over gender equality. The cultural values are linked to debates that evaluate secularism and Canadian culture. For the purpose of this examination of social perspectives, the cultural themes will be addressed in detail later in this chapter.

Opponents of Bill 94 have argued that this legislation is fundamentally problematic with respect to freedom of religion and sex equality. Since both of these considerations are connected to public political themes, the evaluation of these links will be discussed in the context of political systems. In response to Bill 94, Quebec’s Anglican Diocese of Montreal and Orthodox Jewish Community issued public statements opposing the ban, “the group worried that the ‘hard and fast rules’ adopted by the government would exacerbate social tensions and alienate religious minorities.”⁵⁶ Adding further complexity to a discussion about religious freedom is the disagreement among members of the Muslim community. Farzana Hassan, a scholar and former

president of the Muslim Canada Congress argues that “the Qur’ān does not demand adherence to these garments, and that even though some women say they ‘choose’ to wear them, both represent a form of intolerable subjugation.”⁵⁷ Arjumand, a doctoral student, bases her stance on a different argument, one rooted in personal religious piety, “I wear the *niqab* because the Prophet Mohammed’s wives covered their faces, and they are my role models.”⁵⁸ Journalist Maggie Gilmour notes that given the multiplicity among Muslim perspectives, it is difficult to delve into a discussion about religious freedom, but ultimately,

Banning the *niqab* would undoubtedly be considered by many to be an outrage against religious freedom and freedom of expression, not to mention the potential of such a move for further stigmatizing Muslims in Western culture.⁵⁹

Among the themes identified by the proponents and opponents of Bill 94, the main theme linked to political narratives is sex equality. Beverly Baines, a Professor of Law and Head of the Gender Studies Department at Queen’s University, explores the notion of sex equality with respect to Bill 94. The claim made by Minister Weil that this bill would support equality between men and women, is based on the argument that women who wear the *niqab* or *burka* are limited by men. Baines argues that the claim that Bill 94 is enforcing sex equality is flawed because,

if the objective is sex equality, would it not be more minimally impairing to respect a woman’s choice by providing an alternative to removing the *niqab* as for an example by having another woman privately verify whether there are any serious identification or security concerns.⁶⁰

Furthermore, Bains finds fault with the apparent tension between sex equality and religious freedom. She argues that the development of ‘intersectional feminists’, (for

example, women who do not want to choose between their rights to religious freedom and sex equality) requires that it is,

no longer (if it ever was) appropriate to construe sex equality as a perpetual trump card. Put differently, in the early 1980's most women were willing to choose sex equality over multiculturalism; today however, all women should respect the fact that some women choose both multiculturalism and sex equality.⁶¹

To address this tension, Bains proposes significant changes to Bill 94. In her analysis, Bains identifies the plurality of features that are part of this political narrative while at the same time commenting on the evaluation of sex equality enforced through legislation.

Regardless of the perspective, either sex equality or freedom of religion, the main thrust of this discussion is the consideration of the political narrative about the veil and veiling practices in a Canadian context. This discussion, although different from the examples presented earlier in this chapter, highlights a common thread that can be found through all of the instances. The features of the political narratives and ultimately the theme of social systems are an evaluation and definition of the veil and veiling practices without consideration of the individual and embodied experiences. This was demonstrated in the example of Iran and the politicized unveiling and reveiling. It was further illustrated through the lens of Marjane Satrapi and her comment in figure 4.2, “we didn't really like to wear the veil, especially since we didn't understand why we had to.”⁶² It was also reinforced in the discussions in France and the ban on the *niqab* and *burka*. In this example, emphasis was placed on the potential damage to the ‘French Community’ and the need to monitor the ‘dignity of the individual’. This was echoed by Bain’s critique of Bill 94 and a discussion of the problems that occur when rights, such as sex equality and freedom of religion, are placed in a hierarchical order. Jennifer Heath

notes that the veil and the individual are inextricably bound together and should have conceptual features considered rather than limiting them to threads and patterns,

As much as the veil is fabric or an article of clothing, it is also a concept. It can be illusion, vanity, artifice, deception, liberation, imprisonment, euphemism, divination, concealment, hallucination, depression, eloquent silence, holiness, the ethers beyond consciousness, the hidden hundredth name of God, the final passage into death, even the biblical apocalypse, the lifting of God's veil, signalling the so-called end of times.⁶³

The main issue highlighted in all of the examples is the use of the body as the representation of political symbolism. Stemming from this, the inability for women to exercise control over their own bodies is a main concern. It essentially avoids a consideration of the individual's autonomy and ability to enact personal choice. The social narrative discussed provides yet another reason to consider the female body as requiring regulation and structure in the public setting. The concern is with the underlying assumptions that support the claim that social structures, such as political systems, must bear the weight of managing the female body. Further implications of these assumptions on veiled Muslim women's participation in sport will be explored in the second half of this chapter.

Cultural Narratives

It is useful to combine a discussion about cultural narratives of the veil and veiling practices with an understanding of the cultural subsystem as defined by Earle Zeigler. Earlier in this chapter, I referred to the four subsystems identified by Zeigler. According to Zeigler, the cultural system is defined as a structural framework to which the social system is connected, "the structure of this type of system is typically geared to the functional problems of that level which arise."⁶⁴ Zeigler also notes that there are

certain 'value patterns' that exist in this system. These are closely linked to the social system in "upward and downward hierarchy of influence and control."⁶⁵ Similar to the description of the social subsystem, there are features that guide and control the value patterns as well as levels that serve to enforce certain values and norms.⁶⁶ Features that differentiate the two areas are the structures that are part of both systems. In the examples discussed with respect to the political narratives, the structures included were largely social and involved structural systems such as legislation and political decisions. With respect to the cultural narratives discussed in this section, the individual has more influence in the development of the values and norms. To illustrate the cultural narratives developed with respect to the veil and veiling practices, I am including a discussion of examples of multiculturalism and fashion in this section.

Multiculturalism

Illustrations of cultural narratives of the veil can be found in an extension of the debate of Bill 94. These discussions, linked to the theme of multiculturalism, shift the focus from secularism and politics to one of Canadian versus individual identity. It is at this point that the discussion takes a turn towards a tension between multiculturalism and 'being Canadian'. After the Quebec Legislative Assembly passed Bill 94, Ontario responded by instituting an accommodationist approach towards the *niqab* and has allowed for identification photos to be taken by female staff and by extending hours at clinics to allow for medical care "under acceptable conditions."⁶⁷ The different approaches taken by Provinces located geographically side by side illustrate what Stephen Marche calls "fault lines in our culture."⁶⁸ Marche argues that this plurality presents severe problems, "Canada's approach to diversity is schizophrenic; in Quebec

there's a muscular, statist secularism. For the rest of us it's Anglo Saxon toleration. Each approach presents its own problems, but not picking is worse."⁶⁹ Linking these approaches to a difference in British and French perspectives that were influential to Canada during the development of the country, Marche argues that the difference in these approaches is essentially rooted in the level of influence each government is believed to have on the individual,

French Canada believes that the state has a right to insist on a measure of shared values. It will make "reasonable accommodation" with minority rights, but assumes that the government has the right to determine what constitutes "reasonable". English Canada believes that the individual has rights which the state can never alienate. The government will move around the individual's decision.⁷⁰

It is interesting to note that multiculturalism is being used as a moniker for Canadian society while there is a clear distinction between French and English sections of the country. Maggie Gilmore echoes this sentiment and argues that values should be at the forefront of a discussion of whether or not to ban the *niqab*,

Canada is both inspiring and infuriating for its tendency to accommodate alternate viewpoints. We are so afraid of upsetting our multicultural mosaic, that we say nothing in the face of cultural practices that are odds with our values.⁷¹

Defining value systems that adequately construct a system of multiculturalism is not the main focus of this chapter; however, it does illustrate the need for analysis and the tensions that currently exist with respect to an understanding of veiling practices in Canada. It also demonstrates the connection between cultural and religious components represented by value χ_3 in figure 4.1. If multiculturalism is expected to be a main feature of the fabric of Canadian cultural systems, a value that plays a prominent role in the formation of social systems, specifically political, then it is necessary that individuals be

able to discuss and become involved in the evaluation. Marche argues that this approach is useful in centralizing the values that are to be included,

we tend to think of multiculturalism as a simple concept, less a political idea than a spirit of openness, but the great examples of multicultural societies in history have all been based on centralizing ideas – whether it was the Caliphate of Islam’s Golden Age or the Civitas of ancient Rome.⁷²

The main thrust of a discussion of multiculturalism and its connection to the development of cultural narratives, is the relationship between the cultural values and outward appearance of the individual. It is because of this embodied connection that the exploration of this narrative is important with respect to Muslim women’s participation in sport. In both respects, the physical body is considered to be a demonstration of identity and discussions of the impact to the Muslim female body require attention. Specifically, the underlying assumptions that inform understandings of the veil and veiling practices must be examined.

Another example of a cultural narrative that informs understandings of the veil and veiling practices, and reinforces connection to the physical body, is a discussion of fashion. Touching on both the second and third categories of narratives, culture and religion, a discussion of veiling practices in the media has been linked to a question of “religious piety or vanity?”⁷³ Robin Givhan argues that through a comparison between the ban in France on the *niqab* and *burka* and the infamous Paris Fashion Week representation via fabric, a common theme is evident, “if there is one thing that these two disparate events have in common, it is that they both serve as proof that the French understand in a profound way, the power of clothes.”⁷⁴ Given argues that the use of bodies to highlight or show-off garments on the runway helps in illustrating the use of clothing in the definition of individuals and cultural groups.⁷⁵ Jean-François Copé, a

French lawmaker, has argued that the ability to use clothing as a tool for self-expression is at the heart of the French ban on the *niqab* and *burka*, “the burka – the shroud of anonymity that hides the face of beauty and wholly obliterated any hint of the aesthetic self-expression – chips away at the image that France has so carefully etched for the world to see.”⁷⁶ Given notes Copé’s argument that, in addition to serving as a tool for individual self-expression, as a community or cultural group, clothing plays a significant role in the depiction of French culture in the public sphere.⁷⁷ Furthermore, because of this relationship, the claim that one is then obligated to support this form of “cultural identity” naturally follows,

clothes just don’t tell us something about who we are as individuals, but also how we all fit together. Our individual attire doesn’t exist in a vacuum but is part of an ever-changing, real-life costume drama.⁷⁸

What is not clear is how to navigate between tensions that may exist when an individual is connected to different cultures. More importantly, the paradox or main tension lies in the assumption that hierarchical relationships exists between cultural ideals. The consideration of the influence fashion can have in the cultural narrative of the veil, and veiling practices, allows for this paradox to be illuminated. There is a dialectical relationship between the meta-narratives of fashion and the larger political narratives identified in the previous section. This highlights the value of *X1* in figure 4.1. In response to Belgium’s legislation on the *burka*, “the Vice-President of the Muslim Executive of Belgium warned, ‘today the veil, the day after...perhaps it will be miniskirts.’”⁷⁹ The connection between self-identity and cultural representation is fundamentally linked to the definition of individuals and groups of others in the public sphere. It is these relationships, and the tension between competitions, cultural narratives

and expectations, that are significant. I argue that these considerations are important with respect to a discussion of the veil and veiling practices because of the alternate perspective that can be considered in a discussion of Muslim women's public persona as created and understood by others.⁸⁰

Religious Narratives

Engaging in a discussion about religion and the evaluation of an individual's religious path is very difficult. There exists a fine line between what others can question with respect to religious practices and what lines of questioning are actually laden with presumptions and evaluations about religious beliefs and do not seek to gain an understanding of an individual's personal choices. Similarly, the issue of religious freedom, as a fundamental human right, has been raised in this chapter complementing a discussion of how much influence others, whether through political, social or cultural means, should have on an individual's religious path. In previous chapters, I have drawn attention to the need for balance and perspective when religion is being discussed. Inasmuch as religious experience is linked to individual perspectives, there is a need for discussion of religious practices. This will also prevent the adoption of relativistic attitudes.

The issue of religious narratives as it pertains to the veil and veiling practices is one example of how philosophical discussion, or evaluation of a practice argued to be theologically supported and justified, can reveal additional factors. These factors are not immediately visible because they are often under the protection of the right to freedom of religion. It is my intention to explore the religious narratives of the veil, and veiling practices, and critically discuss how additional factors such as modesty, morality and

piety are conflated with meta-narratives of freedom of religion. Rosie Dimanno highlights this somewhat difficult relationship in an article titled, “Religious Piety – or is it Vanity?” Although the title implies that veiled Muslim women do so because of either religion or vanity is inflammatory, (which I argue misrepresents this complex issue), she does highlight the difficulty of engaging in a discussion about religion and the veil,

in truth, it’s impossible to distinguish women who wear the *Hijab* as religious obligation from those who have taken it for other reasons of self-identity or because of political symbolism. There is more to the *Hijab*’s increasingly ubiquitous presence in Western societies than religious piety. But individual expression is rightly afforded to all. If this were a matter simply of sartorial choice, there would be no fuss.⁸¹

The tension that Dimanno is referring to is the blurred line between categorizing the veil in one of three ways: social, cultural or religious.

In order to explore the notion of piety, I would like to turn to Asma Barlas’s examination of religious Scripture, the Qur’án and the practice of veiling. In Chapter III, I introduced Barlas’s analysis of patriarchal interpretations of the Qur’án. One of the main claims argued by Barlas, is based on the issue of contextualization. According to Barlas, failure to contextualize results in misinformed interpretations of Qur’ánic Scripture. She argues that this claim is further supported and demonstrated through the veil. In her assessment, Barlas refers to two *āyāts* that have been utilized as Scriptural justification of the requirement of veiling. She also identifies the connection between these *āyāts* and conservatism which she argues relies heavily on these Scriptural passages to justify the requirement of veiling,

O Prophet! Tell
Thy wives and daughters,
That they should cast
Their [*jilbāb*] over
Their persons (when abroad):

That is most convenient,
 That they should be known
 (As such) and not molested...
 Truly, if the Hypocrites,
 And those in whose hearts is a disease...
 Desist not, We shall certainly
 Stir thee up against them.

And,

Say to the believing men
 That they should lower
 Their gaze and guard
 Their modesty: that will make
 For greater purity for them:

* * * *

And say to the believing women
 That they should lower
 Their gaze and guard
 Their modesty; that they
 Should not display their
 Beauty and ornaments except
 What (must ordinarily) appear
 Thereof; that they should
 Draw their [*khumūr*] over
 Their bosoms and not display
 Their beauty except to...⁸²

Barlas argues that underpinning the refusal to contextualize these passages is the claim that one can generalize the particular. The belief that the Qur'ān is universalizable leads to the understanding that religious Scripture is, “relevant to all times and places, not just the time or place of revelation.”⁸³ Barlas argues that it is the generalization of the particular combination with these *āyāts* that results in patriarchal interpretations of the veil. As a general concept, Barlas does not find fault with the veil, rather she argues that it is the enforcement of the veil, the *Hijab* to the *burka* that links women's bodies to images of sexual corruption.

In Chapter III, I highlighted Barlas' claim that interpretations of Qur'anic Scripture, although commonly applied to the governance of women, actually should consider men and women to be at an equal level. With respect to the *āyāts* that are linked to the veil, Barlas repeats this claim. Furthermore, Barlas argues that the *āyāts* are addressed to the Prophet and not meant to be made into universal requirements.⁸⁴

Through an exploration of historical influences, Barlas argues that veiling was not born from religious reverence but had a patriarchal and social foundation,

In mandating the *jilbāb* [cloak], then, the Qur'an explicitly connects it to a slave-owning society in which sexual abuse by *non-Muslim* men was normative, and its purpose was to distinguish free, believing women from slaves, who were presumed by *Jāhili* men to be nonbelievers and thus fair game. *Only a slave-owing Jāhili society*, then, does the *jilbāb* signify sexual non-availability, and only then if *Jāhili* men were to invest in such a meaning.⁸⁵

Barlas identifies this explanation as one of the central misinterpretations linked to the *āyāts*. She argues that from this illustration, it becomes illogical to link veiling with the corrupting features of the female form. This point is central to the conservative exegesis and enforcement of veiling practices.⁸⁶ Ultimately, according to Barlas, the treatment of the female body as sexually corrupt violates Qur'anic ethics,

indeed it is remarkable that women should have to fend off sexual abuse in a society that claims to be Islamic, given the rule of the Islam, by ordinary sexual modesty for women and men, *runs counter* to the rule of veil, brought on by *Jāhili* male promiscuity.⁸⁷

The connection between the veil and regulation of the female form in public settings results in support for the ideology that reinforces female immorality and inferiority. This narrative further illustrates the definition of the veil in both a social and religious context which is identified by value χ_2 in figure 4.1.

In the final assessment of the *āyāts* offered by Barlas, she argues that moral praxis cannot be forced upon an individual. This claim is linked to notions of piety. Barlas argues that according to the Qur'ān, it is not the responsibility of members in society, a position commonly occupied by men, to pass judgement on individuals and their moral praxis, “not only can one not force moral praxis upon a person – as the Qur'ān (2:256) says, ‘Let there be no compulsion in religion’ – but no one, not even the Prophet, was given the right to force compliance upon his wives with any of the Qur'ān’s injunctions.”⁸⁸ In fact, according to Karen Armstrong author of Muhammad: a Biography of the Prophet, the veil was born from attempts to discredit Muhammad through the behaviour of his wives. This further supports Barlas’s claim,

Some Muslims liked to approach him [Muhammad] through his wives, in the hope of getting his ear. Aisha, for example was known to have several friendly chats with a particular young man, which people remembered later when a scandal broke out that threatened to split the *umma* down the middle. The *Hijab* or curtain was not intended to be an oppressive measure. It was designed to prevent a scandalous situation developing which Muhammad’s enemies could use to discredit him.⁸⁹

To address notions of piety, which have become infused with the veil, acknowledging the influence of conservative readings of the *āyāts*, as identified by Barlas, is important. Barlas argues that, without contextualizing the Qur'ān, an attempt to understand the historical contexts of the Prophet’s community, certain readings are canonized as religious “law” and precedence, “Such a view of divine discourse and its relationship to time engenders specific textual reading practices...They expect Muslim tradition to enable and ensure this process of replication by adhering to and protecting the canon and by avoiding innovation.”⁹⁰ The lack of contextualizing described by Barlas reinforces the link between women’s immorality and inferiority and the female physical body.

Extending from this, Barlas argues that defining women's morality by such measures serves to legitimize harm to women,

how can Muslim men, if they are living by the Qur'án's injunctions, feel free to kill or assault women; and how can we reconcile religious vigilantism with the irreducible voluntary nature of faith and moral responsibility in Islam?⁹¹

Discussed in Chapter III, the link between the female body and lack of morality legitimizes the understanding that because women suffer this fate, the ultimate guardianship of the female body must be awarded to her male counterpart.

The philosophical exploration of piety with respect to the veil is further illuminated by the philosophical insight of Socrates. In the Euthyphro, Socrates explores the possible definitions of piety in order to further understand the relationship between human actions and divine doctrine. Although a concrete definition of piety was not offered, the philosophical inquiry initiated in the Euthyphro provides a starting point for the examination of religious doctrine and human actions. The dialogue between Euthyphro and Socrates considers whether an individual can solely appeal to religious doctrine in order to gain an understanding of piety. Through an exploration of possible definitions of piety, Euthyphro and Socrates highlight the tension between the sole acceptance and reliance on Divine Command and personal philosophical exploration of religious discourse. Asma Barlas highlighted this tension in her evaluation of Qur'anic Scripture. In her assessment, she played the role of Socrates, while conservative readers of the Qur'án dutifully embody the character of Euthyphro. Further exploration of religious narratives of the veil and veiling practices support Socrates' claim that interrogation between knowledge and religion can be demonstrated through personal accounts of Mona Eltahawy and Marjane Satrapi. Both women are authors who explore their own

experiences with the veil in public forms. Mona Eltahawy, an award winning columnist and public speaker on Arab and Muslim issues, was born in Port Said, Egypt. In an article entitled “Allow me to Confuse you,” Eltahawy argues that the notion of piety is incorrectly applied to the veil, “those who really care about women’s rights should talk about the dangers in equating piety with the disappearance of women.”⁹² At a recent Technology Entertainment Design (TED) women conference, Eltahawy notes the following, “the conversation on Muslim women usually revolves around our head scarves and our hymens – what is on our heads (or not), what is between our legs, and the price we pay for it.”⁹³ Given the focus on the female body, her personal exploration of how religion influenced her understanding began with her decision to wear a head scarf, “I chose to wear a head scarf and become a feminist (the two weren’t mutually exclusive).”⁹⁴ Throughout her youth and into adulthood, Eltahawy explored what wearing a head scarf and being a feminist meant to her in the context of religion and piety. Through this exploration, a shift occurred, “my headscarf-and-hymen moment came when I took off my head scarf - it no longer represented the Muslim woman I was becoming.”⁹⁵ Eltahawy’s personal journey occurred in locations that accepted both veiled and unveiled women in public spaces. Partially supported by the ability to oscillate between veiled and unveiled, often conceived of as two opposite ideological poles, Eltahawy’s experience demonstrates an individual’s personal quest to explore and unpack her identity as a Muslim woman.

A second example illustrating a personal quest for understanding of the veil can be found in the later chapters of The Complete Persepolis. The personal journey of Satrapi and introduction to the veil was introduced at the beginning of this chapter. The

later sections of her graphic novel, expanding on the discussion of political narrative of the veil, illustrated her experience with mandatory veiling. In the final chapter of The Complete Persepolis, her journey explores her early adulthood. In 1989, Satrapi elected to attend the College of Art, specifically the graphic arts program. In order to become a student, she was required to pass both academic and ideological examinations. Given the political climate of Iran during this time, the ideological examination involved testing Marjane on her ideological beliefs, specifically her religious practices,

Figure 4.5. Persepolis, “The Exam.”⁹⁶



Her decision to answer honestly when pressed about her ideological beliefs illustrates the tension she feels between religious, social, political reasons and her personal religious beliefs. Satrapi continued to struggle with this tension throughout her time at the College of Art. In the last section of the novel, she describes a situation in an art class where the female students are asked to draw from a female model. The professor notes that although the class is based on drawing human anatomy, and in the past the class was able to refer to nude bodies, due to the political climate, the female model must now be covered.⁹⁷ Satrapi describes this experience as a failed lesson, “We tried, we looked from every direction, from every angle, but not a single part of her body was visible. We nevertheless learned to draw drapes.”⁹⁸ It is interesting to note that, even though the female students were separated from males, it was still forbidden to sketch the female form. The tension between public and private female personas was difficult for Marjane and the only way she could safely avoid public persecution was to create two different personas. The only way that Marjane could cope with her religious understanding and beliefs was to abide by what was publically required. Then she explored ideological questions in private settings,

Next page: Figure 4.6 Persepolis, “The Socks” (continued on page 203).⁹⁹



These examples illustrate Barlas' call for individuals to act reflexively and engage in the practice of contextualization. These examples also highlight the tension that occurs when religious narratives are reinforced publically and translated into embodied expectations.

Summary

In the sections above, elements and themes of narratives that are linked to understandings of the veil and veiling practices were outlined. I argue that through an examination of these narratives, the multilayered perspectives and assumptions of the veil are explored. I also argue that, through this examination, we can gain a deeper understanding of how social, cultural and religious narratives can contribute to, and be infused into, public areas such as sport. In Chapter III I introduced the example of Asmahan Mansour, an 11 year-old banned from the soccer pitch because she refused to remove her 'sports' *Hijab*. This example is significant in the discussion of how social, cultural and religious narratives play a role in formulating rule structures that ultimately influence participation in sport.

In Chapter III, I also introduced Klaus Meier's discussion of rule structures in sport. I argued that Asmahan Mansour and examples describing other athletes, who were not allowed to participate in taekwondo, could be linked to 'auxiliary' rule structures that are in essence arbitrary and discriminating. The categorization of these rules as auxiliary shifts the discussion of these rules from ones that define the essence of sport to the social structures of sport that are linked to the broader 'ethos' of the sport context. This categorization allows for the discussion to include social and cultural influences in the evaluation of how and perhaps some insight into why, these rules are created and socially accepted. In the evaluation of Asmahan Mansour in the Canadian media, Safia Lakhmi

begins an exploration of how narratives, especially ones linked to a rise in tensions with respect to veiling, can be used in an evaluation of Muslim women and their public persona in North America. Although Lakhani argues that a binary representation of veiled women as fulfilling images of both, “victim and threat” can provide an explanation of the status of Muslim women in Western contexts (which I argue represents one piece of this complex puzzle), she is correct in identifying the connection between narratives and perceptions of veiled Muslim female athletes.¹⁰⁰ This connection allows for the exploration of how veiled female athletes are positioned as ‘other’. Lakhani illustrates this point and notes, “the body of the veiled female subject is often construed as an embodiment of difference in which the veil plays the role of an important *signifier of difference*.”¹⁰¹ Given the embodied natures of sport and physical activity, a physical representation of perceived ‘difference’ or ‘otherness’ can have significant impact and influence or understanding.

The struggle over embodied representations in a sport context is not a new phenomenon. A struggle between representations and images of the athletic and female body has been discussed in several different academic areas. Although the analysis of embodied representations of the ideal athletic body is not the focus of this chapter, it does highlight the tension between that which is considered to be an ideal athletic body and bodies that do not meet this expectation. Lakhani argues that this tension played a significant role in the case of Asmahan,

beyond its racial implications, Mansour’s ejection from the match is a sexualized exclusion. By trivializing Mansour’s status as an athlete, the referee effectively perpetuates male hegemony in the arena of sport, soccer in particular, which is typically conceived as a male sport. The referee’s

intervention follows from a history of male dominance and female invisibility in sport.¹⁰²

Asmahan Mansour's body on the playing field is both a physical and ideological representation of the tensions involved in the expectations of an ideal athlete.

Moving beyond the consideration of male and female bodies in sport and returning to the issue of embodied representation, I argue that the case of Asmahan Mansour touches upon all three elements within social, cultural and religious narratives discussed in previous sections and therefore represent the fourth value, *X4*, in figure 4.1. With respect to the social narrative and the politicization of the veil this incident, along with the examples of taekwondo, took place in Quebec. Even though this incident took place prior to the introduction of Bill 94, Lakhani notes that the French media reports of the case highlighted concerns of threats to Quebec's secular identity.¹⁰³ Additionally, Lakhani argues that media reports in a broader sense commented on threats to existing national narratives, which hold secular above sacred values. Conflicting with the privileging of secular values is the cultural narrative of multiculturalism. An interesting turn of 'Canadian multiculturalism' can also be found in the evaluation of the Mansour case. Exploration of a different response to multiculturalism is addressed by Lakhani. Touching on themes of both 'victim' and 'threat', the *Hijab* as a signifier of difference is defined in seemingly opposite manners; however, both contribute to the argument that veils do not belong in Canadian sport contexts. Lakhani argues that the perception that veiled women suffer from forms of physical oppression contributes to the meta-narrative of 'victim',

by collapsing the *Hijab* and its wearers and neglecting to mention Mansour's refusal to remove the headscarf, the headline implies that it was the veil, and not Mansour, that ultimately determined the outcome of events, thus endorsing the Orientalist myth of the veiled woman as a passive victim.¹⁰⁴

Contrasting with the image of 'passive victim' is the definition of the veil as a threat.

This definition, according to Lakhami, has both a broad and narrow definition. In a broad sense, the veil is posited as a threat to national unity. In a sport context, the link between international sport and national representation is a key connection. The use of uniforms based on colour patterns that 'belong' to different countries is highlighted.

Lakhami argues that there is a connection between national identity and sport that further reinforces the notion of citizenship, "by this logic, Asmahan's inability to compete in the nationwide sporting event rendered her 'invisible' in the context of the tournament and, symbolically the public space of the nation."¹⁰⁵ Lakhami argues that this view of the threat is also supported by Post 9 – 11 xenophobia and fears of fundamentalist Islam.¹⁰⁶

In a narrow sense, the veil is construed as a weapon. Lakhami notes that Michel Dugas, the communications co-ordinator of the Quebec Soccer Federation, argued that the veil itself was a physical threat to both Mandour and other soccer players.¹⁰⁷ Lakhami's assessment of the media representations of the case of Asmahan Mansour highlights the impact of narratives of the veil in sporting arenas. It also illustrates the interwoven web of relationships between social, cultural, and religious narratives of the veil, and how these lead to the production of meta-narratives and public understandings of veiled athletes. It also provides a strong case for the consideration of the impact of these presumptions. Returning to the consideration of embodied representations, I argue that the evaluation of narratives discussed in this chapter must be unpacked. The understanding that the constructions of these representations in all respects, social,

cultural, religious and in sport, have occurred without the individual's impact or support. They are external to the identity of the individual and are, in a sense, mapped or transcribed onto the veiled Muslim female athlete. This is problematic and I argue that discussion of these narratives and meta-narratives illuminate important paradoxes and tensions. In this chapter these conflicts were uncovered and further illuminated through the case of Asmahan Mansour. Although I included examples of individuals who have, through their work as a journalist, graphic novelist and scholar, commented on their individual experiences with the veil, I argue that, in order to continue with an evaluation of veiled athletes, personal accounts and experiences with sport and physical activity need to be included. This area will be discussed in the chapter examining the 'Ishraq: Safe Places to Learn, Play and Grow' program in Chapter V.

Endnotes

¹ Jennifer Hargreaves, *Heroines of Sport: The politics of difference and identity* (London: Routledge, 2000), 2.

² Hargreaves: 2000, 2.

³ See the discussion of the case examples in Chapter III.

⁴ Natalie V.K. Szudy, "Towards an Understanding of the Scientific, Cultural and Religious Influences on the Embodiment of Female Athletes" (Master's Thesis, The University of Western Ontario, 2007), 30.

⁵ Jennifer Heath, ed., *The Veil: Women writers on its history, lore and politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 5.

⁶ Trudy Govier, *A Practical Study of Argument*, 7th ed. (United States: Wadsworth, 2010), 187.

⁷ Govier: 2010, 212.

⁸ Heath: 2008, 2.

⁹ The discussion of social, cultural and religious narratives included in this chapter focus on examples that demonstrate the interconnected relationship between social, cultural and religious perspectives. Additional evaluations focusing on narratives that would be defined as solely social, cultural and religious may add additional perspectives to the discussion of narratives linked to the veil.

¹⁰ Heath: 2008, 40-41.

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- ¹¹ Earle Zeigler, *Socio-Cultural Foundations of Physical Education and Educational Sport* (Oxford: Meyer & Meyer Sport UK, 2003), 149.
- ¹² Zeigler: 2003, 149.
- ¹³ Zeigler: 2003, 149.
- ¹⁴ Zeigler: 2003, 149.
- ¹⁵ Zeigler: 2003, 149.
- ¹⁶ Zeigler: 2003, 150.
- ¹⁷ Zeigler: 2003, 150.
- ¹⁸ Zeigler: 2003, 151.
- ¹⁹ Zeigler: 2003, 152.
- ²⁰ Ashraf Zahedi, *The Veil: Women writers on its history, lore and politics*, ed. Jennifer Heath (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 250.
- ²¹ Zahedi: 2008, 252.
- ²² Zahedi: 2008, 254.
- ²³ Zahedi: 2008, 254.
- ²⁴ Zahedi: 2008, 259.
- ²⁵ Zahedi: 2008, 256.
- ²⁶ Zahedi: 2008, 257.
- ²⁷ Zahedi: 2008, 258.
- ²⁸ Zahedi: 2008, 259.
- ²⁹ Zahedi: 2008, 259.
- ³⁰ Hillary L. Chute, *Graphic Women: Life Narrative and Contemporary Comics* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2010), 135.
- ³¹ Chute: 2010, 137.
- ³² Chute: 2010, 136.
- ³³ Chute: 2010, 140-141.
- ³⁴ Marjane Satrapi, *The Complete Persepolis*, (United States: Pantheon Books, 2004), 3-4.
- ³⁵ Chute: 2010, 141.
- ³⁶ Satrapi: 2004, 5.
- ³⁷ Zahedi: 2008, 263.

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- ³⁸ Satrapi: 2004, 75.
- ³⁹ Chute: 2010, 165.
- ⁴⁰ Chute: 2010, 165.
- ⁴¹ Chute: 2010, 166.
- ⁴² Zahedi: 2008, 263.
- ⁴³ CNN Wire, Belief Blog, “France burqa ban in effect next month,” <http://www.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/europe/03/04/france.burqa.ban/index.html> (accessed March 4, 2011)
- ⁴⁴ The law is expected to affect a relative tiny number of women. Reported estimates range from 350 to a maximum 2,000 full-veil wearers out of France's population of roughly 64 million. CNN Wire, Belief Blog, “France burqa ban in effect next month,” <http://www.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/europe/03/04/france.burqa.ban/index.html> (accessed March 4, 2011)
- ⁴⁵ CNN Wire, Belief Blog, “France burqa ban in effect next month,” <http://www.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/europe/03/04/france.burqa.ban/index.html> (accessed March 4, 2011)
- ⁴⁶ CNN Wire, Belief Blog, “France burqa ban in effect next month,” <http://www.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/europe/03/04/france.burqa.ban/index.html> (accessed March 4, 2011)
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- ⁴⁹ Martin Patriquin and Charlie Gillis, “About Face A bill banning the niqab—supported by a majority of Canadians: how did our multicultural, tolerant nation get here?” *Macleans Canada*, April 7, 2010, 1.
- ⁵⁰ Patriquin and Gillis: 2010, 2.
- ⁵¹ Maggie Gilmour, “What should Canada do?” *Toronto Star*, December 18, 2010.
- ⁵² Beverly Baines, “Bill 94: Quebec’s Niqab Ban and Sex Equality” Women’s Court of Canada Blog, May 2010 <http://womenscourt.ca/2010/05/bill-94-quebec%E2%80%99s-niqab-ban-and-sex-equality/> (accessed December 8, 2010), 1.
- ⁵³ Beverly Baines, “Bill 94: Quebec’s Niqab Ban and Sex Equality” Women’s Court of Canada Blog, May 2010 <http://womenscourt.ca/2010/05/bill-94-quebec%E2%80%99s-niqab-ban-and-sex-equality/> (accessed December 8, 2010), 1.
- ⁵⁴ Martin Patriquin and Charlie Gillis, “About Face A bill banning the niqab—supported by a majority of Canadians: how did our multicultural, tolerant nation get here?” *Macleans Canada*, April 7, 2010, 3.
- ⁵⁵ Martin Patriquin and Charlie Gillis, “About Face A bill banning the niqab—supported by a majority of Canadians: how did our multicultural, tolerant nation get here?” *Macleans Canada*, April 7, 2010, 3.
- ⁵⁶ Maggie Gilmour, “What should Canada do?” *Toronto Star*, December 18, 2010.
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- ⁶⁰ Beverly Baines, "Bill 94: Quebec's Niqab Ban and Sex Equality" Women's Court of Canada Blog, May 2010 <http://womenscourt.ca/2010/05/bill-94-quebec%E2%80%99s-niqab-ban-and-sex-equality/> (accessed December 8, 2010), 3.
- ⁶¹ Beverly Baines, "Bill 94: Quebec's Niqab Ban and Sex Equality" Women's Court of Canada Blog, May 2010 <http://womenscourt.ca/2010/05/bill-94-quebec%E2%80%99s-niqab-ban-and-sex-equality/> (accessed December 8, 2010), 3.
- ⁶² Satrapi: 2004, 1.
- ⁶³ Heath: 2008, 3.
- ⁶⁴ Zeigler: 2003, 150.
- ⁶⁵ Zeigler: 2003, 150.
- ⁶⁶ Zeigler: 2003, 152.
- ⁶⁷ Stephen Marche, "Why Canada's Mosaic is Cracked," *Toronto Star*, May 1, 2010.
- ⁶⁸ Stephen Marche, "Why Canada's Mosaic is Cracked," *Toronto Star*, May 1, 2010.
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- ⁷³ Rosie Dimanno, "Religious Piety – or is it Vanity?" *Toronto Star*, April 5, 2010.
- ⁷⁴ Robin Givhan, "What Runway Fashions Expose about Burqa Ban," *Toronto Star*, October 7, 2010.
- ⁷⁵ Robin Givhan, "What Runway Fashions Expose about Burqa Ban," *Toronto Star*, October 7, 2010.
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- ⁷⁹ Robin Givhan, "What Runway Fashions Expose about Burqa Ban," *Toronto Star*, October 7, 2010.
- ⁸⁰ Jennifer Heath notes in the introduction to The Veil: Women writers on its history, lore, and politics, veiling is a complex concept and a discussion of veiling practices must include multiple perspectives. The religious narratives included in this chapter are linked to broader socio-political themes. Additional evaluations of the narratives discussed in this chapter could include personal accounts of veiling. Heath, 2008: 5.
- ⁸¹ Rosie Dimanno, "Religious Piety – or is it Vanity?" *Toronto Star*, April 5, 2010.

⁸² Asma Barlas, "Believing Women" in *Islam: unreading patriarchal interpretations of the Qur'an* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2002), 53-54.

⁸³ Barlas: 2002, 50.

⁸⁴ Barlas: 2002, 55.

⁸⁵ Barlas: 2002, 55.

⁸⁶ Barlas: 2002, 57.

⁸⁷ Barlas: 2002, 57.

⁸⁸ Barlas: 2002, 55.

⁸⁹ Karen Armstrong, *Muhammad: A biography of the prophet*, (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993), 198.

⁹⁰ Barlas: 2002, 52-53.

⁹¹ Barlas: 2002, 58.

⁹² Mona Eltahawy, "Allow me to Confuse you," *Toronto Star*, December 11, 2010.

⁹³ Mona Eltahawy, "Allow me to Confuse you," *Toronto Star*, December 11, 2010.

⁹⁴ Mona Eltahawy, "Allow me to Confuse you," *Toronto Star*, December 11, 2010.

⁹⁵ Mona Eltahawy, "Allow me to Confuse you," *Toronto Star*, December 11, 2010.

⁹⁶ Satrapi: 2004, 298.

⁹⁷ Satrapi: 2004, 299.

⁹⁸ Satrapi: 2004, 299.

⁹⁹ Satrapi: 2004, 305.

¹⁰⁰ Safia Lakhani, "Sporting the Veil: Representations of Asmahan Mansour in the Canadian Media," *Topia: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies*, 19 (Spring 2008): 86.

¹⁰¹ Lakhani: 2008, 89.

¹⁰² Lakhani: 2008, 91.

¹⁰³ Lakhani: 2008, 88.

¹⁰⁴ Lakhani: 2008, 84.

¹⁰⁵ Lakhani: 2008, 92.

¹⁰⁶ Lakhani: 2008, 90.

¹⁰⁷ Lakhani: 2008, 89.

CHAPTER V

The ‘Ishraq’ program and Civic Activism: ‘Safe Places to Learn, Play and Grow’

This dissertation entails a philosophical discussion of the influence of particular religious values on attitudes toward the body and gender, with the use of sport as the illustration and expansion of this theoretical discussion. The previous chapters established the theoretical parameters. These parameters were then used to develop a discussion centred on the evaluation of the influence religion may have on social and cultural constructs. The ensuing philosophical discussion assisted in the evaluation of the impact religion can have on public and private spaces, and ultimately, on how Muslim women’s bodies are seen and treated in public spaces. The argument presented in this work is that for some Muslim females, religious values largely inform their understandings of the physical body and movement of the body in public spaces due to the narratives linked to the veil. Examples of the definitions of the veil were discussed in Chapter IV. This chapter expands this discussion by focusing on the following connections: i) Muslim women’s bodies influenced by social, cultural and religious narratives; and ii) limitations these assumptions can lead to on Muslim women’s mobility in public spaces. This argument supports the claim that there is a large overlap between social and cultural constructs and religious values, particularly in cases where religion overlaps with secular activities such as sport. The sports field has also become the ‘battlefield’ on which the articulation between the values of the institution of religion and the values of the institution of sport are contested. Veiled Muslim females are caught up in the conflict.

Sport requires physical demonstrations from athletes. Through these physical expressions of strength, endurance, and agility the athletic body is defined. Reciprocally, the athlete is impacted by this definition. It is because of this connection that the analysis of the values that support definitions prescribed for athletes need attention and analysis. This connection underpins Joy T. DeSensi's call for research that addresses these relationships. The narratives explored in Chapter IV, along with the Scriptural interpretations included in Chapter III, presented several different perspectives that have been linked to, or used to define, veiled Muslim female athletes. Through the use of case examples, specifically of Asmahan Mansour, it is intended to engage in a discussion of how misunderstanding and assumptions, similar to those raised in Chapter III, are demonstrated by the experiences of the participants of the 'Ishraq: Safe Places to Learn, Play and Grow' program.

In Chapter I, the link between epistemological claims and the discussion of lived experiences of individuals was established. This is an important connection because the study included in this chapter provides evidence that further supports the theoretical discussions addressed in preceding chapters. Up to this point, through theoretical discussions, three different layers from which the explorations of the lived experiences have been discussed. The first layer challenged the assumption that only religion can have sacred status. The work of Charles Prebish supports the understanding that sport can hold a sacred status along with religion. The second layer challenged common understandings of the relationship between logic and the interpretation of Scripture. The use of philosophical investigations not only lends support to theoretical frameworks, but can be used to address incorrect claims that link women's immorality to interpretations of

Qur'anic Scripture, outlined in Chapter III. The third and final layer explores the narratives that are used as definitions in social, cultural, and religious contexts. The discussion of these contexts included the evaluation of cases, which provided insight into the construction and refinement of narratives that impact veiled Muslim women. These three layers support a discussion of experiences of veiled Muslim girls and young women in a sport context.

The evaluation of the 'Ishraq' program illustrates the influence of particular religious values on attitudes towards the female body, through the connections between community development, empowerment and women's mobility in public spaces. Centrally, it attempts to empower women through the use of literacy and sport in hope of eliciting change in the community. In this chapter, it is demonstrated that the 'Ishraq' program provides evidence of the difficulties that veiled Muslim females' experience. These difficulties are revealed through narratives that are built upon social, cultural and religious understandings about female physicality. Interestingly, instead of providing an example of conflict between the sacred status of sport and religion, this case example provides an illustration of the sacred status of sport and youth centres that is linked to male physicality, which, in turn, has prevented women's participation.

The 'Ishraq' initiative developed when many international donor aid organizations were focused on expanding programming that would support children living in the rural areas outside of Cairo.¹ Non-governmental organizations such as the Population Council, Save the Children, the Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) and Caritas² were largely active in developing education-based initiatives that addressed the low literacy rates that were being reported in the rural

areas.³ In addition to the identification of low literacy rates among children and adults living in the rural areas outside of Cairo, studies conducted in the late 1990's revealed that a majority of females were also not accessing health programs and were not aware of their individual citizenship rights. Additionally, the young girls that were interviewed described themselves as having low self-esteem and limited public mobility.⁴

In response to the need for programming that targeted disadvantaged girls and women living in the rural areas outside of Cairo, the Population Council, in partnership with Save the Children, CEDPA and Caritas, developed the 'Ishraq: Safe Places to Learn, Play and Grow' initiative. In Arabic, the word 'Ishraq' means 'sunshine' and was selected because of the understanding that the program was meant to enlighten the lives of the mentors and participants.⁵ The 'Ishraq' program currently utilizes physical education to encourage young girls and women living in rural areas to build upon their educational experience. The program helps to facilitate learning about health care, citizenship rights, and seeks to encourage full participation in all aspects of public life. The implementation of a sport and physical activity program as a pedagogical tool, in communities where women's public mobility is significantly limited, highlights the need for the use of community development, empowerment and the physical body in order to break down social barriers for women in these communities.

This chapter explores the impact of the implementation of the 'Ishraq' program on the embodiment and attitudes of Muslim female participants. This case study is an attempt at understanding the participant's experiences of the program and is rooted in a desire to better appreciate the use of the physical body, in conjunction with the removal of barriers that can limit individuals' movement in public spaces. The evaluation of the

‘Ishraq’ program will include detailed analysis of program materials, including program status reports and curriculum outlines, and interviews with program coordinators, facilitators and participants. The focus of this chapter will be the evaluation of three themes that are central to the ‘Ishraq’ program. The relationships amongst community development, empowerment and the implementation of a sport and physical activity program that seeks to challenge and change public spaces, especially for veiled Muslim females, are explored.

The selection of the ‘Ishraq’ program was based on the research I completed in 2006. In 2006, during the data collection period for an exploratory study, I was introduced to the ‘Ishraq’ program. For the purpose of the exploratory study, a brief description of the pilot phase of the ‘Ishraq’ program was included. Upon the completion of my Master’s degree, I decided to conduct a further evaluation of the ‘Ishraq’ program in order to explore the experiences of the participants in more detail.

Tracing the development and implementation of ‘Ishraq’

The ‘Ishraq’ program was first identified while conducting research for my Master’s thesis completed in 2006. At the time, the program had just completed the pilot implementation phase in five rural villages in the Al Minyā Governorate, located outside of Cairo. The ‘Ishraq’ program was conceived in the late 1990’s partly due to the identification of the needs of girls living in rural areas in Upper Egypt.ⁱ A national survey on adolescence in Egypt confirmed the concern raised by international agencies

ⁱ In addition to the establishment of governorates, Egypt is divided into Upper and Lower sections. Lower Egypt, also referred to as Northern Egypt beings includes the city of Cairo and extends to the Nile Delta in Alexandria. Upper Egypt, also referred to as Southern Egypt begins at modern Aswan and extends to the area South of Cairo.

that, “a category of adolescent girls [who are] ignored by society, face higher rates of illiteracy, early marriage, and domestic seclusion.”⁶ Each of the four non-governmental organizations (NGO) supported the development of the program through different areas of specialization aimed at challenging and changing values and attitudes at both the individual and community level,

Save the Children, CEDPA and Caritas, each working in the field, had a piece of the solution; CEDPA’s *New Horizons* curriculum had been generating enormous enthusiasm amongst rural girls, and – amazingly – had found supports amongst traditional leaders in many villages; Caritas’ *Learn to be Free* literacy curriculum had for years been inspiring the uneducated to recognize their illiteracy as a result of social injustice rather than personal failing; and Save the Children’s community mobilization had led to well-documented behaviour and value change.⁷

As a result of the collaborative efforts of the NGO’s, a pilot intervention was launched in 2001 in four rural villages of the Al Minyā Governorate in Upper Egypt.⁸ The main thrust of this pilot program was the establishment of “girl-friendly spaces”ⁱⁱ in communities for girls to meet, learn, and play.”⁹ This program was referred to in the villages simply as ‘Ishraq’, or ‘enlightenment’ or ‘sunshine’.¹⁰ It operated at a community and individual level and had little involvement with national-level ministry officials.¹¹

In 1999, during the formulation of the ‘Ishraq’ program, focus groups with girls living in the target rural areas were conducted. These focus groups revealed three main issues: i) the need for training on income-generating activities; ii) the need for education and information on health services; and iii) the need for more freedom to move freely

ⁱⁱ In order to create these “girl-friendly spaces” a major component of the program included integrating a community level approach and developing relationships between program coordinators, facilitators, parents, siblings, religious leaders and participants.

outside the home.¹² Based on research conducted by the Population Council, the focus groups, and information obtained through literacy initiatives offered by CEDPA, the identification of a correlation between literacy opportunities, building social relationships and establishing trust was built into the fundamental goals of the ‘Ishraq’ program,

In conceptualizing Ishraq, the partners postulated that a comprehensive program would be better able to meet the broad needs of girls than one that was narrowly focused. Ishraq simultaneously addressed cognitive development through language, numeracy, and problem solving; physical expression through games and sport; livelihoods through exposure to working women and skill training; and life skills through discussion about interpersonal relations, gender and other social norms, and health beliefs and behaviour.¹³

The ‘Ishraq’ program continued to expand and was implemented in the Beni Suef governorate. Currently over 600 girls from 12 communities in both governorates have completed the ‘Ishraq’ program.¹⁴ In a recent report, representatives from Save the Children have confirmed that nearly 400 girls have re-enrolled in education programs.¹⁵ Coinciding with this assessment, an evaluation of the ‘Ishraq’ program revealed that, “65% [of girls who participated regularly in the Ishraq program] said that they often feel ‘strong and able to face any problem’ as well as 49 percent of Ishraq participants belong to a local club or association.”¹⁶ At this juncture, although there has been a separation of the NGO’s, both Save the Children and the Population Council continue to support the ‘Ishraq’ program. The Population Council is responsible for the operation of the program in Al Minyā governorate and Save the Children operates the program in Beni Suef governorate. Separately, these NGO’s have also been pursuing funding opportunities in order to further expand this program in rural areas located further south in Upper Egypt.

The development of relationships among the members of the community, in conjunction with the development of spaces where girls could come together to engage in sport and physical activity, was an example of opportunities for Muslim females to participate in sport while being able to maintain religious observances.¹⁷

Program Features

The success of the ‘Ishraq’ pilot program resulted in attention from government agencies, donor organizations and more importantly the separation of the original NGO’s that were partners during the first phase of the program.ⁱⁱⁱ Additionally, the pilot phase allowed the ‘Ishraq’ model to be further tested and, since it was assessed to be a viable model, it has now been adopted in several other African countries.¹⁸ The development of new relationships also resulted in revised program goals. These were to: i) increase girls’ functional literacy and educational aspirations; ii) improve knowledge of key health and rights issues; iii) increase girls’ life skills, civic engagement, and livelihood skills; iv) expand girls’ peer network; v) provide a ‘safe space’ for girls to learn and play; vi) influence attitudes of parents and boys towards girls and their capabilities; and vii) improve local and national policymakers’ support for girl-friendly measures and policies.¹⁹ In conjunction with the refinement of the program goals, the need to secure future donor funding required the identification of the philosophy of the program. Even though the assumption was that the program should make a significant difference in the lives of the participants, during the pilot phase the philosophical goals were not clearly articulated. As a result, the NGO’s established a working philosophy with a central focus

ⁱⁱⁱ This initial partnership was largely due to the need for external funding sources and the ability of the NGOs to access funding sources as a result of cultivated relationships with donor organizations.

being the development of community and the increase in the mobility of the program participants. The philosophy of the program is based on the following tenets,

i) every young woman has special characteristics which enable her to play a positive role in the community; ii) young women deserve safe, supportive spaces for their activities; iii) effective, ongoing relationships with parents and community leaders lead to long-term community support for the program; iv) building stronger relations with government entities can lead to greater government investment in services for adolescent girls; v) athletic activities are important and provide real benefits to the participants that other literacy and awareness activities may not be able to offer; vi) the program does not stop at granting young women literacy certificates, but rather continues to help them apply the new skills they have learned to improve their personal lives.²⁰

These tenets highlight the need for the creation of a supportive environment and community. Program coordinators seek to develop a community of support for the participants and then attempt to increase the social mobility of the program participants, through the use of education, sport and physical activity. The central theme of the program is the development and fostering of a supportive community atmosphere. In the promotional material outlining the 'Ishraq' program, an outline of how a village committee is formed illustrates a concern for the inclusion of both male and female village members. The recognition of certain 'gatekeepers' located within the community extends the purview of the 'Ishraq' initiative beyond the program participants, "Thus, engaging parents, brothers, and community leaders became an essential element of program strategy ...the 'Ishraq' partners wanted to achieve acceptance among these gatekeepers of the intrinsic value of the program."²¹ The approach taken by the partner organizations is one that seeks to convince both the community and the program participants of the value that is linked to both an increase in female mobility and support

from the community. Ultimately, the program is attempting to bridge intrinsic value with social and physical empowerment, “The primary goal of the program directed at boys was to encourage girls’ brothers and other male relatives to think and act in a more gender equitable manner.”²² The rationale behind the inclusion of boys and parents was to seek support for changes in social attitudes through educational and activities based programming rather than the discussion of religious, social and cultural ideologies that currently act as barriers for empowerment.

Method

As noted in Chapter 1, as the primary researcher, I was situated within a critical realist paradigm. Porter notes that when situated in the paradigm of critical realism, researchers attempt to explain the relationship between social structure and human actions.²³ Ontologically, a critical realist believes that social structures have a large amount of power in individuals’ lives and impacts their autonomy.²⁴ The impact of social structures extends to the public and private domains of the individuals living within the society that propagates these structures. The researcher can come to understand the nature of reality through examining how individuals are impacted by the social structures. Pairing with the ontology of critical realism is the identification of the epistemological outlook that was integrated in this study. Finlay notes that an epistemological outlook illustrates how the researcher understands the knowledge that will be generated through the study, and how the information collected through the study will contribute to the development of knowledge.²⁵ This greatly influences how the researcher understands her or his impact in the creation of knowledge throughout the study. The knowledge that is

produced through research that is situated in a critical realist paradigm identifies and examines the impact of social structures on individuals' lives.

Setting

The study was conducted in Beni Suef located in Upper Egypt. The 'Ishraq' program is currently operating in the governorates of Al Minyā and Beni Suef in Upper Egypt.²⁶ The interviews with the program coordinators took place at the offices of Save the Children and the Population Council. Both offices are located in Cairo, Egypt. Observation of the program and interviews with the program facilitators and participants took place at the community youth recreation centre in Beni Suef, Upper Egypt.

Data Collection

Drawing on research completed during my Master's degree, in order to better understand the experiences of the program participants, this study included interviews with program coordinators, facilitators and participants of the 'Ishraq' program. The selection of the participants was based on their involvement with the 'Ishraq' program. Permission to observe the 'Ishraq' program operating in Beni Suef was granted by Save the Children and an invitation to participate in this study was extended to the program participants by the program coordinator. A total of 14 program participants were interviewed following a small focus group format and were also observed during the physical activity classes. Secondary sources collected included the program curriculum, proposals to international donor organizations for funding, program material used for the instruction of program facilitators, and briefing sheets, including correspondence among partner organizations working collaboratively with the 'Ishraq' program.

To ensure research quality, Morrow outlines several qualitative quality checks that should be integrated.²⁷ On the part of the researcher, Morrow argues that the integration of reflexivity is essential.²⁸ Fitting with this claim, the following was integrated in this study: i) analytic journal to ensure reflexivity; and ii) the development of a community of practice composed of my doctoral supervisor and members of the academic community.^{iv}

Ethical Considerations

Prior to entering the field, approval for this study was granted by the Research Ethics Board for Non-medical Research Involving Human Subjects (NMREB) through The University of Western Ontario. All of the individuals invited to participate in the study received a letter of information outlining the parameters of the study. For the Arabic speaking participants, the letter was translated.

Description of the Researcher

The influence of the researcher extends beyond the mere selection of the area of study. Guba and Lincoln note that it is important for the researcher to reflect on their personal experiences in relation to their studies.²⁹ As the primary researcher, it is important to include a brief description of my background. I am a Euro-Canadian female doctoral candidate with research experience focusing on philosophy and ethics in sport. I have been involved in sport and physical activity programs throughout my life. I chose to complete graduate work in the area of kinesiology because I am interested in exploring and understanding women's experiences with physical activity. Prior to my trip to Egypt

^{iv} A community of practice is comprised of knowledgeable peers and fellow researchers. The role of this group is to assist by engaging in critical discussion and is responsible for questioning the researcher's interpretations and approaches.

in 2009, I had spent time in Cairo, Egypt in 1999 and 2006. I am not fluent in Arabic and do not practice the religion of Islam.

Analysis

In this study, field notes and focus group transcription were analyzed using a holistic approach. As noted in Chapter I, this approach described by van Manen, supports the integration of the focus group and interview transcripts with personal field notes.³⁰ The data was examined for patterns and descriptions in order to better understand the experiences of the ‘Ishraq’ participants. The goal of this case study was to contribute to an understanding of how the ‘Ishraq’ participants are influenced by social, cultural and religious narratives and how assumptions linked to these narratives limit women’s public mobility.

The method employed in the evaluation of the credibility of the data is based on the research paradigm selected for this study. Nahid Golafshani notes that definitions of reliability and validity are based on understandings drawn from quantitative evaluations.³¹ In order to evaluate triangulation methods which support the assessment of the validity and reliability of the data, Golafshani evaluates Patton’s approach which advocates the use of several kinds of methods or data.³² Healy and Perry support this approach and note that the methods of triangulation should match the research paradigm.³³ In this study, the focus group and interview transcripts were analyzed with the data collected from the Population Council and Save the Children. This includes program briefing sheets, ‘Ishraq’ curriculum documents and research documents.

Findings: Community Development

In earlier research, I briefly outlined the few attempts made by program facilitators towards the inclusion of community development within the ‘Ishraq’ program.^v During the pilot phase, organizers found that involvement from the community in the creation and support of the program was essential and required continual support and effort.³⁴ Without this component, the girls simply would not be allowed to attend ‘Ishraq’ or would be removed during the program.³⁵ As a result of this need, after the pilot phase ‘village committees’ were established. Program coordinators were responsible for forming ‘village committees’ that included individuals that held various roles in the broader community.³⁶ These committees are comprised of youth leaders, women leaders in the community; youth club directors, religious leaders, health centre doctors, family members, ‘Ishraq’ participants, and at least one program coordinator. In the promotional literature, the primary role of the village committee is defined as one that, “assisted in the procurement of birth certificates, and health identification cards, played a supportive role during meetings with parents and intervened to solve problems as they arose”.³⁷ The development of village committees is the first component to gaining “collaborative community action” which is central to the success of the program.³⁸ The development and fostering of a supportive community aspect is closely linked to the goals of empowerment that will be discussed in the next section. Without the support of community members, the experiences and knowledge gained by the participants through the program would not extend beyond the walls of the youth centre. Most importantly,

^v Research conducted during the exploratory study completed in 2006 revealed efforts on behalf of the program coordinators to develop supportive relationships within the community.

the transforming of the attitudes of the participants needs to coincide with a change in their social environment.

Creating a supportive community atmosphere is an integral and essential piece that is linked to several ‘Ishraq’ program objectives. The four major program objectives are: i) create safe public spaces for girls; ii) improve girls’ functional literacy, recreational opportunities, livelihood skills, health practices and mobility; iii) positively influence social norms concerning girl’s life opportunities; and iv) improve local and national decision-makers’ support for girl friendly measures and policies.³⁹ All of the objectives cannot occur unless there is support for both the program and the participants among the community. Although these objectives are closely linked to one another, for the purpose of this chapter and the discussion of the theme of community development, the focus will be on the evaluation of the first and third objectives. The second objective will be addressed in the discussion of the theme of empowerment and the fourth objective will be addressed in the latter part of this chapter.

The program objective of creating safe public spaces for the girls within the community is closely connected to challenging and influencing social norms concerning a girl’s life opportunities. The interdependent relationship between these objectives, therefore, illustrates that the establishment of ‘safe spaces’ for girls within the community is a foundational keystone for the ‘Ishraq’ program. As noted in the introduction, prior to the implementation of this program, the public mobility of a majority of women and girls in the rural communities in Upper Egypt was severely limited, “Short of attending schools, girls in rural Upper Egypt find themselves restricted by close family supervision, lack of access to peers, and norms severely constraining their mobility...The result: girls’

mobility is restricted, thereby narrowing their options for full participation in public life.”⁴⁰ Program coordinators and facilitators believe that the main reason for this restriction is due to a fear of improper behaviour, unsanctioned activities and violence.⁴¹ Even though it is the intention of the program coordinators to eventually challenge and address assumptions that underpin these concerns, in order to arrive at a time when this can occur, the creation of ‘safe spaces’ for the program and the participants is essential.⁴²

The creation of ‘safe spaces’ has two different meanings. The first is the creation of physical space. This includes securing times for the participants’ access to the community youth recreation centre. Concern by the community members over the use of these centres was further highlighted in the interviews and the program material (executive summaries, founding proposals and promotional material). The efforts of village committees were essential in accessing spaces in these centres,

Understanding, anticipating, and responding to parents’ concerns about their daughters’ reputation were critical. Location and time of day for program activities were major points of negotiation with parents. Youth centres, the proposed program sites, were considered places exclusively for boys.⁴³

By engaging parents in the discussion and workshops at the youth centres, eventually parents, community leaders and youth centre staff began to see that, “the youth centre belongs to the village – that everyone has the right to use it.”⁴⁴ The creation of shared space that is safe from the parents’ point of view is recognized by both the program facilitators and participants as a geographical representation of an increase in freedom. One participant commented, “We come here and it is our time together and our time to learn and play. This is our location.”⁴⁵ The connection between the youth centre and the public acceptance of girls’ and women’s rights in the broader community is also highlighted by the program facilitators, “who could believe the day would come when we

would be able to enter a youth centre? We never dared to come close because it was for men only. Now we are equal; we have the right to go there.”⁴⁶ This interpretation offers a glimpse into a second meaning to the feature of ‘safe spaces’ and access to the youth centres. Although gaining access to the youth centre is one type of physical representation of an increase in public presences and ultimately mobility, the participants occupying the space during the classes and physical activity component is a second sense of representation. Access and continual use of the youth centre are two significant changes that are linked to the creation of ‘safe spaces’. Not only are the girls able to use the youth centre, but through continual access, a change occurs in public spaces that the community now views as shared spaces for both men and women. This connection is identified in the description included in the following field notes,

The youth centre is a small yellow building with a dirt field surrounded by a wire fence. There are two small football nets at either end of the field. During the physical activity classes, the facilitators line sections of the field with pylons. During the class today I noticed that we were being watched by some of the brothers and young boys. During the beginning of the class, some of the boys were laughing and pointing at the participants...The facilitator decided to have the girls compete against one another in a sack race. The girls were organized into two lines and when the races started I noticed that the boys were cheering for the girls.⁴⁷

The use of the youth centre is an important element that challenges understandings of what is considered acceptable and ‘safe’ for the girls of the community.^{vi}

The second meaning of the term ‘safe space’ is connected to the creation of emotional spaces where the participants can feel comfortable. Although the youth centre

^{vi} It is important to note that during the ‘Ishraq’ program sessions; only the female participants and facilitators are allowed in the youth centre.

is the physical building where the participants attend the program, the ‘Ishraq’ facilitators create,

a safe space for the girls within the youth centre to bring girls into public spaces in a socially acceptable way... ‘safe’ in this context refers to the absence of trauma, excessive stress, violence (or fear of violence) or abuse. Supportive means an environment that provides a positive, close relationship with family, other adults (including teachers, youth and religious leaders) and peers.⁴⁸

To foster the creation of emotional safe havens a “code of practice” was created.⁴⁹ This code of practice outlined expectation of respect and dignity between the staff of the program, the village committee and participants. This is an important feature and further supports the holistic approach used to effectively change the lives of the participants.

The relationship between the establishment of safe physical and emotional spaces is further supported by the creation of peer networks and mentoring groups. In the interviews, program participants from Beni Suef noted that the development of secure spaces for the participants included not only the youth centres, but also the public spaces that the girls must travel through in order to reach the youth centre.⁵⁰ Understanding that the fostering of ‘safe spaces’ extends beyond the physical confines of the youth centre further supported the need for the development of peer networks and mentoring groups. One participant elaborated on how the peer network assists with the travel from their home to the youth centre, “we travel in groups to the centre. It is my job to pick up my friend on my way to the classes. If she does not want to come, I talk to her so that she will come to classes with me. It is the only way that I can come to the classes.”⁵¹

Although the main intention is to develop safe program spaces, the formation of a

community among the participants is cultivated. This observation is described in the following field notes,

The girls have formed a tight bond with one another, they hug or hold each other's hands while in line waiting to participate in an activity. This is supported by the facilitators who foster these relationships by talking about how they can support each other and how friendship is very important.⁵²

These groups often contain three or four girls who live near one another. These peer networks are fostered by the program facilitators. A program facilitator commented further on the development of peer networks in an interview, "At the beginning the girls did not know each other, unless they were neighbours or something else like that. By the end the girls all know each other, they are family. If someone is absent or sick, they all go together to visit her."⁵³ During the research time spent at the youth centre in Beni Suef, these peer networks were visible in both the class setting and on the sports field. When observing a soccer game, "two of the girls were playing the position of goalie and often held hands during the game...It is clear that these girls have a close bond."⁵⁴ Support for the creation of 'safe spaces' includes the various features discussed with respect to the philosophic values identified earlier in the chapter. Formulated as an expectation or right rather than a request, the second and third objective of the 'Ishraq' program supports the fact that 'safe spaces' ought to be developed and maintained for the participants, girls and women of the community. This is instrumental in creating an atmosphere of support in numerous forms, for the participants, and is an integral requirement for the success of the program.

The second objective to be addressed in this section is rooted in challenging community-wide held beliefs about gender roles and assumptions about roles of women and men in society. Fitting with the third component of the philosophy of 'Ishraq', the

creation of long-term support for the ‘Ishraq’ program, members from the partnership organization responsible for the development and implementation of the sports program, the Population Council, conducted two survey studies. These research initiatives were created in order to better understand the values of the community and how to address values held by the community, which may be harmful to perceptions of girls and women. The first study was conducted in 2001, prior to the start of the program. Classified as the ‘Impact of ‘Ishraq’ study, one of the key features was the assessment of the ‘gender sensitivity index’. Prior to the implementation of the program, ten different gender role attitudes were included in the ‘gender sensitivity index’. These were based on previous studies conducted in rural Upper Egypt that targeted understandings gender relationships.⁵⁵ Through this survey, program coordinators sought to understand if exposure to a curriculum which challenged attitudes towards power relationships, that support gender inequity, was affecting perceptions of the participants. This information would then be integrated into community development initiatives. The statements are,

- i) If the wife works outside home, the husband must help her with housework and child care; ii) Women must be wives and mothers only not work; iii) Boys must help with housework just like girls; iv) When the family cannot afford to educate all children, only boys should go to school; v) If the husband wants children, the wife must obey him, even if she does not want to have children; vi) A girl must obey her brother, even if he is younger; vii) Men should have knowledge about pregnancy, delivery, and family planning before marriage; viii) A women who has only daughters must keep trying for a boy; ix) A girl should accept a groom chosen by her parents, even if she does not want him; and x) The husband should decide how to spend money at home.⁵⁶

The timeline reported in the study findings noted that the baseline survey included 176 girls from five program villages.⁵⁷ This study was conducted by the Population Council.

The endline survey, which included the same gender role attitudes, was conducted 30 months later and included 108 girls.⁵⁸ Participants were asked to comment on whether they agree or disagree with the ten gender role attitudes. Table 5.1 outlines the findings from the 'gender sensitivity index'.

Table 5 .1 ‘Gender Sensitivity Index’.⁵⁹

	Percent agreement	
	Baseline	Endline
Gender role attitudes		
If the wife works outside home, the husband must help her with housework and child care.	72	88
Women must be wives and mothers only and not work.	65	34
Boys must help with housework just like girls.	40	63
When the family cannot afford to educate all children, only boys should go to school.	41	26
If the husband wants children, the wife must obey him, even if she does not want to have children.	73	68
A girl must obey her brother, even if he is younger.	82	71
Men should have knowledge about pregnancy, delivery and family planning before marriage.	59	82
A woman who has only daughters must keep trying for a boy.	44	18
A girl should accept a groom chosen by her parents, even if she does not want him.	35	21
The husband should decide how to spend the money at home.	72	54

At first glance, an evaluation of the results supports the claim made by program coordinators that, “overall gender role attitude appear to become more equitable as girls mature.”⁶⁰ The program coordinators argued that this small factor that should be accounted for in the change in attitudes towards gender and maturity could be linked to the 30 month time period in between the baseline and endline surveys.⁶¹ However, further research by program coordinators revealed that the change in attitudes towards

rights to literacy, education, attitudes toward marriage and reproduction also occurred and is linked to the themes addressed in the 'gender sensitivity index'. The results from the 'gender sensitivity index' further highlight the need for community development in order to support challenges to social norms and assumptions outlined in the 'Ishraq' program objective. For example, there were significant changes in attitudes towards women in the workforce. A 31 percent change in attitude from 65 percent to 34 percent was reported by participants to the statement that women should not work outside of the home. Another example of a significant change in attitudes is the 26 percent difference between those who agree that a woman who has only daughters must keep trying for a boy. This change in values affects the social structures of the broader community. Girls who believe that women should be able to work outside the home, and complete the education necessary to do so, will most likely attempt to do so. This change, in turn, will challenge the social fabric of the community. Additionally, exerting an increase in the level of control over how many pregnancies a woman will have during her reproductive years further challenges social conventions. This is especially the case with respect to women who will not have additional pregnancies in order to have male children.

Given the evidence demonstrating changes in social values, the realization that additional initiatives that target gender values are required has been addressed by program coordinators. Through community development initiatives and dialogue, changes that occur with respect to the participants understanding and values can be supported in the broader community. In order to further support this change, the 'Ishraq' program has expanded to include educational programs for young men in the community.

it was not enough to convince girls that 'Ishraq' is beneficial; 'Ishraq's' partners also had to address the concerns of several groups of gate-keepers. Thus engaging parents, brothers and community leaders became an essential element of program strategy.⁶²

As previously noted, support for the program and participants is the role of the village committee. However, the position of the gatekeepers occupied by brothers, both older and younger, required further attention. Just as the identification of change at the community level was required in order to support the changes in attitudes of the participants, the same was required for the brothers and the community of young men, "the contradictions of social changes are particularly acute among adolescent males, who are grappling with received wisdom from elders, personal insecurities of adolescence, and a growing awareness that gender relations are changing."⁶³ Given these factors, program coordinators identified that disruptions in the creation of 'safe spaces', specifically at the youth centre, were caused by adolescent boys, "once girls reach puberty, brothers often monitor their behaviour, protecting them from impropriety or damaging interactions. But boys also create an unsafe atmosphere in public spaces by teasing, flirting with or harassing girls."⁶⁴ The recognition of these influences resulted in the creation of the 'New Visions' program. This program runs in tandem with the 'New Horizons' program offered in the educational component. The 'New Visions' program seeks to address topics such as: communication, creative thinking, values and human relationships and, most importantly, gender issues.⁶⁵ As a new addition to the 'Ishraq' education component, program coordinators are seeing some evidence of change, however; they note that this component will require further attention and research.⁶⁶

Fundamentally, the theme of engaging and fostering community development is supported by both broad and specific efforts. Broadly speaking, this occurs through the

creation of village committees, access to youth centres and programs for adolescent boys. These changes in social fabric are accompanied by specific efforts that facilitate peer networks, individual changes of perceptions related to gender roles, and the creation of ‘safe emotional spaces’. In order to inspire changes in the educational level and physical mobility of the participants, it was demonstrated that the foundation of community involvement and development must be maintained and supported. Finally, through the evaluation of the themes of empowerment and physical activity, the claim that community development serves as the keystone for this program will be further emphasized.

Findings: Empowerment

A second theme that emerged from the evaluation of the ‘Ishraq’ course curriculum and interviews with the program coordinators, instructors and participants is ‘empowerment’. The definition of empowerment can be found in, at least, the fields of psychology, women’s studies, and philosophy. In this evaluation, it is vital that the understanding of empowerment be based on the definition found in the program manual, “improving their [Ishraq participants] self-confidence, cognitive abilities, interpersonal skills and level of physical mobility.”⁶⁷ This understanding arises from the rationale for the development of ‘Ishraq’. Prior to the development of this initiative, researchers from the partner NGO’s identified several problems linked to the lives of girls in rural areas,

As they approach puberty, girls in rural Upper Egyptian villages are restricted by close family supervision, lack of access to peers, and norms severely constraining their mobility. Girl’s physical mobility is curtailed by cultural norms, which determine where it is safe and acceptable to go; not surprisingly, adolescent girls are noticeably absent from public. For the few girls who did engage in sports, they typically do so in the confines of their home.⁶⁸

Additional barriers that limit access to education are linked to levels of confidence and self-esteem. Enhancing an individual's feelings of self-worth and confidence is further supported by the first component of the program philosophy, which identifies 'special characteristics' that can be found in all individuals, regardless of sex, and positive influences that can ultimately benefit the broader community.⁶⁹ From an evaluation of the 'Ishraq' course curriculum, and discussion with the program developers from Save the Children and the Population Council, it is clear that the effort to empower the participants is instrumental in the effort to infuse 'Ishraq' with the fabric of the community. The evaluation of the program curriculum completed in this study revealed two different foci linked to the development and fostering of empowerment. Through educational initiatives, a focus on literacy and health can be linked to the development, or enhancement, of self-confidence, autonomy and fundamental empowerment of the participants.

Literacy

After the pilot phase was completed and evaluated by the program partners a focus on education, specifically literacy, was reaffirmed. As noted previously, a focus on improving literacy rates in rural areas was a major concern and an instrumental factor in the development of the 'Ishraq' program. Moving beyond the simple connection between an increase in literacy abilities among the participants and benefits in livelihoods, a secondary goal of the program, integrated after the pilot phase, is to prepare the participants for entrance into school systems upon graduation from 'Ishraq', "54% of girls in rural areas are not enrolled in schools. When we try to mainstream the girls into normal schools, we have to adjust the way the teachers interact with them."⁷⁰ The partner

NGO responsible for this educational component is Caritas, which specializes in literacy programs. Caritas created the 'Learn to be Free' program integrating features meant to enhance participant's self-esteem, self-expression, and problem solving skills.⁷¹

Empowerment in this sense is rooted in an understanding and overall acceptance that all individuals, regardless of the expectations of gender roles, should be able to continue in education if they so desire and Omayma Maneer, a program facilitator working with Save the Children in Beni Suef, commented on the need for the participants to understand this argument and internalize this new level of interaction, "we teach the girls that they have rights; the right to learn, the right to health care and to have the right to voice their own opinion in the family."⁷² Reflecting on her own experience, Omayma noted that during her experience as a program participant this was a critical lesson for her, "I learn to be brave, how to talk to people regardless of their gender."⁷³ In order to ensure that the literacy programs are meeting the needs of the participants, the NGO partner organizations frequently surveyed the 'Ishraq' program participants. For example, in a study conducted in 2006, program facilitators noted that, "Ninety-two percent of 'Ishraq' participants who later passed the government literacy exam, and 67 percent of girls who completed the program have entered school."⁷⁴ In conjunction with these markers of success, facilitators have collected qualitative data asking participants to reflect on levels of confidence, self-esteem and self-expression,

girls are more certain of their rights and more confident in their ability to assert and defend them. Upon completion of the program, girls reported higher levels of self-confidence: 65 percent said that they often felt, 'strong and able to face any problems'.⁷⁵

The literacy program is the first section of classes that the ‘Ishraq’ participants complete. After the first four months, participants are introduced to sports and health education classes.

Health

In tandem with the ‘Learn to be Free’ program, beginning in the fifth month of the program, participants attend three classes of the ‘New Horizons’ curriculum per week. This section of the program focuses on enhancing basic life skills and communicating essential information about health.⁷⁶ The curriculum for this program was created and initiated by the NGO CEDPA. Developed in 1994, the ‘New Horizons’ program, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), integrated non-formal education and life skill sessions that were aimed at enhancing girls understanding of health,

New Horizons, an innovative, non-formal education programs for girls, was developed to research the underserved population of girls and young women who had limited access to education, little knowledge of reproductive health, few life skills to make healthy choices for themselves and their families, and limited options to fully develop their own abilities and shape their futures.⁷⁷

This program was developed alongside the ‘New Visions’ initiative that targets boys in rural areas to increase gender sensitivity and reproductive health knowledge.⁷⁸ One of the central philosophical themes that is linked to the ‘New Horizons’ program is connected to the theme of empowerment, specifically the fostering of self-confidence and control over decisions that have an impact on the participant’s body. The overall goal of the program is to “increase self-confidence and demystify and communicate essential information on basic life skills and reproductive health.”⁷⁹ Among the basic life skills that are integrated

into this program, is an intensive focus on: i) rights and responsibilities of men and women; ii) nutrition; iii) health; iv) first aid; and v) child development.⁸⁰ Interestingly, the basic life skills components are separated from the reproductive health component. Part of the reason for this separation is the values that are connected to understandings of reproduction. The reproductive health component includes sessions that examine gender-based violence, marriage, pregnancy, contraception, and sexual health.⁸¹

An interview with a program developer currently working with Save the Children, Dr. Mehrnaz El Awady, who has previously worked with CEDPA and assisted with the ‘New Horizons’ program was conducted. In the interview, Dr. El Awady commented on the sensitive nature of the program components,

Some of them thought that the life-skills component was mainly introducing sex education which was not accepted by the community. Reproductive health was seen and viewed as sex education and that was a big challenge for us especially in some governorates further down in Upper Egypt.⁸²

The reason for this tension can be linked to discussions on the rights that women possess over the female body and can be further connected to the practice of female genital cutting (FGC). The ‘Ishraq’ curriculum which is linked to the ‘New Horizons’ program identifies targets that: i) seek to delay the age of marriage past the legal age of 16; ii) change attitudes towards childbearing; and iii) eliminate FGC.⁸³ These targets are centrally rooted in the right to make decisions over one’s own body. An example that illustrates the tension between empowerment and control over women’s bodies can be found with respect to the prevalence of female genital cutting. CEDPA and Save the Children see, “women’s empowerment and enhanced decision making as a crucial means to not only end a harmful practice but also promote women’s overall participation in development.”⁸⁴ Although the issue of female genital cutting requires a breadth of

examination and discussion which is beyond the purview of this chapter and dissertation, I would like to introduce a specific case example that illustrates how themes of empowerment found in the educational component of the ‘Ishraq’ program are inextricably linked to governance over the female body.

Beginning in 1995 the Egypt Demographic Health Survey (EDHS) included an evaluation of FGC. In this study, the prevalence and features of FGC, is defined as,

A harmful traditional cultural practice that involves any alteration or cutting of the female genitalia. Procedures range from snipping or removal of the clitoris and the labia minora to excision of all external genitalia, with tight closure of the resulting wound.⁸⁵

This practice is rooted in closely held traditions of governing women’s status, identity, and manageability.⁸⁶ Although the historical root of this practice has been traced to Egypt in 742 A.D., evidence has now been found that suggests that this practice was part of rituals in Muslim, Christian and Ethiopian Judaism.⁸⁷ Due to the fact the FGC is practiced in several different religions; it is formally defined as a cultural practice.⁸⁸ In the 2008 EDHS, the nationwide prevalence rate of FGC was 91 percent among women ages 15 – 49.⁸⁹ This is a decrease of six percent from the 1995 EDHS.⁹⁰ Among these circumcisions and excisions, 63 percent were conducted by *dayas*, traditional birth attendants.⁹¹ The EDHS also collected data on the reasons as to why FGC is supported in Egypt.⁹² Among the data collected from rural Upper Egypt, reasons were identified based on health, hygiene, preservation of virginity, and a good tradition to promote sociocultural integration. Roughly half (56 percent) of those interviewed in rural Upper Egypt noted that FGC was required by religious precepts.⁹³ This research also supported a connection between lower likelihoods of FGC to higher levels of education, “the

likelihood that a woman is circumcised^{vii} also declines with the women's educational level and is markedly lower among women in the highest wealth quintile than in other quintiles (78 percent versus 92 percent or higher).⁹⁴ In order to respond to the high prevalence of FGC, the Positive Deviance Approach (PDA) has been integrated into the 'Ishraq' program. This approach is based on the formation of community groups of women that share their experience with FGC and pledge to help eliminate this practice. The creation of village committees and peer networks supports the integration of this approach,

The Positive Deviance (PDA) is, thus, a methodology that focuses on individuals who have "deviated" from conventional societal expectations and explored – though perhaps not openly – successful alternatives to cultural norms, beliefs or perceptions in their communities.⁹⁵

A feature of this program is the development of communities of women within the 'Ishraq' program who can speak freely about this practice and assist young girls in creating a dialogue with family members about this taboo subject.⁹⁶ An example of the development of this focus can be illustrated through an experience outlined by Dr. El Awady,

The PDA is based on community participation, and its strength lies in the understanding that the solution to a problem already exists within a community. In other words, by taking an active part in the process of self-discovery, the people themselves have the capacity to identify and articulate the solutions and to expressly apply those solutions to improve life in their communities.⁹⁷

^{vii} This study includes three types of categories of FGC as female circumcision: i) *Clitoridectomy*, the removal of part of or the entire clitoris; ii) *Excision*, the removal of the clitoris and the partial or total excision of the labia minora; and iii) *Inflibulation*, the removal of the clitoris, the partial or total excision of the labia minora and incisions made on the labia majora to create raw surfaces that are then stitched together.

Dr. El Awady explained how, with health program initiatives, and the understanding that support networks exist for all of the participants, one of the program participants was able to prevent FGC,

They go back and convince their parents, I recall one of the stories that was very well known in one of the villages in Minya. One of the girls went back and told her parents that she did not want to be circumcised. And now after having all of the lessons she was conveying all of the messages she took. So the parents were convinced but they told her that they still have to circumcise her because of the community because they were afraid and scared what would the community people, what would the other members say if she is not circumcised. So the little girl was able to tell them that they are going to bring in the midwife and they are going to act as if she was circumcised. And they were going to pay the midwife and she was going to go back and they were going to have the celebration as if everything was normal and she was circumcised. Yes, it worked. And she was never circumcised and everybody in the community [thinks] that she is circumcised.⁹⁸

The participant in this story was able to effect change within her family structure and essentially enforce her right of governance over her physical body. This example also illustrates the willingness on the part of her family to support this decision once a discussion was facilitated, which can be linked to the feature of community development. Furthermore, the creation of a dialogue with parents and fellow members of the ‘Ishraq’ program served as a vital element to support change.

In the study conducted on FGC in Africa, CEDPA outlined a definition of empowerment which highlights the key features discussed in the above sections,

Empowerment can be defined as ‘the sustained ability of individuals and organizations to freely, knowledgeably, and autonomously decide how to best serve their strategic self-interest and the interest of the societies in an effort to improve their quality of life.’⁹⁹

This definition highlights qualities of self-confidence, autonomy and the ability to engage in individual assessment of social practices that have a direct impact on the body. Fitting

with the ability to embrace the ‘Ishraq’ participant’s self-efficacy, the initial component lays the foundation for further development and supports the challenge of commonly held myths about women and the female body. Examples of these challenges are incorporated further into the overall structure of the program and will be discussed further with respect to the themes of physical mobility in public settings.

Findings: Physical Mobility

The third and final theme to be explored in this chapter is women’s mobility and the use of sport and physical activity as a vehicle to challenge social and cultural norms that limit freedom of movement. In the previous sections, the relationship between community development, empowerment and women’s public mobility are briefly touched on. Challenges to community-wide understandings of women’s access to public spaces have occurred. This has happened through the establishment of safe, physical spaces, peer groups, village committees, educational initiatives and FGC interventions. Resulting from these challenges, subtle yet important changes in attitudes towards gender roles have been documented and examples of individuals’ efforts to make decisions about their bodies have been highlighted. Exploring women’s mobility in public spaces through the final component of the ‘Ishraq’ program which focuses on the development of sport and physical activity is the next point of focus.

The sports and physical activity component is the first of its kind to be included in literacy intervention programs in Egypt.¹⁰⁰ Formally, the rationale for the inclusion of a sports program is based on the relationship between participation in sports and the development of healthy values and attitudes.¹⁰¹ The NGO largely responsible for this component is the Population Council. Nadia Zibani created, and currently teaches, the

sports components to program facilitators.^{viii} In 1997, the Population Council, whose headquarters are in New York, convened a meeting of women's health advocates, sports experts and researchers from across the globe.¹⁰² This meeting resulted in the creation of programs that used sport and physical activity as a vehicle to foster, "the development communities' appreciation of sports as a legitimate field of action and inquiry, and the desire of women's sport community to incorporate broader health and development objectives into their agenda."¹⁰³ This meeting, and a subsequent push towards the creation of initiatives effectively utilizing "sport for development," was based on the 'Convention on the Rights of the Child' (CRC). In 1989 the CRC recognized the "right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities."¹⁰⁴ Building from this declaration, at the 1995 Fourth World Conference in Beijing, sport and physical activity was formally declared as a "tool for development."¹⁰⁵ After the Population Council initiated programs that used sport as a vehicle for social change, other NGO's have turned to sport as a tool "in community regeneration, social inclusion and reconstruction efforts in post conflict situations."¹⁰⁶

In order to implement programs rooted in the development of sport and physical activity, the Population Council examined research that evaluated links between girls' sport participation and empowerment. Resulting from this examination, and with the addition of themes linked to health promotion, the Population Council solidified what sport, being used as a vehicle, could offer girls' in developing countries.¹⁰⁷ Under the theme of challenging traditional systems, the following are six objectives identified by

^{viii} Internationally, the Population Council has been instrumental in the creation of sport and physical activity programs.

Populations Council: i) to develop new and valued life skills; ii) to form friendships and expand on their social networks; iii) to enjoy freedom of expression and movement; iv) to build leadership and citizen opportunities and skills; v) to receive monitoring support from trusted adults; and vi) to take advantage of new opportunities to learn.¹⁰⁸ In addition to these six objectives, researchers from the Population Council noted that sport can provide a vehicle by which the community members, specifically adolescent boys, experience a change in perspective, “seeing girls in new, action-oriented roles, boys learn about strengths, capabilities, and contributions of girls and women, which in turn may begin to reshape male perceptions of appropriate roles for females.”¹⁰⁹ This approach was applied to two programs under the purview of the Population Council. The first is the Mathare Youth Sports Association, a community-based co-ed organization working in the slums of Nairobi, Kenya, and the second is the ‘Ishraq’ program in rural Upper Egypt.¹¹⁰

When this model was applied to the ‘Ishraq’ program, the themes of development of life skills, friendship, and social networks were combined with efforts to increase physical mobility. Previously identified tensions that occur with respect to participation in the ‘Ishraq’ program are based on both access to the public spaces, in this case the youth centre, and girls’ participation in sport. This is supported by the re-formulation of the preceding objectives of the Population Council to adjust these goals to the context of villages in rural Upper Egypt,

We believe that participation [in Ishraq] may begin not only to positively influence the life trajectory of the girls who participate in the program, but may also begin to address long-standing restrictions in rural communities about appropriate activities and aspirations for adolescent girls. Girls’ visible presence in community life, including participation in sports (which has

historically been considered a male domain) symbolizes a bold new impact for girls in settings such as rural Upper Egypt.¹¹¹

As a result, during the twenty months of the ‘Ishraq’ program, participants are expected to attend 144 hours of sports classes.¹¹² This is compared to 840 hours identified for the literacy program and 108 hours slated for the ‘New Horizons’ program.

Justification

Initially, the justification for the creation of a sports and physical activity component within the ‘Ishraq’ program was supported by a hypothesized link between sports participation and reduced risk of pregnancy. Studies that examined this link were conducted in the United States,

using a nationally representative sample, findings indicated that adolescent females who participate in sport tend to become sexually active later in life, have fewer sexual partners, and when sexually active, make greater use of contraception than their non-athletic counterparts.¹¹³

Given that one of the main objectives of the ‘Ishraq’ program was to enhance the lives of the participants through lessons on reproduction and to elicit a change in the marrying ages of girls in rural Upper Egypt, these findings provided a suitable justification for the inclusion of a sports component. However, as the curriculum of the ‘Ishraq’ program was finalized and the pilot phase was complete, the justification for the inclusion of sports shifted from a tactical technique used to address reproduction, to one that focused on enhancing the lives of marginalized, underprivileged and disadvantaged out-of-school rural girls.¹¹⁴ The current rationale for the continued support of this program is, “to offer underprivileged out-of-school girls their right to play (CRC Conventions) and to increase their social benefits and inclusion in their communities through building their confidence, self-esteem, and leadership abilities.”¹¹⁵ Furthermore, at the conclusion of the pilot phase,

the program coordinators realized that the Western models for the sports component that worked in Western settings could not be easily adapted to the rural Egyptian context,

introducing the concepts of sport in such a context is thus an unprecedented challenge given the restrictive gender norms and the resulting belief that participation in sports is a superfluous and unfeminine activity, and that ‘girls are not strong enough and are likely to get hurt. Sport is accepted as a male domain and is therefore socially unacceptable (*Eib*) for girls.’¹¹⁶

The inclusion of the sports component is challenged by the members of the broader community and has become a point of contention every time the program is initiated in a new setting.

Even though the integration of the sports component presents a challenge for the program coordinators, continued efforts have been made to further define and refine this component to meet the needs of the participants. Dr. El Awady expanded on this tension and commented on the inclusion of medical and religious leaders to assist in addressing this barrier,

Dr. El Awady: Also allowing girls to play sports, even though nobody could see them and even if there was a safe space, physical space for them, it wasn’t acceptable because girls were not allowed. And they thought that sports were only made for men and men should only participate in this. Those were the two main things.

Principal Investigator: How did you address this problem?

Dr. El Awady: Convince the community leaders and getting the community to buy in and introducing the program. Getting a physician and sometimes more than a physician sometimes we had to bring in religious peoples like a Sheikh, Imam or a priest to talk to the people. They were informed of the difference between sex education and reproductive health. We had women facilitators for the girls’ classes and male facilitators for the boys’ classes sex segregation was appreciated by the community. We made sure that the community felt more comfortable, for the sports classes we made sure that there were no males in the facility, again more sex segregation.¹¹⁷

The link between the three themes discussed in this chapter is highlighted by this personal account. This further emphasizes the need for a relationship between the village

committee members and the community. It also highlights the link between educational initiatives that challenge social norms. Towards the conclusion of the interview, inquiry about what component of the program had the most impact on the physical mobility and expression of the participants was made;

Let me tell you one thing, introducing the sports into the community is a very new concept in Egypt. And we need to stop and study the impact of that which we have not done that yet. From the daily interaction with the girls, it had a great impact on them, they were all saying that this was the first time for us to do something like that, it is the first time to know that it is our right to play sports. We have never played, the last time we played we were 6 or 7 and we were allowed to go out into the streets alone. Not accompanied by anyone. So it is having an impact on the girls.¹¹⁸

Dr. El Awady's responses highlight the conflicts that are linked to the sports component while reaffirming that evidence found through interactions with the participants supports the positive influence on the 'Ishraq' participants.

Current Status of the Program

Understanding of the intricate features of the sports component was enhanced through an interview with Ms. Zibani, primary developer and facilitator of the sports component with the Population Council. Ms. Zibani has worked on initiatives that address poverty, gender and youth programs, and out-of-school (adolescent girls) projects and child labour in Egypt. As previously mentioned, the sports component of 'Ishraq' has undergone changes resulting from an evaluation of the pilot program, sought to address gender differences. Originally the sports program included experienced male dominated sports, such as, baseball, football and table tennis, but this proved to be an immediate barrier, "the curriculum developed for team sports was too ambitious to succeed among the novices."¹¹⁹ And as Ms. Zibani noted,

The girls were lined up in a row and they were asked to throw and catch a ball. In those days I was in the playground and I was looking at the girls in the row. I suddenly looked at the face of the girl who was supposed to receive the ball and she was terrified, terrified of what was going to come and then I realized that these were girls that had never used any type of sports equipment. For me this made me realize that if you want to teach these girls, you will need to start with the ABC's. I will never forget the face of this girl; she was terrified at what she was being asked to do. This was my memorable souvenir.¹²⁰

The fact that the participation in organized and formal sport activities is a foreign concept to the 'Ishraq' participants is highlighted through this example. According to Ms. Zibani, the program coordinators quickly realized that there needed to be adjustments to the curriculum if the goal was to use sport as a "tool for development" and bolster self-esteem. In an article included in the publication, Introduction to Sport and Physical Activity as Developmental Contexts, Zibani outlines the steps taken to address this issue within the 'Ishraq' program. The introduction of familiar and comfortable traditional games facilitated an entry point into the sports curriculum.¹²¹ In the interview, Ms. Zibani expanded on this change,

For the parent, as you know Ishraq is the first program that has a sports program in the rural areas. So I thought that if we link traditional games, it would be easier for the parents to accept. You know that concern over virginity is the fear that is always raised. For instance in skipping, horseback riding even though we don't offer this, the balance beam, the parents think that this is linked to the girls losing virginity.¹²²

She noted she had 52 traditional games collected from the participants.¹²³ She also noted that the inclusion of traditional games not only supports the 'Ishraq' participants, but also eases the concerns of the parents, who may be uncomfortable with the sports component.

A second significant change involved the selection of the program facilitators, initially, filled by graduates from the physical education programs offered by universities in Cairo.¹²⁴ The pilot phase demonstrated that, "The university graduates prove to be ill

prepared to work in villages, both in terms of their attitudes towards the promoters and the participants and in terms of their standards and level of expectation.”¹²⁵ The removal of certified instructors coincided with the elimination of the exclusive focus on sports. Ms. Zibani noted that program facilitators from the rural communities that graduated from the ‘Ishraq’ program were a better fit. They were provided with a training session prior to the program,

This is what I call the introductory phase; this is the way for the promoters to learn the program. The promoters of course are not experienced in all sports and I don’t want them to be. They learn the program so that they can bring the sports to the girls and bring some skills to the girls, change attitudes and provide them with right information about sport.¹²⁶

Facilitators that come from rural areas not only had a better fit for the program, but also developed relationships with the participants, thus supporting new peer networks as identified for community development.

The change from popular sports to traditional games is also linked to a philosophical perspective. The justification, noted above, identified a close link between the use of sport as a vehicle to elicit change and Western conceptions and understanding of the difference sport can make in the lives of youth. These understandings and assumptions about what sports can provide seem to be based on cultural norms and conditions that may not be applicable in the context of the ‘Ishraq’ program. This contextual consideration has an impact on this program in two senses. The first is a broad consideration linked to the creation of ‘safe spaces’. Martha Brady, a senior associate at the Population Council, argued that gender differences in the use of public spaces must be considered in the development of sports programs, to address the tension and mismatch that occurred during the pilot phase.

While in many countries, public spaces are not legally defined, there are designated spaces where citizens can go for recreation, education, entertainment, and participation in political life. Typically, the kinds of public spaces that are seen as legitimate venues for females – markets, health clinics, tailors – are those that confine females to fulfilling their domestic roles as homemakers and mothers. In contrast, appropriate public spaces for males are less narrowly defined and are not necessarily linked to their gender roles.¹²⁷

The close relationship between the creation of a successful sport program and an understanding of the community values and beliefs, leads to changes to accommodate some of the community needs, “The ‘Ishraq’ program did not ‘lead’ with sport, but over time sport became an increasingly important and valued program component.”¹²⁸

Fitting with this approach is a significant change from common understandings of why sport and physical activity is important. In a Western context, recent pushes towards the development of sports and physical activity program have been rooted in concerns over childhood obesity. Research linking participation in sport to various health outcomes has been utilized as foundational pieces that provide a structure to the development of sports programs.¹²⁹ In the case of the ‘Ishraq’ program, efforts to address levels of inactivity are not at the forefront. Many of the ‘Ishraq’ participants come from farms and are expected to engage in a lot of physical labour in order to contribute to the families’ agriculture.¹³⁰ Ms. Zibani expands on this connection and notes that, in order to support participants, a paradigm shift is required,

In rural areas, we are telling them that they are usually very active physically. In your day to day life, you are very active people because you do a lot of different hard work. What does that mean exactly, they don’t question why they need to be physically active. We are trying to say that in order to be physically fit you need to have all of the qualities. I am trying to make them realize the connection between the six elements of physical fitness. I am giving them the six elements, they may not really relate to themselves. But being able to coordinate, when the women are in the field and they carry a lot on their head. It is a way of saying that I don’t know if you realize what you

are doing, being able to carry in the field means that you have a lot of balance.¹³¹

Understanding these differences is important in order to facilitate a program that best serves the ‘Ishraq’ participants. Furthermore, I argue that these significant changes support the overall goal of challenging and transforming social norms within the community without trying to integrate Western values or understanding linked to sport.

Participating in Sports: Facts and Fallacies

In her analysis of the ‘Ishraq’ sports program, Brady poses the question, “can sport provide such ‘safe spaces’ and serve to offer valuable assets to the Ishraq participants?”¹³² Although this question is posed towards the end of her analysis, she does highlight the role that effort towards challenging and transforming social norms plays in the sports component. This question also supports the concern raised by Dr. El Awady, that sport is considered to be a departure from common understandings of what femininity. “It challenges male privilege and cultural myths about what is acceptable behaviour for girls” and challenges expectations regarding girls’ capabilities and roles.¹³³ Through the use of the ‘Ishraq’ sports program, which is part of a broader non-formal education program, a ‘safe space’ is created and this, in turn, allows for the participants to challenge social norms with respect to female mobility in recreational aspects.

As mentioned above, Ms. Zibani introduced the relationship between sports and what she refers to as “myths about women’s bodies.”¹³⁴ She notes that through interactions with the parents she has become aware of the deeply entrenched values that are linked to understandings of femininity, sexuality and physical movement, such as the example presented earlier in which Ms. Zibani described concerns over virginity being

linked to participation in sport. She notes that the perspective she has adopted to address these issues is the following,

I came up with all of the false and myths they had in mind around the girls playing sports. Girls should not play sports or girls should not wear pants. Sports for girls are not socially acceptable. These are also activities I do with the promoters. Probably there are more that can be added, but these are a starting point. Instead of saying right or wrong, [we need] to get through these facts and fantasy to incorporate games.¹³⁵

This emphasis is placed on a facilitation of a discussion that unpacks the myths and facts linked to girls' participation in sport. This exercise resembles the gender sensitivity index discussed in the previous section. Upon the completion of the pilot phase nine 'myths' were identified and integrated into a teaching module that is discussed at the beginning of each sports component. The myths are: i) girls should not play like boys; ii) sports for girls is socially unacceptable (*eib*); iii) girls are not strong enough to play sports and are likely to get hurt; iv) girls don't play sports because they are afraid they won't be good at sports; v) girls don't play sports because they are afraid of being perceived as unfeminine; vii) girls your age are too old to play and; viii) girls are too busy to play.¹³⁶

Working through these myths involved more than discussions among the participants. As noted above, the sports facilitators, village committees and the program coordinators needed to reach out to the members of the community in order to tease out the values linked to social norms or cultural values.¹³⁷ Looking at the list of the seven myths, two interconnected issues are evident. The first issue is the physical capabilities of women, and the second is the relationship between femininity and sports that is linked to social and cultural conventions. Given women's role in agriculture and labour in the rural communities, Ms. Zibani argues that the first issue does not come with much

resistance.¹³⁸ The second issue, the relationship between femininity and sport, requires additional negotiation.

It is difficult to see significant change in social and cultural norms in short periods of time. This is especially the case when the values are intertwined with religious practices and cultural norms that been largely unchallenged. In the interview with Ms. Zibani, she discussed an example that provides evidence of change that has been facilitated by the sports program. The requirement that, in order for girls to be able to participate freely and safely in the sports program they would need to wear a track suit resulted in a backlash from the community, especially the male siblings. Ms. Zibani described the issue fully in the interview,

For instance wearing the track suits is increasingly becoming a problem. The communities are increasingly conservative. If you look at the myth – girls should not wear pants – this is a really big challenge because a crucial part of the program is wearing the track suits. We start at the beginning of the program to tell the girls that we are going to give you – free of charge of course – track suits for you to wear. This is a gift from the program to you. Some are happy about but more are scared. ‘Pants’ have become a larger issue within sports programs. How the girls relate to the pants and what the pants mean to her in the context of her life. When it comes to the sports classes, the girls refuse, it is not her decision, it is perhaps her father or brother. They have told her you can go to the sports class but you cannot wear the pants.¹³⁹

Ms. Zibani noted that this issue has become more prominent as the ‘Ishraq’ program has been implemented in communities further South in Upper Egypt. This issue is raised after the community has agreed upon the granting of access to the girls and the program has established the youth centre as ‘safe space’. Ms. Zibani argues that there are distinct differences between the attitudes of the mothers compared to the fathers and male siblings, “Ensuring girl’s marriage-ability and preserving girls’ honour shape parents’ attitudes and behaviour toward their daughters. Mothers were more supportive (75

percent) of letting girls play sports than were fathers (64 percent).¹⁴⁰ Ms. Zibani also argued that mothers were more concerned about the perception of the community than the actual sports program or track suit requirement. One participant commented that her mother gave permission to participate in sport with the following caveat, “it is right (to play sports) if other girls will play with you, the most important thing is not to allow boys to see you with training suits.”¹⁴¹ This description reinforces the connection between the concerns over the perception of the community members. Further research into the attitudes that are linked to the perceptions of the fathers and siblings revealed the following, “a girl’s siblings played a critical role in the decisions whether or not their sisters would play sports. Of those who had brothers, 36 percent stated that their brother’s approved of their playing sports under certain conditions.”¹⁴² In addition, Ms. Zibani noted that 16 percent of the siblings interviewed responded to the tracksuit requirement with the following, “My brother objected to the sports, uniform, my brother said I was acting like a boy.”¹⁴³ In a summary of her research examining the attitudes of the parents and siblings towards the sports component, specifically the tracksuit requirement, Ms. Zibani noted,

Community members had mixed feelings about the girls playing sports. Ishraq girls reported that those who still resisted the idea (40 percent) labelled them as loose girls and were convinced that sports taught them immorality. Others commented that it is wrong for a girl to play sports and wear training suits.¹⁴⁴

Ms. Zibani’s research on the impact of the sports component, specifically the track suit requirement, supports the claim that a significant challenge to notions of femininity and masculinity is evident in this example.

The issues and values raised in connection to this tension highlights concerns over community perceptions, virginity, immoral behaviour and blurring of traditional masculine and feminine activities. These tensions are echoed by challenges raised through the literacy program and securing access to the youth centres. Prior to the start of the sports component, the community engaged in discussions in order to address these values. After access to the youth centres is established, concerns over the sports component being an opportunities for immoral behaviour are reduced. This is further supported by the acceptance of the sports component by the mothers of the participants. Additionally, with the establishment of peer networks, participants and facilitators further support the creation of a community of girls who engage in sport and physical activity as a group. Another consideration is the inclusion of traditional games which seems to ease the facilitation of a sports program without the introduction of activities that drastically change common perceptions of activities that women of the community have had previous experience with. Finally, the speed of progression and length of time of the sports component impacts the community acceptance. The sports program runs for ten months, half of the entire 'Ishraq' program. This allows for the community members to become familiar and accept the format of the classes.

A final element that contributes to the challenge of social norms that limit girls' participation in sport is the voices of the participants. During my observation of the sports class in Beni Suef, I had the opportunity to interview the participants. When asked about what benefits they receive through the sports component, one participant commented, "This of the program makes me feel alive."¹⁴⁵ Another participant noted, "I can do anything if I am taught how to do it. I love to run and I am energetic, this is what

the sports program has given me.”¹⁴⁶ In addition to these positive comments, I observed the energetic and happy participants during the sport class.¹⁴⁷ When the participants were asked which activities they enjoyed the most, running and learning different sport activities such as potato sack races and tag were the most popular.¹⁴⁸ The experiences of the participants play an important role in challenging social norms. A commitment by the participants to continue to attend the program further supports the efforts of the facilitators and coordinators. Working together as a collective creates a powerful community which, in turn, continues to demonstrate that sport can be used as a platform to challenge conceptions of femininity.

Currently at the end of the sports component, the facilitators organize a tournament for the ‘Ishraq’ participants. This assists in raising the profile of the program and creates an opportunity for the participants to integrate the lessons learned into a friendly competition with each other. With the goal of further challenging the attitudes of boys towards the sports component, Ms. Zibani outlined her intentions for future developments with respect to the tournament,

I am thinking that when the time is right, eventually to invite some of them (the boys) to give them a role to do and be supportive to their sisters. For example if they were referees. I think that this will break down the gender barriers as well. This would not be done at the very beginning; this would be at the end. At the end of each sports cycle, there is a tournament and this may be the best time to get the brothers into the picture. This would give us an idea about sports in general and sports with girls. When we talk about sports and girls we do so by excluding the boys. I want to involve the boys in the conversation about the facts and fallacies. Once we have prepared the girls with the argument, we then invite the boys into the picture and argue about these concepts and notions.¹⁴⁹

This change, if implemented, would be an attempt to involve the male relatives, specifically siblings, in the sports component as partners which would contribute to the activity by supporting structural components.

Summary

The work of Iris Marion Young and Christine Battersby largely informed the qualitative perspective utilized in this case study. The guided observation and data collected through this focused approach complements the work of these authors and further contributes to strengthening the use of this approach for future research studies. Additionally, it demonstrated the need for the development of future studies which explore the experiences of women in sport. Understanding the lived experience of participants is supported by Young's argument that the concept of the 'lived body' helps us to understand the social and cultural influences that affect individuals. Through the work of Simone de Beauvoir, Young argues that, "Every human existence is defined by its 'situation'; the particular existence of the female person is no less defined by historical, cultural, social and economic limits of her situation."¹⁵⁰ Whereas de Beauvoir believes that the examination of the 'lived body', includes an account of 'situation', Young argues that this account does not take into consideration the, "situatedness of the woman's actual bodily movement and orientation to its surroundings and its world"¹⁵¹ Young addresses this gap in her examination of female embodiment, mobility, femininity and physical expression. In her conclusion, she notes additional questions with respect to female embodiment and sport requiring exploration in order to contribute to accounts that examine whole body movement.¹⁵² These explorations of relationships between gender, social and cultural norms, and of how these experiences influence female embodiment,

allow evaluation within forms of movement. In connection with this analysis, she identifies the need for additional research which highlights the female's bodily capabilities,

I have an intuition that the general lack of confidence that we frequently have about our cognitive and leadership abilities is traceable in part to an original doubt of our body's capacity. None of these questions can be dealt with properly, however, without first performing the kind of guided observation and data collection that my reading has concluded, to a large degree, is yet to be performed.¹⁵³

Young's concluding sentiments further reinforce DeSensi's call for research that contributes to the collection of guided observation and data that illuminates situated 'lived body' experiences. The inclusion of Young's theoretical framework in this study addresses the concern raised by DeSensi with respect to the misunderstanding, and incorrect application, of feminist theory in the examination of women's embodiment in sport. Following the collection of the women's experiences in the sport context, the impact of social, cultural and religious norms on the female body can be evaluated and discussed in a more complete manner.

The exploration of the 'Ishraq' participant's experiences in sport and physical activity contributes to the collection of guided observation. Through this analysis -- specifically the exploration of the relationship between empowerment and physical movement that was observed through the sport classes and discussed by the program coordinators, facilitators and participants -- an ability to engage in sport and physical activity is positively correlated with the report of positive change in confidence and mobility. Additionally, significant change can result from the specific initiatives that sought to challenge community wide beliefs about women's bodies and movement in public settings. Christine Battersby's 'fleshy metaphysics' is intimately connected with

the understanding of the 'lived body' perspective. Its addition was important due to: i) relevance to research conducted in sport contexts; and ii) its support of the evaluation of norms, such as those addressed with respect to religion, that link rationality with physicality. The definition of 'fleshy metaphysics' reinterprets traditional metaphysical understandings, based on the male form, to include perspectives based on the female body. Two further connections that are harmful to feminist research in philosophy are based on the relationship between rationality and the male body. The female body is associated with physical forms and has traditionally not been connected to dominant models of philosophical exploration, for example, metaphysics. The discussion of the interpretation of religious Scripture in Chapter III addressed the use of norms of rationality with respect to religion and the negative consequences of this perspective on female embodiment. In Chapter III, it was argued, through the work of Averroes that this association exists and it was also demonstrated, through the work of Barlas, that it can be disputed.

The study discussed in this chapter reaffirms the connection between rationality and the male body. The need to address the community members' concerns about the female body outside of unprotected areas, and the practice of FGC, illustrates the connection between the female body, irrationality and the need for governance. Accounts that challenge these notions, for which Battersby is an advocate, can be found in the examination of the 'Ishraq' program. This claim is supported by the examination of a program that incorporates educational and physical targets. Through the use of the female form, program coordinators examined the norms that had a negative impact on girls in the rural areas and sought to challenge these norms both on an individual and a community

level. All of the program components, including the ‘New Visions’ course, were based on challenging norms that prevent the educational development and physical freedom of the participants. In my opinion, this focus provides a concrete example of Battersby ‘fleshy metaphysics’. The incorporation of a sports component that allows the movement of the female body in settings that traditionally prevent women’s access, further challenges the use of the male body as the standard.

Battersby notes the generation of examples that challenge the use of the male body as the status quo will influence the perspective of women’s bodies,

I am interested in models of identity for ‘the object’ – and, in particular, for a body that is capable of generating a new body from within its ‘own’ flesh and from within the horizons of its ‘own’ space-time.¹⁵⁴

This study provides an example of using the body by generating knowledge and experience that challenged and changed the status quo within the village community.

In the evaluation of the ‘Ishraq’ program, three themes emerged that are linked to the goal of changing the lives of girls in the rural villages in Upper Egypt. At the foundational level, community development is an essential step towards developing and fostering a dialogue among the members of the village community. Given the close relationship between the villagers, the evaluation of this theme demonstrated the need for the inclusion of community in order to foster positive change for the ‘Ishraq’ participants. Through the development of village committees, and the inclusion of medical officials and religious leaders, the program coordinators have successfully developed community mapping. This mapping seeks to understand the intricate relationships between parents, male siblings, and ‘Ishraq’ participants, and to integrate these understandings into the educational sports components. This theme highlights the realization that the community

must be involved in the framework of the program in order to support the girls' skills and new found levels of activity after they complete the program.

Coinciding with efforts to foster relationships among the community members, the implementation of the educational aspects of the program provides an example of the second theme discussed in this chapter. Through literacy, health, and citizenship classes, participants are exposed to skills that would greatly impact and improve their capabilities. In the 'New Horizons' participants are introduced to information about identity and women's rights, and are able to apply for birth certificates and health cards. Through these components, participants have access to essential learning opportunities which, in turn, can lead to the skills needed to continue with education. This can ultimately be translated into financial support for themselves and their families in the future. It also raises the profile of women's capabilities within the broader community. This form of educational empowerment has had a large impact on the 'Ishraq' participants. In the endline survey conducted at the completion of the program, the participants self-reported an increase in self-confidence and 52 percent of the participants noted that they believed in themselves and were, "strong and able to face any problem."¹⁵⁵

Fitting with the philosophy of the 'Ishraq' program, the final component examined in this chapter was the increase in women's mobility through the sports component. In the evaluation of this component, the role of sports in challenging certain social and cultural norms was highlighted. Through this example, the adjusted format supported the facilitation of community dialogue while being able to offer a program that has a positive impact on the participants. The role the sports component plays in the lives of the participants highlights the intrinsic values that can be gained when a safe and

supportive space is created for the girls. Through this examination, the numerous direct and intrinsic benefits are visible. The key to this relationship is the use of sport in conjunction with the creation of ‘safe spaces’.

In summary, the examination of the ‘Ishraq’ program provides insight into the role sport can play in conjunction with non-formal education programs. The ‘Ishraq’ program also provides insight into how sport models, traditionally used in Western contexts, can be adapted to best serve the community and facilitate community development and empowerment.

This study and examination contributes to the field of research that examines models of sport in developing countries as well as providing examples of women’s experiences in sport that have not been considered by current academic areas including the field of philosophy of sport.

Endnotes

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² The Population Council is an international, nongovernmental agency involved in the creation and execution of initiatives that seek to address reproductive health, family planning, poverty and gender and youth. The Population Council established offices in Cairo, Egypt in 1978.

Save the Children is an international organization currently supporting programs in over 120 countries. Programs supported by Save the Children focus on children’s rights, education, emergency response and health.

Caritas Egypt is affiliated with the *Caritas Internationalis Confederation*, comprised of 162 Catholic relief, development, and social service organizations working in over 200 countries and territories.

The Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) creates and implements programs that seek to support women through the development of leadership skills. These initiatives include supporting educational programs and leadership opportunities.

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Chapter VI

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations for Future Study

Summary

The purpose of this dissertation is to engage in an examination of veiled Muslim female's participation in physical activity. Due to recent conflicts in Canada and Europe, the need for an evaluation of rule structures which have been used in the rationale that limits the participation of veiled athletes, is essential. The evaluation of veiled Muslim females in a physical activity context connects two areas of discussion, which have not been adequately addressed in academic literature. The first area is the examination of the relationship between sport and religion. Moving beyond the relationships between sport, spirituality and the mimicry of rule structures found in both sport and religion, the discussion contained in this dissertation included the exploration of the conflicts between the institution of sport and religion and the evaluation of social, cultural and religious understandings that have an impact on the participation of veiled athletes.

The second area addressed in this dissertation is linked to the case study examined in Chapter V. Through the qualitative examination of the 'Ishraq: Safe Places to Learn, Play and Grow' program the inclusion of research that explored 'lived body' experiences of veiled Muslim females in physical activity addresses the gap identified by Dr. Joy T. DeSensi. As stated in the introduction, there is an absence of research that examines women's participation in sport in philosophy of sport literature. Specifically, DeSensi advocates for the evaluation of women that extend beyond the Western contexts and the inclusion of diverse examples. The theoretical framework used in this dissertation supports both the investigation of the articulation of rule structures found in sport and religion and 'lived body' experiences. This discussion was supported by the work of Dr.

Farag, Averroes, Barlas, Young and Battersby, which were outlined in Chapter I and extended in Chapter II and III and IV.

Chapter II provided insight and context through the evaluation of a historical case example. Through this example, the tension between religion, women's bodies, and the application of philosophical evaluation was highlighted. In this chapter, the exploration of the relationship between faith and reason through the work of Dr. Farag was evaluated. The analysis of Dr. Farag's lecture on the status of women in Egyptian society in 1930 illuminated the contentious relationship between faith and philosophy and the examination of women's rights. This examination also included the exploration of political movements and the development of the Egyptian Feminist Movement. The work of Huda Shaawari was included in order to provide some depth and highlight the significance of Dr. Farag's lecture and the involvement of the AUC and their attempt to challenge social norms which ultimately impacted women's place in public society.

In Chapter III the examination of the relationship between faith and reason was extended through a discussion of logic and Scriptural interpretation. There is a parallel found in the tensions between faith and reason and the examples of conflicts between sport and religion. This is highlighted through the discussion of veiled Muslim athletes. This parallel was further supported through the application of the philosophical evaluation offered by Averroes and a discussion of the articulation between the institutions of sport and religion. Through an evaluation of the sacred status of sport and religion and the recent tensions between veiled Muslim athletes in Alberta and Quebec, the conflicting institutional structures of sport and religion were explored.

In Chapter IV, examination of veiled Muslim females was narrowed by focusing on an evaluation of narratives that impacted the social and cultural understandings of veiled women. Building upon the discussions outlined in Chapter II and III, the analysis of the narratives were classified and discussed as social, cultural and religious. Through the use of the case of Asmahan Mansour, a discussion of how narratives rooted in social, cultural and religious assumptions and understandings was extended. This analysis included the discussion of the impact of recent legal decisions in Quebec and France. The discussion in Chapter IV contributed to the evaluation of institutional structures and rules in sport that are linked to conflicts surrounding the participation of veiled Muslim athletes. This discussion included an evaluation of the 'ethos' that can contribute to the formation and application of rule structures in sport.

In the final chapter, a qualitative study that examined the 'Ishraq: Safe Places to Learn, Play and Grow' program in the rural areas of Upper Egypt was introduced. The examination of Ishraq program included a qualitative case study which incorporated a phenomenological approach integrated with a focused ethnographic exploration. Program material including course curriculum, promotional material and funding applications were examined. In this chapter, three themes emerged from interviews with program coordinators, facilitators, and participants, these themes were; i) community development; ii) empowerment; and iii) the physical body. The study included in Chapter V contributed to the theoretical evaluation outlined in Chapters II, III and IV by providing a concrete applied example.

Conclusions

Cumulatively, chapters of this dissertation contribute to a discussion of veiled Muslim female's participation in physical activity. Through historical, political, social, cultural, religious examples and theoretical discussions, each chapter contributes an important layer that supports and assists in an exploration of veiled Muslim women in sport. The main contribution of each chapter is the evaluation of the dynamic and multifaceted features that must be considered in order to engage a discussion that includes the 'lived body' experiences. Additionally, each chapter provided depth to the overall argument that logic and philosophical frameworks can contribute positively to the examination of religion and women's rights through a broad application that challenges epistemological premises. This in turn, impacts the veiled Muslim women's participation in sport.

Through the evaluations of Dr. Charles R. Watson, Robert S. McClenhan, Wendell Cleland, Theodore Yoder, the Division of Extension and the program curriculum of AUC, the development of an environment that encouraged and supported students in their exploration of values was demonstrated.¹ This in turn provided support for the extension of this environment to the members of the broader community. The significant work of the AUC, between 1920 and 1930, specifically by the members of the Division of Extension, is vital to the development of philosophical and critical thinking skills among the student body. This in turn, facilitated the creation of an educational environment which supported the inclusion of women. It can be concluded that the entrance of female students in 1930 along with the creation of the Division of Extension supported the modern progressive approach outlined by Watson. This also provided an

example of how a higher education facility could be instrumental in facilitating difficult conversations about religion, values and women's rights among broader society.

Integral to the facilitation of a conversation about religion and values was Dr. Farag's lecture on the status of women's rights in Egypt in 1930. Through a close reading of the lecture, the evaluation of the seven rights outlined by Dr. Farag provided a comprehensive assessment of the current status of the public rights of women in Egypt at that time. In conjunction with the evaluation of these rights, Dr. Farag also addressed the influence of religious interpretation on women's bodies. The analysis presented by Dr. Farag is significant because with the exception of the work of Huda Shawarri, there was little public discussion about the rights of Egyptian women during the 1920's. Through an application of philosophical inquiry, which addressed the influence of social, cultural and religious values, the evaluation of women's rights in public society was examined. As noted in chapter two, the lecture presented by Dr. Farag offered a compelling and well reasoned argument for the inclusion of women's rights in public society that would extend beyond the barriers that limited women's public mobility in Cairo, Egypt in the 1920's. Furthermore, this lecture can be used as a supporting framework for the further evaluation of women's rights in Egypt in today's context.

The disruption that occurred during the lecture in Ewart Hall provided an illustration of the tension between faith and reason. Despite the disruption caused by the lecture, through the supportive atmosphere of the AUC and the efforts of Huda Shawarri and Dr. Farag, the initiation of a dialogue that included philosophical examination was fostered. Furthermore, in this chapter, the claim that the evaluation of women's rights must include the development of philosophical and rights based assessments was

supported. Extending from this discussion, insight into historical examples of the examination of women's rights in Egypt, the evaluation of social rights, and the facilitation of discussion requires a framework for the evaluation of the interpretation of Scripture. These main considerations were explored individually in the remaining chapters. One particularly important connection between the analysis included in chapter two and the evaluation of the 'lived body' experiences included in chapter five, is the exploration of women's experiences in a context where women's voices are largely silent in public settings. In chapter two, Dr. Farag and Huda Shawarri address the reasons underlying the historical silence of Egyptian women. In chapter five, it was demonstrated that the 'Ishraq' participants were actively engaged in challenging the social, cultural and religious values that serve to limit women's public mobility and support women's public silence in the community of Beni Suef.

Through the evaluation of selected contemporary examples that occurred in Alberta and Quebec with respect to veiled Muslim athletes being asked by the referees and judges to leave the sports field or remove their hijab and be allowed to play, two important areas of discussion were highlighted. Based on the evaluation included in chapter three and four, it was concluded that there was the need for assessment of the relationship between sport and religion in conjunction with an understanding of social, cultural and religious narratives linked to veiled Muslim women.

The evaluation of the relationship between sport and religion, specifically the institutions and rule structures, further supported the use of a philosophically driven analytical framework. The assessment of the conflicts that have occurred in Canada highlighted the fact that the rules governing uniform requirements are linked to auxiliary

rule structures, specifically arbitrary guidelines. As demonstrated in the discussion of the articulation of the relationship between sport and religion contained in Chapter III, the understanding of the status that both sport and religion can hold among individuals is impacted by the assumption that both sport and religion cannot mutually hold privileged sacred status. Based on this analysis, it can be concluded that this faulty assumption also affects women participating in physical activity. With respect to the work competed in this dissertation, it appears that veiled Muslim women are most severely impacted by this misunderstanding. In fact, the cases discussed in Chapter IV demonstrated that veiled Muslim athletes are physically caught in the middle. It can be concluded that an appreciation of the influence of social, cultural and religious narratives contributed to a further examination of the impact of the conflicts described in Chapter IV. Given the global features of sport participation, the argument was offered that understanding how values and interpretations are linked to narratives of veiled Muslim females in turn informs the ‘ethos’ of sport and rule structures.

The inclusion of the ‘Ishraq’ study in Chapter V provided an applied example of the support that sport and physical activity can lend to a non-formal education program. In the conclusion of previous research, it was argued that the ‘Ishraq’ program provided a “valuable insight into how participation in sport can have a positive impact on the embodiment of Muslim females”.² As demonstrated in Chapter V, it can be concluded that participants of the program greatly benefited from the use of sport and physical activity in conjunction with efforts to promote community development, peer network groups, and the creation of safe places. This study highlighted how a physical activity program can be successfully operated in an area where Muslim females traditionally have

limited public mobility. Furthermore, as noted by program coordinators and facilitators, physical activity is not traditionally considered to be an area in which women are allowed to engage in. This consideration further reaffirms that the potential exists for physical activity, along with literacy and health classes, to be used as a tool for development and to support change. Through further support of initiatives such as the 'Ishraq' program, the continued development of courses that empower girls and women, and in the future boys and men, along with community development, education and physical activity, results in benefits to all those involved.

Recommendations for Future Study

The examination of the institutional structures of sport and religion, in this case the religion of Islam, highlighted the need for further evaluation into the impact of such requirements on the individual body. It also highlighted the link between ethical responsibility and an athlete's physicality. This link raises a concern for the possible conflation of ethical responsibility with expectations that exist in both sport and religious contexts. I briefly touched upon this concept in Chapter III, through a discussion of how some religious interpretations are used to support the claim that women's bodies require additional governance due to the inferior physical make-up. This line of reasoning can be seen with respect to female bodies in sport contexts. Governance of femininity and sexuality are some examples of this relationship. Although they have been addressed in sociological academic evaluations, the link to ethical responsibility and the parallel between sport and religion in this manner has not yet been fully explored. By expanding the scope of an analysis that examines the link between ethical responsibility and perceptions regarding gender, a researcher could focus on developing an interdisciplinary

approach and possibly identify additional examples and themes. This line of inquiry would address additional structural features that limit women's participation in physical activity.

DeSensi argues that through academic discussion and qualitative studies of women, from a variety of backgrounds in sport, we can come to understand the experiences of women which in turn inform understandings of power relationships and the formation of epistemological premises. Stemming from an engagement in these forms of studies DeSensi argues that,

As this area of philosophical investigation is pursued in more detail, it is necessary to investigate contemporary theories of power and subjectivity. Feminist theory should consider itself a form of strategy which involves recognizing the situation and alignments of power within and against which it operates. It must seek certain goals and future possibilities which it may replace prevailing norms and ideals demonstrating that they are not the only possibilities.³

In my opinion, in select areas of research centered on the examination of women's participation in sport, effort has been made to address theories of power and subjectivity. For example, in areas of sport management and sociology, the assessment of initiatives put in place to support women's participation, such as Title IX, have been conducted. However, this research has not yet reached a level that collaboratively provides a depth to the analysis of epistemological premises. Additionally, research that has been conducted examines initiatives put in place to address low levels of participation rather than to explore the deeper reasons contributing to the overall definition of the female athletic body.

An example of a possible collaboration between the areas of sport management and philosophy of sport could be an evaluation of leadership models in the 'Ishraq

program. Within the sport management literature, the concept of leadership has been explored and can provide useful insights into the concept of leadership linked to the empowerment of the 'Ishraq' participants. Stemming from deeper analysis that connects philosophical, sociological and policy perspectives, research examining potential changes to structures that influence epistemological meanings and understandings of women in sport is warranted. This line of inquiry could include research examining how the 'Ishraq' program could be expanded into a large scale program operating at the national level in Egypt.

Aligning with an inclusion of 'lived body' experiences advocated by DeSensi, additional possibilities for future study include the expansion of qualitative research to include the males living in the rural areas targeted by the 'Ishraq' program. It was noted in Chapter V that initiatives, which would be open to the male siblings of the 'Ishraq' participants, are currently being developed. Future research that examines the impact of these programs would contribute to an assessment of the overall impact of the 'Ishraq' program. Other possibilities for future study include a qualitative research study to: i) explore the experiences of the 'Ishraq' participants interviewed in the case study completed for this dissertation after they have completed their 'Ishraq' program; ii) evaluate the role of parents and community leaders in conjunction with the 'Ishraq' program; and iii) complete a comparison between the rural communities and current location of the 'Ishraq' program in Al Minyā, Assuit and Fayoum. Furthermore, the addition of these perspectives would result in a longitudinal study that would capture the growth of the program and contribute to the validation of the data collected.

The goal of this dissertation was to contribute to two gaps of academic evaluation. The first was based on the examination of the relationship between sport and religion. I advocated for the inclusion and discussion of a third articulation within the broader relationships previously examined with respect to sport and religion. The second gap in literature that I addressed was identified by DeSensi. Through the inclusion of a qualitative study that highlighted the ‘lived body’ experiences of veiled Muslim females living in the rural communities in Upper Egypt, I provided an evaluation of a program and group of women that has not been widely discussed in academia.

Endnotes

¹ “American University in Cairo Student Handbook,” (Cairo: Egypt: American University in Cairo Archives, 1929-30), 12.

² Natalie V.K Szudy, “Towards an Understanding of the Scientific, Cultural and Religious Influences on the Embodiment of Female Athletes,” (Master’s Thesis, The University of Western Ontario, 2007), 126.

³ DeSensi, Joy T. “Feminism in the Wake of Philosophy.” *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, Presidential Address, 19, 1993: 92.

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APPENDIX A**Interview Questions: Program Participants**

1. How long have you been attending the non-formal education program?
2. What motivated you to enrol in the non-formal education program?
3. Could you please describe your experience as a program participant?
Probe Question: Please tell me about the first classes you attended?
4. What type of lessons do you enjoy the most?
5. What type of lessons do you enjoy the least?
6. What type of lessons do you think should be added to the program?
Probe Questions: What areas would you like to learn more about?
7. Which sport and physical education modules do you enjoy the most?
8. Which sport and physical education modules do you enjoy the least?
9. What benefits do you expect to receive from participating in the program?
Probe Question: How does it feel physically to participate in the sport classes?
Probe Question: Thinking about women participating in sport, can you please reflect on your experiences in the sport class.
10. When is the best time for you to participate in the program?
11. What other areas would you like to add to the lessons?
12. In your opinion, how do the sports and physical education lessons fit with the other education lessons?

APPENDIX B**Interview Questions: Program Facilitators/Coordinators**

1. How long have you been involved in the non-formal education program?
2. What motivated you to become involved the non-formal education program?
3. Could you please describe your experience as a program facilitator?
Probe Question: Please tell me about the first classes you taught at the program
4. What elements of being a program facilitator/coordinator do you enjoy the most?
5. What elements of being a program facilitator/coordinator do you enjoy the least?
6. What elements of the sports and physical education modules do you think best support the program participants?
7. What elements of the sports and physical education modules do you think least support the program participants?
8. In your opinion, how do the sport and physical education modules facilitate learning?
9. Do you feel as if there are some limitations to your role of a program facilitator?
Probe Question: In your understanding, what areas of the program could be improved to better support the program participants?
10. What areas of the current curriculum best support the program participants?
11. What areas of the current curriculum do not support the program participants?
12. In what ways should the current program curriculum be adjusted to better support the program participants?
13. Do you think that you would continue to participate as a program facilitator/coordinator in the future?



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Use of Human Subjects - Ethics Approval Notice

Principal Investigator: Dr. A. Schneider

Review Number: 16060S

Review Level: Expedited

Review Date: April 03, 2009

Protocol Title: Canadian Assessment and Evaluation of Targeted International Educational Initiatives

Department and Institution: Kinesiology, University of Western Ontario

Sponsor:

Ethics Approval Date: April 15, 2009

Expiry Date: May 31, 2010

Documents Reviewed and Approved: UWO Protocol, Letter of Information and Consent

Documents Received for Information:

This is to notify you that The University of Western Ontario Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects (NMREB) which is organized and operates according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario has granted approval to the above named research study on the approval date noted above.

This approval shall remain valid until the expiry date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the NMREB's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information. If you require an updated approval notice prior to that time you must request it using the UWO Updated Approval Request Form.

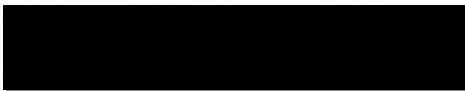
During the course of the research, no deviations from, or changes to, the study or consent form may be initiated without prior written approval from the NMREB except when necessary to eliminate immediate hazards to the subject or when the change(s) involve only logistical or administrative aspects of the study (e.g. change of monitor, telephone number). Expedited review of minor change(s) in ongoing studies will be considered. Subjects must receive a copy of the signed information/consent documentation.

Investigators must promptly also report to the NMREB:

- a) changes increasing the risk to the participant(s) and/or affecting significantly the conduct of the study;
- b) all adverse and unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected;
- c) new information that may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study.

If these changes/adverse events require a change to the information/consent documentation, and/or recruitment advertisement, the newly revised information/consent documentation, and/or advertisement, must be submitted to this office for approval.

Members of the NMREB who are named as investigators in research studies, or declare a conflict of interest, do not participate in discussion related to, nor vote on, such studies when they are presented to the NMREB.



Chair of NMREB: Dr. Jerry Paquette

Ethics Officer to Contact for Further Information			
<input type="checkbox"/> Grace Kelly (grace.kelly@uwo.ca)	<input type="checkbox"/> Janice Sutherland (jsutherl@uwo.ca)	<input type="checkbox"/> Elizabeth Wambolt (ewambolt@uwo.ca)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Denise Grafton (dgrafton@uwo.ca)

This is an official document. Please retain the original in your files.

cc: ORE File

CURRICULUM VITAE

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Given Names: Natalie Vanessa Katrina

SECTION I – *Personal Information*

Place of Birth: Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Year of Birth: 1981

SECTION II – *Education*

Post-Secondary Education:

Ph.D. (Philosophy of Sport) ± 2011
 School of Kinesiology, The University of Western Ontario
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Masters of Arts (Philosophy of Sport) ± 2007
 School of Kinesiology, The University of Western Ontario
 London, Ontario, Canada

Diploma in Ethics ± 2006
 Department of Philosophy, The University of Western Ontario
 London, Ontario, Canada

Bachelor of Arts (Honors) ± 2004
 School of Kinesiology, The University of Western Ontario
 London, Ontario, Canada

SECTION III – *Related Publications*

Szudy, N. ³Safe Places to Learn and Grow: An Examination of Egyptian Muslim Female Athletes. *International Olympic Academy Proceedings* 17. (2009): 241-253.

Szudy, N. ³Ghost Stories: Accounting for Silences in Narrative Inquiry. *Quest Journal, National Association for Kinesiology and Physical Education in Higher Education*. 61, Issue 3. (2009): 306-321.