ALLEGHENY COLLEGE

POLITICAL SCIENCE 610
SENIOR PROJECT

Marisa Brown

The Correlation Between Female Participation in Sport and in the Public Sphere: The Cases of Iran and Saudi Arabia

Department *of* Political Science

13 April 2015

Marisa Brown

The Correlation Between Female Participation in Sport and in the Public Sphere: The Cases of Iran and Saudi Arabia

Submitted to the Department of Political Science of Allegheny College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

I hereby recognize and pledge to fulfill my responsibilities as defined in the Honor Code and to maintain the integrity of both myself and the College community as a whole.

_____

_____

Approved by:

_____ **Professor Sharon Wesoky**

_____ **Professor Jacqueline Gehring**

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge the help provided by Dr. Sharon Wesoky, Dr. Jacqueline Gehring and the Political Science department at Allegheny College for the encouragement throughout this project and during my time at Allegheny.

I would also like to thank Coach Wilkerson and the Cross Country Team for constantly forcing me to reach my potential.

Finally, I wish to thank my family and friends for their support and encouragement throughout my project.

Table of Contents

Introduction ……. 5

Chapter One ……. 8

The Increase of Female Participation in the Public Sphere through the Mode of Sport

Chapter Two ……. 24

The Case of Iran: The Modern Change

Chapter Three ……. 40

The Case of Saudi Arabia: The Paradox of Tradition versus Modernity

Conclusion ……. 56

Bibliography ……. 59

Introduction

In order for both sexes to be actively involved in society, both must be allowed the ability to possess equal access to participation within the public sphere. The restricting of female participation in the public sphere creates societal divides and positions females as a lesser status than of their male counterpart. This situation causes resentment among female citizens and therefore may lead to a desire to become more involved within the public sphere. To become more involved within the public sphere in countries of restrictive governments, females may use a secondary mode, such as sport, in order to increase their presence in the public sphere. This project will analyze the possibility of a correlation between female participation in sport and in the public sphere, using Iran and Saudi Arabia as cases.

Sport is used as a mode to increase women's participation in the public sphere because of its ability to empower women through skills gained from participation in sport and through the notoriety of sport around the world. Female participation in sport also improves societal development because of a female's role in the development of her family. By empowering women through sport, the development of women (and an improvement of their status within society) will allow for a further developed and "modernized" society. The advocates for female participation in sport are those who understand the importance of women in the development and "modernization" of society, and typically overlap with those who are in support of feminist movements within the society analyzed. In contrast, those opposed to female participation in sport include those who are opposed to disrupting the current patriarchal structure within a society and typically overlap those who are opposed to the feminist movements in the society analyzed. Sport is relevant within society today because of its popularity around the world (notably Soccer) and an increased popularity of international competitions such as the Olympics

and the World Cup in the last thirty years. By increasing women's participation in sport, their position within the public sphere will improve. This theory will be analyzed within the nations of Iran and Saudi Arabia from both feminist theorists and articles pertaining to the nations.

The first chapter of this project will analyze the importance of the public sphere and describe ways in which an increase in female participation in sport will then lead to an increase of female involvement in society. This chapter will also depict the importance of Islamic Feminism within this discourse of increased female participation in the public sphere. Islamic Feminists prove important within this discourse because of their use of Islam to increase their status, rather than limiting their status. Islamic Feminist discourses are present in both Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Islamic Feminism is important in the discussion of Iran and Saudi Arabia because both countries are considered to be the most conservative Muslim societies in the world. Therefore, Islam must play an important role in the feminist movement because of the importance that Islam has in both of these societies. Islamic Feminism uses the ideals within Islam to promote their contested higher and then equal place within society by demanding a reinterpretation of the Quran in order to improve their status.

Chapter two and three both use the ideals discussed in chapter one and analyzes those ideals within the nations of Iran and Saudi Arabia, respectively. The two nations were chosen because of their location in the world of their Muslim majorities and their conservative rulings. Both nations also struggle with the paradox between tradition and modernity: tradition through the Quran and the elders and modernity through the Internet through an increasing globalized world.

This project will strive to analyze and discover the impact of sport on society, notably by the effects that an increase of female participation in sport will have on their hopeful increase in the public sphere.

Chapter One:
The Increase of Female Participation in the Public Sphere through the Mode of Sport

In many societies, participation in sport provides the participant with many valuable skills that may be considered important within that society. Those skills are especially important to the female athletes due to the societal norms that are created under the notion and sometimes acceptance of a patriarchal society within which females participate. In the societies that function within a patriarchal approach, women are faced with the challenge of how to alter the deep seated societal norms and begin to question their ability to challenge and change those norms, both within sport and the public sphere. In the cases studied, the public sphere is defined as an area in which individuals congregate in order to exchange ideas and to find the betterment of society and to therefore influence political action. The challenge "for greater equality in sport is inevitably linked to wider social and political issues" that are prevalent in everyday experiences (Burnett, 2001, p. 76). To increase women's role within the public sphere, which therefore will begin to challenge the patriarchal society, participation in sports may be used as a mode for involvement. Thereby, an increase of women's participation in sports will lead to an increase of female participation within the public sphere because of the skills gained from being involved within sport that become valuable within society because "sports provides a mechanism to link organizations and to develop managerial and administrative skills among the local population" (Frey, 1991, p. 512). Those valuable skills assist "socialization [which can be] defined as the process whereby individuals learn to play various social roles necessary for effective participation in society" (Greendorfer). The change in public views of women due to athletic participation of being strong, capable, and competent women will aid in the increase of women in society. This analysis of female participation in the public sphere will work to answer the central question: How will an increase of female participation in sport correlate to an increase of

female participation within the public sphere and establish a relationship between the public sphere and sport, specifically when analyzed within the cases of Iran and Saudi Arabia?

Throughout time, participation in sport has evolved into more than simply a game. The evolution "from a playful, participation-oriented activity to one that resembles corporate form" (Frey, 1991, p. 503) is evident within the business aspect of sport and its "continuum between play and work" (Holland, 1979, p. 87). The evolution of sport is an important aspect of society because sport is "a microcosm of society" that is prominent in "almost every society because it combines the characteristics found in any institution" (Frey, 1991, p. 503). This microcosm of society that sport represents may be compared to that of the microcosm of religion within a society due to its societal implications and the promotion for social change that both produce (Frey 1991). Although female participation both within sports and the public sphere have increased in some societies, their overall participation remains lower than the male participation because of conditions present within patriarchal societies.

Due to the correlation of sport being a microcosm of society it contains many traits and conditions that are also within the public sphere (Frey 1991). The public sphere may be described "as a modern institution and a set of values which brings private persons together in a public to engage in a context of reasoned debates" (Gheytanchi, 2001, p. 558). Although the definition for the public sphere encompasses "individuals", those who benefit from participation within the public sphere are dependent on the cultural and societal norms present within the society. Therefore, one may not assume that female participation within sport and the public sphere promotes equality and the double standards associated with female participation must be altered in order for an increase of participation in the public sphere (Lopiano 1993.). One may

assume, however, that with sport being a "microcosm of society", the traits and conditions within sport will act as a way in which female participation within the public sphere may be increased.

In the past, sport has been portrayed as a male dominated activity, especially within the many patriarchal societies. Although "there has been extensive female participation in sporting activities since the turn of the century", "women's participation in physical activity" continues to be "constrained by 'the myth of frailty' that in many patriarchal societies has informed ideas about women, gender relations and participation in sport" (Holland, 1979, p. 84 and Burnett, 2001, p. 71). The inferiority of the female athlete within sport and the "male-stream" industry "are perpetrated by decision-making that excludes women's participation and marginalizes women's ('Cinderella') sports", because of the limited female coaches, officials, and athletic administrators when compared to its male counterpart (Burnett, 2001, p. 71). Because of the gender gap present both within sport and the public sphere, its "power structures maintain a web of social practices, which legitimize and express a masculine worldview that renders women inferior and, to a large extent, invisible" (Burnett, 2001, p. 72). Gender discrimination is present both within sport and the public sphere and in order to diminish that discrimination, leaders in both must work together in order to better increase participation of women in the public sphere through the mode of sport.

For women, participation in sport is used to push against both the standardized representation of the patriarchal society and a subset of that patriarchal society, the male-dominated world of sport. Female participation in sport has been altered through the years, typically corresponding with feminist movements within the society encompassing "a revolution of values, institutions, [and] individuals" (Holland, 1979, p. 81). Although the overwhelmingly positive effects of women in sport outweigh societal myths of the same, the perception of male

sport differs from female sport because “the women’s sport model was more likely to be paidic, expressive, educational in orientation” (Holland, 1979, p. 84). Similarly, “males are still expected to be solely instrumental while females are expected to be both instrumental and expressive” further portraying the altered perceptions of male versus female participation in sport (Holland, 1979, p. 85). The females who decide to participate may be portrayed as “sideline athletes” because “sport has tended to celebrate the achievements of men while marginalizing the status of women by placing women in expressive, supportive roles such as cheerleaders, or relegating participation by women to a secondary status” (Frey, 1991, p. 516). Female participation in sport may prove to fight against the supposed myths regarding their participation, social conditions present, and the media perception of sport.

Females’ participation in sport has become altered throughout time, yet the myths regarding women’s participation continue to the present day. Their participation may be viewed by opponents of women in sport as harmful or against cultural norms of both the patriarchal society and of male-dominated sport because “the history of sport is generally one of masculine domination” (Duquin 1978). That “domination results from cultural patterns and perception which determine not only who participates in sport but how sport is conducted and experienced” (Duquin 1978). Although the similar ideal portrayed within Frey’s research may be proven valid, change has occurred allowing for increased female participation in sport, expanding that participation into more than secondary athletes. This change has resulted from women “beginning to receive a bigger share of the resources available”, allowing for their participation to be more supported within the athletic industry (Holland, 1979, p. 90). In order for a continued improvement of female participation in sport, the issue regarding the lack of organizational influence must be addressed (Holland 1979). However, the societal conditions affect the

participation of treatment of both males and females in sport, which is thereby portrayed in the public sphere because of the connection between both sport and the public sphere.

The analyses provided by Hudson, Holland, and Frey provide a standard of theories regarding participation in sport and women's inequalities throughout both sport and the public sphere. Although these theorists completed their work in earlier years, they are still relevant and important to this discussion portraying the slow progress of women's participation in sport and the public sphere. Much of the framework of those discussions continue to remain relevant, but the study of women in sports prove that women have become more prominent within both sport and society than it was during the 1970s and 1980s because of feminist movements around the world. The dramatic changes to female sports have boosted the female athlete to international notoriety through an increase in the importance of fitness and from feminist movements. The recent studies have also begun to study the overall inequalities in sport rather than distinguishing between "men's sport" and "women's sport" (McKay 2000). Another important distinction between these articles and the present day is the increased participation in all levels and types of sport, especially in the United States, since 1972, with the number growing "more than 400 percent, from 30,000 to 150,000" (Wushanley 2004). There has also been an increase of women in sport administrative positions, thereby increasing the power of women in the sport industry. This increases "those who have power to influence sport" and to in order to "develop character and the related skills of moral consciousness, caring, connection, undergirded by feminist moral principles and reflective practice" (Fisher 2014). The improvements that women have made in this sector prove positive in respect to the increased participation. However, progress must still be made in order to reach gender equality in sport, which therefore may aid in the equality within the public sphere.

Although progress has been made regarding female participation in sport, the conditions present and the participation levels are not equal to the male counterpart (Burnett 2001). Holland argues that although "women's sports has changed dramatically in recent years … men's sport has changed little" because of male's existing dominance over sport (Holland, 1979, p. 90). This dominance may be attributed to the "social-historical factors" that "have influenced men and women to experience sport in a highly differentiated fashion" (Holland, 1979, p. 83). The differing experiences and levels in sport by male and female may be attributed to " be more a function of activity level than gender" (Holland, 1979, p. 83). However, in order to continue the increase of women's participation in sport, the language used for their participation must be altered. "Women and men, girls and boys are not opposite sexes and should never be referred to it in that language. They are members of different sexes" (Holland, 1979, p. 84). Because of the historical significance of male participation in sport, the political power associated with the participation is evident in the perceived "powerful male dominated sports", notably the international notoriety of rugby and soccer. These sports "are seen to cultivate and portray community and national values and identities by transcending social divisions and affirming political loyalties to the nation" (Burnett, 2001, p. 75). The significance of nationhood in relation to sport and gender is important because of a society's reliance on nationhood within the public sphere. To contrast that ideal, women do not possess the same political power through the mode of sport, both within sport itself and within the public sphere. The ideals regarding the societal conditions that cause the over dominance of sports by male may be described by the conflict theory " which argues that sport reflects and reinforces the hegemony of societal arrangements, thereby perpetuating class and power differentials" because sport serves as a mode to reinforce gender differences that are present within the public sphere (Frey, 1991, p. 505). The societal

conditions and myths of the female athlete are portrayed throughout the representation and portrayal of the female athlete within the media.

Because of societal conditions and the myths regarding females in sport that are present throughout both sport and the public sphere, the representation by the media of female participation in sport increases female inequality and perceptions by society, which has occurred since the increase of female in sport in the 1970s, especially within the United States. The media has the power to "influence our ideas about sport [and] our perception of gender, race, social relations, and proper behaviors, and our adherence to certain values" and thereby further projects the injustice (Frey, 1991, p. 507). Although female athletes perform remarkable tasks, such as Gertrude Edele who "broke the previous male time for swimming across the English channel in 1926", females are continually portrayed as "unnatural athletes" (Burnett, 2001, p. 73). Gertrude Edele was "portrayed as 'a cutie… as sweet as tutti-frutti', and was asked in an interview who the 'lucky man' would be" (Burnett, 2001, p. 73). Instead of being described in the same manner as male athletes, female athletes are instead portrayed as "'sexy', 'mothers', or 'having [a] feminine side'" (Burnett, 2001, p. 73). The myths regarding female participation in sport correlates with the societal conditions that are also prevalent within the public sphere.

The correlation between women's participation in sports and women's participation within the public sphere is created from the skills obtained within sport that may allow for an increase of participation within the public sphere. Those skills gained within sport are important in connection with the public sphere because their "expressive and instrumental capabilities" begin to create female empowerment and thereby begin to create equality between the female and male participants (Holland, 1979, p. 83 and Burnett 2001). The benefits from the integration of those skills into the public sphere prove crucial to the further development and increase of

female participation into the public sphere. Sports change perceptions of women through its notoriety and the skills achieved in sport that may thereby increase female public sphere participation. There is much that "the government and women's groups can do... to politicize women' sport and to transform sports culture and society" and therefore the female participation in sports must increase in order to continue the development of those skills (Burnett, 2001, p. 76).

The skills obtained and developed during sport are not only useful and important within the public sphere, but also for the individual to further develop herself. Participation in sport may create an environment in which the female participant develops her interests and thereby become more comfortable with herself to then increase comfort participating within the public sphere. Female participation in sport "is going to build leaders, build stamina, heighten competitive spirit, produce physical fitness, create mental toughness and put students through college" (Holland, 1979, p. 86). Participation in sport also "has the potential to create positive social capital in the form of trust, openness and respect for different individuals and groups that may also facilitate greater cooperation and increase social cohesion within communities" (Maxwell, 2010, p. 467). Therefore, the skills create a "development of cultural awareness" which are then transferred into the public sphere because experiences obtained during sport participation is easily transferable to the public sphere (Maxwell, 2010, p. 468). However, also found both within sport and the public sphere is the apparent gender constraints placed upon females when compared to males within sport and the public sphere because of societal and cultural conditions within a patriarchal society.

The correlation between the increase of female participation in the public sphere and the female participation in sport is important because of the skills obtained through sport that assists

female participation in the public sphere and positively impacts the society in which this participation occurs. In order to increase participation, an increase in feminists ideals may call for the change in society. Therefore, feminist ideals, especially within Islamic feminism, will be analyzed in order to discover the impact on the increase of female participation within the public sphere.

Islamic Feminism

Islamic feminism, like feminism within the Western world, possesses many different dimensions and definitions because of the complexity of the ideals associated with it. The ideals associated with both Western feminism and Islamic feminism are "diverse, multiple, and evolving" and with the connection between Islam and feminism, Islamic feminism thereby becomes more complex (Mir-Hosseini, 2006, p. 640). Therefore, Islamic Feminism proves difficult to describe without providing both the arguments supporting this movement and for the arguments opposed to the ideals that the movement represents. In order to depict the importance of Islamic Feminism and its connection with female participation in the public sphere both the arguments in agreement to and opposed to the ideals, and the distinction between religion and religious interpretation in regards to Islamic Feminism must be analyzed.

Islamic feminism refers to the "Islamic alternative to western feminisms", which advocates for "the compatibility of Islam and feminism" (Mojab, 2001, p. 130). The ideals portrayed with this term are of new ideology that is "feminist in its aspiration and demands, yet Islamic in its language and sources of legitimacy" (Mir-Hosseini, 2006, p. 640). Although Islamic feminism possesses differing ideals and differing approaches for those ideals than those of Western feminism, both seek "gender justice and equality for women", which will allow for an increase of female participation within the public sphere (Mir-Hosseini, 2006, p. 640). Key

scholars within this discourse stress the importance of Islamic feminism but also recognize the potential restraints of the ideals it promotes.

An important distinction made within the discourse of Islamic feminism is that of religion versus religious interpretation. Religion is associated with the religious faith while religious interpretation is associated with organized religion and the norms and values associated with it. Although these two principles "are linked… they are not the same thing" (Mir-Hosseini, 2006, p. 632). Religion is thought to be "sacred and immutable" while religious knowledge "including Islamic law is human and evolved in time because of forces external to religion itself" (Mir-Hosseini, 2006, p. 636). Thereby, Islamic feminists argue that much of the oppression placed upon females within Islam are due to the practices put into place by Muslims throughout time and are not enforced by the religion of Islam or by the Quran. The "laws which discriminate are not rooted in Islamic *feqh* but rather in tradition and history", further calling for a reinterpretation of the Quran by Islamic feminists (Mojab, 2001, p. 136). Islamic feminists have taken upon themselves the task of reinterpreting the Quran in order to reinforce the gender justice that the Islamic feminists strive for (Mojab 2001). The distinction between religion and religious interpretation may be analyzed within the verses of the Quran that discuss the role of women within society.

Contrary to those who interpret the Quran as a justification for the lesser value of women in society, the Quran "gives a place of great honor to the whole of humanity, which included both sexes" (Pharaon, 2004, p. 353). The Quran "advocates equal rights for women" and designates that women's status "is as high as that of men" (Pharaon, 2004, p. 353). Also contrary to those in critic of the rise of women's status, The Quran "does not subscribe to the view that Eve was born from the crooked rib of Adam and thus has an inferior status. In fact, that is a

biblical explanation, not a Quranic one" (Pharaon, 2004, p. 353). The verses from the Quran that are used to justify the actions in regards to the treatment of women in Islam must not be used as justification in the modern era for those ideals were written in the time period of the Prophet Muhammad in the 7th century A.D. The verses must also be read in the entirety against the backdrop of the Quran instead of justifying individual sections because otherwise the Quran may be misinterpreted. Although there are sections of verses that depict the lesser treatment of women, when read in the entirety the Quran may be interpreted as a use of justification in the promotion of women's rights within Islam.

The verses in the Quran that if read individually may portray justification for the lesser value of women within society include verses 2:282, 4:11, and 4:34. Verse 2:82 states that one man is equal to two women if witnesses are needed, stating the lesser value of women in society. Verse 4:11 distinguishes a similar sentiment, "God commands you that a son should have the equivalent of two daughters" (Haleem, 2010, 4:11). Verses 4:34 further describes the authority that men have over women if read individually. " If you fear highhandedness from your wives, remind them, then ignore them when you go to bed, then hit them" (Haleem, 2010, 4:34). However, regardless of the individual portrayals of justification for the lesser treatment of women, it is stated throughout the Quran that women are of equal value to men and should be treated as such. Many of the verses portraying the equality are worded similarly to verse 2:228, which states women having rights over men similar to those of men over women (Haleem , 2010, 2:28). Such as in verses 4:1, "People, be mindful of your Lord, who created you from a single soul, and from it created its mate." This verse along with 7:189 and 42:11 assert without any ambiguity that men and women have the same spiritual nature and they are created out of a single soul (*nafsin wahida*) and as our mates (*azwaja*) they are a part of us (*min anfusikum*)"

(Ahmed 2013). Ahmed argues that “treating women with the inherent dignity that she was created with, ensuring that their rights are preserved and advocating that they are given equitable opportunities to succeed is necessary to uphold the Quranic vision, "O you who have attained to faith! Be ever steadfast in upholding justice," (4:135)” (Ahmed 2013). Although the Quran depicts the status of women equal to those of men, those opposed to the higher status of women use their interpretations to change the understanding of the Quran. The supporters of Islamic feminism believe in the possibility of increase in gender equality, those opposed to this feminist movement are not opposed to that possibility but rather are not convinced of the reality of coexistence between Islam and feminism.

Those opposed to the ideals associated with Islamic feminism may be categorized within Muslim traditionalists, Islamic fundamentalists and secular fundamentalists. Although those within the three categories possess differing stances on Islam and its practice, all share the common ideals that Islamic feminism cannot be achieved because Islam cannot be changed or reinterpreted for the words of Allah are eternal and unchanging, independent of the present day, and “they share an essentialist and non historical understanding of Islam and Islamic law” (Mir-Hosseini, 2006, p. 634). The opposition groups also argue that women are in fact not treated as a lesser value than men and instead “respects and grants them equal rights” (Mojab, 2001, p. 137). The lack of acknowledgment of gender inequality by opposition groups portray that the position of women at a lesser value is their prerogative. However, those expressing their discontent with Islamic feminism do not offer evidence for their claim; rather refer to past interpretations of the word of Islam. Other critics of Islamic feminism do not disband the importance of gender equality in Islam but rather express the inability and lack of feasibility of Islamic feminism to flourish within Islam.

Critics that question the feasibility of Islamic feminism argue that there "cannot be improvements in women's status as long as the Islamic Republic is in place" (Moghadam, 2002, p. 1142). Because the "very structure of power [in Islam] is male dominated to an absolute degree" the success of altering the interpretations of the Quran in favor of gender equality may prove small or nonexistent (Moghadam, 2002, p. 1145). Although the patriarchal societies that occur within Islamic practice (i.e. Islamic Republic of Iran) prove powerful, the ideals within Islamic feminism do not wish to overturn all of the ideals present within the societal structure. Instead, the feminists hope to bring gender equality through Islam, a powerful force within these communities. Although Islam may appear opposing to women's rights, these Islamic feminists hope to use Islam to promote their status because of the importance of Islam within many societies of the Middle Eastern region (Moghadam 2002).

Others who are critical of Islamic Feminism are concerned because of the perception that the outside world has of women in Islam and the need for the outside world to "fix" the Islamic women's lives because of the falsified perceptions from the Western world. However, the separation of the males and females within society may be viewed in a positive light. The separation creates a woman's society that "in their space, women can be, and often are, freely together, freely exchanging information and ideas, including men, without danger of being overheard by men" (Ahmed, 1982, p. 524). According to this logic, the two sexes are separated because of their profound differences and the ability for women to thrive within their own society within the harem. The harem can be defined "as a system whereby female relatives of a man - wives, sisters, mother, aunts" congregate and share ideas without the fear of men overhearing (Ahmed, 1982, p. 524). Within this society, the harem may be referred to as a positive aspect of a woman's life because "the very world 'harem' is a variant of the word

'haram' which means 'forbidden', which suggests to me that is was women who were doing the forbidding, excluding men from their society, and it was therefore women who developed the model of strict segregation in the first place" (Ahmed, 1982, p. 524). Therefore, according to this logic and ideal, the separation between men and women's society allow for more freedoms for women to thrive.

Despite the logic associated with Ahmed's discussion on women's freedom within Islam, this paper is written from a Western perspective and therefore comparing the situation of women in Islamic nations with the freedoms associated with women in the Western world. Those freedoms that are not found within all the cases analyzed are a right to equal education opportunities, the right to drive, and the freedom to develop into an independent woman without being "claimed" by a husband, father, brother, or other relative. Despite this perspective, the important of Islam will not be discredited within the societies represented.

The Islamic feminists understand the importance of Islam within their societies and unlike those of the Western feminist thought, cannot separate their ideals from their society. These feminists must include Islam and focus "primarily on progressive readings of Islamic texts to argue for a more egalitarian Islamic tradition that enhances women's rights" (Saliba, 2000, p. 1090). The importance of Islam within society must be examined within the analysis of female participation within the public sphere and instead of Islam acting as a repressor may instead be looked as a form of additional empowerment for the females involved. Because of the ideals within Islamic feminism, the increase of Islamic feminist ideals within society may cause for an increase of female participation within the public sphere, aided by female participation in sports.

In order to analyze the increase of female participation through the mode of sport in Saudi Arabia and Iran, Islamic feminism proves significant because of the significance that Islam

possess within these Muslim majority countries. Although an increase of female participation in the public sphere may be feasible through the mode of sport, an important distinction must be made in the types of women who have previously been permitted to participate. For over 3,000 years, "Sport for the noble women appears to have been accepted as part of their lives" (Spears 1978). Critics of Islamic feminism make a similar argument that the women who benefit from Islamic feminism will be that of upper class and not include the average Muslim woman (Mir-Hosseini 2006). Regardless of the perceived notions of those who participate, the importance of female participation in sport must not be overlooked because "sport provides a setting in which young people can express themselves… and perform social identities" and to discover a "concept of belonging" (Spaaij, 2014, p. 2). The remainder of this paper will analyze females who are able to participate in sport and the feminist movement and if the female participation in sport will cause for an increase of female participation in the public sphere within Iran and Saudi Arabia.

These two countries possess a particular "modern" aspiration within the confines of Islam. Sport promotes those modern aspects because of the notoriety of sport across the world through world games such as the Olympics and other international competitions perpetuating "modern societies" into "multicultural and many-sides members of the global village" (Breivik, 1998, p. 104). Sport possesses the ability to increase globalization through the power associated with sport "on an institutional level by the State, the Press, or the Market" (Breivik, 1998, p. 105). The incorporation of women in sport would allow for the further world recognition in sport competitions, thereby proving women in sport to be a positive aspect of societal involvement in each of the countries.

In the case of Iran, women have previously experienced involvement within the public sphere, to then have those opportunities stripped away during the late 20th century. However, in

recent years, women have begun to proactively rebel against the regime for gender equality. The increase of organized female sport will be examined as a factor for the empowerment of females and an increase of their demanded role in the public sphere.

Saudi Arabia proves different from Iran because of the very limited role that females have within the public sphere in comparison to Iran, limited through interpretations of Islam. The paradox between tradition and modernity in Saudi Arabia proves difficult within the context of gender equality and the embarrassment faced when examining the lack of equality. Because of the ban on female sport in Saudi Arabia, governmental programs must halt an increase of obesity in order to remedy the situation. Therefore, a different approach for female involvement must be examined in order to supplement the ban of female sport.

Chapter Two
The Case of Iran: The Modern Change

The case of Iran fits within the parameters of limited female involvement within the public sphere and women's desire to become more involved. However, Iran's history portrays previous female involvement within the public sphere before the revolution and in recent years, a slow increase of female participation has reemerged. In order to examine how female participation in sport may lead to an increase of their involvement and participation in the public sphere, an examination of societal norms in Iran and the progression of the women's movement in Iran must be examined.

Iran, or the Islamic Republic of Iran, is a society governed by Islam and thereby promotes a close connection between religion and politics. This "deep seated connection… [has] made the polity a site of serious competition over the allocation of the political, economic, social, and cultural resources of the state" (Alinejad, 2010, p. 26). The clerics in power following the 1979 revolution used their interpretations of the Quran to create a patriarchal society although "it is clear that the written policy of the Islamic Republic has never aimed to isolate women from public life and to restrict them to the performance of domestic chores, although the situation was often different in practice" (Mehran, 2003, p. 274). The situation in practice insists that "men and women are in fact biologically different, [and] women become mothers and must be protected by the state" (Gheytanchi, 2001, p. 571). Because of the drastic difference between the government sanctions placed on males and females, female participation in the public sphere does not reach equality and instead females must fight for an increased availability of participation within the public sphere. The increased sanctions placed on women after 1979 excluded them from their previous participation in the public sphere through laws banning their participation in both the

labor and government sectors. The discussion of an increase of female involvement in the public sphere may be an outcome of Iran's struggle between tradition and modernity because of an increase of globalization.

The importance of nationalism and of motherhood within the Islamic Republic of Iran is evident within the societal norms and within the clerical interpretations of the Quran. Following the 1979 revolution, an increased cultural nationalism within Iran and growing emphasis on Islamic identity during the 1970s pushed women's rights to the background (Tohidi 2010). Therefore, "most arrested women activists have been charged with 'endangering national security' or 'contributing to the enemy's propaganda against the regime" because according to the regime an increase of female participation will therefore lead to an decrease in the patriarchal society and the powerful hierarchical structure present in Iran (Tohidi, 2010, p. 406). In order to fight for gender equality, female activists must strive to coincide with nationalism in Iran to further progress the importance of women participation in society, just as female activists must use the importance of motherhood to further their cause. This women's movement possesses continuity from its inception in 1979, portrayed in the continued goals and organizations.

As for many countries in the Middle East, Iran is struggling to stay relevant within the increasingly globalized world while continuing its traditions within Islam. "The current struggle between the conservative and reformist political discourses" has developed because of the sources of legitimacy found in both discourses (Alinejad, 2010, p. 45). Women are trapped within the paradox of being required to be both traditional and modern. They are asked to be modern, "reflected in the political will to increase female access to schooling and to reduce gender disparities in the educational sector" but are then forced to accept tradition "illustrated in the attempt to educate women for their proper role in the family and society" through laws

restricting women's rights (Mehran, 2003, p. 275). Although Iran continues to progress within the modern and ever globalized world, the Iranian government is apparently caught between the distinction of "modern" and "Western" because of their anti-Western ideals.

Iran's efforts at modernization and "increased globalization has intensified 'glocal' dialectic, meaning the interplay of local-national factors with the global-international factors" (Tohidi, 2010, p. 375). The domestic desire to stay relevant within the increasingly modern world does not therefore signify Iran's desire to become "Western." Following the 1979 revolution, the "discourse was based on a radical critique of 'Western modernity'" and in turn a "lengthy campaign against what they consider[ed] to be Western cultural influences on gender relations' was enacted because of the Shah's attempt to Westernize the country in the years before the revolution (Alinejad, 2010, p. 37 and Kurzman, 2008, p. 298). The Western, mainly American, "economic sanctions and cultural-communicational invasion" were blamed by the official media for Iran's problems and thereby an anti-Western hysteria can be found within Iran. Ironically, "in Iran, as in other parts of the world, the women's movement and feminist discourse are by-products of modernity and industrial capitalism", much to the discontent of the Iranian government (Tohidi, 2010, p. 377). Following the 1997 election, the proposed reforms that many Iranians were striving for since the 1979 revolution had the potential to be met, comparative to the lack of previous reform. The victory of Mohammad Khatami occurred because of his promises to improve the status of women in society and his promise to respond to the reforms proposed by the youth. "The huge electoral support for Khatami's 'reformist' agenda was interpreted both as an indication of public dismay with the status quo, and as continued public trust in the possibility of correcting the ruling Islamic system from within" (Alinejad, 2010, p. 27). Because women have the right to vote, their opinions and support are important in selecting

leaders, however in many instances, their protests are censored around the country. In order to attempt to understand the necessity of female involvement in the public sphere, the history of the women's movement in Iran must be described to draw connections regarding how the increase of female participation in sports will therefore lead to the increase of female participation in the public sphere because of the importance of sport in Iran and of the skills learned through sport.

Before the Iranian revolution of 1979, women participated in the public sphere and were key members in governing bodies, depicted in the following paragraphs. The Family Protection Law of 1975 further protected women's rights during this pre-revolution era and "was designed to modernize the family and elevate women's position in the traditional setting of the family" (Gheytanchi, 2001, p. 568). Female activism was not considered illegal activity, and instead "women's activism around gender issues was confined to a single state-controlled Women's Organization of Iran (1963-1978) headed by Princess Ashraf, the twin sister of the Shah" (Tohidi, 2010, p. 385). Although the state-controlled Women's Organization of Iran increased the status of women, the first recorded female activists began in the early twentieth century and focused on the increase of female status.

The progression of female activism in Iran in the twentieth century focused on increasing women's literacy rate and increasing women's position in society. Between 1905 and 1925, an increase in women's literacy was stressed. These women "emerged mostly through their involvement in the pre-constitutional and anti-colonial activities" (Tohidi, 2010, p. 384). The activists in the decades of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s also focused on the importance of increasing women's status through education. During this time, mandatory unveiling of all women occurred and mandated Western style clothing was put in place for both males and females. Up until the revolution of 1979, female activists continued to strive for more female

participation in the public sphere. They achieved this goal, shown in the "growth in the social visibility of modern working and professional women in the rapid process of urbanization" and through the "positive legal reforms concerning women's suffrage and family law" (Tohidi, 2010, p. 385). The remarkable progress that Iranian female activists accomplished up until 1979 was squashed upon the formation of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

During the revolution, women began to cover themselves in protest of the Shah and therefore began the change and regression of women's rights during the formation of the Islamic Republic of Iran beginning in 1979 (Gheytanchi 2001). Women were targeted "from the early 1980s into the mid-1990s" by the Islamic Republic of Iran by "a series of attacks on the social and political rights of women" (Gheytanchi 2001, p. 557). With the formation of the new republic, "many of the laws and policies in both the public and domestic domains… came under the direct control of the clerics, who have furthered the degree of gender discrimination and male bias" (Tohidi, 2010, p. 378). The gender discrimination of the clerics and their interpretations of the Quran caused women's rights to regress" to the way they were in the 1930s and 1940s" by regulating each aspect of women's life in Iran through the disbanding of the Family Protection Law and the implementation of the Education Plan in 1988 (Tohidi, 2010, p. 378 and Gheytanchi, 2001, p. 568).

Almost immediately following the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the ruling clerics disbanded the Family Protection Law; thereby altering the norms of society. The disbandment began to then promote polygamy, male unilateral right to divorce and child custody, promoting temporary marriage, changing the age of consent from eighteen to nine for girls and to thirteen for boys, and requiring a mandate of women to veil (Tohidi 2010). The government further halted (and further regressed) the strides that women made before the

revolution by banning coeducation in 1979 and by enacting the Education Plan in 1988. "The Education Plan assigns different roles and responsibilities for boys and girls and makes clear distinctions early in their lives while trying to empower girls and women in the field of education" (Mehran, 2003, p. 275). However, instead of empowerment, "female students were barred from entering studies deemed inappropriate for women" and limited to areas of lesser educational importance than male education (Mehran, 2003, p. 278). The limited rights that women did possess were threatened in 2008 with the proposed Family Protection Bill which "threatened stability, equilibrium, and mental health of families by reinforcing and facilitating polygamy, temporary marriage, and men's privileged position with regard to divorce" (Tohidi, 2010, p. 403). However, female activists joined together and fought the bill, which disbanded and instead the new version presented a law that made the second marriage on consent of first marriage and no tax on dowry upon divorce. The aspects of the feminist movement in Iran may be compared to other feminist movements around the world.

Similar to other feminist movements, the Islamic feminist movement was started by "urban, educated, middle-class women" in major cities who also made "up the predominant class and socioeconomic composition of the activists" (Tohidi, 2010, p. 381). These feminists are typically "educated women [who] are more feminist than their mothers, and more feminist than young men" (Kurzman, 2008, p. 320). The first emergence of these Islamic feminists on the international stage in Iran was on International Women's Day on March 8th in 1979, demanding gender equality within Iran. Those women, as well as Islamic feminists in the present day, strive for "legal reform, 'change for equality' and campaigns against discriminatory laws, policies, and traditional customs" (Tohidi, 2010, p. 382). However, many "women's activists aspiring for

equal rights have found themselves in a defensive position" because of the discriminatory laws placed onto women by the Islamic government (Tohidi, 2010, p. 377).

The feminists who participated on International Women's Day may not have comprehended the vast effect that their demonstration had on other women in Iran. This movement portrayed the "struggles for freedom of the excluded groups in civil society… [and drew] on historically specific and contextual moral discourses of civil society" (Gheytanchi, 2001, p. 568). It was clear after this movement that "the women's movement … [had emerged] paradoxically because of the regime's attempt to restrict women's rights by holding them up as the 'moral guides of the Islamic state'" (Gheytanchi, 2001, p. 560). Despite the gender disparity in Iran, women continue to fight for gender equality. In order to fight the gender disparity, I argue that women should begin using nationalism and the importance of motherhood as key arguments because of their importance within Iranian society and their ability to unite Iranians within their cause.

Within Islam, there is a strong importance on the ideals associated with motherhood because of its significance within society, "representing the boundary tension between the civil sphere of Islamic society and the private sphere of family" (Gheytanchi, 2001, p. 561). It may be assumed that because of women's importance in connection with motherhood that a woman's place would become important within society. Although women are "praised [by their] position as mother", the "inherent contradictions of the Islamist regime" cause the lesser position of women in society (Gheytanchi, 2001, p. 564). Therefore "tensions [have been] created between their roles as mothers and guardians of the Islamic nation and citizens of the Islamic Republic of Iran" (Gheytanchi, 2001, p. 564). Such contradiction is found in the consent age of women to marry; "according to the Islamic law, a girl at the age of nine is considered an adult and can

legally marry a man. But when time comes for the election of the country's prime minister, the legal age for females to vote in 16 years old" (Gheytanchi, 2001, p. 567). In order to fight against the injustices placed on women and to increase women's participation in the public sphere, female activists must emphasize motherhood during their argument. "Zanan [feminist periodical] has made its foremost priority to argue that women, due to their highly praised status as mothers in the Islamic Republic of Iran, should also enter the religious realm and directly participate in Islamic law-making processes" (Gheytanchi, 2001, p. 564). Therefore, the Islamic feminist movement must be "intertwined with nationalism" and the importance of motherhood in order to "situate the ideas of democracy and civil society within the Islamic tradition" (Tohidi, 2010, p. 377 and Alinejad, 2010, p. 30). Because of the differences in ideals associated with the gender inequality in Iran between the feminists and the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic feminist movement has created backlash from both supporters and opponents of the movement.

Resentment towards the feminist movement in Iran may be categorized into three categories: conservative traditionalists, husbands, and secular feminists. The conservative traditionalists possess "strong anti-feminist views and feelings" and "portray women's activism for equal rights as a 'feminist deviation instigated under the Western influence'" (Tohidi, 2010, p. 405).

Therefore, because of the anti-Western sentiments by the conservative rulers, "they react to it by smear campaigns, negative propaganda, arrest, and imprisonment" (Tohidi, 2010, p. 406). Iranian husbands of Islamic feminists express similar sentiments because of their desire to be a priority of their wives, and not be overlooked by a career. Obtaining a career for its monetary value is not of greatest importance to these women. Instead, the independence, separate from one's husband and/or family, associated with obtaining a career greatly influences a

woman's desire for a career. The husbands expect "themselves to be the wife's first priority, the husband's family to be the second, their children to be third, and the wife's job to be fourth or lower" (Kurzman, 2008, p. 287). Therefore, women in Iran are marrying later because of the control that their husbands will have over them and their career. Their "delayed marriage appears to be associated with changing aspirations of educated women" and the empowerment associated with becoming educated (Kurzman, 2008, p. 317). The third category of resentment is from secular feminists abroad who "hold strong anti Islamic views and feelings" and do not agree that Islam and feminism can exist together (Tohidi, 2010, p. 391). They argue that one cannot be "Muslim feminist or [practice] Muslim feminism [because they] are in reference to those Muslims who see their faith compatible with feminism. The term Islamic feminism, however, can be used in reference to "analytical categorization in the field of feminist theology or feminist exegesis within the Islamic tradition" (Tohidi, 2010, p. 381). The resentment towards the feminist movement in Iran may be attributed to the progression of women's rights both before and after the 1979 Islamic revolution. The progression of women's rights movements in Iran have used those ideals within their discourse but have been forced to alter their portrayal of ideals depending on the era of execution. Because of the importance of education within a society, the feminist movement in Iran has also focused on education in order to increase female empowerment.

Female activists stress education because an increase of educated women will lead to both an increase of women's status and an increase in the development of society. The educated women "are significantly more likely than other urban adult Iranians to call themselves feminist" because of the values and ideals associated with feminism that leads to a more developed society because of the educated women (Kurzman, 2008, p. 320). The educated women become

empowered and "tend to delay marriage; have fewer children; take better care of their children in terms of health, hygiene, and nutrition; pay special attention to their performance in school; and be a source of self-esteem for their children, especially their daughters", which therefore leads to a more developed society (Mehran, 2003, p. 283). Because of "a rise in female literacy rates and educational attainment (as of 2005, more than 60 percent of university enrollment was female)", more women are becoming empowered, which "can pave the road to women's participation in the decision-making process, a necessary step in overcoming the obstacles of structural inequality" (Tohidi, 2010, p. 393 and Mehran, 2003, p. 286). However, "a third of the female population can neither read nor write", which portrays the need for further empowerment and an increase in education reforms, perhaps through the mode of sports (Pfister, 2005, p. 210). The empowerment produced from education may also be produced through the empowerment that sport produces, therefore aiding in the increase in female participation in the public sphere. However, sports has the ability to produce competition and other positive elements that education does not have the ability to produce, especially within this society.

Despite restrictions placed onto women that restrict participation during sport, the increase of female participation in sport may reflect the growing participation of women in the public sphere due to the skills gained from participation in sport and because of the growing feminist movement in Iran. Although the female Muslim immigrants in Germany, Britain, and the USA participate less in sport, the history of female participation in Iran "has a long history" especially when "compared with other Islamic countries" (Pfister, 2005, p. 207). Female Iranians first went to the Olympics in 1964 where four women athletes competed "in two disciplines, gymnastics and track and field" (Pfister, 2005, p. 214). In the 1970s, the Federal Republic of Germany constructed a sports academy for men and women in Iran allowing for a

further increase of female participation. This is reflected in the first female gold medal in fencing at " the Asian Games held in Tehran in 1974" (Pfister, 2005, p. 207). "In Iran, a lively women's sports movement has developed since the 1980s which is marked by active women, a largely independent 34lympic34tion, scientific accompaniment, the promotion of competitive and top-level sports and, last but not least, the support of a 'sport for all' movement"(Pfister, 2005, p. 207). The pre-1979 revolution context must be considered during this increase of women in sport because without a previous standard of women's rights, women may not have the desire to find a mode , such as sport, to improve their position within society. Therefore, an increase of women's sports movement may be attributed to both the increase in desire of participation and to the increase in women's sports organizations to aid in the increase of women's participation.

Because of an increase of want for participation in sport from the female population, an increase of female sports organizations have emerged in Iran. The increased desire may have resulted from the success of the national football team and due to an increase of the middle class which "has expanded the numbers of those able to give some leisure time to sport" (Steel, 2003, p. 316). The desire for sport has acclaimed acceptance "at the government level [which] has been led by Mrs. Faezeh Rafsanjani, daughter of the former president" (Steel, 2003, p. 316). Faezeh Rafsanjani has previously served in government organizations and is well known around Iran as an activist for gender equality. In 2012, she was arrested for spreading "anti-state propaganda" ("Iran" 2012). Other organizations have emerged "since 1988, the Muslim's Women's Sports Federation (MWSF), The Islamic Countries Women's Sports Federation (ICWSF), The National Women' Sports Administration (NWSA) and several smaller organizations, coming under the jurisdiction of the Deputy for Women's Sport in the Ministry for Sport", thereby promoting sport through the government (Steel, 2003, p. 318). Through these sporting organizations, a women's

surfing organization, Waves of Freedom, was started in Iran as a way to empower women and to portray that they should not be limited by the simple fact of being a woman (Jain 2015). Support for women's participation and access to sport competition has also been from the FIFA president, Sepp Blatter, who argues that the continuation of the restrictions on sport for women can not continue and will in turn hurt Iran's modernization and desire to host international competition. After meeting with the Iranian president, Blatter believes "that the intolerable situation could change over the medium term" ("Sepp Blatter" 2015). Despite the supposed governmental support of female participation in sport, the heavy restrictions placed on women's involvement limits their participation in sport, just as their participation is limited in the public sphere.

The restrictions placed on female participation in sport coincide with the gender segregation present within the public sphere in Iran. Although conservative rulers claim the gender segregation in sport justifiable through the Quran, females in Iran claim that their exclusion from the public sphere and within sport is not in the Quran or the Hadith and instead is attributed to "a mixture of Islam and patriarchal traditions" (Pfister, 2005, p. 210). To participate in sport female athletes have two options: "either in public, wearing the appropriate clothing, or in private rooms to which men have no access" (Pfister, 2005, p. 210) . However, even when covered, conservatives still view female athletes negatively because of their participation in a male dominated activity. Just as in the public sphere, Iranian girls and women are required to wear the hijab during sport. If they are "correctly dressed, Iranian girls and women can move freely in public places" (Pfister, 2005, p. 210). Both the designing of the sports hijab and the gender separation during sport have allowed for an increase in female sport participation. The "gender segregation in sport has in some respect proved to be an advantage: to a certain degree

women make the decision, and the exclusion of men may have made to easier for some women and girls, particularly the daughters of families with traditional attitudes, to take up sport and reduce inhibitions" (Pfister, 2005, p. 210). However, separate does not equate to equality, portrayed in both domestic and international sporting contests in Iran because "many sports are considered to be 'unfeminine' even if they are practiced out of sight of the (male) public" (Pfister, 2005, p. 215).

Although female participation in sport in Iran has increased, comparatively, desire for participation is low. Most participation stems from aerobics, "almost 40 per cent of women who take up sport do aerobics, but other popular sports are swimming, volleyball and badminton" (Pfister, 2005, p. 222). However, the "sport participation" in aerobics does not allow for competition, an important aspect of sport participation and therefore, many female sport participants do not receive the full sport experience. In order to compete in more international competitions, women have the opportunity to participate at the Muslim Olympic games or within futsal, a FIFA recognized, 5 versus 5 indoor sport, which has 181 registered teams. Since 1993, there has been three Muslim Olympic games which included female and male sports. "The competitors came from sixteen countries, and to these games too, eight Islamic countries failed to send any athletes at all" (Pfister, 2005, p.222). The comparative lack of interest to other Islamic countries is comparable to the "universal lack of interest in watching women's team sports amongst either men or women, and women's own lethargy towards it" and because "only in USA and Japan do professional women's leagues exist" (Steel, 2003, p. 318). The desire to participate in athletics may increase due to the feminist movement in Iran and because of the positive aspects of participation in sport such as improved self-esteem, increased leadership skills, and as an outlet of frustration and other emotional needs.

Sport in Iran is promoted by supporters of the feminist movement because of its ability to promote empowerment and because of its ability to improve one's personal appearance (Steel 2003). The empowerment and competition produced by sport is important in developing skills necessary for the increase of female participation in the public sphere. Sport also may "be considered as a means of self-definition for the Iranian youth", thereby important for developing skills within the Iranian population (Steel, 2003, p. 316). Physical appearance is important within the Iranian society noted through publications released "to inform Iranian women about the need for physical fitness and about women's sport in general" and from "governmental support for women's sports by stressing health requirements of the population" (Steel, 2003, p. 316). Pressures regarding appearance for Iranian women are from both the self, pressures from the husband or in order to find a husband, and from societal standards through magazines, movies, and other media outlets. However, to maintain the physical appearances, "the commercial fitness gyms and aerobic studios are only accessible to a relatively small number of well-off Iranian women" and therefore only few are able to achieve the physical fitness goals outside of her home (Pfister, 2005, p. 215). In order to justify their desire for sport, women have "quoted the Prophet and cited Islamic doctrine to lend weight and legitimacy to this initiative on women's sport. The crucial argument was (and is) the promotion of girl's and women's health, which would guarantee the health and the contentedness of their families" (Pfister, 2005, p. 213). Coinciding with the health of women's families, the importance of motherhood and the continued roles of motherhood are important in the argument. The improved family then improves the development of society and therefore creates an increased sense of nationalism. Although an increased desire for female participation in sport has emerged in Iran, the future of

female participation depends on women's sporting organizations and governmental regulations on women's participation in sport and the public sphere.

The future of female presence in society is being threatened with "A pair of proposed laws in Iran [which] would restrict women's reproductive choices, according to human rights advocates, who raised alarm over legislation that they say would reduce women to "baby-making machines" (De Bode 2015). The first law reduces education on preventative births and contraceptives and the second law will "encourage early marriage and make divorce more difficult. It would also make it legal for employers to discriminate against female job candidates, particularly if they are single and have no children" (De Bode, 2015). These laws would eliminate the nationwide progress in the past thirty years of a declining birthrate, considered one of the most successful campaigns in the world. These laws are an attempt to double population in Iran in 50 years. In order to counteract those laws, women must continue to fight against the injustices through sport, education, and organizing through women's organizations.

With "restrictions on which types of sports they may play are becoming less and less defined", the increase of female participation in sport will continue with an increased desire for gender equality in Iran (Steel, 2003, p. 322). The continued increase must be aided by governmental sporting organizations because of the heavy restrictions placed on female participation. Therefore, "the WSO has set itself the task of training women coaches and referees as well as 'to hold national and international competitions', 'to conduct research on women' sports' and to expand international relations" in order to aid the process (Pfister, 2005, p. 213). Because of a recent proposal by the national security council to overturn the law restricting women from watching sporting events in stadiums, the future of an increasing participation of women in sports prove promising (Dehghan, 2015). The involvement of women in sport is

enforced through government reform because of the presence of women in Iranian politics. An increase of women in sports in Iran will allow for a different approach for women's entrance into the public sphere and therefore sport creates female empowerment necessary for an increased involvement in the public sphere.

Thus, a continued increase of women in sports in Iran will allow for an increase of female participation in the public sphere because of the notoriety of sport and due to the skills gained during sport. An increased participation of women in sport align with the nationalist and motherhood discourses central to Islamic feminists in Iran because of the skills obtained in sport that will allow for an improved family development and therefore a more developed society that will improve the sense of nationalism within Iran. However, that task proves difficult because gender segregation is the very foundation of Islam (Pfister 2005). The female participation in both sport and the public sphere may be contrasted to that in Saudi Arabia.

Chapter Three
The Case of Saudi Arabia: The Paradox of Tradition versus Modernity

When compared to the Iranian case, the Saudi Arabian case possesses both similarities and differences when analyzing the governmental, societal and cultural aspects of the two nations. The formation of Saudi Arabia and its governance proves to possess major differences from the Iranian case, which thereby causes for the further limitation of female involvement in the public sphere in more drastic terms than in Iran. This case will be analyzed through the history of Saudi Arabia and its connection with religion and its paradox between tradition and modernity, the current state of women's rights and their lack of participation in the public sphere and in sport, the importance of education in Saudi Arabia, and the future of women's participation in the public sphere through the use of sports. In order for the improved status of women in Saudi Arabia, proposing small changes and by gaining support for those changes through one's family will allow for increasing support of the women's movement and therefore increased involvement within the public sphere.

Like Iran, the Saudi government places an importance on both education and the place of Islam in society. In Saudi Arabia, "Islam is more than just a religion: it is an interpretation of the world, a style of thinking, 'a total way of life that affects all aspects of being: public private, and spiritual'" (Hargreaves, 2007, p. 75). The importance of Islam is portrayed through its use to legitimize ideals and to "increase the legitimacy of the ruling elite by fusing Al Saud's identity with a national identity and combining that with Islam, whilst also reducing the legitimacy and capability of other strong groups" (Mabon, 2012, p. 537). In Saudi Arabia, the importance of Islam has created more intense laws, which has caused decreasing freedoms and increasing restrictions within the country including the ban on women's groups. Important distinctions

between the two countries are the differences in ages of formation (Saudi Arabia was formed in 1932 and Iran is considered one of the oldest continuous civilizations dating back to BCE) and the wealth associated with Saudi Arabia from its oil reserves.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was formed through the unification of Bedouin tribes in "1932 by Abd al-Aziz ibn Saud, commonly referred to as Ibn Saud. Ibn Saud was the third generation of the Al Saud family to attempt to unify the Arabia peninsula" (Mabon, 2012, p. 533). Saudi Arabia is governed as a monarchy "with the constitution governed by a strict interpretation of Islamic law" and depends on "Sharia law as a basis of its legal system" (Mobaraki, 2007, p. 114 and Al-Khateeb, 1998, p. 167). The importance of religion and therefore of Islam in this country may in part be because "Saudi Arabia is considered the keeper of the Islamic religion" (Baki, 2004, p. 2). Soon after Saudi Arabia's formation, oil was discovered, creating an abundance of wealth within the nation and transferring Saudi Arabia into a consumer oriented society.

Oil was discovered in Saudi Arabia in 1938, proving to be a turning point in Saudi history transforming it from an isolated country to a "cash economy based on the oil industry" with oil accounting for "90% of all Saudi export revenues, 75-80% of all budget revenues, and 53% of the Saudi gross domestic product", creating a world dependence on its oil (a shutdown of Saudi oil would cause for a collapse of the world economy) (Pharaon, 2004, p. 351 and Al-Khateeb, 1998, p. 170). The abundance of wealth accumulated by Saudi oil has created "rapid developments in standards of living in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and [its] increased mechanization have touched all aspects of people's lives" (Al-Hazzaa, 2004, p. 663). The wealth has transformed Saudi Arabia into a modern country and caused a "shift from the rural existence of farmers and Bedouins to the modern concept of industry" (Pharaon, 2004, p. 350). Due to the

wealth accumulated in Saudi Arabia, "the ruling elite is responsible for the provision of welfare, in particular education and healthcare" (Mabon, 2012, p. 544). However, the growing population sacrifices political representation for no taxation and governmental provisions. Therefore, "Saudi Arabia's key security challenge is not external threats, or internal extremism, but the need to come firmly to grips with its economy" (Pharaon, 2004, p. 350). Because the oil reserves in Saudi Arabia will not last forever, oil has stabilizing short-term effects while also causing Saudi Arabia instability in the long run.

In the short run, Saudi Arabia possesses stability because of the current economic prosperity of its oil reserves. The current goal "is to provide universal free medical care for Saudi citizens" thereby gaining support among the population (Mobaraki, 2007, p. 114). Because of the benefits provided by the Kingdom, Saudi Arabia remained overall trouble free during the Arab Spring in 2011 (Mabon 2012). The unrest that did occur called for a "Day of Rage" on March 11th but only one protester arrived on the day. The event on Facebook for this "Day of Rage" attracted 36,000 followers on Facebook demanding an elected council with a reduced average age, an independent judiciary, a release of all political prisoners, a right to exercise expression and assembly, an abolition of all duties and taxes and an implementation of a minimum wage (Mabon 2012). These demands were developed through the Saudi youth as they (youth under the age of 17) account for "more than 58% of the Kingdom" while "the average age of government ministers" is 60 (Pharaon, 2004, p. 350 and Mabon, 2012, p. 545). Instead of meeting the demands of the "Day of Rage", King Abdullah issued a package "of welfare reforms sought to remove the sting from the Arab Spring, preventing economic issues from igniting protests across the Kingdom" (Mabon, 2012, p. 540). This "analysis [has] concluded that the Saudi monarchy has avoided short-term instability but longer-term pressures facing the Al Saud family

necessitate domestic reform" or the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will experience a depletion of both economic and social prosperities (Mabon, 2012, p. 544).

As previously stated, instability in Saudi Arabia is developed through economic troubles in the long run. Because of "the absence of meaningful direct taxation" and the presence of large subsidies, the economy could prove to be unstable in the long run once the oil reserves reach depletion (Pharaon, 2004, p. 350). The Saudi economy also has an overdependence on foreign labor, leading to a decreasing in Saudi employment. However, instability in the long run may also be found through the lack of educational reforms and from the lack of women's rights within the Kingdom. Much of the employment issues are from the lack of education preparing both women and men for the "realities of the global labor market" where "young affluent Saudis believed that they did not have to work, and if they did, that they need not apply themselves because they did not need to climb the corporate ladder. They would go straight from 'school to an executive suite'"(Baki, 2004, p. 5). The lack of meaningful participation in the workforce corresponds to the limited male and female participation in the public sphere and the problems associated with that lack of participation.

The strict control by the government over the Saudi people by "the regime has sought to crush any organization that possessed scope for revolution" (Mabon, 2012, p. 545). This strict control also limits citizen involvement and questions the Saudi statehood. "Because of the importance of families and the rudimentary nature of the Saudi Arabia political and administrative institutions for much of the country's existence, the population, it could be argued, has never had a clear sense of statehood" (Altorki 2000). The religious leaders have interpreted Islamic texts to govern the Saudi Kingdom, which causes for the lesser treatment of women. Due to reform efforts in the new millennia, "the government ran municipal elections for

the first time in 2005" however "women were not allowed to vote" though in recent years have been able to participate in limited aspects in the government (Mobaraki, 2007, p.114). Within Saudi civil society, the "Saudi family is a male-dominated institution with the important decisions still being made by men" because the "civil rules in Saudi society do not give women enough rights to be independent" (Al-Khateeb, 1998, p. 186). The patriarchal logic that dominates Saudi society offers rights and entitlements to certain members (elder males) and disempowers others such as women, thereby portraying the absence of women's participation in the public sphere and the lack of women's rights in Saudi Arabia.

The Saudi Arabian society possesses a male dominated public sphere that limits women's participation because a woman's "place" is not in the public sphere and is limited depending on a woman's husband because "the marriage contract gives the husband the right to control his wife's work and means of production" (Al-Khateeb, 1998, p. 178). Therefore, "Saudi women's involvement in the work sector remains limited" to the jobs that are seen as "unfit for males" (Pharaon, 2004, p. 356). Although their work remains limited, "Saudi women would rather earn less as government employees than accept domestic work" because of the independence associated with working in the government sector (Al-Khateeb, 1998, p. 182). According to the religious leaders, women should "be confined to the four wall of the home and should have no role to play outside" but that ideal is not a Quranic one for "as far as the Quran is concerned, a woman can play any role in life without violating the limits of Allah" (Pharaon, 2004, p. 356). However, that ideal is not practiced in Saudi Arabia and instead the woman's role is the maintenance of the family. Because of the importance of family in society women are defined by their husband and children, therefore "children are seen as a source of security for women" (Al- Kahteeb 2008). The limited rights that women possess in the public sphere proves

the lack of gender equality within the Kingdom and how education and female involvement in sport would help to raise the status of women within the Kingdom.

The issue of gender inequity in Saudi Arabia is defended by the religious leader's interpretations of the Quran, which therefore further restricts women within society. Because the Quran does not provide explicit information about the lesser of women's rights, the Saudi use of Wahabism produces those inequalities. "Wahabism, in strict orthodoxy, interpreted the Qur'an's warning about the mixing of sexes by tightly restricting any type of interaction among unmarried and unrelated men and women" therefore creates restrictions for women (Baki, 2004, p. 3). The lack of gender equality within Saudi society is translated into "a power imbalance with women being more vulnerable" (Mobaraki, 2007, p. 114). If the support for gender equity were to rise, a shift in Saudi society would occur because "support for gender equality is a key indicator of tolerance and personal freedom, which are closely associated with stable democratic regimes" (Rizzo, 2007, p. 1133). Progressive women in Saudi Arabia understand "the contradiction between the affirmation of the universality of women's rights and the principle of legal equality in the [United Nations] Platform for Action and the existence of contrary family laws" (Pharaon, 2004, p. 355). Although women recognize the imbalance of males and females in society, their further restrictions within society because of the forced dependence of women on a male and the lack of feminist movements restrict progressive movements to improve the status of women.

The forced dependence of women causes for the further restriction of women in Saudi society. Women are always at the ward of a family member because an "unmarried adult women is the ward of her father, a married woman is the ward of her husband and a widowed women is the ward of her sons" (Mobaraki, 2007, p. 115). Within the Muslim family order, the husband has an authority over his wife by his responsibility "for her economic support and on the wife's

obedience to her husband's authority" (Pharaon, 2004, p. 355). The restrictions are also evident by a Ministry of Health law "preventing woman being admitted to a government hospital unless she is accompanied by her male guardian" (Mobaraki, 2007, p. 115). Further restrictions in the labor market mentioned above contribute to the growing restrictions within the home due to the growing economy. Because of the increased wealth, houses are bigger and therefore a separation of the rooms for males and females are possible (Mobaraki 2007). Women are limited in their ability to improve their situation because "independent non governmental women's groups are missing from the conservative state. Saudi Arabia seems to share hostility to independent women's groups. Such groups are considered threatening to conservative regimes because they challenge the state's rigid control of women" (Pharaon, 2004, p. 363). The groups that women are permitted to form are limited to charitable organizations and "any other forms of associations, including self-help groups, income generating cooperative, and professional skilled volunteer teams are often prohibited by law" (Pharaon, 2004, p. 363).

The lack of organized women's groups in Saudi Arabia is concerning because of the limitations associated with the ban. This ban may be associated with the government's unwillingness to change and with their battle between tradition and modernity. An improved status of women in the public sphere would prove to be a threat to the male dominated society and force further competitions within the labor market. Despite the ban, women have formed groups over the internet such as the Women's Revolution Group in order to achieve a higher status in the public sphere. This group "began as an exchange of Twitter messages among like minded women, and now has more than 2,000 Facebook supporters. 'Women are treated like minors, except if they commit a crime,' the group said in a statement on Facebook, 'Then they are equal'" (Abu-Nasr 2011). The restrictions placed on women and the lack of a movement or

group for women to progress their status contributes for the necessity for education and sports to improve women's status in society.

Although an increase in female education would lead to an increase in the female quality of life, female "education is being used as a societal control" in order to continue the status quo of male domination in Saudi Arabia (Baki, 2004, p. 7). The restrictions placed on coeducation and on the subjects that women may study further limit women in Saudi society. In Saudi educational systems "coeducation is not allowed and the curriculum in girls' school has long been a less comprehensive version of that taught in boys' school" therefore proving that "the education system treats the sexes differently due to their different societal expectations" (Mobaraki, 2007, p. 115 and Baki, 2004, p. 5). Women are unable to study or work in fields other than "teaching and medicine" because of the restrictions placed on their education (Mobaraki, 2007, p. 115). The women who decide on a career in teaching does not guarantee equity in the field shown in the experiences of the female professor; "the role of the female professor was not taken as seriously as the role of the male professors" (Baki, 2004, p. 2). However, despite the restrictions placed on women's education, "women constitute 58 percent of all university graduates in Saudi Arabia" though "their educational background still does not guarantee them a job after graduation" because freedoms associated with education is not present within Saudi Arabia (Baki, 2004, p. 5). The high graduation rate of females from university also does not equate for the high education of all females in Saudi Arabia with "statistics reveal[ing] that about 30% of Saudi women are still illiterate" (Mobaraki, 2007, p. 115). If female education were at a higher importance in Saudi Arabia, an immediate effect on both the female quality of life and of all of society would occur.

An increase of access to female education in Saudi Arabia, as well as around the world, "seems to have an immediate, tremendous impact on women's perception of themselves, their reproductive and sex roles, and their social mobility expectations" therefore increasing society through an increase of the quality of life (Pharaon, 2004, p. 365). In Saudi Arabia, there is a high fertility rate because "there is no effective family planning programme supported directly by the Saudi Arabia government" therefore not a mandated education program (Mobaraki, 2007, p. 116). However, an increase in education would create a rippling effect of society because of the "inverse relationship between the number of children a woman has and her education, income and age at marriage" (Mobaraki, 2007, p. 116). By increasing access to education and the type of education, the "education and employment status" will improve and prove to be "good predictions of birth and spacing preference and the health of mothers and children" (Mobaraki, 2007, p. 116). An improved quality of life for females would also improve the lives of her children because of the values and ethics that will be brought onto the children through education. Therefore, an increase in an educated female population in Saudi Arabia would create an increase in the overall development of society because of the connection between education and the quality of life associated with that education. The empowerment associated with an education may also be found within sports, however access to female sports is more limited than of female education.

Although there is a nation wide lack of physical activity in Saudi Arabia for both males and females, the restrictions placed on female physical activity causes for a larger gap between male and female participation in sport, which further separates the female population from the male population. In this case, physical activity is defined as any type of activity that includes endurance, lifting, team sports, or other physical activities that require an increased heart rate.

The lack of physical activity may be attributed to the "massive urbanization and increased reliance on computer and telecommunication technology" and with the increased modernization in the Kingdom "further reductions in physical activity are projected for the coming years" (Al-Hazzaa, 2004, p. 663). Physical inactivity "was shown to be higher among the less educated Saudi males" and among females (Al-Hazzaa, 2004, p. 664). The physical inactivity present within the Saudi female population has repercussions for the society if actions are not made to improve the situation.

Because of women's forced segregation in Saudi society their physical inactivity is further restricted. The obesity rate for Saudi women is 44% because of women's "forced unhealthiness and bodily containment whereas men can enjoy healthy and sensuous freedom of movement" (Hargreaves, 2007, p. 82). The forced unhealthiness within the Saudi female population may be attributed to the media portrayal of Western female athletes and due to the lack of sustained and continued governmental support for the improvement of women physical activity. The "images of Western sportswomen are a significant part of the political tug-of-war over women's bodies … [because] conservative Muslim clerics view immodest dress - and specifically body-hugging, secularized sportswear - as thoroughly immodest and symbolic of the corrupt values and practices of the West" (Hargreaves, 2007, p. 88). Although women have previously been unable to participate in sport, the worsening health conditions for women have forced governmental intervention and as "recommended… a national policy encouraging active living and discouraging inactivity" has been established, which allows for an improved position of women in Saudi society, despite the limited female Saudi athletes (Al-Hazzaa, 2004, p. 668). The Saudi Arabian "government spends roughly £3 billion each year treating illnesses related to obesity" (Hinde 2015). Although "there is no ban on women going to the gym in Saudi or

playing sport … “sex segregation means that most private gyms - there are no public ones, really, outside of schools - are limited to men only, and that in order for women to have access to gyms, they need women-only facilities, of which there are few" (Hinde 2015). The limited access to women-only facilities may attribute to the lack of success of the two female athletes sent to the London Olympic games in 2012.

In 2012, two female athletes represented Saudi Arabia in the London Olympic games. However, neither athlete were reported on in Saudi Arabia and one of the two athletes was “branded by Twitter users back home as ‘The Prostitute of the Olympics’” despite wearing clothes abiding by the Saudi Olympic committee standards (Hinde 2015). One of the athletes representing Saudi Arabia grew up in the United States with an American mother and Saudi father who “wanted to represent Saudi Arabia at the sporting event as a way of inspiring women” (Hinde 2015). Although she finished last by over thirty seconds in the 800 meters, Attar “received a standing ovation for her efforts” (Hinde 2015). The lack of female representation at Olympic games have sparked criticism because of gender equality being a key part of the Olympic mission and brought question as to whether this Gulf kingdom should be barred from international competition until gender equality is met (Butler 2015). For future international competitions, Saudi Arabia “officials want to ensure any athletes they send are more competitive” such as in Rio 2016 where officials are planning to likely to send multiple athletes in taekwondo (Butler 2015). Initiatives to increase female participation is also from the International Olympic Committee who are striving “ to achieve 50% female participation in the Olympic Games as well as to ‘stimulate women’s participation and involvement in sport by creating more participation opportunities’” (Hinde 2015).

It is interesting to note that although Saudi Arabian female athletes were represented during the 2012 Olympics, neither athlete achieved standard marks to attend the games. Wojdan Shaherkani, a judo competitor, had only been practicing judo for two years before her first official competition at the Olympics. She attended the games after experiencing pressure from the Saudi Arabian government (because of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) threatening sanctions) and with strict rules on how to she must compose herself during the games. Sarah Attar, the track athlete, had never lived in Saudi Arabia before competing in the 2012 games. These athletes portray that although Saudi Arabia is allowing female athletes to compete in these international competitions, only one of the athletes lived in Saudi Arabia. In addition to the lack of female participation in international competition, Saudi Arabia proposed a male-only Olympic games for 2016, which the Olympic Committee immediately rejected. Therefore, the perceived representation does not equate change for female Saudi athletes and in order for an increased participation, further mandates from the IOC must be enacted, along with an increased education reform for mandatory sports and exercise in school.

The education reform that required "mandatory sports and exercise for Saudi girls" in school has the potential to improve the position of Saudi women in society because of the notoriety that the sport may provide and the skills gained by the participation in sport that will improve women's self-confidence and therefore well-being (Amos 2015). Women's participation in physical activity has also become possible through the opening of Glowfit, the "first licensed sport center for women", which was developed from Gloworks, a Saudi company that works at placing women in jobs across the Kingdom (Amos 2015). The small progression that has occurred for the betterment of women in Saudi Arabia portrays the hopeful gains that women may have through the mode of sport in their continuing increase of participation in the

public sphere. However, their goals are contradictory to the conservative rule and the women must therefore find supporters through their family in order to continue their progression.

The increasing globalization in the twenty-first century has had an impact on the progression of Saudi women. Saudi women, especially young Saudi women, are realizing their inequalities through testimonies from women around the world on the internet. These Saudi women are discussing their frustrations of the "issues such as why women are forbidden to drive, and why the sexes must remain segregated" through chat rooms and other forms of Internet discussion groups (Pharaon, 2004, p. 365). Women are fighting for "what they see as priority issues [such as] … legal rights, female suffrage, domestic violence, children's rights" stemming from their increasing frustrations "of denied access to many occupations and the ease with which men can divorce them, some Saudi Arabia women have begun to pool their financial resources as a hedge against insecurity" (Hargreaves, 2007, p. 89 and Altorki 2000). In order to incorporate the frustrations of women into sustained change within Saudi society, women must incorporate their family because of the importance that the family has within society. These "women must work from within family networks to achieve access to the resources" in order to "evolve a model of Saudi Arabia female citizenship that upholds her traditional interaction in a dense network of relationship with relatives and near-relatives" (Altorki 2000). Although the progress of women may be possible, the obstacles of critics within the conservative state will prove difficult to overcome, even those of reluctant women who believe in equal rights. Those "women believe that 'the achievement of any outstanding rights should be left to the 'natural process' of social change" (Pharaon, 2004, p. 364). In order to further progress women in Saudi society, small proposals for change may allow for an increased participation in sport and therefore for an increased participation within the public sphere.

Within the last decade, small changes have been made to advance women in both the labor and government sectors within Saudi Arabia because of the "strong pressure from the Saudi population for reform" (Mabon, 2012, p. 544). Strides within the labor sector was made where "the Ministry of Labour enforcing a royal decree stating that sales personnel, working in shops that sell lingerie, cosmetics, and other goods only for women, must be women" therefore increasing women's presence in the public sphere (Mabon, 2012, p. 544). This year, Saudi companies signed "to employ 5,300 Saudi women", which drastically changed the labor market raising the number of employed women from "50,000 in 2009 to 454,000 in 2013" ("Jobs in Saudi Arabia" 2014). An additional method to increase women in the work force is the building of the fourth women-only industrial city in Saudi Arabia in the city of Jeddah. This "city" will span five million square meters and "will need employees in various fields such as economic, industrial, medical and technical", thereby promoting female skilled labor in Saudi Arabia ("Not a Rumour" 2015). Similar to the structure associated with GlowWorks, "eTree" was built due to the huge demand for social media; a fifteen million dollar business "100 percent Saudi, 100 percent run by Saudi females" (Amos 2015). As of 2010, "Saudi women can now have female lawyers on family related court cases", improving their status in the public sphere ("Seizing the Key" 2010).

Additionally to the public sphere, Women have also made strides in government when a woman was appointed to the Deputy Minister of Education in 2009, being allowed "to participate in council elections from 2015" with "30 women were appointed to the Shura Council, a government advisory board chosen by the Saudi king" (Mabon, 2012, p. 545 and Amos 2015).

However, despite the reforms that have occurred, "meaningful reform is unlikely" because "there are often much louder voices that are vehemently opposed to the idea" of women having a higher place in society (Mabon, 2012, p. 545). Many Saudi women also insist that their status will not be improved within Saudi Arabia without the right to drive and view driving as "an essential stepping stone towards future progress" (Gibbons 2011). Women continue to fight for this improvement in lifestyle through online forums, namely "Women for Driving in Saudi Arabia" because "no Saudi law explicitly bans women from driving. It is part of a religious edict issued by the Islamic council that advises King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz" (Gibbons 2011). Although these reforms are minor, the improved status of women in Saudi Arabia will continue to rise, aided by the proposed improvement of female participation in sport.

An important question that must be addressed regarding question of women participation in the public sphere is if women *want* or *desire* for this increase to occur within society or if it is only a small amount of Saudi women desiring for this change with a backing of international pressure. The literature and articles that have been addressing this issue do not designate the amount of overall support for this movement of Saudi women. Perhaps, according to the previous mention of Leila Ahmed's argument, Saudi women do not wish to invite men into their female designated spaces, rather than their "intrusion" of male designated space. However, because of the lack of response regarding their opinion on their increase participation in the public sphere, one may assume that the increase may allow for improvements in their liberties, including education and the ability to drive. An increase of female presence in the public sphere may also improve female physical activity, thereby improving the women's self-confidence and well-being within society.

Due to the conservative ruling of Saudi Arabia, meaningful and sustainable reform for women will prove to be slow. However, the integration of mandated physical activity in female education proves to be an important and significant step for the progression of women because of the importance of physical education in regards to a women's self confidence and well-being, then transferred onto a woman's family. Therefore, in order for an increase of female participation in the public sphere, a further stress on the importance of physical education must be continued as well as an involvement of the family in order to create a larger support for the increased presence of women in the public sphere in Saudi Arabia.

Conclusion

Following the analysis of Iran and Saudi Arabia, the importance of Islam and the interpretation of the Quran within these two societies have proved to be used as a way to restrict women within the public sphere. Therefore, within the two Muslim majority nations, there is not gender equality. In order to reach gender equality through an increase of female participation in the public sphere, sport may be used as a mode of participation. However, sport in itself is not the entirety of modes necessary for this increase to occur. By also increasing female education, an increase of both educated women and women participating in sport may then lead to a population of women with increased self-confidence, sense of empowerment, and team building which then improves one's family for future generations.

This research is significant because it portrays how sport can be used in order to increase the status of women in the public sphere but also notes that this mode must be supplemented with other modes (i.e. education) and must be supported by the government, especially within Muslim majority nations. Many studies have been conducted on possible modes to improve women's status within society, notably within the public sphere. However, this study focused on cases that incorporated sport as a means for change, such that other groups may use sport as a mode for change (i.e. impoverished nations using sport to increase status). The significance of sport as a means for progression of women within a society is also portrayed in the United States through the implementation of Title IX.

Title IX was implemented in the United States in 1972 in hopes of increasing female participation in sport by requiring universities to offer the same amount in athletic scholarships to females as are offered to males. However, reaching gender equity does not equate reaching gender equality, such that an increase in female participation in numbers does not equal

involvement within sports and the public sphere. By simply adding the number of females in sports, their involvement in sports will not be equal to their male counterpart in terms of facilities, leagues, instructors, and fan bases. A similar sentiment can be made regarding women's participation in the public sphere. The increase of presence of women in the public sphere will not automatically create gender equality because of the current societal norms. Therefore, the United States is not an example of gender equality because of the skewed participation of women in sport through Title IX and due to many other countries possessing both increased gender equity and gender equality, which the United States must continue to work towards to achieve in the future.

In coming years, Iran and Saudi Arabia will continue to find hardships in modernizing their countries (and in considering themselves modern nations) with the current status of women. Therefore, in order to allow for an increase of female participation in the public sphere, there must be added policies in both Iran and Saudi Arabia to encourage more female participation and in order to continue to challenge tradition and the restrictions of women. For future research, other countries should be analyzed with different majority religious to determine if Muslim promotes the lesser participation in the public sphere or if it is limited to certain countries and their governments. In that research, other conservative religions should also be examined such as Orthodox Judaism and Mormon religions. An additional research opportunity may be found in the willingness (or unwillingness) of women to aspire for change in a Muslim society, through further analysis of women in Muslim majority countries. Leila Ahmed argued that women within the Muslim society are empowered by the division and therefore may not wish for a change in societal structure. Is this statement true among other societies?

The increase of gender equality within societies is important to reach because of the necessity to allow for equal participation in the public sphere. In order to reach that equality, all aspects of society must be incorporated, such as the government, increased education, and increased participation in sport. By increasing those factors, women may possess an increased status within society, allowing for a more developed and “modernized” society.

Bibliography

Abu-Nasr, Donna. (2011, April 4). Saudi Women Step up Demand for Equality; Activists Turn to Online Organizing to Push Reform. *The Charleston Daily Mail*. B9.

Ahmed, Leila. (1982). Western ethnocentrism and perceptions of the harem. *Feminist studies*, 521-534.

Ahmed, Parvez. (2013, December 23). Lack of Women Empowerment Contradicts Quranic Vision. The Huffington Post.

Al Hazzaa, H. M. (2004). Prevalence of physical inactivity in Saudi Arabia: a brief review.

Alinejad, Mahmoud. (2002). Coming to terms with modernity: Iranian intellectuals and the emerging public sphere. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, *13*(1), 25-47.

Al-Khateeb, S. A. H. (1998). Women, family and the discovery of oil in Saudi Arabia. *Marriage & family review*, *27*(1-2), 167-189.

Altorki, Soraya. (2000). The concept and practice of citizenship in Saudi Arabia.*Gender and Citizenship in the Middle East*, 215-236.

Amos, Deborah. (2015, March 10). Saudi Girls Can Now Take Gym Class, But Not Everyone Is Happy. NPR.

Amos, Deborah. (2015, February 25). Saudi Women Still Can't Drive, But They Are Making It To Work. NPR.

Baki, Roula. (2004). Gender-Segregated Education in Saudi Arabia: Its Impact on Social Norms and the Saudi Labor Market. *education policy analysis archives*,*12*(28), n28.

Breivik, Gunnar. (1998). Sport in high modernity: Sport as a carrier of social values. *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, *25*(1), 103-118.

Burnett, Cora. (2001). Whose game is it anyway? Power, play and sport. *Agenda*,*16* (49), 71-78.

Butler, Nick. (2015, March 21). Exclusive: Saudi Arabia Targets Taekwondo as Sport to Send Female Competitor to Rio 2016. Insidethegames.biz.

De Bode, Lisa. (2015, March 11). Iran Draft Bills Would Reduce Women to 'baby-making Machines'. Al Jazeera America.

Dehghan, Saeed Kamali. (2015, April 4). Iran's Deputy Minister for Sports: Yes, Women can Go to Watch Big Matches. The Guardian.

Duquin, Mary E. (1978). The androgynous advantage. *Women and sport: From myth to reality. Philadelphia: Lea & Febiger*.

Fisher, L. A. (2014). "Where are Your Women?" The Challenge to Care in the Future of Sport. *Sex Roles*, 1-11.

Frey, James H., & Eitzen, D. S. (1991). Sport and society. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 503-522.

Gheytanchi, Elham. (2001). Civil Society in Iran Politics of Motherhood and the Public Sphere. *International Sociology*, *16*(4), 557-576.

Haleem, M. A. (Ed.). (2005). *The Qur'an*. Oxford University Press.

Hamzeh, Manal, & Oliver, K. L. (2012). "Because I Am Muslim, I Cannot Wear a Swimsuit" Muslim Girls Negotiate Participation Opportunities for Physical Activity. *Research quarterly for exercise and sport*, *83*(2), 330-339.

Hargreaves, Jennifer. (2007). Sport, exercise, and the female Muslim body. *Physical culture, power, and the body*, 74-100.

Heide, Wilma S. (1978). Feminism for a sporting future. *Women and sport: From myth to reality*, 195-202.

Henderson, Karla A., & Gibson, H. J. (2013). An integrative review of women, gender, and leisure: Increasing complexities. *Journal of Leisure Research*,*45*(2), 115-135.

Hinde, Natasha. (2015, July 3). As Rio 2016 Draws Closer, When Will Discrimination End For Sportswomen In Saudi Arabia?. The Huffington Post.

Holland, Judith R., & Oglesby, C. (1979). Women in sport: The synthesis begins. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *445*(1), 80-90.

Hudson, Jackie. (1978). Physical parameters used for female exclusion from law enforcement and athletics. *Women and sport: From myth to reality. Philadelphia: Lea and Febiger*, *19*.

Iran Moves Rafsanjani Daughter to Solitary Confinement.(2015, December 21). BBC News.

Jain, Piyush. (2015, March 17). Women Become First Female Surfers in Iran. Clapway.

Jobs in Saudi Arabia: Pact Signed to Employ 5,300 Women. (2014, April 17). Saudi Gazette- Al Arabiya.

Kurzman, C. (2008). A feminist generation in Iran?. *Iranian Studies*, *41*(3), 297-321.

Lopiano, Donna A. (1993). Political analysis: Gender equity strategies for the future. *Women in sport: Issues and controversies*, 104-116.

Mabon, Simon. (2012). Kingdom in Crisis? The Arab Spring and Instability in Saudi Arabia. *Contemporary Security Policy*, *33*(3), 530-553.

Maxwell, Hazel, & Taylor, T. (2010). A culture of trust: Engaging Muslim women in community sport organizations. *European sport management quarterly*, *10*(4), 465-483.

McKay, Jim, Messner, M. A., & Sabo, D. (2000). *Masculinities, gender relations, and sport* (Vol. 11). Sage publications.

Mehran, Golnar. (2003). The paradox of tradition and modernity in female education in the Islamic Republic of Iran. *Comparative Education Review*, *47*(3), 269-286.

Mir-Hosseini, Ziba. (2006). Muslim women's quest for equality: Between Islamic law and

feminism. *Critical inquiry*, *32*(4), 629-645.

Mobaraki, A. E. H., & Soderfeldt, B. (2010). Gender inequity in Saudi Arabia and its role in public health.

Moghadam, Valentine M. (2014). Islamic feminism and its discontents: Toward a resolution of the debate. *Signs*, *40*(1).

Mojab, Sharzad. (2001). Theorizing the politics of 'Islamic Feminism'. *Feminist Review*,*69*(1), 124-146.

Not a Rumour after All! Saudi Arabia to Build Women-only Industrial City. (2015, March 26). Albawaba Business.

Pfister, Gertrud. (2003). Women and sport in Iran. *Sport and women: Social issues in international perspective*.

Pharaon, N. A. (2004). Saudi women and the Muslim state in the twenty-first century. *Sex roles*, *51*(5-6), 349-366.

Rizzo, H., Abdel-Latif, A. H., & Meyer, K. (2007). The relationship between gender equality and democracy: A comparison of Arab versus non-Arab Muslim societies. *Sociology*, *41*(6), 1151-1170.

Saliba, Therese. (2000). Arab feminism at the millennium. *Signs*, 1087-1092.

Seizing the Keys to the Kingdom. (2010, Fall). MS.

Sepp Blatter: It's Time to End Ban on Women at Matches. (2015, March 6). CNN.

Shaltut, M. (1948). The Koran and fighting. *as translated by Rudolph Peters from al-Qur'an wa-al-qital, Cairo: Matbaat al-Nasr and Maktab Ittihad al-Sharq*, 69-70.

Spaaij, R. (2014). Refugee youth, belonging and community sport. *Leisure Studies*, (ahead-of-print), 1-16.

Spears, B. (1978). Prologue: the myth. *Women and sport: From myth to reality*, 1-15.

Steel, J., & Richter-Devroe, S. (2003). The development of women's football in Iran. A perspective on the future for women's sport in the Islamic Republic. *Iran*, 315-322.

Tohidi, Nayereh. (2010). The Women's Movement and Feminism in Iran: A Glocal Perspective. *Women's Movements in the Global Era: The Power of Local Feminisms*.

Wushanley, Ying. (2004). *Playing nice and losing: the struggle for control of women's intercollegiate athletics, 1960-2000*. Syracuse University Press.