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the first woman to carry the Iranian flag during an opening ceremony of the Olympic Games. To many people, her presence and her flag carrying role symbolised a freedom for women that echoed the freedom for Australian aboriginal people symbolised so poignantly by Cathy Freeman's torch carrying at the Games in Sydney in 2000. However, freedom is a complex concept and, in relation to sport and leisure, Goodale and Godbey (1989:9) remind us that freedom is "freedom to" as well as "freedom from" and is almost always "relative freedom". In conclusion, global sports movements can bring East and West together but cultural differences that shape gender relations both within and between nations need to be acknowledged, understood and, where possible, accommodated, if we are to achieve the Olympic ideal:

The goal of the Olympic Movement is to contribute to building a peaceful and better world by educating youth through sport practised without discrimination of any kind with regard to a country or a person on grounds of race, religion, politics, sex or otherwise.

(The Olympic Charter)

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twelve canoeing events were open to men but only four were available for women; there were six men's fencing events but only four women's events; eight men's rowing events but only six for women, ten shooting events for men but only seven for women; and eight men's weightlifting events but only seven for women. In only one sport-swimming-was there one more women's event than than men's (synchronised swimming). Women competed in seven events for the first time. These were the modern pentathlon, Weightlifting, water polo, triathlon, tae kwon do, the pole vault and the hammer throw. But women were still prevented from taking part in events such as the 3,000 metres steeplechase and combative sports such as boxing and wrestling.

Of the 199 nations represented, 53 had teams comprising of 50 per cent or more female athletes although Great Britain's team was not in this group of 53 as women made up only 41 per cent of athletes. The number of teams without any women competitors decreased from 26 in Atlanta to 9 in Sydney. There was also a significant change in the number and proportion of women officials with an increase from 19 per cent in Atlanta in 1996 to 27 per cent in Sydney in 2000. Interestingly, the only area where women outnumbered men was that of volunteers (Olympicwomen.co.uk).

Only women carried the Olympic torch inside the stadium for the opening ceremony at Sydney. Seven women, all former Olympic gold medallists took the torch around the stadium with Debbie Flintoff-King handing the torch to Cathy Freeman to light the Olympic flame. At the Atlanta Olympics in 1996 Lida Fariman became the first Iranian woman to participate in the Olympics Games since the Revolution in 1979. More significantly, she became

and girls are adequately addressed.

Narional and International Co-operation

- To raise the awareness, support and understanding of the key issues relating to women's and girls' sport and physical activity.
- To adopt a multi-agency approach when working on strategies and actions that influence women's sporting and physical opportunities.
- To provide, distribute, share and promote positive solutions and examples of good practice relating to the promotion of opportunities, achievements and successes of women and girls' sport nationally and internationally.

(Women's Sports Foundation/Sports Council 1999)

Cultural Difference, Gender and the Plympic Ideal

Returning to the Olympic Games, we can see that the history of women in the wider world of sport and the narrower realm of the Olympics demonstrates the changing relationships between gender and sport even up to the most recent Games. The 2000 Olympics represented the centenary of women's official participation in the modern day Olympics and women's participation increased from 34 per cent in Atlanta to 38 per cent in Sydney where there were 3906 female athletes compared to 6416 male athletes. Women competed in 25 of the 28 sports at the Sydney Olympics although these sports included only 116 women's events compared to 166 men's events and accounted for only 41 per cent of available Olympic medals. In sports where women were permitted to compete there were often fewer events and therefore reduces chances of gaining medals:

- To promote positive images of girls' and women's sporting and physical activities in order to generate more positive attitudes to girls' and women's sports participation.

Facilities and Participation

- To increase participation by women and girls in a wide variety of sports, recreation and leisure opportunities.
- To ensure that the planning, design and management of facilities meets the needs of women in relation to childcare provision, accessibility, membership and participation.

High Performance Sport

- To enable women and girls with sporting ability to achieve sporting excellence in all areas of sport.
- To maximise the support, profile and opportunities available to elite British sportswomen.

Information and Resources

- To increase and maximise the resources available for women's and girls' physical activity and sport.
- To provide valued and current information and resources on women's and girls' sport and physical activity.
- To encourage positive images of women in all publicity, information and marketing materials and to ensure that the diversity of women from different backgrounds and with different abilities is appropriately portrayed.
- To ensure that resources are allocated equitably and a monitoring process is in place to ensure that the needs of women

and physical activity.

- To seek at least equal representation by women on decision-making bodies and in decision-making positions.
- To support the personal and career development of women in physical activity and sports administration and management, whilst providing more opportunities for women to access these areas of sport and physical activity.
- To support the personal and career development of women and at all levels in coaching, officiating, sports administration and management and to raise their profile.

Education, Training and Research

- To provide a continuum of personal development and training and research and education opportunities for women and girls in physical activity and sport.
- To ensure that those responsible for providing sport, recreation and physical education in schools and colleges deliver and equitable range of opportunities and learning experiences.
- To increase the knowledge and understanding of women's and girls' sport and physical activity through positive action focusing on women's experiences and increase opportunities for women to engage in sports and physical activity research.

Young People

- To increase opportunities for participation by girls and women in a wide variety of sport, physical activity and recreation, and to generate more positive attitudes to sport and physical activity by girls and young women.

Activity in 1999 in partnership with Sport England's Women and Sport Advisory Group. The *WSF National Action Plan* advocated a multi-agency approach to promoting sport and physical activity for women and girls and was designed to encourage sport-related organisations to identify targets and actions that would help to achieve sporting gender equity. The Plan identified eight inter-related areas where change was required to enhance opportunities for women and girls. A list of aims was highlighted within each target area together with a series of stated commitments to implementing the Plan by sport-related organisations. The areas identified and their associated aims were as follows:

Equality

- With state and governmental organisations, to work towards the elimination of discrimination against women and girls, raising awareness of the contribution that physical activity and sport has made and makes to society, and to the health and quality of life of women, girls and their families.
- To ensure that the issues surrounding women's and girls' sport are known, understood and supported, particularly by key influencers and decision makers.
- To Challenge instances of inequality and discrimination that women from different cultural, social and religious backgrounds experience in sport and physical activity, and to seek to bring about change.

Leadership

- To increase the number of women leaders at all levels of sport

The Women's Sports Foundation and the Development of Women's Sport

Although many organisations and policies outlined above have attempted to include women and girls within their remit sport is still dominated by men and boys. For this reason, national organisations such as the UK Women's Sports Foundation have been created to support women and girls in sport. The Women's Sports Foundation (WSF) is a non-governmental national organisation solely committed to improving and promoting opportunities for women in sport in all roles and at all levels. The WSF is a non-profit membership-based organisation dedicated to increasing opportunities for women and girls in sport, fitness and physical activity through advocacy, information, education, research and training. The organisation was founded in 1984 by women working in sport who were concerned about the lack of sport and recreation opportunities for women and girls and the low representation of women in sport coaching, sport management and the sports media including sports photography. Since the foundation of the UK Women's Sports Foundation many similar organisations have been established in other countries reflecting a global concern about gender equity in sport (Hargreaves, 2000: 217). For example, there is an active Women's Sport Foundation in Iran that represents women athletes, coaches and administrators and lobbies on behalf of Muslim women athletes' rights to participate in international competition.

Concerned with continuing under-representation and under-funding of women's sport, the Women's Sports Foundation published its *National Action Plan for Women's and Girls' Sport and Physical*

theory into policy and practice.

In 2000 Sport England launched their new strategy titled *A Sporting Future for All* aimed at increasing sports participation and enhancing performance. The strategy focused on schools and young people and continued to develop the established Tripartite theme of *more people, more places, more medals* embraced in the 1995 policy document *Sport: Raising the Game* which focused on schools, sporting culture, higher education, and excellence (Sports Council, 1997). *A Sporting Future for All* (2000) then embraced a series of programmes designed to encourage more people to take part in sport and to sustain their commitment to sport. These programmes were identified as *Active Schools*, *Active Sports*, and *Active Communities*. Within each programme a further series of measures was designed to fulfil the aims of the specific programme. For example, *Active Schools* introduced an initiative called *Sporting Ambassadors* aimed at introducing sports stars to primary and secondary pupils. Within this initiative sportswomen can be important role models in encouraging younger women and girls to participate and excel at sport. *Active Communities* developed a series of measures for encouraging sports provision and participation through the designation of *Sport Action Zone* in area experiencing social and economic exclusion. In these areas Sport England's existing training programme for sports administrators titled *Running Sport* was targeted at community groups to develop *Sport for all* and thus echoing the original Sports Council ethos formed two decades earlier.

Figure 2. Thirty years of policy for women and sport: a summary of key dates and policy developments

Year	Events and Policy Documents
1970	Sport England (Sports Council) formed
1982	<i>Sport in the Community: The Next Ten Years</i>
1987	<i>Sport in the Community: Which Ways Forward</i>
1988	<i>Sport in the Community: Into the Nineties</i>
1993	<i>Sport in the Community: New Horizons</i>
1993	<i>Women and Sport: Policy and Frameworks for Action</i>
1993	Brighton Women and Sport Conference
1995	<i>Sport: Raising the Game</i>
1997	<i>England. the Sporting Nation: A Strategy</i>
1998	Windhoek, Namibia Women and Sport Conference
2000	<i>A Sporting Future for All</i>

In addition, *Women and Sport: Policy and Frameworks for Action* provided clearer guidance for translating policy into action than the previous documents. This document mapped out a framework for change that addressed the significant elements in the organisational network influencing women and sport. These were identified as education, local authorities, the media, voluntary sector organisations for sport, women and young people in addition to the major public sector sports providers. The recognition of the wider social and cultural environment in which sport development took place represented a significant advance in translating sport-related

people over the age of 50. The series of documents recognised that "Sports equity is about fairness in sport, equality of access, recognising inequalities and taking steps to redress them. It is about changing the culture and structure of sport to ensure that it becomes equally accessible to everyone in society, whatever their age, race, gender or level of ability" (Sports Council 1993b: 4). The development of these policy documents between 1970 and 2000, and outlined in figure 2, illustrates the thematic priority of *Sport for All* from the early 1980s onwards. Acknowledging the need for women to be more involved in sport coaching and leadership positions, *Women and Sport: Policy and Frameworks for Action* emphasised that the Sports Council's aim was to "increase the involvement of women in sport at all levels and in all roles (Sports Council, 1993b: 6). The document identified six objectives designed to achieve this aim: first, to encourage equality of opportunity for girls to acquire basic movement skills and to develop positive attitudes towards an active lifestyle; secondly, to increase opportunities and reduce constraints to enable all women to participate in sport; thirdly, to increase opportunities and reach publicly recognised levels of excellence; fourthly, to increase the number of women involved in the organisation of sport and encourage them to reach senior positions; fifthly, to encourage all appropriate organisations to adopt gender equity policies and practices; and, finally, to improve communication about women and sport and establish appropriate communication networks.

participation by men had increased in both indoor and outdoor sport. Finding that the gap between women and men's participation in outdoor sport had actually increased during the period when women were being targeted as a priority group was extremely disappointing. the Sports Council was forced to conclude that "Sporting participation has grown in popularity and facilities have increased, but resources have been inadequate and progress insufficient to meet all the Council's targets" (Sports Council, 1988:1). The report recommended that the Sports Council's strategy for the next five years should be "organised around two broad themes which reflect the Council's principal objective - promoting mass participation, and promoting performance and excellence" (Sports Council 1988: 58). within this strategy for the next five years has two principal targets - young people and women (Sports Council, 1988:58). Such a policy has been criticised for ignoring women as targeting women as potential participants has been criticised for ignoring women as equally potential sports performers, leaders, developers, coaches and managers (Aitchison, 2000; Aitchison, Brackenridge and Jordan, 1999).

Recognising some of the limitations of previous policy initiatives, the Sports Council's next policy document *Sport in the Nineties: New Horizons* (Sports Council, 1993a) identified a vision for the future of sport where sports equity, including gender equity, would form a key element. In the same year the Sports Council published *Women and Sport: Policy and Frameworks for Action* (Sports Council, 1993b). This policy document formed one of a series aimed at increasing participation levels among priority groups such as young people and

development in the policy document titled *Sport in the community: The Next Ten Years*, published in 1982. It was here that women were first recognised as a "target group" for increased participation in sport and recreation and the document set targets for increasing women's participation in indoor sport by 70 per cent, and in outdoor sport by 35 per cent, both by 1993. In 1987, and half way through the period for which these targets had been set, then Spots Council undertook a review of progress and published its findings and recommendations in a second policy document titled *Sport in the Community: Which Ways Forward*. The document concluded that the gap between men and women's participation rates had declined. This was especially true of indoor sport where the health and fitness industry was beginning to have a positive impact on women's participation in sport with the advent of activities such as keep fit and aerobics. However, the Sport Council acknowledged that progress towards achieving *Sport for All* was slower overall than had been hoped and was hampered by a range of additional social, cultural and economic factors including social class, age, ethnic origin, and disability.

Sport in the Community: Into the Nineties - A Strategy for Sport 1988 - 1993 represented the next Sports Council policy document to address the *Sport for all* theme (Sports Council, 1988). The report concluded that "Nearly on million extra women have been attracted into indoor sport in the past five years - marginally short of the target, but nevertheless a major social phenomenon. However, the number of women participating in outdoor sport has fallen" (Sports Council. 1988:1). Over the same time period, 1983-1988,

the role of sport in developing human rights for women around the world and in enabling women to achieve their potential. At the 1998 conference delegates endorsed the *Windhoek Call for Action* "which builds on the Brighton Declaration to bring about more positive action to enhance the overall quality of women's lives using sport and physical activity as a vehicle" (Women's Sports Foundation/ Sports Council 1999:1). The two Women and Sport conferences then resulted in the publication of *Women and Sport: From Brighton to Windhoek - Facing the Challenge* (Sports Council 1998).

The Sports Council's involvement in both the *Brighton Declaration* and the *Windhoek Call for Action* could leave Western nations open to criticism that they are dominating the global discourse on women and sport. However, both conferences initiated dialogue and through dialogue comes a greater understanding of difference, less potential for the construction of "the Other" and more potential for co-operation. Such co-operation allows us to reflect on our own national sport policies and to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses.

"Sport for All": UK Sport Policy and Global Discourses of Gender and Sport

Sport England, as the English arm of the Sports Council is now known, has a twenty-year history of policy initiatives designed to increase opportunities for women in sport (Aitchison 2001, 2003). These developments in policy are embraced by the ideal of *Sport for All*, a principle enshrined in the former Sports Council's Royal charter. Women's sport emerged as a particular focus for

Sport Association and the formation of Women's Sport Associations in twelve other countries.

The *Brighton Declaration* was developed at a major international conference titled *Women and Sport and the Challenge of Change* hosted in Brighton, England by the English Sports Council in 1994. The conference represented the first world conference on women in sport and 280 policy and decision-makers from sport attended from 83 different countries. The two major outcomes from the conference were a set of principles referred to as *The Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport* and an *International Women and Sport Strategy* designed to provide a framework for developing sport for women. The *International Women and Sport Strategy* sought to develop a co-ordinated approach to women and sport in all countries in an attempt to share good practice around the world whilst respecting cultural difference. *The Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport's* overriding aim was "to develop a sporting culture that enables and values the full involvement of women in every aspect of sport" (UK Sports Council 1998:3).

The declaration addressed ten key areas designed to cover the entire organisational network of women and sport: equity and equality issues in society and sport; sports facilities; school and junior sport; developing participation; high performance sport; leadership in sport; education, training and development; sports information and research; resources; and domestic and international co-operation. In 1998, the second world conference on Women and Sport took place at Windhoek in Namibia, Southern Africa and brought together around 400 delegates from 74 countries. The conference highlighted

strengthen the ties between women working to promote women's sports in different countries".

In 1991 Iran initiated the first Islamic Countries Sports Solidarity Congress (ICSSC) in Tehran when representatives from 20 countries discussed women and sport. In 1992, following a further meeting, the Islamic Countries Women's Sport Solidarity Council (ICWSSC) was formed with Faezeh Hashemi as President and the following year, in 1993, the Islamic Countries Women's Sports Solidarity Games (The Solidarity Games) took place in Tehran with 407 athletes. The intention was to demonstrate that the three identities of women, sport and Islam are not incompatible and that no one should be excluded from one aspect of this triad simply because they are included in or identify with another. Hargreaves (2000:60) has gone as far as to argue that "Sport has become a metaphor for social change in Iran". The value of sport to Islamic culture, health, well-being and community development has thus become a key strand of government policy just at the time that many Western nations are beginning to appreciate more fully the health-related benefits of sport, exercise and physical activity to combat increasing obesity, heart disease, diabetes and other lifestyle-related illnesses of the West.

In 1995 Professor Nabila Abelrahman of Egypt chaired the First International Scientific Conference for Arab women and Sport in Egypt. The conference demonstrated the benefits of sympathetic international co-operation when it resulted in: the endorsement of the *Brighton Declaration*; the founding of the Arab Women and Sport Association; the establishment of the Egyptian Women and

the Games. According to Hargreaves (1994: 227) at the 1988 Seoul Olympics 42 of the 160 countries competing in the Games, and including Iran, did not send any women athletes. By 1996 the number of women competitors at the Games had increased so that 35 per cent of those taking part were women (Pfister, 2000: 13). According to Pfister (2000: 15) by the 1996 Atlanta Games in the US there were still 26 countries competing without any sportswomen. Many of these countries had excluded women competitors for cultural and religious reasons and the Atlanta Games sparked a controversial debate as to whether countries that did not send sportswomen-mostly Islamic nations-should be excluded from the Games. However, in a paper presented at the Second Scientific Conference for Arab Women's Sport, held in Egypt in 1997, Margaret Talbot, then president of the International Association of Physical Education and Sport for Girls and Women (IAPESGW), criticised the Atlanta lobby for speaking on behalf of Muslim women rather than consulting with them (Hargreaves, 2000). The domination of international sport politics by Western ideology, not to mention Western commercialisation and consumerism in the form of the "Coca-Cola Games" of 1996, has often served to marginalize the very people the global sports movement claims to represent. Such neo-colonialist attitudes have, in part, contributed to the formation of alternative international alliances both between East and West and within Muslim nations themselves and have resulted in women organising on a number of different levels to support sports development. As Hargreaves states (2000: 67) "regional and international conferences and organisations

Figure 1. The introduction of women's events into the Olympic Games

1900	Tennis
1908	Figure skating
1924	Fencing
1928	Athletics: 100 metres, High jump, Discus, Gymnastics
1932	Javelin
1936	Alpine skiing
1948	Athletics: 200 metres, Long Jump, Shot Put, Canoeing
1952	Equestrian, Nordic Skiing
1960	Speed skating
1964	Athletics: 400 metres, Volleyball, Luge
1972	Athletics: 1,500 metres
1976	Basketball, Handball, Rowing
1980	Hockey
1984	Athletics: 3,000 metres, Shooting, Cycling, Marathon
1988	Table tennis, Athletics: 5000 metres
1992	Judo, Biathlon
1993	Football
2000	Taekwondo, Triathlon (swimming, cycling, running)

Sources: Blue, A. (1988) *Faster Higher, Further: Women's Triumphs and Disasters at the Olympics and British Olympic Association (2000) Education Pack.*

Women and Sport Outside the Olympic Movement

Just as women's inclusion in the Olympics has changed over time, so too has the inclusion of women by specific countries represented at

at the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games, or in the number of women competitors, Germany fielded a strong women's team who won 13 of the 45 available medals. Instead of seeing this as a victory for women, however, some sports writers and academics have pointed out that women were merely used as part of the Nazi propaganda machine to demonstrate German superiority. Indeed Pfister (2000: 10) comments that the notion of "women's competitive sports ran counter to the principles of 'racial hygiene' and national socialist ideals of femininity".

By 1948 women took part in 19 events across five different sports at the London Olympic and by 1960 there were 30 events for women at the Rome Olympics. In athletics, the 400 metres race for women was not introduced until the 1964 Games, and the marathon and 3000 metres not until 1984. Figure 1 illustrates the timescale for the introduction of various women's events at the Olympic Games. Interestingly, in 1978 the all-male International Olympic Committee (IOC) decided not to let the 3,000 metres into the 1980 Moscow Olympics because it was "too strenuous for women" and the 5,000 and 10,000 metres were not introduced for women until the Seoul Olympics of 1988. Paradoxically, this was four years after woman had been permitted to run the much longer distance of the marathon (British Olympic Association, 2000).

won gold in this event. But the Games were not without controversy and in 1908 Emmeline Pankhurst, a leading English suffragette, threatened to disrupt the London Olympic Games if women were excluded. In the end, forty-three women representing four countries took part in three sports at the 1908 Games: figure-skating, tennis and archery. At the 1912 Stockholm Games in Sweden two swimming events and one diving event were included for women. By 1920 in Antwerp, 60 women competed out of a total of 2692 competitors. Four years later, at the first Winter Olympics in 1924, women's events were included from the outset (Hargreaves, 1994; British Olympic Association, 2000). At the 1928 Summer Olympics in Amsterdam, women's gymnastics and athletics were added to the programme for the first time. At these Games women competed in 12.8 per cent of events and female athletes comprised 9.6 per cent of all competitors. So, by the 1920s women were becoming increasingly visible in the Modern Olympic Games. This visibility, however, was restricted to Western women and the Games were an exclusively Western European affair.

Politics were not confined to nationality or religion, however, as gender politics also played their part. The inclusion of the women's track 800 meters at the 1928 Games was particularly controversial. The race was won by German runner Lina Radke but, when a number of women collapsed at the finish line as a result of their efforts to achieve outstanding performances, men declared the event too dangerous for women and banned the 800 metres from the Olympic Games until 1960 when it was reintroduced. Although there was no increase in the number of events included for women

part in a separate games, the Heraia, in honour of the goddess of the hearth and home, Hera. Like the men's Olympics, these games also took place every four years, with foot races being the only events (Aitchison, 2001). As the centuries passed, faith in the ancient gods and goddesses faded, the games lost much of their religious meaning, and disagreements about the staging of the Games took hold. In AD 394 Roman Emperor Theodorus banned all secular festivals, including the Ancient Games.

Following a 1500-year gap, the Modern Olympics were born. Throughout his life, the Frenchman Pierre de Coubertin, who founded the Modern Olympic Games in 1896, made it clear that he did not welcome women in the Olympic Movement. However, women were only excluded from all events at the first modern Olympic Games and, since that time, women have gradually become more visible in more events at the Olympics. Gertrude Pfister chronicles these developments:

As early as 1900, at the second Olympic Games in Paris, twelve women took part in the tennis and golf competitions-typical upperclass sports... It was not until 1908, when the Olympic Games were held in England ... that women's sport achieved a modest upswing, with women competing in four disciplines: tennis, sailing, ice-skating and archery. (Pfister, 2000:4)

The first woman to win gold in an all women event was Charlotte Cooper, a British tennis player who became an Olympic champion in 1900. In 1904 archery was added to the programme for women and in 1908 Lottie Dod, an all-round accomplished sportswoman,

Olympic Games until the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta in the US. The second section evaluates the role of women in sport outside the Olympic movement and explores the ways in which the Western domination of global sports movements such as the Olympic Games has resulted in the alternative organising and organisation of women's sport. The third section evaluates the ethos of "Sport for All" and the influence of discourses of UK sport policy in informing wider global discourses of gender and sport. The fourth section examines the relationship between the UK Women's Sport Foundation and the development of other Women's Sports Associations around the world. The final section of the paper concludes with a focus on cultural difference, gender and the 2000 Sydney Olympics and asks if the Olympic ideal can bring the Middle East and the West together without unduly compromising cultural difference, gender relations or sports participation and performance.

Women and the Olympic Movement

The connections and tensions between sport, gender and religious belief are not new. The Ancient Olympic Games, which took place in Olympia between 776BC and AD 393, began as part of a religious gathering that honoured the gods and goddesses of Greek mythology. Women were not permitted to compete in the ancient Olympic Games but girls were allowed to attend and, according to mythology, although a woman "priestess" was always required to witness the games any other woman breaking the rules decreeing her absence would be thrown to her death over a nearby cliff. Instead of attending and participating in the ancient Olympics, women took

**When East Meets West:
Cultural Difference, Gender and Global
Sports Movements**

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Abstract

Introduction

This paper seeks to evaluate the complex, competing and ever-changing discourses between cultural difference, gender and sport in relation to global sports movements. The paper raises a number of questions about inclusion and exclusion and, although it attempts to provide some answers to these questions, it does not claim to have all the answers or even that the answers offered by a Western academic are necessarily the most appropriate answers for academics and practitioners working in Iran. The role of a social scientist, however, is to problematise as much as problem solve with the latter dependent upon establishing links between academics and practitioners.

The paper is structured in five sections. The first section highlights the role of women in the Olympic movement from the ancient