

The negotiation of identities through sport participation of British Muslim females living in the United Kingdom

Item Type	Thesis or dissertation
Authors	Amjad, Habiba
Citation	Amjad, H. (2025) The negotiation of identities through sport participation of British Muslim females living in the United Kingdom. University of Wolverhampton. https://wlv.openrepository.com/handle/2436/625938
Publisher	University of Wolverhampton
Download date	2025-05-16 02:15:26
License	https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/
Link to Item	https://wlv.openrepository.com/handle/2436/625938

On THE NEGOTIATION OF IDENTITIES THROUGH SPORT PARTICIPATION OF
BRITISH MUSLIM FEMALES LIVING IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

HABIBA AMJAD

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of the University of Wolverhampton
for the degree of MPhil

February 2024

This work or any part thereof has not previously been presented in any form to the University or to any other body whether for the purposes of assessment, publication or for any other purpose (unless otherwise indicated). Save for any express acknowledgments, references and/or bibliographies cited in the work, I confirm that the intellectual content of the work is the result of my own efforts and of no other person.

The right of Habiba Amjad to be identified as author of this work is asserted in accordance with ss.77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. At this date copyright is owned by the author.

Signature: H.Amjad

Date: Originally submitted 25 February 2024 – Resubmission 7 November 2024

Abstract

This thesis aims to explore the negotiation of identities around sport among British Muslim females living in the United Kingdom. Sports have long been regarded as a significant aspect of culture and identity, providing individuals with opportunities for physical activity, social interaction, and personal growth. However, the experiences of British Muslim females living in the United Kingdom within the realm of sports are unique and often overlooked. This thesis delves into the multifaceted challenges and opportunities faced by British Muslim females in their participation in sports. This research seeks to understand the impact of cultural, religious, and societal expectations on the sports engagement of British Muslim females. It explores how these factors shape their identities and influence their decision-making processes regarding sports participation. Moreover, this research also examines the systemic barriers and discriminatory practices that hinder their access to sports opportunities in the United Kingdom. By examining the experiences and narratives of British Muslim females, this thesis aims to contribute to a better understanding of how identities are negotiated and shaped within the context of sport, specifically among British Muslim females living in the United Kingdom. The study shows that the women felt both included and left out in their sports and Muslim communities. They often felt like outsiders trying to fit into both their world of sports and religious community, leading to different beliefs and behaviours that made it hard for them to fully belong to either group. However, when playing sports that matched Islamic values, it helped bring the Muslim community closer together. So, these athletes experienced feeling welcomed but also excluded at times within their groups. The findings highlight how challenging it can be for Muslim athletes trying to balance their religion with being part of the sporting world, showing a bigger picture of how people struggle with fitting into different areas of life. These observations underscore the intricate interplay between identity formation and senses of belongingness.

Acknowledgments

I'd like to start by offering my sincere thanks to Allah for His unyielding support and guidance. His presence has been a guiding light on this path, and I am grateful for the strength He has bestowed upon me to achieve this milestone.

Immense appreciation goes out to my mentors and supervisors, Kay, Kath, and Richard. Your profound wisdom, unwavering support, and valuable guidance have been instrumental throughout my academic journey. Your mentorship has not only shaped my research endeavours but has also contributed significantly to my personal development.

A special acknowledgment to my family, particularly my parents. Your lifelong commitment to education and the drive to excel beyond our ancestors' accomplishments have been the bedrock of my ambition. Your confidence in me has fueled my determination. To my siblings, Heena and Muneeb, your gentle prods regarding my master's degree were the nudge I needed to make it to the finish line – I owe this achievement to your encouragement.

To my dear friends Zenib and Aisha, thank you for being my pillars during the most hectic times and for having faith in me when it mattered most.

I am profoundly grateful to each one of you for being my backbone, my inspiration, and my guiding lights.

Contents

Abstract	2
Acknowledgements	3
Contents	4
Auto Ethnography	7
Chapter 1- Introduction	12
Aims of the thesis	13
Chapter 2 - Literature Review	15
Introduction	15
Theoretical Framework	18
Concept of Whiteness in Sports	18
Whiteness in Sport for Muslim Women	21
Intersectionality	27
Intersectionality and Gender in Sport	28
Diaspora	31
Diaspora Theory and Identity Formation of Muslim Women in Sport	31
Generational Patterns of Muslim Women in Sport	34
Barriers	37
Structural and Institutional Barriers	37
Cultural and Religious Barriers	38
Racism and Islamophobia in Sport	47
Sport as a site of identity negotiation	50
Negotiating religious Identity	53
Negotiating Cultural Identity	55
Community and Diaspora Connections	57
Creating Hybrid Identities	58
Sport as Platform for Agency	65

Conclusion	66
Chapter 3 – Methodology	68
Introduction	68
Positionality	68
Reflexivity – The Process	71
Research Philosophy	71
Reflexivity – Locating the self in research	76
Research Design	78
Participation Access	79
Methods of Data Collection and Analysis	80
Ethical Considerations	84
Summary	85
Chapter 4 - Discussion	87
Introduction	87
Pen Portraits	88
Confronting Whiteness: Muslim Women’s’ Experience in Sport	90
Facilities and Sport Participation: Challenges for Muslim Women	90
The role of Education: Shaping Muslim Women’s’ Participation in Sport	96
Beyond the Veil: An Intersectional Analysis of Sport	105
Navigation Dress Codes: Muslim Women Athletes and Clothing Challenges	105
Challenging Stereotypes: Muslim Women in Sports	112
Breaking Boundaries: Negotiating Identity as Muslim Women in Sports	120
Chapter 5 – Conclusion	127
Significance of the Findings	127
Strengths and Limitations	130
Future Research	132
Recommendations	133

Bibliography	137
Appendix 1 – Ethical Approval	153
Appendix 2 – Research Questions	158
Appendix 3 – Interview Transcript	160

Auto-Ethnography

My Story

In many Asian families, there's a tradition of parents shaping their children's futures, often envisioning them in prestigious careers like medicine, law, or pharmacy. My own journey diverged from this path. Although teaching was initially seen as an acceptable choice for me, reflecting a suitable career for an Asian girl, my ambitions led me elsewhere. My adventure into the realm of sports began with childhood memories, particularly learning to ride a bike with my grandfather's guidance. This experience, among others involving family weekend activities and school sports, sparked my passion for physical activity and its societal impact. These early experiences laid the foundation for my eventual pursuit of a research master's in Sport Sociology, marking a departure from expected career paths and igniting a quest to explore the intersection of sports, society, and cultural identity.

Growing up in Walsall, my earliest and most vivid memories are intertwined with outdoor activities and sports, which were not just pastimes but essential parts of my upbringing. The joy of receiving my first bicycle from my grandfather marks a significant milestone in my journey, where the simple lessons of riding in our garden blossomed into a lifelong passion for sports. This passion was nurtured by my family's weekend traditions, which included frequent trips to the park for cycling and picnics, fostering not only a love for physical activity but also a sense of togetherness and adventure.

During my primary school years, physical education (PE) was a source of pure enjoyment, a time when the simplicity of playing games like 'stuck in the mud' or 'tag',

and impromptu rounders with family, felt like the essence of childhood. These activities, blending elements of cricket and football, mirrored my cultural hybridity—cricket representing my Asian heritage and football my British identity. This dual affinity reflects the complex interplay of parental influence and my own evolving identity, highlighting how sports became a medium through which I navigated my dual heritage.

As I transitioned to secondary school, the decision to attend Alumwell, a school distinct from my initial preference, introduced me to a diverse new world. Here, PE became more than just an activity; it was an avenue for self-expression and discovery. Despite the physical separation of genders for PE classes, which allowed me to not wear my headscarf during activities, I encountered moments of self-doubt and cultural introspection, especially as I grappled with my identity as a British Asian girl. These experiences during my formative years were crucial in shaping my approach to sports, challenging stereotypes, and reaffirming my commitment to my cultural and religious practices.

Navigating through sixth form and beyond, my relationship with sports and physical education continued to evolve. The freedom of not wearing a uniform, the opportunity to express my personality through fashion, and the continued engagement in sports activities underscored my growing independence and quest for identity. The challenges of wearing a headscarf during physical activities, particularly in circuit training, did not deter me; rather, they reinforced my resilience and dedication to both my faith and my passion for sports.

These early experiences laid the groundwork for my eventual decision to pursue a degree in sport studies at the University of Wolverhampton, a choice that was met with support from my parents. This pivotal moment marked the beginning of a journey that not only challenged conventional expectations for an Asian Muslim girl but also allowed me to explore the sociological dimensions of sports, setting the stage for my research master's in Sport Sociology.

Upon reaching the pivotal stage of university decisions, the path ahead was fraught with complexity, particularly as an Asian Muslim girl. The contemplation of my future career was shadowed by uncertainty and the weight of cultural expectations. Initially inclined towards teaching, I questioned whether this was a genuine passion or a path of least resistance, influenced by societal norms for British Asian girls.

The turning point came when "sport" caught my eye in the university course listings. This discovery led to a heart-to-heart with my parents, exploring the possibility of pursuing sport studies with a focus on its sociological aspects. Remarkably, my parents supported my unconventional choice without question, trusting in my judgment. I chose the University of Wolverhampton, a decision that was not only practical but also marked the beginning of an extraordinary journey.

My university experience commenced with a blend of excitement and apprehension. Walking into my first class, I immediately felt out of place, being the only Asian girl, and notably, wearing a headscarf. This moment of stark realization underscored my unique position and the uncharted territory I was about to navigate. Despite feeling like the

"odd one out," this experience fostered a sense of pride and identity, as I became accustomed to being a trailblazer on my course.

The contemplation of a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) brought its own set of dilemmas. The decision between primary and secondary education was clouded by the daunting prospect of being one of the few Muslim female P.E. teachers, a path that seemed both challenging and pioneering. However, the uncertainty surrounding my readiness and the alignment of this path with my true passion led me to a different route.

Opting against the immediate pursuit of a PGCE, I was drawn towards exploring sport development, community engagement, and inclusion through a master's degree. This choice was motivated by a desire to build self-confidence, embrace my minority status, and potentially serve as a role model for other British Asian girls. The pursuit of my master's was not just an academic endeavour but a mission to contribute a unique perspective to the field, bridging cultural insights with sports sociology.

Upon reflection, it becomes clear that the journey to higher education and beyond was a maze of decision-making, especially for someone at the crossroads of multiple identities: Asian, Muslim, and a woman. The choice of university and course was not merely academic; it was a statement of identity, a step into uncharted waters. Opting for sport studies at the University of Wolverhampton was a decision made with the support of my parents, who, while perhaps surprised, did not question my choice. This marked the beginning of an extraordinary chapter, challenging societal norms and expectations.

The transition to university life was a culture shock, not least because of the realization that I was venturing into a field not typically associated with someone of my background. The first day was a whirlwind of emotions, underscored by the immediate awareness of being the only Asian girl, and conspicuously so, in a headscarf. This moment was pivotal, not for making me feel isolated, but for instilling a sense of pride and determination. It highlighted my unique position and the potential to pave the way for others like me.

Facing the prospect of a postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE), I grappled with the choice between primary and secondary teaching, the latter appealing due to my passion for physical education. Yet, the idea of being one of the few Muslim female P.E. teachers, navigating the complexities of wearing a headscarf in such a role, was daunting. This introspection led me to a critical decision: I was not ready for a PGCE. My passion lay elsewhere, prompting me to explore sport development, community engagement, and inclusion at a master's level. This decision was driven by a desire to gain confidence, accept my minority status, and potentially inspire other British Asian girls. It underscored the importance of having Muslim researchers who can offer insider perspectives to their culture, thus enriching the literature and contributing to a more inclusive understanding of sports sociology.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

British Muslim females living in the UK face unique challenges and barriers when it comes to participating in sports. These challenges are often rooted in cultural, religious, and societal expectations that shape their identities and limit their access to sports opportunities. Studies have shown that traditional gender roles, cultural norms, and religious practices, combined with mainstream sports culture in the UK, create an environment where British Muslim women encounter both visible and invisible barriers to sport participation (Ben et al., 2016; Hargreaves, 2013) According to Ahmed and Khan (2016), cultural and religious considerations play a significant role in shaping the participation of British Muslim women in sports. These considerations often lead to limited opportunities and understanding from sports providers, as many facilities and clubs do not offer the privacy and gender segregation that some Muslim women seek for cultural and religious reasons. This lack of accommodation can deter Muslim women from participating in sports outside of school settings, where they feel more comfortable and where accommodations are more likely to be made.

The negotiation of identities in sport is a complex process for British Muslim females. Their identity as British Muslims intersects with their gender, cultural background, and religious beliefs, shaping their experiences and opportunities in sports. British Muslim women often face challenges in accessing sports opportunities due to societal expectations and cultural norms. These expectations and norms often dictate the roles and activities deemed appropriate for women, which can significantly limit their participation in sports. This intersectionality of identities further complicates their

engagement in sports as they navigate between cultural, religious, and societal expectations. Furthermore, the literature suggests that British Muslim women may experience marginalization and double marginality in relation to their participation in sports. This experience of double marginality is partly a result of the absence of a self-sufficient ethnic community of British Muslim women, which further compounds their marginalized position in both wider British society and the Muslim community.

Addressing the barriers and challenges faced by British Muslim females in sports requires a multi-faceted approach. It involves addressing societal expectations and cultural norms that limit their participation, creating inclusive and culturally sensitive sports facilities and programs, and promoting awareness and understanding of the unique needs and preferences of British Muslim women in the sports sector. Additionally, the lack of representation and visibility of British Muslim women in sports further perpetuates the existing barriers. In conclusion, the negotiation of identities in sport for British Muslim females is a complex process shaped by their intersectional identities as British Muslims. The challenges they face in accessing sports opportunities are influenced by societal expectations, cultural norms, and religious beliefs.

Aims of the Thesis

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the dynamics of identity negotiation in sports contexts among British Muslim females residing in the United Kingdom. This study will examine different facets such as identity development, hybrid identities, the

impact of religion, cultural influences, and ethnic origins. It will analyse the challenges and barriers faced by British Muslim women in participating in sports, as well as how they navigate and negotiate their religious and cultural identities within the sporting realm. This research aims to fill a gap in existing literature by exploring the negotiation of identities around sport among British Muslim females living in the United Kingdom.

The research aims to answer the following two research questions:

1. Do British Muslim Females feel that they face barriers when accessing sports?
2. What negotiation strategies do British Muslim females use to create their sporting identities?

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Introduction

'South Asian' refers to individuals originating from countries in South Asia, including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and the Maldives. This terminology is widely used in academic research to categorise participants based on their ethnic and cultural heritage (Ratna, 2011; Azzarito and Hill, 2013). Given this academic precedent, I will therefore use the term 'South Asians' when referring to my participants to maintain consistency and clarity in defining their regional and cultural identities.

In recent years, the participation of Muslim women in sport has gained increased visibility, both in academic research and in the public sphere. This growing attention is largely due to the complex and multifaceted ways in which Muslim women navigate their identities within sporting contexts. For Muslim women, sport is not merely an arena for physical activity but a contested space where issues of religion, culture, gender, and race intersect. The act of participating in sport, particularly in Western countries, often requires Muslim women to negotiate their religious and cultural identities while simultaneously contending with the norms and expectations of the broader society. This process of identity negotiation is influenced by a range of factors, including cultural expectations, religious beliefs, and the pressures of assimilation into host societies. Therefore, the study of Muslim women in sport offers valuable insights into how identities are shaped, contested, and redefined in the diaspora.

The concept of identity negotiation is crucial for understanding the experiences of Muslim women in sport, as their participation is often marked by tension between different aspects of their identity. Muslim women athletes must frequently balance the requirements of their religious beliefs—such as modesty, often symbolised by the hijab—with the demands of a sporting culture that can be exclusionary and hostile to religious and cultural difference (Hargreaves, 2000; Ratna, 2011). At the same time, they are subject to wider socio-political discourses surrounding Islam and gender, which further complicate their involvement in sport. This thesis aims to explore the processes by which Muslim women negotiate their identities in sport, focusing on the intersection of religion, gender, and race.

The thesis will employ a theoretical framework based on key concepts from diaspora studies, intersectionality, and identity theory. Brah's (1996) concept of "diaspora space" is particularly useful in understanding how Muslim women in sport navigate multiple, often conflicting identities. The diaspora space, as Brah (1996) explains, is a site of intersection between different identities, shaped by both the homeland and the host society. In the context of sport, this space becomes a crucial arena where Muslim women negotiate their cultural, religious, and national identities. Similarly, the theory of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) will be used to examine how identities of race, gender, and religion intersect within the experiences of Muslim women. Intersectionality can reveal multiple axes of oppression that Muslim women face, particularly in Western sports environments, where issues of racism and sexism often intersect with Islamophobia.

Sport, as a cultural and social institution, provides a unique platform for the negotiation of identity. As Carrington (2010) argues, sport is not just a space for physical competition but a site of cultural production, where identities are constantly constructed and contested. For diasporic communities, including Muslim women, sport can serve as a means of maintaining connections to their cultural heritage while also facilitating integration into the host society. However, participation in sport can also expose individuals to exclusionary practices, such as racism, sexism, and cultural discrimination. Muslim women, in particular, often face unique challenges in the sporting world, as they must navigate the intersecting pressures of religious observance, cultural expectations, and the structural barriers of the sports industry (McDougle, 2014).

This thesis is not only timely but also essential, given the increasing participation of Muslim women in global sporting events and the visibility of athletes such as Ibtihaj Muhammad, the first Muslim American woman to compete in the Olympics in 2016 while wearing a hijab. The experiences of these athletes highlight the complex processes of identity negotiation that Muslim women must engage in to participate in sport. Moreover, understanding these processes is critical for developing inclusive sports policies and practices that recognise and accommodate the diverse identities of Muslim women athletes.

By examining the ways in which Muslim women negotiate their identities in sport, this thesis contributes to broader discussions about gender, religion, and race in contemporary society. The study will provide valuable insights into how Muslim women

athletes balance competing identities and navigate the various social, cultural, and political pressures they face.

Theoretical Framework

Concept of Whiteness in Sports

"Whiteness" refers to a social construct that establishes white identity as the normative or dominant position within society. Rather than being merely about skin colour, it encompasses a range of privileges, power structures, and societal norms that benefit those identified as white. According to scholars such as Frankenberg (1993), whiteness operates on three interrelated dimensions: it is a location of structural advantage, a standpoint from which white people look at themselves and others, and a set of cultural practices that often remain invisible or unmarked.

Whiteness, as an ideology, thrives on maintaining and reinforcing the dominance of white people and perspectives in various societal institutions. This includes the privileging of white cultural norms and values, often at the expense of marginalising other racial identities (Bonilla-Silva, 2003). Moreover, Leonard (2009, p.95) argues that whiteness is maintained through what he calls "the denial of coevalness," a process whereby white people claim cultural and historical superiority, thus framing others as perpetual "others" in the social order.

In the context of sport, whiteness can be seen through the institutional and cultural dominance of white norms, values, and leadership within sporting organisations and media representations. Whiteness within sport is not merely about the racial makeup of players but extends to how sports are governed, discussed, and celebrated. Carrington and McDonald (2001) argue that the idea of sport being a "meritocratic"

space, where success is based solely on effort and talent, often obscures the racial inequalities that are structurally embedded within it. For instance, the disproportionate representation of white individuals in leadership roles, such as coaches, managers, and board members, in major sports leagues underscores the structural advantages associated with whiteness. These disparities become even more pronounced when considering the inclusion of women and individuals from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds in these positions, as their underrepresentation further perpetuates the marginalisation of these groups.

This is particularly evident in Ward, et al's (2023) research that explored how BAME (Black Asian Minority Ethnic) athletes, particularly in British university sports, must "play by white rules." Ward et al (2023) explains that BAME athletes often face additional pressures to conform to white cultural expectations and norms to avoid racial stereotyping, such as being labelled an "angry Black man." This illustrates how whiteness operates as a structural norm that governs behaviour, silencing resistance to racial abuse and perpetuating racial hierarchies within sport (Ward et al., 2023).

Moreover, whiteness in sport is often naturalised and rendered invisible. Hylton (2009 p.78) notes that sports media frequently highlight the "natural athleticism" of Black athletes while attributing strategic and intellectual prowess to white athletes. This dichotomy reinforces stereotypes about race, with whiteness associated with intellect and leadership, while Blackness is linked to physicality and instinct. These representations contribute to the broader racial hierarchies within society.

Ward's findings further this argument, particularly his focus on the "Keep You Guessing" phenomenon, where subtle and often ambiguous forms of racism in sport make it difficult for non-white athletes to prove or challenge discriminatory behaviour. The structural nature of whiteness ensures that these forms of racism often go unchallenged, making them an ingrained part of the sporting environment (Ward et al., 2023)

Additionally, whiteness is maintained through the cultural narratives and traditions associated with sports, which often reflect white, middle-class values. Hylton and Lawrence (2015) discuss how the historical development of sports like cricket, rugby, and football in the UK has its roots in imperialism and colonialism, where sporting ideals were aligned with the "civilising mission" of British colonial power. These legacies continue to shape the racial dynamics in contemporary sports. This is evident today where we still see clear racism within football.

Ward et al (2023) echoes this in his study of British university sports, where he found that the sporting culture is overwhelmingly perceived as a "white space." Non-white students in his research reported feeling "othered" or fetishised, reinforcing the notion that sport, like other institutions, is shaped by the historical and ongoing dominance of whiteness. His work calls for more direct engagement with whiteness by sporting institutions, urging white athletes and organisations to actively participate in dismantling these structures rather than passively benefiting from them (Ward et al., 2023).

In practice, this means that while many sports have become more diverse in terms of player demographics, the structures that govern these sports remain overwhelmingly white, both in the UK and globally. The representation of athletes in media coverage also tends to reinforce whiteness as the norm, with white athletes often portrayed as role models for desirable behaviour, while athletes of colour are either exoticized or problematised (Hartmann, 2000). The findings of Ward et al (2023) add to this understanding by showing that these patterns exist even at the university level, where non-white athletes are forced to navigate and conform to a system that is implicitly governed by white cultural values.

The concept of whiteness, when applied to sport, reveals the racialised power structures that underlie what is often considered a "neutral" or "objective" space. By recognising how whiteness shapes not only the participation but also the governance, representation, and consumption of sport, we can better understand the racial dynamics at play. As Hylton (2009) emphasises, challenging whiteness in sport requires a critical interrogation of how race and privilege continue to operate both on and off the field, as well as in the broader socio-cultural context in which sport exists.

Whiteness in Sport for Muslim Women

Whiteness in sport, as both an ideology and structural norm, affects not only racial minorities but also women, particularly Muslim women, who experience the intersection of racialisation, gender, and religious discrimination. The institutional and cultural dominance of whiteness in sports has historically marginalised women of colour, especially Muslim women, whose religious and cultural practices often clash with norms embedded in Western sports environments (Maxwell et al., 2020; Jawad et

al., 2011). This intersectional marginalisation reflects broader racial, gender, and religious hierarchies within sports systems, where Muslim women face barriers related to their visibility and dress codes, such as the hijab, which further exacerbates their exclusion (Dworkin & Messner, 2002). Crenshaw's (1989) theory of intersectionality highlights how various forms of oppression overlap, creating unique forms of marginalisation. For Muslim women, whiteness in sport reinforces racial hierarchies and embodies cultural norms that exclude or marginalise those who do not conform, such as those who wear the hijab or adopt modest dress.

Recent studies, including Agergaard, and Botelho (2022), have explored how Muslim women athletes in Western contexts navigate their identities while facing exclusion from mainstream sporting cultures. Agergaard et al. (2022) show how globalisation creates opportunities but also deepens marginalisation, particularly for Muslim women, who are often expected to assimilate into Western norms of dress and behaviour. Whiteness in sport also manifests through expectations of cultural conformity, marginalising Muslim women who express their identity through religious practices. Ratna (2011) notes that Muslim women athletes in Britain are pressured to conform to white, Western ideals of femininity and athleticism, creating a sense of exclusion. This expectation leads to structural exclusion from sports, particularly where there is conflict between dress codes and religious values.

Islamophobia in sports refers to the discrimination, prejudice, and stereotyping of Muslim individuals or communities within the context of sports. This can manifest in various ways, including biased treatment, exclusion, negative portrayals, or outright hostility toward Muslim athletes, coaches, and fans. It is often rooted in broader societal

prejudices against Islam and Muslims, which are exacerbated in the sports world due to visibility, media portrayals, and certain cultural and religious practices that may be perceived as "other." (Khan & Bukhari, 2020; Shah, 2015).

Islamophobia, intertwined with whiteness, complicates the experiences of Muslim women in sport. Fleming (2015) argues that Muslim women are often viewed as "other" due to visible markers of faith, such as the hijab, reinforcing the idea that white, secular identities are the norm in sport. McGee and Akbar (2021) document how Islamophobia has become ingrained within sports governance and media representation, particularly in the post-9/11 era, when Muslim women athletes have faced increased scrutiny and exclusion. Additionally, Aitchison (2021) notes that media portrayals of Muslim women athletes tend to focus on their "otherness" rather than their athletic abilities. This is evident in the coverage of athletes like Ibtihaj Muhammad, where her hijab became the focal point rather than her sporting achievements.

Another significant aspect of how whiteness in sports media shapes the representation of Muslim women is through their near-absence from mainstream coverage. This exclusion reflects broader societal biases, where BAME particularly Muslim women, are either overlooked or their identities are highlighted in ways that emphasise their perceived difference from the white, secular norm. Ratna (2011) observes that when Muslim women athletes are covered in British media, there is often disproportionate focus on their religious identity—especially the wearing of the hijab—framing them within a broader cultural or religious clash, rather than focusing on their sporting achievements. This emphasis on religious identity reinforces the narrative that Muslim women's identities are incompatible with mainstream sport (Fleming, 2015).

Consequently, Muslim athletes may feel compelled to conform to the norms of whiteness, diminishing their religious identity to gain acceptance (Agergaard & Botelho, 2022).

This phenomenon is documented in sports such as football, where athletes of colour and Muslim women have struggled for visibility and acceptance. Ratna (2011) points out that Muslim women in British football often find themselves marginalised due to religious practices, especially where dress codes conflict with Islamic values. For instance, the hijab is often viewed as incompatible with sport, creating barriers for Muslim women in navigating these spaces. Whiteness in sports media extends beyond Muslim women, reflecting a broader pattern of racialised representations in the UK. White athletes are frequently depicted as the ideal standard-bearers for their sports, celebrated for their work ethic, discipline, and strategic intelligence (Hylton, 2009). In contrast, athletes of colour are often portrayed as naturally gifted but lacking the discipline or intellectual sophistication to excel (Carrington & McDonald, 2001). These racialised portrayals further entrench stereotypes about who is seen as a "natural" leader or strategist.

An example of this is seen in British cricket. While players of South Asian heritage excel in amateur leagues, their representation dramatically diminishes at the professional level. This is not merely a reflection of ability but may also be indicative of systematic discrimination within cricket structures, where white athletes are more often perceived as fitting for leadership roles, and athletes of colour are confined to support roles or positions with less visibility (Long et al., 2009). These dynamics show how whiteness

governs not just participation but also who is deemed fit for strategic, intellectual roles in sports leadership.

Additionally, whiteness is reinforced through sports media coverage, which tends to amplify these stereotypes. In football, Black athletes are often praised for their speed and strength, while their white counterparts are celebrated for their leadership and intelligence (Billings et al., 2015). Hylton (2009) and Ratna (2011) suggest that this dichotomy reflects broader societal narratives linking whiteness with intellect and strategy, while non-white athletes are portrayed as purely physical beings.

Muslim women athletes use various strategies to subvert whiteness in sport, such as creating alternative athletic spaces free from the pressure to legitimise white normativity, forming alliances with fellow non-white athletes, and actively lobbying sporting organisations to change ingrained practices. Hylton's (2009) strategies of resistance "test and challenge" the white athletic norm. However, as Ahmad (2011) explains, separate spaces can serve as safety nets but may reinforce the worst aspects of segregation. While non-segregated sports spaces enable Muslim women athletes to meet as a community, they can also deny them a role in the wider multicultural community, which is the goal.

Sports organisations can either solidify or resist the whiteness historically embedded in sports. Critics highlight how many organisations in Western countries have been slow to consider the specific circumstances of Muslim women athletes or to develop inclusive policies. Ratna (2011 p.5) critiques the "beige and bland" leadership of sport organisations, which design policies "without paying attention to difference." Muslim

women in sport continue to face significant institutional barriers shaped by whiteness and Islamophobia. Benn, Pfister, and Jawad (2010) argue that sport's governing bodies frequently fail to accommodate the religious needs of Muslim women, particularly concerning dress codes and scheduling. Recent studies, such as those by Silk et al. (2020), emphasise that despite growing attention to diversity in sport, systemic issues remain that prevent meaningful inclusion. To address these, Hylton and Lawrence (2020) call for broader policy changes, including inclusive sports policies that accommodate religious dress, provide spaces for prayer, and account for religious observances such as Ramadan.

The research on whiteness in sport and its impact on Muslim women reveals the intersectional complexities of race, religion, and gender. The challenges facing Muslim women athletes are clear, as are the strategies they employ to navigate and challenge the structures of whiteness. Much more work is needed to make sports inclusive for Muslim women and other marginalised groups.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality, a concept introduced by Crenshaw (1989), is crucial for understanding how Muslim women in sport experience multiple, intersecting forms of oppression. Crenshaw developed intersectionality as a critique of feminist and anti-racist frameworks that failed to account for the specific experiences of individuals who belong to more than one marginalised group. For Muslim women in sport, intersectionality is essential for understanding how their identities are shaped by the intersection of race, religion, and gender. Crenshaw (1989) argues that individuals who occupy multiple marginalised identities often face unique forms of discrimination that cannot be fully understood through a singular focus on one aspect of identity.

In the context of sport, Muslim women are subject to multiple forms of discrimination, including sexism, racism, and Islamophobia (Samie, 2013). This intersection of oppressions creates unique barriers to participation, as Muslim women must navigate both the patriarchal norms of their own communities and the exclusionary practices of the broader sporting world. Ratna (2011) highlights how British Asian Muslim women in football, for example, are often subjected to both racist and sexist abuse from their peers, coaches, and spectators. This abuse is rooted in the intersection of their gender, race, and religion, which positions them as doubly marginalised within the sporting world.

Intersectionality is also important for understanding how power operates within sports institutions. As Carrington (2010) notes, the global sports industry is dominated by Eurocentric norms and values, which often marginalise individuals who do not conform

to these standards. For Muslim women, this marginalisation is compounded by the fact that they occupy multiple marginalised identities, which intersect to produce unique forms of discrimination. Crenshaw's (1989) framework allows us to see how these intersecting oppressions shape the experiences of Muslim women in sport and how they negotiate their identities in response to these power dynamics.

Moreover, intersectionality highlights the importance of agency in identity negotiation. Despite the multiple barriers they face, Muslim women in sport are not passive subjects of discrimination. Instead, they actively negotiate their identities in ways that challenge the dominant narratives of both their communities and the broader society (Ahmad, 2011). This process of negotiation is often marked by acts of resistance, as Muslim women use their participation in sport to assert their agency and challenge the structures of power that seek to marginalise them (Ratna, 2011).

Intersectionality provides a critical framework for understanding the lived experiences of Muslim women in sport. It allows for a more nuanced analysis of how multiple forms of identity intersect to shape their experiences of discrimination and empowerment. By focusing on the intersection of race, gender, and religion, intersectionality reveals the complex and dynamic ways in which Muslim women navigate their identities in the sporting world (Samie, 2013; Fleming, 2014).

Intersectionality and Gender in Sport

In the context of sport, the intersectional identities of Muslim women are often marked by the simultaneous experiences of sexism, racism, and Islamophobia. As Ratna (2011) notes, Muslim women athletes frequently navigate multiple layers of

discrimination, which are compounded by their visibility as women of colour and practising Muslims. The intersection of these identities produces unique challenges that cannot be fully understood through a singular focus on gender or race alone. For example, while women in sport often face gender discrimination (Hargreaves, 1994; Scraton et al., 2005), Muslim women are also subjected to additional scrutiny due to their religious practices, such as wearing the hijab or adhering to modesty codes. This adds a further layer of marginalisation, as their religious identity is often viewed as incompatible with the norms of Western sports institutions (Ratna, 2011; Benn et al., 2011).

The intersectionality framework is not only useful for analysing the barriers to participation but also for understanding how power operates within sports organisations and structures. The global sports industry has long been dominated by Eurocentric values and norms, which privilege certain identities over others (Carrington, 2010; Burdsey, 2006). In this context, Muslim women, particularly those from racialised backgrounds, are often positioned as 'outsiders' within the sporting world (Amara, 2012). This exclusion is not only based on their gender but also on the racialised and religious identities that mark them as different from the dominant culture (Ahmad, 2011; Agergaard and Sørensen, 2009). Crenshaw's (1989) framework allows us to see how these multiple axes of identity intersect to produce unique forms of discrimination, which in turn affect Muslim women's access to opportunities and their overall experiences in sport.

Furthermore, intersectionality highlights the importance of agency in identity negotiation. While Muslim women in sport face structural barriers, they are not passive

subjects of discrimination. Instead, they actively negotiate their intersecting identities in ways that challenge the dominant narratives of both their communities and the broader society. As Walseth (2006) argues, Muslim women's participation in sport often involves a delicate balance between maintaining their cultural and religious identities and navigating the expectations of the host society. By engaging in sport, they challenge the patriarchal norms within their own communities, as well as the Islamophobic and sexist attitudes they encounter in the broader sports world (Samie, 2013).

Crenshaw's (1989) theory of intersectionality is, therefore, a valuable framework for understanding the lived experiences of Muslim women in sport. It allows for a more nuanced analysis of how multiple forms of identity intersect to shape the specific challenges these women face, while also highlighting their agency in negotiating these identities. By focusing on the intersection of race, gender, and religion, intersectionality provides a deeper understanding of the barriers to participation faced by Muslim women, as well as the ways in which they resist and redefine these barriers through their involvement in sport (Fleming, 2014; Benn et al., 2011).

Diaspora

Diaspora Theory and Identity Formation of Muslim Women in Sport

Diaspora theory, as articulated by Brah (1996), offers a critical framework for understanding how Muslim women in sport navigate their complex identities. Brah's (1996) concept of the 'diaspora space' transcends the traditional notion of diaspora as merely the dispersal of people and instead emphasises the cultural, political, and social negotiations that occur where multiple identities intersect. For Muslim women in sport, the diaspora space represents a crucial site where they must navigate the intersections of religion, gender, race, and national identity. Diaspora is not just about the experience of migration but involves a complex process of identity formation, where individuals must continuously negotiate their connections to both their homeland and their host society. This theory is highly relevant to understanding how Muslim women balance their roles as both members of diasporic communities and participants in mainstream sports institutions.

Brah's (1996) notion of diaspora space enables an exploration of how Muslim women in sport negotiate their identities within the broader context of globalisation and transnationalism. Cohen (1997) notes that globalisation has intensified the movement of people across borders, resulting in more fluid and hybrid forms of identity. For Muslim women in the diaspora, participation in sport often involves navigating this fluidity as they balance their religious and cultural identities with the norms and values of the host society. Thus, the sporting arena becomes a key site of identity negotiation, where Muslim women contend with the often-contradictory expectations of their home

communities and the Eurocentric values of mainstream sports institutions (Burdsey, 2006).

Diaspora theory also highlights the power relations embedded within diaspora spaces. Identity formation is not an isolated process but is influenced by broader structures of power, including colonialism, racism, and patriarchy. For Muslim women in sport, these power dynamics manifest through exclusionary practices such as Islamophobia and racism, which position them as 'outsiders' within the sporting world (Amara, 2012). These exclusionary practices are not limited to the host society but may also emerge within their own communities, where traditional gender norms and expectations can limit their participation in sport (Walseth and Fasting, 2003).

Diaspora theory is essential to understanding the complexities of identity formation for communities experiencing displacement or migration. While 'diaspora' has historically referred to the forced dispersion of groups such as the Jewish, African, or Armenian diasporas, Brah (1996) argues that the modern conceptualisation extends beyond forced migration to encompass voluntary migration, transnationalism, and the creation of new identities across borders. Thus, diaspora refers not only to the scattering of people but also to the processes of identity construction that occur in the spaces between the homeland and the host society.

Identity formation in diasporic communities involves a dual process of connection and disconnection. Diasporic individuals may maintain a strong attachment to their homeland, expressed through cultural practices, religious observances, and political affiliations, providing continuity amidst dislocation (Clifford, 1994). Simultaneously,

identity is shaped by the host society, which imposes its own cultural norms and expectations, creating a situation where diasporic communities must navigate the pressures of assimilation while preserving their cultural and religious identities (Cohen, 1997).

This tension is particularly evident for Muslim women in the diaspora. Brah (1996) notes that identity is not fixed but is characterised by hybridity, a blending of cultural elements from both the homeland and the host society. This hybridity is an active negotiation of identity in response to the host country's social and political conditions. For Muslim women, this negotiation involves navigating intersections of race, religion, and gender, as their identities are shaped by both their heritage and the pressures of living in a predominantly non-Muslim society. The post-9/11 context has further politicised Muslim identity, positioning communities as 'other' against Western cultural norms (Burdsey, 2010). Consequently, Muslim women in the diaspora frequently experience Islamophobia and gendered racism, complicating the process of identity formation (Mirza, 2013).

Sport offers a unique context for exploring the dynamics of diaspora and identity formation. As a cultural institution, sport provides opportunities for integration but also spaces of exclusion, making it a site where the tensions of diaspora are frequently expressed. For Muslim women, sport becomes a contested space where their identities as women, Muslims, and athletes intersect (Hargreaves, 2000). Participation in sport requires Muslim women to navigate multiple layers of identity, often in the face of structural barriers such as racism, sexism, and Islamophobia. However, sport also

offers a platform to assert their agency and challenge dominant narratives about Muslim women both within their communities and in the broader society.

The sporting arena becomes a space where Muslim women can redefine and assert their identities despite the challenges they face. Diaspora theorists such as Clifford (1994) and Cohen (1997) further emphasise that identity formation in the diaspora is shaped by the transnational connections linking individuals to both their homeland and host society. For Muslim women in sport, these transnational connections manifest through maintaining religious practices, cultural customs, and political allegiances. These connections are constantly renegotiated in response to changing social conditions. The sporting arena provides a space where these transnational identities are performed and contested. As Muslim women compete in Western sports institutions while adhering to their religious and cultural beliefs, they engage in a complex process of identity negotiation that reflects the broader dynamics of diaspora.

Generational Patterns of Muslim Women in Sport

Muslim women's participation in sport has undergone intergenerational changes shaped by new generations' cultural revaluation and broader sociopolitical standards. Early generations of migrant Muslim women faced barriers to sport participation based on distinctions between women's and men's roles, cultural expectations, and religious interpretations. Physical activity often belonged to the domestic sphere, and adherence to modesty requirements limited participation in sports that involved specific types of dress or action in public spaces (Walseth and Fasting, 2003).

Subsequent generations, especially those raised in Western societies, experienced greater opportunities for sports participation, using it as a means to assert individuality and challenge traditional gender roles. Many second-generation Muslim women adapted their participation to cultural and religious sensitivities, such as engaging in hybrid sports or forming women-only leagues (Kay, 2006). The third and younger generations benefit from increased visibility of Muslim women athletes, such as Ibtihaj Muhammad and Zahra Lari, who serve as role models demonstrating the potential for successful engagement in sports while maintaining cultural and religious identities. This greater visibility has transformed attitudes toward sports, leading to higher participation levels and a more fluid understanding of cultural identity among younger Muslim women (Benn, Pfister, and Jawad, 2010).

Diaspora theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the complex and often contradictory ways in which Muslim women in sport negotiate their identities. By framing their experiences within the broader context of diaspora, it is possible to better understand the dynamic and fluid nature of identity formation in transnational spaces. Through sport, Muslim women navigate pressures from both the homeland and host society while asserting their agency in the face of intersecting challenges related to race, religion, and gender. Their participation not only challenges dominant narratives but also serves as a means of empowerment, creating spaces where they can redefine their identities on their own terms.

As Muslim women continue to engage in sports, the field of Muslim women's sports is growing stronger, marked by greater visibility and acceptance. This progress reflects not only the resilience and ingenuity of Muslim women but also the gradual

transformation of cultural and gender norms within both their communities and the broader society. As each generation builds upon the achievements of the previous one, Muslim women's participation in sport will continue to evolve, creating new possibilities for empowerment, integration, and identity formation.

Barriers

Research on the experiences of Muslim women in sport has highlighted the unique challenges they face as they navigate the intersection of cultural, religious, and social expectations (Walseth, 2006; Benn et al., 2011). These challenges are compounded by the fact that Muslim women often occupy multiple marginalised identities, which expose them to intersecting forms of discrimination. Ratna (2011) provides a detailed analysis of how British Asian Muslim women negotiate their identities in football, highlighting the ways in which they challenge both the patriarchal norms of their communities and the racist and Islamophobic attitudes of the broader society (Burdsey, 2010; Ahmad, 2011).

Structural and Institutional Barriers

Muslim women face a range of structural and institutional barriers that limit their participation in sports. One of the primary challenges is the lack of gender-segregated spaces in sports facilities, which is crucial for many Muslim women who adhere to Islamic guidelines regarding modesty. Without access to gender-segregated environments, where they can participate without being observed by men, many Muslim women are discouraged from engaging in sports (Walseth and Fasting, 2003). Additionally, mainstream sports institutions often lack the necessary accommodations, such as modest sportswear or prayer spaces, further excluding Muslim women from full participation (Amara, 2012; Benn et al., 2011).

Beyond infrastructural limitations, Muslim women also face exclusionary practices embedded within the governance of sports organisations. These organisations often

operate according to Eurocentric norms that do not consider the cultural and religious needs of Muslim participants (Carrington, 2010). For instance, international governing bodies such as FIFA and the International Olympic Committee have, at various points, restricted the wearing of the hijab in competition, which has posed a significant barrier for Muslim women athletes (Sofi, 2021). Although these restrictions have been overturned in recent years, the very existence of such policies highlights the ongoing structural exclusion Muslim women face (Burdsey, 2010).

Furthermore, institutional racism and Islamophobia within sports organisations exacerbate these barriers. Muslim women, particularly those from racialised communities, often encounter covert and overt discrimination, limiting their access to leadership roles and decision-making processes (Samie, 2013). The underrepresentation of Muslim women in key leadership positions within sports organisations perpetuates the cycle of exclusion, as their voices and perspectives are often absent in the development of policies that could support their participation (Benn et al., 2011).

Cultural and Religious Barriers

The cultural context in which Muslim women engage in sports plays a significant role in shaping their opportunities and experiences. Many Muslim women come from cultures that value traditional gender roles, often imposing constraints on their participation in physical activities. These cultural norms delineate acceptable roles and behaviours for women, leading to restrictions on their engagement in sports.

The term 'culture' is multifaceted, encompassing a range of interpretations. Giddens (1989) defines culture as the values, norms, and material goods produced by a specific group, while Collier (2017) views culture as consisting of complex, interconnected elements. Jandt (2004) adds that culture shapes how groups think, behave, and interact with others, with these cultural norms being transmitted through socialisation. However, essentialist views of culture, which portray ethnic groups as homogenous and static, have been criticised (Chatterjee, 1986). Bhabha (1994), through his post-colonial lens, redefines culture as a fluid process, where different voices compete for dominance in shaping social norms.

This dynamic understanding of culture resonates with the experiences of Muslim women in sports, who navigate conflicting cultural expectations regarding their participation. Yuval-Davis (1997) contends that gender relations are central to the construction of cultural identities, and these relations are often perceived as essential components that must be preserved across generations. The negotiation of these gendered cultural norms is particularly salient for British Asian women, who frequently navigate multiple cultural affiliations in different social contexts, such as home, school, and public life (Prieur, 2004).

Previous research has tended to homogenise British Asians, overlooking the diversity within this population and assuming that their engagement in sports is limited due to cultural constraints. However, British Asians include a broad range of individuals, spanning second and third generations, various religious affiliations such as Islam, Hinduism, and Sikhism, and diverse countries of origin including India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. This complexity means that generalising their experiences

in sport can obscure the unique challenges and opportunities faced by different subgroups. This perspective has led to the perception that British Asian women are unlikely to participate in sports, reinforcing stereotypes about their lack of interest in physical activities (Ramji, 2003). However, Carrington and McDonald (2001) argue that research on ethnic minority groups in sports should move away from focusing on cultural peculiarities and instead address the broader societal structures that shape their experiences. This includes recognising the multiplicity of cultural affiliations held by British Asian women and the dynamic ways in which they negotiate their identities.

In recent years, the concept of hybrid identities has become increasingly relevant for understanding the experiences of British Asians in sports. Kalra et al. (2005) discuss 'stylish hybridity', a phenomenon where hybrid identities are commodified and represented in mainstream media. The film "Bend It Like Beckham" exemplifies this, depicting the tensions experienced by a young British Asian woman who seeks to pursue her passion for football despite the traditional expectations of her family. However, while the film presents a celebratory view of hybrid identities, it often simplifies the lived experiences of ethnic minorities, reducing their struggles to marketable narratives (Bhabha, 1994).

Burdsey's (2015) work on British Asians in football provides a more nuanced analysis of these hybrid identities. He argues that British Asians often navigate dual cultural expectations, with their participation in sports challenging the binary distinction between tradition and modernity. For example, British Asian football fans may display symbols of both British and Asian cultures, such as wearing English football shirts alongside Pakistani cricket jerseys, reflecting their hybrid identities (Burdsey, 2015).

Similarly, Fletcher's (2012) research on British Asian participation in cricket explores how sporting allegiances, such as supporting "Anyone but England," reflect broader issues of multiculturalism, citizenship, and hybrid identities within the British Asian community. Fletcher (2012) highlights how these identities are shaped by the interplay between diasporic affiliations and local experiences, illustrating the fluid nature of cultural identity in the context of sport. These expressions challenge the assumption that ethnic minorities must choose between their cultural heritage and mainstream British culture, demonstrating the fluidity and complexity of identity formation in multicultural societies.

The dynamic nature of culture and the multiplicity of cultural affiliations held by British Asian women are frequently overlooked in discussions about sports participation. As such, researchers must explore the diverse experiences of these women to uncover the nuanced ways in which they negotiate their cultural identities. Ramji (2003) argues that a deeper understanding of the intersection between culture, religion, and sport is essential for grasping the challenges and opportunities faced by Muslim women athletes. By examining these dynamics through the lens of hybrid identity, scholars can better appreciate the complexity of identity formation in multicultural and religiously diverse settings.

Cultural expectations within Muslim communities can also act as significant barriers to Muslim women's involvement in sport. Traditional gender roles, particularly in conservative communities, often prioritise a woman's role in the household over her involvement in public life, including sports (Kay, 2006). In many Muslim-majority countries, patriarchal norms dictate that women's public activities, such as sports

participation, are not in keeping with their domestic responsibilities (Walseth, 2006). Even in more liberal communities, there can be significant resistance to women's participation in sports that are seen as too 'masculine' or inappropriate due to their physical nature or clothing requirements (Ratna, 2011).

Additionally, the pressures to conform to cultural norms around femininity and modesty can limit the types of sports that Muslim women feel comfortable participating in. Many sports, such as swimming or gymnastics, which require form-fitting attire, clash with Islamic principles of modesty, creating cultural dissonance for Muslim women seeking to engage in these activities (Amara, 2012). As a result, these women may face criticism both from within their own communities and from the broader sports environment, further reinforcing the barriers to participation (Benn et al., 2011).

In the diaspora, Muslim women also contend with broader societal pressures, particularly in Western contexts where Islamophobia remains pervasive. Public discourse around Muslim women in sport often portrays them as oppressed or passive, reinforcing harmful stereotypes that discourage participation and limit visibility (Samie, 2013). This societal marginalisation, coupled with internal community pressures, creates a double burden for Muslim women, who must navigate both cultural and external barriers to their involvement in sport (Burdsey, 2010).

Cultural expectations and gender roles also play a significant role in shaping the experiences of Muslim women in sport. In many Muslim-majority communities, traditional gender roles dictate that women should prioritise their roles as mothers, wives, and caretakers, often limiting their involvement in public life, including sport

(Kay, 2006). These cultural norms, which are reinforced by patriarchal structures within Muslim communities, can create significant barriers to participation for Muslim women who wish to engage in sport. Walseth (2006) argues that many Muslim women in the diaspora face resistance from their families and communities when they attempt to participate in sport, as their involvement is often seen as inappropriate or as conflicting with their domestic responsibilities.

This cultural resistance is particularly evident in research on Muslim women in Western societies, where participation in sport is often viewed as a challenge to traditional gender roles. Ratna (2011) discusses how British Asian Muslim women, for example, often face opposition from their families and communities, who view sport as a 'Western' activity that conflicts with their cultural and religious values. This resistance is further compounded by the fact that many sports, particularly contact sports such as football or rugby, are seen as masculine and therefore inappropriate for women. This results in a double marginalisation for Muslim women, as they must navigate both the patriarchal norms of their communities and the broader gendered norms of the sporting world (Elling et al., 2001).

However, despite these barriers, many Muslim women use sport as a platform to challenge traditional gender roles and assert their agency. Walseth (2006) notes that for some Muslim women, participation in sport represents a form of empowerment, allowing them to challenge the gendered expectations of their communities and create new identities that transcend traditional norms. This aligns with Brah's (1996) concept of "diaspora space," where identity is constantly negotiated in response to both internal and external pressures. By participating in sport, Muslim women in the diaspora are

able to construct hybrid identities that allow them to navigate the cultural expectations of their communities while also engaging with the broader sporting culture (Brah, 1996).

Moreover, the negotiation of gender roles in sport is not limited to Muslim women in the diaspora. In Muslim-majority countries, where cultural norms may be more rigid, women are also finding ways to challenge traditional gender roles through sport. Amara (2012) highlights the increasing participation of women in sports in countries like Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, where female athletes are using sport as a platform to assert their rights and challenge patriarchal restrictions. This demonstrates that the negotiation of gender roles in sport is not confined to the diaspora but is a global phenomenon that reflects broader struggles for gender equality and women's rights within Muslim communities (Benn et al., 2011).

One of the key challenges faced by Muslim women in sport is the tension between religious observance and participation in a secular sports culture. For many Muslim women, modesty is a central aspect of their religious identity, and this is often expressed through the wearing of the hijab or modest clothing (Kay, 2006; Samie, 2013). However, sports institutions in Western societies are often structured around norms that conflict with these practices, creating significant barriers to participation (Walseth and Fasting, 2003). Walseth (2006) notes that Muslim women athletes frequently struggle to find appropriate sports facilities that accommodate their religious needs, such as gender-segregated spaces or the provision of modest sportswear (Amara, 2012; Kay, 2006). Sports facilities were conceived and designed to accommodate religious needs. The absence of these considerations can limit

participation in sport and concurrently position Muslim women as outsiders within the sporting world (Ahmad, 2011; Burdsey, 2010).

In recent years, the role of religion in shaping sports participation, particularly for Muslim women, has garnered increased scholarly attention (Benn, Pfister and Jawad, 2010; Amara, 2012; Ahmad, 2011). Researchers have explored how religious values and practices influence not only the opportunities available to Muslim women but also the ways in which they engage with sports. For example, the decision to wear the hijab or engage in specific sports settings has been studied as a means of negotiating religious identity in secular spaces (Walseth and Fasting, 2003; Hargreaves, 2000). These studies highlight how Muslim women navigate both cultural expectations and religious obligations while asserting their right to participate in physical activities.

Religion profoundly influences the beliefs, values, and behaviours of individuals, extending into various aspects of social life, including sport. For Muslim women, the intersection between religious observance and sports participation presents unique challenges, especially in contexts where secular norms dominate public life. The hijab, as a visible marker of religious identity, has sparked controversy in the sporting world, reflecting broader tensions between religious expression and secular institutional regulations (Al-Khalidi, 2021).

A notable example of this tension occurred in 2003 during a women's football match in Australia. A player from the Melbourne Women's Soccer Club was barred from playing due to her hijab. The referee chose to publicly identify this player's otherness by asking, "is something wrong with your head?" (Turnball, 2007). This comment underscores the dominance of normative exclusion of muslim women who wish to wear a hijab and to

play football. The Victorian Soccer Federation eventually intervened, allowing the player to compete in her hijab (BBC News, 2004). However, such rulings have not been universally adopted. For instance, the Ansar Women's Football Club, a predominantly Muslim team in East Glasgow, faced similar barriers when the Scottish Women's Football Association prohibited their participation if they wore their hijabs (Turnball, 2007).

While FIFA lifted its ban on the hijab in 2014, inconsistencies remain in the enforcement of such regulations across different national associations (Hamzeh & Oliver, 2012). This demonstrates the ongoing struggle to reconcile institutional rules with the religious practices of Muslim women athletes. Al-Khalidi (2021) highlights that these tensions are part of a larger debate concerning religious expression in secular spaces, particularly in sports, which are often perceived as neutral but are, in fact, deeply embedded within Western secular values.

Moreover, scholars have pointed to the role of multiculturalism and citizenship in these debates. Bagguley and Hussain (2005) argue that sports often reflect a binary distinction of 'us versus them', where minority identities, such as those of Muslim women, are either accepted or excluded based on their alignment with mainstream cultural norms. The Runnymede Trust's report (2000) similarly contends that Britishness is racially coded, linking national identity to Englishness, thereby marginalising those who do not conform to this narrow conception of citizenship (Fortier, 2000). Hall (2000) adds that politicians must redefine British citizenship to include ethnic minorities, rather than treating them as perpetual outsiders. These exclusionary practices directly impact Muslim women's participation in sport, as their

religious practices are often viewed as incompatible with the secular ideals of athletic competition.

In addition to these structural barriers, individual Muslim women must navigate complex personal and cultural negotiations. Ratna (2011) highlights how many young Muslim women in Western societies blend Islamic principles of modesty with Western fashion trends. One participant in her study noted that it is wrong to assume Muslim women are uninterested in how they look; she enjoyed mixing sporty clothing with Islamic garments, such as pairing jeans and t-shirts with a hijab. This hybrid fashion reflects the broader phenomenon of cultural fusion, where Islamic and Western styles are blended to create new, hybrid expressions of identity (Modood, 1997). Wright et al. (2016) argue that this 'stylish hybridity' serves as both a tool for empowerment and a means of negotiating participation in sports, as Muslim women assert their individuality while maintaining their religious commitments.

Racism and Islamophobia in Sport

Muslim women in sport often face social challenges related to their visibility as women of colour and practising Muslims. Ratna (2011) highlights the experiences of British Asian Muslim women in football, who are frequently subjected to both racist and sexist abuse from their peers, coaches, and spectators (Burdsey, 2010; Samie, 2013). This abuse is often rooted in stereotypes about Muslim women, which portray them as passive, submissive, or oppressed (Hargreaves, 2000; Kay, 2006). These stereotypes are reinforced by the media, which often exoticises or marginalises Muslim women athletes, positioning them as anomalies within the sporting world (Burdsey, 2010; Ratna, 2011).

Racism and Islamophobia are significant factors that shape the experiences of Muslim women in sport, particularly in Western societies. As Burdsey (2010) notes, Muslim women in sport often face a double burden of discrimination, as they are subjected to both racial and religious marginalisation. Islamophobia, in particular, plays a critical role in shaping how Muslim women are perceived and treated within the sporting world. Muslim women are often viewed through the lens of Western stereotypes that portray them as oppressed, passive, or submissive, and these stereotypes are further compounded by Islamophobic discourses that position Islam as incompatible with Western values (Samie, 2013).

The presence of Islamophobia in sport is not limited to individual acts of discrimination but is often institutionalised within sports organisations. Carrington (2010) argues that sports institutions in Western societies are dominated by Eurocentric norms and values, which marginalise individuals who do not conform to these standards. For Muslim women, this means that they are often excluded from full participation in sport, as their religious and cultural practices are seen as incompatible with the secular norms of Western sports (Burdsey, 2010). This institutionalised Islamophobia creates significant barriers to participation, as Muslim women must navigate not only individual acts of discrimination but also the broader structures of exclusion that shape the sporting world (Amara, 2012).

Racism also plays a critical role in shaping the experiences of Muslim women in sport, particularly for those who belong to racialised communities. Ratna (2011) discusses how British Asian Muslim women, for example, are often subjected to both racist and

sexist abuse from their peers, coaches, and spectators. This abuse is rooted in the intersection of their race, gender, and religion, which positions them as doubly marginalised within the sporting world. Burdsey (2010) further notes that Muslim women of colour often face additional barriers to participation, as they are excluded not only based on their religion but also because of their racial and ethnic identity.

Despite these barriers, Muslim women in sport are finding ways to resist and challenge the racism and Islamophobia they encounter. Walseth (2006) highlights how Muslim women athletes are using their participation in sport to challenge the dominant narratives that position them as marginalised or excluded. By asserting their presence in the sporting world, Muslim women are able to disrupt the stereotypes that portray them as passive or oppressed, and instead, present themselves as empowered and active agents of change. This reflects the broader struggles for racial and religious equality within Western societies, where Muslim women are at the forefront of challenging Islamophobic and racist discourses (Samie, 2013).

Sport as a site of identity negotiation

Sport functions as a critical site for the construction and negotiation of identity, particularly for marginalised groups such as Muslim women in the diaspora. As a cultural and social institution, sport is not merely a space for physical activity but a site where broader social, political, and cultural issues are played out (Hargreaves, 2000; Scraton et al., 2005). For Muslim women, participation in sport involves a continuous process of negotiating their identities as women, Muslims, and athletes. This negotiation occurs within a broader context of power relations, where dominant ideologies about race, gender, and religion intersect with the norms and expectations of the sporting world.

Hargreaves (2000) argues that sport is deeply embedded in structures of power that reflect and reproduce broader societal inequalities. For many marginalised groups, sport offers both opportunities for empowerment and spaces of exclusion (Elling et al., 2001; Kay, 2006). On the one hand, sport provides a platform for Muslim women to challenge stereotypes and assert their agency. On the other hand, it can also be a site of discrimination, where Muslim women are subjected to sexism, racism, and Islamophobia (Carrington, 2010; Burdsey, 2007). The process of identity negotiation, therefore, is shaped by the competing demands of inclusion and exclusion that Muslim women encounter in sport.

Carrington (2010) extends this analysis by highlighting the ways in which sport serves as a site of cultural production, where identities are constructed, contested, and transformed (Hall, 1996). For Muslim women, sport offers a unique context in which

they can navigate the pressures of both their religious and cultural communities and the norms of the host society. Participation in sport often requires Muslim women to negotiate multiple layers of identity, including their gender, religion, and national identity (Ahmad, 2011). This negotiation is further complicated by the broader socio-political discourses surrounding Islam and Muslim identity, particularly in Western societies, where Islam is often viewed as incompatible with modernity and gender equality (Fleming, 2014; Amara, 2012).

In this context, sport becomes a site of resistance, where Muslim women can challenge the dominant narratives about their identities. As Hargreaves (2000) notes, Muslim women athletes often use their participation in sport to disrupt the stereotypes that portray them as passive or oppressed. By asserting their presence in the sporting arena, they challenge both the patriarchal norms within their own communities and the Islamophobic discourses that marginalise them in the broader society (Ratna, 2011). In this sense, sport serves as a platform for identity negotiation, where Muslim women can construct new identities that are both rooted in their cultural and religious heritage and open to the possibilities of integration into the host society (Samie, 2013).

However, sport is also a site of exclusion, where Muslim women face significant barriers to full participation. As Carrington (2010) observes, the global sports industry is dominated by Western norms and values, which often marginalise individuals who do not conform to these standards (Burdsey, 2007; Ahmad, 2011). For Muslim women, this marginalisation is exacerbated by the intersection of race, religion, and gender, which positions them as 'outsiders' within the sporting world (Amara, 2012). The

process of identity negotiation, therefore, is not only about asserting agency but also about navigating the structures of power that shape their experiences in sport.

Sport is a critical site for the negotiation of identity, particularly for Muslim women in the diaspora. The process of identity negotiation in sport is shaped by the competing demands of inclusion and exclusion, as Muslim women navigate the intersection of race, gender, and religion within a broader context of power relations (Ratna, 2011; Fleming, 2014). While sport offers opportunities for empowerment and resistance, it also remains a site of exclusion, where Muslim women face significant structural barriers to full participation (Samie, 2013).

Muslim women athletes, occupying largely white, secular sports spaces, negotiate religious identity perhaps more intensely than any other group. Not only can they face severe Islamophobia, but the way sports spaces operate – culturally (not religious – sports spaces simply operate on their own set of rules) – can push up against their religious practices (Benn, Pfister, 2011; Jawad, Benn, Pfister, 2011). Although they face barriers, sports nonetheless provide Muslim women a space to define themselves, demand inclusion, and alter the landscape of sports organisations to be more tolerant of the variety of identities athletes bring to the fields, courts and locker rooms. Sports serve as cauldrons formatting wider social trends.

The participation of women in sports contests is equally important. Performances by women athletes – who transgress conventional notions of ‘femininity’ and ‘grace’ – hint at an independent, assertive and outward-facing vision of the future, allowing Muslim women to be both ‘modern’ and ‘authentic’. The open display of women as full actors

in the world (enhanced performance, enhanced piety) is emancipatory and has the potential to change society at large. The practice of sport is a complex site where boundaries of gender, piety and modernity are, heterosexual, global, recreational sport modernisers. strive to define women's position in society.

Negotiating Religious Identity

One of the most significant challenges faced by Muslim women in sport is the negotiation of their religious identity, particularly in relation to modesty, which often manifests through the wearing of the hijab or other forms of modest clothing. Islamic principles of modesty are central to the identity of many Muslim women, and these principles often come into conflict with the norms of Western sports, which tend to prioritise body exposure, physicality, and secularism (Amara, 2012). The wearing of the hijab, for instance, has been a point of contention in international sporting events, with bans in certain sports creating barriers to participation.

In examining how Muslim women negotiate their religious identity in sport, it is crucial to recognise that the hijab is not simply a religious or cultural symbol but also a site of resistance and identity assertion. Ratna (2011) argues that, for many Muslim women, the decision to wear the hijab while participating in sport is an act of defiance against the secular, often Islamophobic, expectations of Western sports institutions. The hijab serves as a marker of religious identity, but it also symbolises the agency of Muslim women in challenging the stereotypes and marginalisation they face within the sporting world. This is further evidenced by the global rise of Muslim women athletes such as Ibtihaj Muhammad, who competed in the 2016 Rio Olympics wearing the hijab, and

Zahra Lari, the first Emirati figure skater to compete internationally while wearing the hijab (Sofi, 2021).

However, the negotiation of religious identity in sport is not limited to the hijab. Modesty, in a broader sense, also affects the participation of Muslim women in sports that require tight or revealing clothing. For example, sports like swimming or gymnastics present additional challenges for Muslim women, as the standard attire often conflicts with Islamic principles of modesty. Studies by Walseth and Fasting (2003) highlight that many Muslim women choose not to participate in such sports because of the lack of modest alternatives. This demonstrates that identity negotiation for Muslim women in sport involves not only religious adherence but also a complex interaction between cultural expectations, personal agency, and institutional constraints (Benn et al., 2011).

Furthermore, Muslim women face additional challenges in navigating the broader socio-political discourses surrounding Islam, particularly in Western societies where Islamophobia is pervasive. Amara (2012) notes that Muslim women in sport are often subject to heightened scrutiny, with their participation being framed as either incompatible with Western values or as a threat to secularism. This framing places Muslim women in a difficult position, as they must constantly negotiate their religious identity in ways that both align with their personal beliefs and meet the demands of the secular sports environment. In this sense, the sporting arena becomes a critical site of identity negotiation, where Muslim women must navigate multiple, often conflicting, expectations (Samie, 2013).

Negotiating Cultural Identity

Hall's (1996) theory of cultural identity offers a valuable framework for understanding how Muslim women in sport negotiate their identities in the context of globalisation and transnationalism. Hall (1996) argues that cultural identity is not fixed or static but is instead a process of continuous negotiation, shaped by the experiences of migration, displacement, and diaspora. For Muslim women in the diaspora, participation in sport represents a key site of identity negotiation, where they must balance their religious and cultural identities with the norms and values of the host society.

Hall (1996) highlights the fluidity of cultural identity, arguing that individuals in the diaspora are constantly negotiating their connections to both their homeland and their host society. This process of negotiation is particularly evident in the experiences of Muslim women in sport, who must navigate the often-conflicting expectations of their cultural and religious communities and the secular norms of Western sports institutions (Amara, 2012). As Brah (1996) notes, identity in the diaspora is shaped by a tension between 'belonging' and 'difference,' where individuals must constantly negotiate their place within both the homeland and the host society.

For Muslim women, this process of identity negotiation is further complicated by the broader socio-political discourses surrounding Islam in Western societies. Islamophobia and gendered racism often position Muslim women as 'other,' creating additional barriers to their participation in sport (Samie, 2013). Hall's (1996) theory of cultural identity is useful for understanding how Muslim women navigate these discourses, as it emphasises the fluid and dynamic nature of identity formation in the

diaspora. Participation in sport, therefore, becomes a key site of identity negotiation, where Muslim women can assert their agency and challenge the dominant narratives that seek to marginalise them (Ratna, 2011).

Furthermore, Hall's (1996) concept of "cultural hybridity" is particularly relevant for understanding how Muslim women in sport create new identities that transcend the binary opposition between 'homeland' and 'host society.' By participating in sport, Muslim women create hybrid identities that allow them to maintain their cultural and religious beliefs while also engaging with the norms and values of the host society. This process of hybridity is not merely about assimilation but involves a complex process of negotiation, where Muslim women challenge both the patriarchal norms of their own communities and the exclusionary practices of the broader sporting world (Samie, 2013; Walseth, 2006).

Cultural identity negotiation is also shaped by the globalisation of sport. As Carrington (2010) argues, sport is a key site of global cultural exchange, where identities are constructed, contested, and transformed. For Muslim women in the diaspora, participation in global sports institutions provides opportunities for both empowerment and exclusion, as they navigate the transnational flows of culture, religion, and politics. Hall's (1996) theory of cultural identity allows for a deeper understanding of how Muslim women in sport negotiate their identities in response to the complex and often contradictory forces of globalisation.

In conclusion, Hall's (1996) theory of cultural identity provides a valuable framework for understanding how Muslim women in sport negotiate their identities in the context

of globalisation and transnationalism. By emphasising the fluidity and hybridity of cultural identity, Hall's work allows for an analysis of how Muslim women navigate the competing demands of belonging and difference, using sport as a site of identity negotiation (Ratna, 2011; Amara, 2012).

Community and Diaspora Connections

Sport also serves as an important site for maintaining and strengthening connections to both the Muslim community and the broader diasporic identity. Brah (1996) argues that diaspora is not only about physical dispersal but also about the creation of cultural and social connections that transcend geographical boundaries. For Muslim women in the diaspora, participation in sport can serve to maintain their cultural and religious identity while also engaging with the broader community. This is particularly important in the context of the diaspora, where Muslim women often face pressure to assimilate into the host society while also maintaining connections to their cultural and religious heritage (Ratna, 2011).

The role of sport in creating and maintaining these community connections is evident in the rise of grassroots sports initiatives aimed at encouraging Muslim women's participation in sport. According to Walseth (2006), these initiatives provide Muslim women with safe and supportive environments where they can engage in physical activity without the fear of judgement or exclusion. These grassroots sports programmes often cater specifically to the needs of Muslim women, offering gender-segregated spaces or modest sportswear to accommodate their religious beliefs. By creating these spaces, Muslim women are able to engage in sport in ways that are

consistent with their cultural and religious values while also strengthening their connection to the broader Muslim community (Benn et al., 2011).

Moreover, participation in sport allows Muslim women to create new forms of social capital that can strengthen their ties to both their diasporic community and the broader society. Elling et al. (2001) argue that sport serves as a powerful tool for social integration, allowing individuals from marginalised communities to build relationships and networks that transcend ethnic and cultural boundaries. For Muslim women, participation in sport can provide opportunities for social engagement, leadership, and empowerment, allowing them to strengthen their ties to both their religious and cultural communities and the wider society (Walseth and Fasting, 2003).

In conclusion, sport serves as a critical site of empowerment for Muslim women, providing them with opportunities to assert their agency, challenge traditional gender roles, and create hybrid identities that allow them to navigate the competing pressures of their cultural, religious, and sporting worlds. By participating in sport, Muslim women are able to resist the exclusionary practices of both their own communities and the broader sporting world, creating new spaces for empowerment, identity formation, and community engagement (Ratna, 2011; Benn et al., 2011).

Creating Hybrid Identities

The concept of 'hybridity' has become increasingly valuable for understanding the ways in which Muslim women in sport navigate their multiple, and often conflicting, identities. Drawing on post-colonial theory, Bhabha (1994) defines hybridity as the process

through which individuals negotiate and reconcile different aspects of their identity, creating new forms of cultural expression that transcend binary oppositions such as 'traditional' and 'modern' or 'Eastern' and 'Western'. For Muslim women participating in sport, hybridity is a crucial framework to comprehend how they manage their religious, cultural, and gendered identities in ways that enable them to engage in sports while upholding their faith and cultural values (Ratna, 2011). This process becomes especially pertinent in environments where competing social expectations and pressures complicate their participation in traditionally secular sporting spaces.

Brah's (1996) concept of the 'diaspora space' also adds depth to understanding identity negotiation in this context. Diaspora space represents the intersection of histories, cultures, and identities, shaped by the interaction between dominant cultures and migrant or minority groups. For Muslim women in the diaspora, this space is one of constant negotiation, where identity is not only shaped by their cultural and religious communities but also by the wider secular norms of the host society. The negotiation within this diaspora space often leads to the emergence of hybrid identities, allowing Muslim women to adhere to their religious and cultural beliefs while simultaneously engaging in broader sporting cultures (Amara, 2012). This is perhaps best exemplified by the growing trend of Muslim women athletes choosing to wear modest sportswear or hijab-friendly athletic gear. By doing so, they participate in sport without compromising their religious principles, reflecting the intricate ways in which cultural and religious identities are maintained in hybrid forms (Sofi, 2021).

However, this process of identity negotiation is not without its challenges. Walseth (2006) argues that Muslim women athletes often find themselves caught between the

expectations of their religious and cultural communities, which may perceive sport as a secular, Westernised activity, and the broader sporting world, which frequently marginalises religious expression. For instance, sport in many contexts is seen as an arena where secularism prevails, and overt religious symbols or practices can be met with resistance or even outright discrimination. In some cases, sporting regulations have directly clashed with religious dress codes, such as the banning of hijabs in certain competitions, as seen in international football until FIFA lifted the ban in 2014. Muslim women, therefore, experience unique tensions in balancing these competing demands but, through the creation of hybrid identities, they are able to assert their agency and challenge narratives that seek to limit their participation in sport (Ratna, 2011; Samie, 2013).

Furthermore, hybrid identities are not simply a response to external pressures; they also serve as a means for Muslim women to assert their individuality and agency within their own communities. As Benn et al. (2011) point out, many Muslim women use sport as a tool to challenge traditional gender roles, which often limit their participation in public life. In many cultures, women's involvement in sport is still viewed with scepticism or resistance, especially when it involves public physical exertion, which can be seen as contradicting traditional notions of femininity. By engaging in sport, Muslim women are not just participating in physical activity but are actively constructing new identities that go beyond the simplistic binary of 'traditional' versus 'modern'. These identities are fluid, reflecting their complex experiences as Muslim women in the diaspora and as active participants in a global sporting culture (Amara, 2012).

The emergence of hybrid identity as a critical analytical tool offers significant insights into the complex and fluid nature of identity formation in the context of globalisation. Globalisation brings together diverse cultural, religious, and social forces, creating spaces where traditional identities are challenged, and new forms of belonging emerge. Bhabha (1994) introduces the concept of the 'third space' as the site where hybrid identities are forged. This third space is not simply a blending of two cultures; rather, it constitutes an entirely new dimension where unique cultural formations arise. Bhabha argues that the third space is a site of contestation and innovation, where cultural boundaries are redefined, and new forms of subjectivity take shape. Importantly, this process does not result in the creation of entirely new cultures, but rather in the emergence of more nuanced models of cultural knowledge and expression.

Similarly, Stuart Hall (1990) challenges essentialist views of identity, arguing that identity is 'a production, not an essence but a positioning', emphasising its ever-evolving, contested, and politically charged nature. Hall's conceptualisation of identity is particularly relevant in the context of globalisation, where cultural belonging is constantly shifting, contested, and open to redefinition. Hall asserts that 'the process of identification is never complete', underscoring the dynamic and fluid nature of identity in an increasingly globalised world. This resonates with the experiences of Muslim women athletes, whose identities are constantly negotiated in response to both internal and external pressures.

Empirical research has further illuminated the complexities of hybrid identities. Gilroy's (1993) work on the cultural expressions of the African diaspora demonstrates how

hybrid identities emerge from the synthesis of African, American, and European cultural practices. These transnational identities are not confined to a singular cultural framework but are shaped by the dynamic interchange of influences across borders. Similarly, Glick Schiller, Basch, and Blanc-Szanton's (1992) concept of 'transnational identities' highlights how ongoing ties among migrants foster identities that are inherently hybrid. These identities are rooted in multiple cultural and geographic origins, reflecting the fluid and interconnected nature of migration and identity formation in a global context.

More recent studies, such as those by Vertovec (2015) and Wessendorf (2019), argue that these hybrid identities are becoming increasingly visible in urban spaces, particularly in cosmopolitan cities. Vertovec's (2015) work on super-diversity explores how the layering of hybrid identities in major cities creates a complex tapestry of cultural affiliations. Individuals in these spaces often identify with multiple cultural and social frameworks, which are constantly being renegotiated in response to the shifting dynamics of globalisation. Wessendorf (2019) adds that young people growing up in multicultural environments are particularly adept at navigating hybrid identities, as they are exposed to both local and global influences from an early age.

Global flows of people, ideas, and cultures play a crucial role in the generation of hybrid identities. Appadurai (1996) uses the metaphor of 'layers upon layers' to describe how identities are shaped through continuous movement and interaction. These global flows create identities that are increasingly 'deterritorialised', existing beyond the confines of any singular cultural or geographic context. Hannerz (1996) similarly

argues that globalisation creates new realities of cultural complexity, where identities are performed and re-formed in response to shifting cultural dynamics.

For Muslim women, particularly those in diaspora communities, these global flows have a profound impact on their hybrid identities. They are often required to navigate between their religious and cultural heritage and the norms of the societies in which they reside, forging identities that are shaped by both local and global influences. The interaction between Islamic values and Western secular norms can create tensions, but it also provides opportunities for Muslim women to form unique hybrid identities that challenge monolithic understandings of both culture and gender. These identities are not static; they are continuously performed and negotiated within the context of transnationalism, reflecting the fluid and dynamic nature of cultural identity formation in a globalised world. Naber (2016) and Alvi (2020) have examined how young Muslim women in Western contexts develop hybrid identities, negotiating between their faith and societal expectations while simultaneously creating spaces of resistance and cultural affirmation.

The role of media, particularly digital media, in shaping and representing hybrid identities is also significant. Shohat and Stam (1994) critique the mainstream media's tendency to depict races and cultures as singular and essentialised, thereby obscuring the complex realities of hybridity. Media representations often fail to capture the multiplicity of identities that individuals navigate in multicultural contexts. Jackson and Moores (2018) explore how digital media platforms, especially social media, have created new opportunities for hybrid identities to be expressed. For marginalised

groups like Muslim women, social media offers a space for negotiating cultural identity in ways that traditional media often restricts.

Despite the celebratory tone often associated with hybridity, it is essential to recognise that hybrid identities are not always empowering. Nederveen Pieterse (2001) warns that hybrid identities can also emerge from conditions of inequality and coercion. In socio-cultural contexts marked by power imbalances, hybridity may reflect the dominance of one culture over another rather than a mutual exchange. Furthermore, the commodification of hybrid identities within global consumer culture often strips away their cultural richness, reducing them to marketable symbols devoid of deeper significance. This form of commodified hybridity is particularly evident in the global fashion industry, where cultural symbols such as the hijab are often appropriated without regard for their cultural or religious significance.

Hybrid identities encapsulate the complexity, fluidity, and contradictions of identity formation in the 21st century. They challenge static, essentialist notions of culture and identity, illustrating the intricate ways in which individuals negotiate their sense of self within and against the forces of globalisation. For Muslim women in sport, the creation of hybrid identities is a form of resistance and agency, allowing them to navigate the often-conflicting demands of their cultural, religious, and sporting worlds. By challenging the binary oppositions that have traditionally defined cultural identity, hybrid identities open new possibilities for understanding the complexity of human experience in an increasingly interconnected world.

Sport as a Platform for Agency

Sport has long been recognised as a powerful platform for individual and collective agency, particularly for marginalised groups such as Muslim women. Despite the significant cultural, religious, and structural barriers they face, many Muslim women can use sport as a means of asserting their identity and challenging the dominant narratives that position them as oppressed or passive. According to Hargreaves (2000), participation in sport allows Muslim women to push back against both the patriarchal norms within their own communities and the exclusionary practices of the wider sporting world. By engaging in sport, Muslim women can challenge the traditional gender roles that restrict their mobility and freedom and assert their right to participate in public life on their own terms.

The act of participating in sport, particularly in settings where Muslim women are visible as athletes, serves as a form of resistance to both internal and external forces of oppression. Walseth (2006) argues that by taking part in sport, Muslim women can subvert the dominant patriarchal ideologies in their communities that often position them as primarily domestic figures. This subversion of gendered expectations is particularly powerful in Muslim-majority societies, where women's participation in public life is often tightly controlled by cultural and religious norms (Kay, 2006). By asserting their presence in the sporting world, Muslim women not only claim physical and social space but also challenge the narrative that sport is incompatible with their faith and cultural identity (Amara, 2012).

Moreover, Muslim women athletes often use sport as a platform to engage in broader socio-political discourses surrounding gender, religion, and identity. Ratna (2011) highlights how Muslim women in the diaspora, particularly in Western countries, use their participation in sport to challenge Islamophobic stereotypes and affirm their agency. In this context, sport becomes a site of both resistance and empowerment, where Muslim women can assert their religious and cultural identities in defiance of the racist and Islamophobic discourses that marginalise them. This has been particularly visible in the case of high-profile athletes such as Ibtihaj Muhammad, whose participation in the 2016 Rio Olympics wearing a hijab sparked global conversations about Muslim women's right to engage in sport while adhering to their religious beliefs (Sofi, 2021).

The negotiation of agency in sport also involves challenging the structures of exclusion that limit Muslim women's participation. For Muslim women, this marginalisation is exacerbated by the fact that their religious practices, such as wearing the hijab or adhering to modesty codes, are often seen as incompatible with the norms of Western sports institutions (Burdsey, 2010). However, by asserting their right to participate in sport on their own terms, Muslim women are able to challenge these exclusionary practices and demand greater inclusion and representation in the sporting world (Walseth, 2006).

Conclusion

In conclusion, sport serves as a powerful platform for identity negotiation and empowerment for Muslim women, providing them with opportunities to assert their

agency, challenge societal and cultural barriers, and redefine their roles in both their religious communities and the broader sporting world. However, the barriers to participation remain significant, particularly in the form of structural exclusion and cultural resistance. To ensure that Muslim women can fully participate in sports without compromising their religious and cultural values, sports organisations, policymakers, and the media must take proactive steps to promote inclusivity and challenge exclusionary practices. As the visibility of Muslim women athletes continues to grow, so too must the efforts to create environments that support their participation and celebrate their achievements.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

Introduction

The methodology section will outline the research design, data collection methods, and analysis techniques that will be used to investigate the negotiation of identities around sport among British Muslim females living in the UK.

In this section, I address the theoretical and practical aspects of gathering data. The section commences with an overview of the selected research design and its alignment with my epistemological perspective. Subsequently, I delve into several methodological considerations such as identifying suitable participants and developing and approaching a research sample. Finally, I elucidate and support the methodological approaches employed in this study, highlighting data collection methods, analysis procedures, and ethical concerns.

Positionality

In my role as a Muslim woman with first-hand knowledge, I often encountered situations where participants assumed I already understood certain topics. While my ability to comprehend and use Arabic phrases and "Muslim slang," as well as relate to similar experiences, was advantageous, I frequently had to pause and request further explanations from them to capture detailed insights into their experiences. Despite my initial concern that this would disrupt our discussions, seeking clarification enriched our conversations by delving into what we might perceive as ordinary within the Muslim community. For instance, when discussing wearing tight clothes, some women would

simply say "You know how it is." It was only after asking one of them to explain the feeling without assuming prior understanding that she provided more detailed insight. This underscores the significance of acknowledging one's position in relation to research participants and its impact on relationships and resulting data collection.

It was also important for me to recognise that this reflexivity needed to continue into the data analysis and writing phases of this thesis. My participants often talked about how important it was that I was a Muslim woman, doing this research. They felt that aspect of my identity was significant and would help me "accurately" describe and shed light on their experiences. This highlights the importance of acknowledging and critically reflecting on one's positionality as a researcher, particularly when studying marginalised communities.

Considering the discussions with participants and observing the prevalent use of White, Eurocentric feminist frameworks in sport literature on Muslim women, it was crucial for me to focus on Islam in my analysis and portrayal of this data. For the participants, Islam significantly influences their experiences as it shapes their decisions about activities, attire, and relationships. Recognising this central role of Islam prompted me to analyse the data through a cultural and religious lens, examining how Islamic teachings and practices intersected with the experiences of Muslim women in sports participation. This approach allowed for a more thorough understanding of the challenges faced by Muslim women in sports participation by acknowledging one's positionality as a researcher and recognizing the importance of

Islam in their lives. It facilitated an authentic representation of their experiences while shedding light on the unique intersectional challenges encountered by Muslim women in sports participation. By centring the participants' perspectives and recognising the significance of their cultural and religious identities, the researcher was able to provide a more nuanced understanding of the experiences and barriers faced by Muslim women in sports participation.

These issues have important methodological implications for researchers conducting sports research with Muslim women. The process of data generation involves a dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewee, rather than being simply collected. As a result, the researcher's background, experience, and location can influence the produced data. All knowledge is shaped by a specific position or perspective. Therefore, it is crucial for researchers to recognize their position within their research endeavours, particularly when working with marginalized populations such as Muslim women who have historically been silenced or portrayed in a homogeneous manner. When conducting research with these women, it is essential to consider that they may not perceive themselves or their experiences through a Western lens; however, previous work has often emphasised the perspectives of Western feminist researchers (Walseth & Fasting, 2004; Dagkas & Benn, 2006). It's critical for Western researchers not only to acknowledge their own positioning and be reflective but also to explore post-colonial or Muslim feminist theories when giving voice to their Muslim participants.

Reflexivity - The Process

In addition to recognising my various roles and positions in this research, it is important to explore how I practised reflexivity. I saw reflexivity as an ongoing process that started before data collection, leading me to include a reflexive statement to uncover the underlying assumptions I carried into this work. It was also crucial for me to be reflective about my positionality and the power dynamics as a Muslim woman and researcher during the interview phase. However, the most significant instances and challenges of conducting "reflexive research" arose during the analysis and writing phases of this project. I began questioning how my involvement in this research influenced the knowledge being generated and its representation in this document.

Despite, being a British Muslim woman, many theories and concepts considered "valid" for researching in this field favoured Eurocentric Western perspectives on identity, community, and sport. While it might seem natural for a Muslim woman to focus on Islam within such work, I found integrating these aspects uncomfortable because traditionally they have been separate areas of my life: faith and academia were not something I felt at ease merging. The discussions with my research participants compelled me to think critically about who has historically been allowed access to knowledge and whose voices have been presented in academic literature.

Research Philosophy

Research paradigms shape qualitative researchers' perceptions of the world and their actions within it. This section seeks to explain the research paradigm that forms the basis for this project. Denzin and Lincoln (2000a) suggest that a paradigm consists of

four crucial elements: axiology, which deals with ethical considerations in society; ontology, addressing the nature of reality and human existence; epistemology, exploring the relationship between knowledge seekers and what is known; and methodology, focusing on suitable approaches to acquiring knowledge about our environment (cited by Silk et al., 2005). The two most widely acknowledged research paradigms – positivism and interpretivism – are frequently presented as conflicting concepts, leading to extensive debates regarding social science research methods (e.g., Hughes; 1990; Lazar, 2004; Lincoln et al., 2013).

The positivist tradition aims to develop what it views as impartial, objective, and widely applicable forms of knowledge. Researchers in this tradition seek to distance themselves from the phenomena they investigate to reveal a reality that is not influenced by their own perspectives on the social world. According to this line of thinking, genuine or valid knowledge aligns with scientific methods where the principles used in natural sciences are applied to study human behaviour perceived as objective and concrete. The capacity for scientifically measuring an objective reality plays a central role within positivist ontology, shaping how knowledge is produced through controlled data collection, maintaining a gap between researcher and subjectivity, quantitative measurement, hypothesis testing, and statistical analysis for establishing causality. Within this framework qualitative research is sometimes disregarded as unscientific or subjective by some critics who assert that only quantitative measures can produce credible results within the realm of science. On the contrary, interpretivism challenges the positivist viewpoint by emphasizing that reality

is subjective. From an interpretivist perspective, knowledge isn't just "unearthed" but rather "constructed" based on social and cultural contexts wherein individuals exist.

Critics of positivism assert that it simplifies the intricate and ever-changing nature of human behaviour and society by seeking to break it down into measurable factors and statistical associations. They argue that this approach overlooks the complexity and profoundness of human experiences, as well as the varied meanings and viewpoints of those under investigation. On the other hand, interpretivism promotes a comprehensive and contextual comprehension of social occurrences, acknowledging the influence of cultural, historical, and societal elements on human conduct.

The debate between positivism and interpretivism continues to influence the methodological choices and philosophical foundations of qualitative research in the social sciences. This highlights the ongoing tension between objectivity and subjectivity, structure, and agency, as well as the search for universal laws versus recognition of diverse, context-specific realities. This presents a challenge for qualitative researchers as they navigate understanding human behaviour within a context-bound framework.

In general, while acknowledging the importance of structural inequalities, I adopt a relativist ontological standpoint in my research approach. This perspective is based on the notion of multiple realities, as explained by Guba and Lincoln (2013). A relativist ontology suggests that our understanding of reality is shaped collectively through

social and experiential interpretations and meanings. As a researcher, I recognize the existence of diverse subjective perspectives and understandings of reality that can be influenced by individual experiences, cultural backgrounds, and societal contexts.

Therefore, for my research on how British Muslim females negotiate their identities around sport in the UK, I will employ an interpretivist approach to comprehend the subjective experiences and interpretations of the individuals involved. This involves recognizing that their interactions with sport are influenced by a complex interplay of cultural, religious beliefs, and societal factors. To gain this insight into their worldviews, I will use qualitative research methods like in-depth interviews, personal observations, and document analysis. These techniques allow me to collect detailed data about the lived experiences of British Muslim females with regards to sport and examine various social and contextual factors that shape their identities and behaviours in this area.

Furthermore, I will employ a feminist perspective in my research, as gender is a central aspect of identity that intersects with race, religion, and culture. This feminist perspective acknowledges the power dynamics and inequalities that impact British Muslim females' participation in sports and seeks to challenge and address these barriers (Miles & Benn, 2014). Additionally, I will ensure ethical considerations are prioritized throughout the research process. This includes obtaining informed consent from participants, maintaining confidentiality, and ensuring that the research process does not cause harm or discomfort to participants. In line with the ethical considerations, I will also take steps to ensure that the voices and perspectives of the participants are accurately represented and not distorted or manipulated for personal or academic gain (Mackintosh & Dempsey, 2017). By adopting an interpretivist

approach and incorporating a feminist perspective, this research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the negotiation of identities around sport among British Muslim females living in the UK. This will contribute to existing literature on the topic and provide insights that can inform policies, programs, and interventions aimed at promoting equitable access to sports opportunities for Muslim women.

Interpretivism, on the other hand, seeks to comprehend and explain the subjective experiences and interpretations that individuals assign to their social environment. Researchers in this paradigm concentrate on how reality is socially constructed and acknowledge that people's perspectives shape their understanding of the world. They highlight the significance of context, culture, and social interactions in influencing human behaviour and beliefs. Interpretivist researchers often use qualitative methods such as interviews, observations, and textual analysis to collect detailed data offering insights into individuals' lived experiences and intricate social phenomena. While these paradigms may appear contradictory at first glance, they have their own strengths and limitations. They can be viewed as complementary rather than conflicting approaches within social science research since each presents unique viewpoints and techniques for investigating diverse research inquiries or phenomena. Positivism emphasizes objectivity, generalizability, scientific methods focused on producing value-free knowledge, whereas interpretivism concentrates on comprehending subjective experiences within specific social settings

This forms the basis for my decision to use a qualitative approach in this research, based on the interpretive epistemological standpoint. It focuses on analysing the

thoughts, perceptions, and experiences of the research participants. Rejecting the idea that research can be conducted in isolation from wider society and researcher's biography, embracing the interpretive paradigm enables us to recognize the complexity of the social world and understand how researchers influence knowledge production within it. Likewise, like Silk et al (2016)., I challenge the concept that in social research, there is a clear distinction between knower and known during knowledge production. Also emphasized by Amis (2017) when conducting interviews for social science research is understanding reflexively how one's role as an interviewer affects data collection through personal background reflection. Henceforth, I will delve into discussions about white researchers engaging with minority ethnic participants regarding their relationship in conducting research.

Reflexivity: locating the 'self' in research

There seems to be little agreement within the research field on 'race' and ethnicity on whether being from a similar social and ethnic background to your participants is actually advantageous, or not. In the context of studying British Muslim female athletes, the debate around the advantages or disadvantages of sharing a similar social and ethnic background with the participants is particularly pertinent. As a researcher, my positionality as a British Muslim female may have both advantages and limitations in understanding and interpreting the experiences of the athletes. On one hand, my shared background may enable a deeper level of empathy and connection with the participants, potentially facilitating a more open and honest exchange. On the

other hand, it is essential to acknowledge that my own experiences, beliefs, and biases may influence the way I perceive and interpret the narratives of the athletes.

To navigate this intricacy, reflexivity becomes a crucial element in the research process. It entails critically analysing my own standpoint, prejudices, and presumptions while recognizing their potential impact on the research. Through active engagement in reflexivity, I aim to improve the transparency and integrity of the study, providing a more detailed comprehension of the identity negotiation processes within British Muslim female athletes. This reflective approach acknowledges the significance of comprehending and critically reflecting on the researcher's personal perspective and its potential influence on both the research process as well as findings. By employing a reflexive approach, I strive to reduce any possible bias and ensure that participants' voices and experiences take precedence in the study rather than being overshadowed by my own viewpoints or biases.

The reflexive approach is essential for conducting research about experiences faced by British Muslim females participating in sports activities. Ultimately, reflexivity involves positioning oneself within the research process and acknowledging one's positionality's potential impact on it. It ensures an ethical methodology facilitating a more precise and objective portrayal of British Muslim female athletes' experiences and identities. Employing a reflexive approach allows me to critically assess any inherent biases or assumptions originating from my positionality as a researcher who

is also a British Muslim female participant which leads to an analysis considering diverse experiences, perspectives, and agency amongst them with greater depth.

In an interpretive research methodology, it is essential to recognize that the interactions between the participants, the research environment, and the researcher form a dynamic process where each party influences the others (Oliver, 2008, p.138). Oliver identifies this dynamic process as co-construction, emphasizing the importance of understanding how the researcher's interpretations and biases shape the research findings.

Research Design

The research objectives involve exploration and interpretation, so this study adopts a qualitative methodological approach. Quantifying identity formation or perceptions of various sporting contexts into a numerical score is likely to underestimate the complexity, variability, and adaptability of ethnic minority individuals' positioning in their host nation (Vadher and Barrett, 2009 p.254). As such, a qualitative design is better suited to capture the nuances and complexities of identity negotiation among British Muslim female athletes. The sample for this study was selected using purposive sampling, aiming to include British Muslim female athletes from diverse backgrounds and sporting disciplines. Data collection consisted of in-depth interviews with the participants, allowing them to share their lived experiences, challenges, and strategies. The collected data was analysed using thematic analysis, which involves

identifying and coding patterns within the data to generate themes and subthemes that capture the participants' experiences and interactions related to identity negotiation. The thematic analysis involved an iterative process of data familiarization, coding, theme development, and refinement, ensuring that the findings are grounded in the data and reflect the diverse experiences, perspectives, and agency among British Muslim female athletes.

Participation Access

The sampling method used combined elements of purposive and convenience sampling. Purposive sampling, as outlined by Silverman (1997) involves selecting participants who meet the specific criteria of interest and is widely employed in qualitative research. In this instance, the criteria focused on British Muslim women who had engaged in sports at some point in their lives and were over the age of 18. Additionally, convenience sampling was utilized to connect with potential participants using existing networks and contacts from local communities.

To qualify for participation in the project, individuals were required to self-identify as British Muslims and have engaged in sports at some stage of their lives, with no necessity to be currently active. Participants were recruited through various channels, including community sports organizations, local sports clubs, religious institutions, and personal networks. They were provided with information about the study goals, procedures, and potential benefits and risks. Informed consent was obtained from all

participants, ensuring their voluntary participation and confidentiality of their personal information.

Methods of data collection and analysis

The project's data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, emphasizing the perspectives of research participants as recommended by Bryman (2001). This interview format also allows flexibility to diverge from the guide when necessary; for instance, follow-up questions can be posed to obtain additional information on specific topics. Practically, employing semi-structured interviews enabled me to seek clarification and request further elaboration from interviewees. The interviews were conducted at a location convenient for the participant, with some being carried out virtually due to family and work obligations. This approach allowed for a comfortable and open environment where participants felt at ease to share their experiences and perspectives.

Interviews generally lasted between 30 – 90 minutes. The length of the interviews varied depending on the participant and the depth of their experiences. The interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim.

Each interview was recorded using a Dictaphone with the consent of the interviewee and then transferred to a secure file on a laptop. The transcription process was facilitated by processing the files through Express Scribe, which allowed for adjusting

playback speed to improve accuracy in creating verbatim transcripts. However, transcribing verbatim poses challenges as people do not always speak in complete sentences during interviews. This often requires researchers to reconstruct the text by adding punctuation and sentence structure for coherence and clarity. These modifications are indicated within square brackets to ensure that data is coherent for readers who were not present at the time of recording. A copy of the transcript can be found in Appendix 4

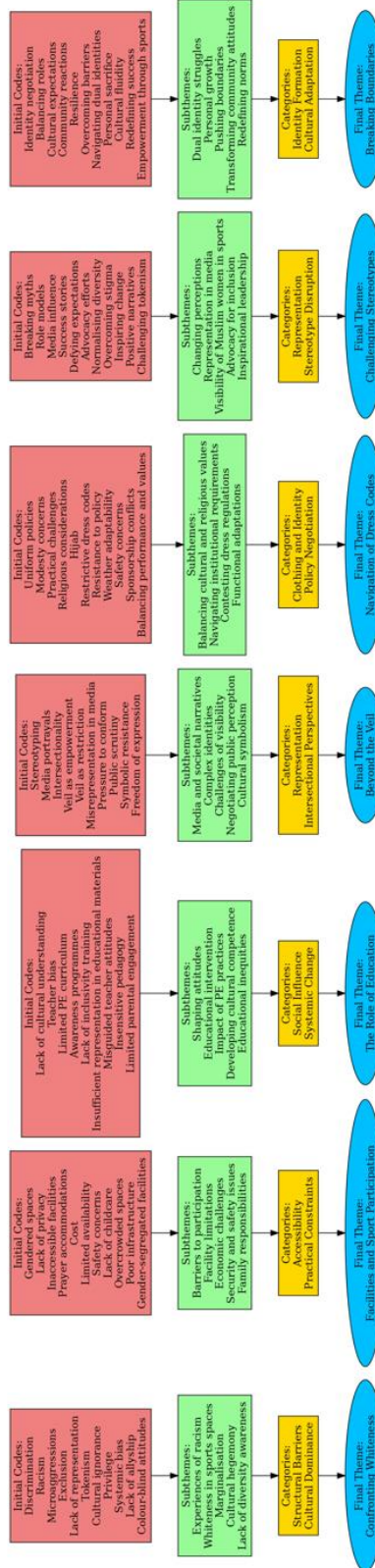
In qualitative research, words serve a deeper purpose than just stating facts. According to Denscombe (2014: 281), text and speech can be used not only for conveying information but also as a means of uncovering underlying messages. The researcher's responsibility is to decipher these 'hidden meanings' within the text and analyze how they relate to implicit assumptions and social dynamics. For this reason, thematic and narrative analysis was chosen as the most suitable method, enabling an examination of participants' constructions and interpretations of their social and personal environment. In order to facilitate data analysis, it was necessary to first organize it into coherent segments. These segments were created based on common themes and patterns that emerged from the interviews.

The initial stage of data analysis commenced with a coding process, following the steps outlined by Bryman. Initially, each transcript was carefully reviewed to recall the conversations and make general notes about interesting or significant ideas. During the second reading, margin notes were added as emerging patterns and codes were

identified in the text. This early coding phase generated numerous codes that needed to be condensed into a manageable number of core themes. The data was then organized under coded themes such as 'clothing and the hijab' This approach helped filter out irrelevant sections from the interviews and reduce a large amount of data into more manageable extracts. Subsequently, I could begin identifying comparisons and similarities between experiences of Muslim women while using this data to construct their sporting narratives.

The blue themes have been grouped under a single heading in the discussion chapter, divided into three specific areas to show their connections. This approach reflects the overlapping content of these themes and their shared importance to answering the research question. After the viva, the thematic framework was reviewed and adjusted to include deeper insights gained from the coding and analysis. This process ensured the themes were clear, well-structured, and accurately represented the data. The final thematic structure, shown in *Figure 1*, provides a clear visual representation of how the coding developed into the refined themes.

Figure 1: Visual Representation of Theme Development



Ethical Considerations

Conducting research ethically is crucial to safeguard the individuals involved and uphold the integrity of the researcher and institution collecting data. Therefore, ethical approval is a prerequisite for all university research activities prior to data collection.

Ethical approval was sought through the ethics committee at the University of Wolverhampton and approval was granted for the research to be conducted.

Researchers are obligated to ensure that participants fully comprehend their involvement in the study and provide informed consent before participating. An established method for achieving this is through obtaining informed consent. The interview process commenced with an introduction of myself and presentation of an informed consent form for participants' review. This document detailed the study's purpose, as well as the role of each participant within it. It also emphasised their freedom to withdraw from participation without facing any repercussions. Subsequently, I provided a verbal summary of the project along with an explanation regarding how their information would be documented, stored, and utilized in the research endeavour. Participants were encouraged to pose any additional queries before completing and signing the consent form.

Another important aspect of research ethics involves guaranteeing anonymity for the participants. Every participant was informed that their identity would be shielded by using a pseudonym. The motivation behind this decision was to prevent the use of stereotypical Asian names, which could create an uncomfortable environment. For instance, Ratna (2011, p.389) embraces this strategy because 'South Asian

pseudonyms may not accurately represent the evolving modern era' in which many British Asian research participants have been raised. Hence, I permitted the participants to select a pseudonym that they felt at ease with.

Summary

A qualitative research approach, utilising semi-structured interviews as the primary method of data collection, was chosen based on my interpretive epistemological perspective and the specific knowledge I aimed to produce. The purpose was to gather detailed first-hand accounts from young British Asians about their experiences in sporting environments, their perceptions of sport, and how these experiences may have influenced their ongoing identity development. Particularly important for discussion was the impact of their involvement in sports on shaping their identity. This study relied on a relatively small but diverse sample of participants with varying backgrounds and levels of sports participation, which is common in this type of research.

This section has provided a justification for the selected methodology, and I have also addressed some of the procedural challenges associated with conducting a qualitative research investigation, such as establishing and securing entry to research locations and enlisting research subjects. Additionally, I have briefly outlined here the techniques employed to produce and examine my data. In the following chapter, I proceed to

examine my discoveries in connection with consumer behaviours related to sports within my study group.

Chapter 4 - Discussion

Introduction

The discussion section of this thesis unpacks the complexities faced by Muslim women in sport, with a particular focus on identity negotiation. It begins by delving into the concept of 'whiteness' and its pervasive influence within sporting environments, exploring how it shapes access, representation, and belonging. The discussion then moves to consider the interplay of intersectionality, reflecting on how multiple, overlapping identities—such as gender, faith, and ethnicity—intersect to affect the experiences of Muslim women athletes.

Diaspora is also a critical thread throughout this discussion, as it allows an exploration of how cultural displacement and transnational identities influence participation and the construction of self within sport. The final section focuses on identity negotiation, examining the ways in which Muslim women navigate, challenge, and redefine their identities in the context of sporting practices, both within and beyond the mainstream

Pen Portraits

Participant	Background/Pen Portrait
Najwa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age – 60 • Mixed Race Marriage • Marital Status – Widowed • Children – 2 girls • 2nd generation immigrant • Job – CEO • 1 of 5 siblings • Sport played - Tennis
Farah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Married – 17 years of age • First generation – born in this country • 41 • 1 of 5 siblings • 2 children • Birmingham • Driving instructor • Football
Asma	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Married • Birmingham • Cricket • 2nd generation • Moved to this country at a young age
Saleema	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Born in Pakistan – moved when she was 4 • Birmingham • Kids • Di • 2 sisters and 2 stepsisters • Mother passed away when she was • Cricket – Worcestershire County • 26 • 4 children
Aaeessah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi Professional Footballer • 24 • Pakistani • Job – Physiotherapist • Moved to UK at 10 – lived in Dubai prior to this • 1 of 6 siblings – brothers and sisters

Hana:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cricket • 30 • Married • 1 of 3 siblings • Teacher •
Saima	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footballer • Single • 22 • Counselling • Pakistani • 2nd generation
Farah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pharmacist • Tennis • 1 of 3 siblings • Arab
Asiha	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil engineer • Pakistani • Single • 1 of 5 siblings • Pakistani • 2nd generation

Confronting Whiteness: Muslim Women's Experiences in Sport

Facilities and Sport Participation: Challenges for Muslim Women

Whiteness theory, as articulated by scholars like Hylton (2009) and Carrington (2010), offers a critical lens to understand these dynamics, such as race and privilege. The sports industry, including its facilities, is largely structured around the needs and norms of white, secular participants. This systemic centring of whiteness means that the unique requirements of minority groups, such as the need for modest facilities and private spaces, are often disregarded. By examining the experiences of Muslim women like Saleema, Aaesha, and Fatima, we can explore how sports facilities—and their lack of appropriate accommodations—contribute to the exclusion of these women from the sporting community.

Saleema's quote below highlights the lack of culturally sensitive facilities that cater to the specific needs of Muslim women. This lack of appropriate spaces can lead to exclusion, as these women feel unable to adhere to their religious and cultural practices in mainstream sports environments. The absence of gender-segregated spaces, prayer facilities, and modest workout options reveals the whiteness embedded in these environments—facilities designed with the majority white, secular community in mind. Research by Walseth and Fasting (2003) emphasises the importance of gender-segregated spaces and cultural accommodations for Muslim women in sports. The lack of prayer spaces or modest sportswear options further alienates women like Saleema, who must navigate between participating in sports and maintaining their religious values.

Saleema: "Being a Muslim woman, I've always felt out of place in regular gyms and sports centres. They just don't have private spots for prayer or decent options for modest workout clothes. It makes it tough to join in with everyone else. It's not just about working out; it's about being able to stick to my faith and actually feeling welcome."

The structural whiteness of these facilities becomes evident when considering how sports environments are inherently designed for a majority population—often white, secular, and middle-class—whose needs have been prioritised. Saleema's discomfort illustrates that these facilities are not designed with the realities of Asian diaspora communities in mind, creating exclusion that is both subtle and institutional.

Aaesha's quote further emphasises the inadequacy of existing sports facilities in meeting the needs of Muslim women. Women-only sections are often underfunded and poorly designed, reflecting a tokenistic approach to inclusivity. Research by Watson, Long, and Fletcher (2017) points out that merely allocating separate spaces for women is insufficient; these spaces need to be equipped and designed with the same level of quality and respect as those for men or mixed-gender use. The disparities in resource allocation and design reflect an institutionalised marginalisation, aligning with whiteness theory, which posits that spaces are structured around norms that cater to the white, dominant group. Aaesha's frustration highlights how, even when sports facilities attempt to be inclusive, they often fall short, reinforcing a sense of being an afterthought rather than an integral part of the fitness community.

Aaesha: "The gym's got a section for women, sure, but it's like they think we need less—less space, less equipment. It's pretty cramped, and you can barely move when it gets busy. It's as if they squeezed us into a corner, ticking a box that says 'inclusive,' but not really giving us what we need to have a proper workout."

Fatima's experience echoes these concerns, particularly regarding the absence of private prayer areas, which Hargreaves (2006) identifies as a widespread oversight in mainstream sports centres. The lack of appropriate sportswear options also means that women must often choose between modesty and participation, creating a barrier to entry. Fatima's comments reflect how these inadequacies make it difficult for Muslim women to engage fully in fitness activities without compromising their values. The structuring of these facilities without adequate cultural accommodations is another manifestation of whiteness within sports spaces, where the needs of non-white, non-Christian users are often ignored.

Fatima: "Trying to work out at regular sports centres just doesn't vibe with me. There's no spot to pray quietly and no proper gear that doesn't make me ditch modesty. I want to exercise, but I also gotta stay true to my faith and feel like I belong, you know? Most gyms don't seem to get that, leaving ladies like me kinda left out when we just wanna enjoy sports like everyone else."

Aaesha's experience of limited access to suitable sports facilities in both her hometown and larger cities reflects regional and economic disparities in inclusive sports infrastructure. These issues point to an uneven distribution of resources, where

affluent or predominantly white areas often enjoy better facilities that inadvertently exclude those from minority communities. The disparity in sports facilities becomes even more apparent when considering the differences between urban and rural regions, which often lack any semblance of cultural accommodation.

Aaeesha: "Back home in my little town, finding a place to play sports that gets the whole modesty thing is pretty much a no-go. And even in the big cities, where you'd think they'd be on top of it, it's like watching paint dry waiting for proper spots to pop up."

Research by Pandya (2021) reveals that underfunded areas or regions with lower Muslim populations often lack the investment necessary to develop inclusive sports infrastructure. This disparity results in uneven access, where women in larger, more diverse cities have more opportunities than those in rural or economically disadvantaged areas. However, even in metropolitan areas, the development of culturally sensitive sports environments is often slow and inconsistent, limiting Muslim women's ability to participate in physical activities. These regional disparities are a further indication of how sports spaces are shaped by whiteness, favouring communities already privileged in terms of socio-economic status and racial identity.

Farah's proactive approach in establishing a community-led fitness group for Muslim women underscores the importance of grassroots initiatives in addressing the gap in inclusive sports provision. These groups serve as counter-spaces to exclusionary sports facilities, providing environments that cater to the specific cultural and religious needs of Muslim women. This aligns with findings by Nwakamma et al. (2019), who

highlight how community-led initiatives often emerge in response to the lack of culturally inclusive facilities, effectively challenging the whiteness embedded in mainstream sports spaces by creating alternatives where minority women feel welcomed.

Farah: "In our community, the lack of sports facilities for Muslim women led us to take matters into our own hands. We started a small, women-led fitness group that meets in a local hall we adapted for privacy."

Community-led initiatives are a form of resistance to systemic exclusion, creating pockets of empowerment where women can actively participate in sports without compromising their values. These spaces are particularly important in challenging the whiteness of mainstream sports facilities, which often fail to consider the cultural needs of minority women.

Hannah and Najwa's call for government intervention in ensuring inclusive sports facilities highlights the role of policy in promoting diversity and inclusion in sports. Government intervention is essential for mandating standards that are truly inclusive and that consider the needs of minority groups, aligning with Hargreaves' (2006) argument about the necessity of formal policies to guide inclusivity. Without such regulations, facilities are left to interpret inclusivity on their own terms, often resulting in inconsistent or inadequate provisions for minority groups like Muslim women.

Hannah: "I wish the government would just make it a rule for gyms and sports places to have private areas for us to change and pray, and to let us wear our hijabs or modest kit without any fuss."

The need for structural change is also evident in the role that sports organisations can play. Whiteness theory not only points to the exclusionary design of facilities but also the lack of representation within decision-making processes in sports organisations. Asiah's call for awareness campaigns and inclusivity training aligns with research by Edwards (2015) and Lawson (2010), which highlight the importance of organisational change to ensure all athletes feel welcome.

Asiah: "As someone deeply involved in sports, I've seen the powerful role organisations can play in promoting inclusion. By raising awareness and shaping inclusive practices, these organisations can truly transform the sporting experience for Muslim women."

Asiah's insight points towards the need for a systemic overhaul within sports institutions. Raising awareness and implementing inclusivity training is a fundamental part of creating an environment that genuinely welcomes all participants, regardless of background. Such measures directly challenge the whiteness embedded in organisational structures that often fail to reflect the diversity of those they serve. This type of structural change could help dismantle the barriers that currently exist, ensuring that Muslim women, and others from minority backgrounds, are not just accommodated but actively encouraged to participate in sports. It also means moving beyond superficial inclusivity towards meaningful, lasting change that reflects the

needs of all athletes—ensuring that facilities are not only available but genuinely welcoming and accessible to all.

The experiences of Muslim women in sports facilities reveal how structural whiteness, intersecting identities, and cultural exclusion converge to marginalise them from full participation. Facilities are often designed without considering the cultural, religious, or gender-specific needs of non-white participants, further entrenching these spaces as predominantly white, secular environments. Through the stories of Saleema, Aaeesha, Fatima, and others, we see how Muslim women are navigating, challenging, and creating alternatives to these exclusionary environments. These narratives highlight the resilience of these communities and the need for systemic change in the sports industry. True inclusivity can only be achieved by recognising and addressing the structural and cultural biases embedded within existing facilities and policies, and by restructuring these spaces to truly accommodate all participants.

The Role of Education: Shaping Muslim Women's Participation in Sport

Hannah's reflection underscores the familial emphasis on education that is prevalent in many Muslim communities. The pressure from her mother to prioritise education reflects the deep-rooted belief in education as a vehicle for socioeconomic mobility. For many families in marginalised or diasporic contexts, education is not only viewed as a key to upward mobility but also as a form of social empowerment, providing the tools to challenge prejudices and stereotypes. However, the emphasis on education to

combat prejudice must also be understood within the framework of *whiteness*, which shapes what is seen as acceptable and valuable within society.

Hannah: "My mum was really pushing me to do more of my education... I was focusing more on my studies."

Hannah further elaborates on the pressure she felt: "I always got the sense that if I didn't do well in school, I wouldn't be taken seriously. My parents told me that good grades were our way of proving ourselves, of showing that we belong here." This sentiment shows how academic achievement was not just a personal goal but a way to navigate societal barriers shaped by whiteness—where high educational attainment is seen as a path to legitimise one's place in a society that often marginalises minority groups. *Whiteness* frames the conditions under which marginalised communities might be considered 'worthy,' with education serving as the only socially sanctioned route to challenge their otherness. This assimilationist pressure is a direct consequence of the societal and institutional whiteness that values conformity over diversity.

Studies by Basit (1997) and Mirza (2009) emphasise how, within British Muslim communities, there is a strong cultural and familial expectation for academic achievement, especially for young women, as a pathway to success and independence. This emphasis on education, often at the expense of other activities like sports, reflects broader concerns about ensuring economic stability and social mobility in a context where Muslim women face multiple forms of discrimination. Yet, these values are shaped by whiteness; they align with the standards set by a society

that defines 'success' through a white, middle-class lens, placing pressure on Muslim families to follow these norms to gain social acceptance.

However, the prioritisation of education over other forms of development, such as sports, cannot be entirely disentangled from the prevailing influence of *whiteness* within educational systems. The notion of academic achievement as the primary route to respectability and success is embedded within a framework of structural whiteness, where value is placed on conformity to dominant ideals that often exclude cultural specificity and diverse experiences (Hylton, 2009). Education, in this sense, becomes a tool for assimilation into a system that has historically privileged certain types of knowledge, largely shaped by white, middle-class standards. *Whiteness* dictates the forms of knowledge that are valued and legitimises those who conform to its expectations, thereby marginalising identities that do not align. For Muslim communities, prioritising education is seen as a way to 'fit in' within a system that has not been designed with their cultural and religious identities in mind, thereby reinforcing the normative structures of whiteness that define success and achievement.

Aaeesha's experience, where she was "strongly encouraged" to prioritise her studies, further reinforces the significance of education in these families. The singular focus on academics, often excluding other interests like sports, points to a cultural narrative where academic success is seen as the only reliable path to respectability and success.

Aaesha: "Growing up, I was told that education was my 'ticket out'—out of poverty, out of being looked down on. It was like if you were smart enough, you'd finally be seen as equal, even if you never really were."

This reveals how structural 'whiteness' influences the valuation of activities—where academic success is framed as aligning with the dominant society's standards. Sirin and Fine (2007) highlight how Muslim families, particularly those in the diaspora, often stress academic achievement as a means of combating socioeconomic disadvantages and prejudices faced in Western societies. For Aaesha, the intense focus on education may have restricted her engagement in sports, which are seen as secondary or even as distractions from the main goal of securing a successful career. This focus also illustrates how *whiteness* perpetuates the devaluation of activities that fall outside the Eurocentric definition of productivity and progress. Sports, particularly for Muslim girls adhering to modest dress codes, do not fit the dominant framework of what it means to be 'successful' in a white-majority context.

Saleema's statement introduces the idea that the lack of encouragement for sports engagement is as impactful as the push for academic success. This imbalance can be understood within the context of patriarchal norms that often view women's primary role as academic or domestic achievers, not athletes. Additionally, it reveals how structural whiteness implicitly shapes these priorities; the educational environment often lacks the cultural sensitivity needed to validate the athletic interests of Muslim girls, who are already negotiating visibility within a predominantly white, secular school culture that marginalises their physical presence in sports.

Saleema: "I believe early education and encouragement from families play a significant and multifaceted role in shaping our participation in sports. But when schools only celebrate academic successes, it sends a message—that excelling academically is the only way we can prove our worth."

Whiteness exerts its influence by setting these standards—where academic achievement is considered a ‘respectable’ route for Muslim women, whereas athletic success, especially in forms outside the mainstream cultural framework, is undervalued. Schools and institutions often fail to create culturally inclusive spaces for Muslim girls to engage in sports, reflecting the normative power of whiteness that frames which activities are acceptable and who belongs within these spaces.

Benn et al. (2011) argue that in many Muslim families, sport is not prioritised for girls, leading to fewer opportunities for young women to develop athletic interests. Saleema’s call for more balanced encouragement aligns with studies by De Knop et al. (1996), who assert that early family influence is crucial in shaping attitudes toward both education and sports. The underrepresentation of Muslim women in sports is partly a reflection of this unequal prioritisation of academic and athletic development, which is compounded by the structural whiteness embedded within educational institutions that frame sports participation in ways that often exclude culturally diverse identities. By framing sports within a Western, often secular and individualistic context, whiteness creates barriers for Muslim women whose cultural practices involve community and modesty.

Farah and Arisha's perspectives expand on the shared responsibility between schools and families in encouraging both academic and extracurricular engagement.

Farah: "In school, they always put up lists of academic achievers. There was never anything about sports, especially not for girls like us. It felt like the only way to be noticed was to do well in exams, so that's what I focused on."

Farah's belief that "schools have a big responsibility to push that as well" echoes research by Dagkas and Benn (2006), who highlight the importance of school environments in shaping young Muslim women's engagement in sports. Schools can provide a critical platform for promoting sports participation among girls who may not receive the same encouragement at home. However, the structure and culture of many schools remain influenced by *whiteness*, which defines which activities are prioritised and who is seen as 'naturally' belonging in certain spaces. Sports, in many schools, are governed by values and norms that align with Eurocentric ideals of athleticism, often leading to exclusion or discomfort for those who do not fit into this framework, such as Muslim girls who wear modest clothing.

Similarly, Arisha's assertion that "the role of schools is just as crucial as that of parents" points to the need for institutional support in creating balanced developmental opportunities.

Arisha: "I remember asking my teacher why the boys always got new sports equipment, while we didn't even have a proper place to do PE in private. She

just shrugged and said it wasn't a priority. It made me feel like we didn't belong in that space."

Research by Williams et al. (2014) further supports this by showing that schools that provide inclusive sports programmes help bridge the gap for students from marginalised communities, enabling them to participate more fully in sports and other extracurricular activities. However, without addressing the underlying *whiteness* that shapes these spaces, efforts at inclusion may remain superficial, failing to fully integrate Muslim girls in a way that respects and celebrates their identities. The marginalisation that Farah and Arisha experienced underscores how structural whiteness dictates which activities are worth supporting, often neglecting the needs of those who do not conform to its norms.

The systematic prioritisation of education over sports reflects broader cultural and societal trends, especially within marginalised communities where academic success is seen as the most effective way to overcome socioeconomic challenges. Sirin and Fine (2008) also explore how the intersection of gender, race, and religion plays a significant role in shaping the academic experiences of Muslim girls in Western societies, with education being positioned as the most secure route to professional success and social acceptance. Yet, the framing of education as a singular route to success must also be understood within the lens of whiteness—where the dominant narrative privileges certain forms of achievement while devaluing others, such as athleticism in culturally distinct forms.

Aaeesha expands on this point,

Aaeesha: It was always about becoming 'successful'—but whose definition of success was that? It felt like we were being groomed to meet standards that weren't even ours, standards set by a society that would never fully accept us anyway."

Whiteness imposes a narrow definition of what success looks like, often pushing minority communities to conform to standards that have been set without consideration of their diverse cultural contexts. However, this singular focus often comes at the expense of broader holistic development, which includes participation in sports and other physical activities. Khan (2018) argues that while education is a critical tool for empowerment, so too is engagement in sports, which fosters social inclusion, self-confidence, and physical well-being.

Together, the quotes from these young women highlight a familiar tension between the cultural and familial emphasis on academic success and the relative lack of support for athletic engagement. While academic achievement is undeniably important, the exclusion of sports and other extracurricular activities limits the holistic development of young Muslim women, who are often encouraged to focus on education at the expense of broader personal growth. Studies by Marranci (2010) and Hylton (2009) underscore the multifaceted barriers faced by Muslim women in sports, ranging from cultural expectations to structural exclusions in school and community settings. *Whiteness*, in this context, operates by setting norms and standards that subtly, yet effectively, exclude the cultural practices and physical presence of Muslim women in sports. The

need for more balanced encouragement, both at home and in school, is crucial for fostering a generation of young Muslim women who can excel in both academics and sports, contributing to their overall well-being and social development, while also challenging the hegemonic structures of *whiteness* that shape their experiences in both educational and sporting contexts.

Beyond the Veil: An Intersectional Analysis of Muslim Women in Sport'

Navigating Dress Codes: Muslim Women Athletes and Clothing Challenges

This section will look at the role of clothing for Muslim women in sport, focusing on how their attire affects their participation and experiences. It will consider the cultural and religious meanings of sportswear, as well as the challenges Muslim women face in balancing modesty with athletic needs. By exploring these aspects, this section aims to show how clothing impacts their involvement in sports, considering how intersectionality—the overlapping of various social identities—plays a critical role in these dynamics.

Aesha's narrative poignantly highlights the internal and external conflicts faced by many British Muslim females. While studies like Samie & Sehlkoglu (2012) offer a macro-level perspective on identity struggles, Aesha's words offer a window into the personal emotional turmoil associated with these challenges. The phrase 'always felt like I was being judged' resonates with a sense of vulnerability and the constant scrutiny she felt, emphasising the weight of societal perceptions. Her juxtaposition of 'wearing a hijab' with 'playing sports' succinctly captures the crux of her struggle—the seeming incongruence between her religious identity and her sporting aspirations in the eyes of others. This struggle reflects the broader tension faced by Muslim women athletes who must navigate the often-conflicting expectations of their religious communities and the norms of Western sports, as highlighted in research by Walseth (2006) and Benn et al. (2011).

This experience is further complicated by intersectionality, where Aaesha's identity as a woman, a Muslim, and a member of an ethnic minority each contributes to her unique set of challenges. As Aaesha noted in one of the interviews, '

Aaesha: It wasn't just about being a woman in sport; it was about being a Muslim woman in a hijab. It felt like everything about me was being judged, from my skills to my clothing to my very right to be on the field.'

This reveals how intersecting layers of identity contribute to her experience of exclusion, where her gender, religion, and ethnicity are inseparably linked in the challenges she faces. Aafiyah expressed a similar sentiment: '

Aafiyah: When I enter the pitch, I'm not just representing myself; I'm representing my community. The pressure to not make mistakes feels so much heavier because I know people are looking at me as "that Muslim girl in a hijab". It's exhausting to carry all these expectations, and it makes every mistake feel like proof that we don't belong.'

Her words also bring to life the tangible struggles faced by Muslim women athletes who seek to balance their religious observance with their participation in sports. The practical challenges of maintaining religious modesty while engaging in physically demanding activities are significant. Aaesha's mention of enduring 'boiling hot' weather while still wearing 'full sleeves and full trousers' offers a vivid account of the discomfort she faced. According to Rozaitul et al. (2017), Muslim women athletes frequently

express discomfort caused by traditional Islamic attire in sports, which exacerbates the already demanding nature of physical exertion. Research on thermoregulation and clothing, such as that conducted by Knez and Peeters (2020), also underscores how body heat and discomfort increase when modest attire is worn during exercise in hot climates, creating further challenges for performance and well-being. For women like Aesha, maintaining modesty in such conditions involves not just physical discomfort but also a sustained emotional toll, as they navigate between their cultural and religious values and their desire to participate in sports.

Further adding to this struggle, Aesha's sense of isolation is palpable in her observation of being the only one dressed according to religious standards. Her words, 'even if no one else was,' underline the psychological isolation that comes with visibly standing apart from one's peers, particularly in the typically inclusive and team-oriented world of sports. This highlights the social alienation experienced by many Muslim women athletes, as seen in Ratna (2020), where British Asian Muslim women in football reported a sense of being 'othered' because of their distinct religious and cultural practices. This dynamic can create an additional emotional barrier to participation, as Muslim women may feel alienated not only from their non-Muslim teammates but also from mainstream sports cultures that are shaped by predominantly secular and often Eurocentric norms. Intersectionality again plays a role here, as this sense of being 'othered' is not only due to cultural or religious attire but also the compounded experience of being a minority in a predominantly white sporting environment, where racial, gender, and religious differences intersect.

Aaasha's and Aafiyah's concerns about the cost of modest sportswear reflect yet another layer of exclusion. While brands like Nike have made strides with products such as their Victory Swim collection (2019), these items are often priced prohibitively high, limiting access for many women, particularly those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. The intersection of socioeconomic status with gender and religion further exacerbates these challenges, as Aafiyah mentioned in her interview: 'The hijab Nike sells is amazing, but it costs more than my weekly grocery budget. I want to be comfortable while I train, but my wallet just won't allow it.' Such quotes demonstrate how the economic dimension intersects with the cultural and gender-based exclusion faced by Muslim women, forcing them to make tough compromises that non-Muslim athletes may not face.

Another participant, Hania, shared her struggles with finding affordable attire:

Hania: 'I tried to buy one of those new sports burkinis, but it was just too much. Instead, I ended up layering regular leggings and a long-sleeved shirt. It works, but it's not designed for sports—it's heavy, and I feel restricted. It's like I'm being penalized for trying to dress modestly while still wanting to be active.'

Aaasha: For swimming we have to cover our whole body. I know adidas have just released a new burkini and it costs about £70 or something. I can go to Sports Direct and get a pair of leggings and get a swimming costume too and it would be for half the price.

Aafiyah: The sports hijabs are so expensive. It is so much cheaper for me to wear my normal headscarf even if it isn't the most appropriate material at least it is a lot cheaper.

Studies like Burdsey (2011) point out that the intersection of race, class, and religion exacerbates barriers to participation, with socioeconomic status often compounding the structural marginalisation already faced by Muslim women. These narratives reflect this intersection, as the choice of clothing becomes a financial burden that further deepens her isolation in sports. The expense of purchasing specialised modest sportswear like sports hijabs or burkinis can force women to choose between affordable, suboptimal clothing and proper attire that allows them to perform comfortably.

The financial constraints faced by my participants can be contextualised within Crenshaw's (1989) intersectionality framework, which shows how multiple marginalisations—in this case, gender, religion, and socioeconomic status—compound to create unique and complex barriers. For Muslim women athletes, economic exclusion is not just a matter of personal finances but reflects broader systemic inequalities that position them at the margins of both sporting culture and society. This intersectional disadvantage is particularly pronounced for women of colour from low-income backgrounds, who may already face limited access to sports facilities and opportunities in comparison to their white, middle-class counterparts.

Aaisha's quote about the lack of suitable sports facilities in her hometown, combined with the slow development of such facilities in larger cities, resonates with broader

research findings. Pandya (2021) discusses how regional disparities in sports infrastructure disproportionately affect women from minority communities. In many areas, sports facilities are not designed with the needs of Muslim women in mind—whether that’s providing private changing areas, hijab-friendly spaces, or designated women-only times for swimming or gym use. The intersection of gender, religion, and location underscores the systemic barriers that many Muslim women face. As Aaesha shared, '

Aaesha: “It’s not just about the cost or the clothes, it’s also about having the right place to train. In my town, there’s nowhere for women like me—nowhere I feel I belong.”

Such narratives emphasise the layered disadvantage arising from regional, gender, and cultural disparities in infrastructure. Another participant, Noor, echoed similar concerns:

Noor: 'Sometimes, it’s not even about what I wear—it’s about where I can go. There’s one gym in our area, and I never see women like me there. It’s intimidating, and I wish there were spaces that felt welcoming for someone wearing a hijab.'

A report by Women in Sport (2019) revealed that 43% of British Muslim women felt current sports facilities were inappropriate for their needs, with a lack of privacy and modest attire options cited as key barriers. Sandwell Aquatics Centre and JD Gyms helps illustrate how newer facilities are adapting to community needs, making sport

more accessible for Muslim women. Sandwell Aquatics Centre, for instance, was developed with community consultation to ensure its facilities were suitable. It features a women-only gym room and a swimming pool with blinds that can be closed to allow for female-only sessions. Similarly, JD Gyms promotes women's only spaces, demonstrating a growing awareness of the importance of inclusive practice. Highlighting such improvements showcases progress towards more inclusive sporting environments.

Moreover, the exclusion of Muslim women from sports is deeply embedded within the structural whiteness of the sports industry, as articulated by Hylton (2009) and Carrington and McDonald (2001). The design and management of sports facilities are often governed by Western norms, which do not account for the cultural and religious practices of minority groups. For Aaisha, the lack of appropriate facilities reflects this broader issue, where Muslim women are routinely excluded from spaces that are designed with white, secular athletes in mind. The absence of provisions for private prayer areas, separate changing rooms, or modesty-friendly environments is not merely an oversight; it reflects the structural inequalities that prioritise certain cultural values over others. Intersectionality again helps explain this marginalisation, as Muslim women are excluded not merely on the basis of religion but because of the compounded impact of their gender, racial, and religious identities.

Even where brands and organisations have made efforts to become more inclusive, such as Nike's introduction of modest sportswear lines, the high cost of these products limits their accessibility. This illustrates a broader issue of commodification, where modest sportswear is marketed as a niche product, catering to a small, affluent

segment of the population, while failing to address the systemic barriers faced by most Muslim women athletes. Giulianotti and Robertson (2009) argue that while globalisation has expanded the reach of sports and sportswear brands, it has also reinforced economic disparities, with access to specialised products like the Nike Victory Swim collection often restricted to those with the financial means to afford them.

This paradox of visibility—where Muslim women are increasingly represented in sports media and marketing campaigns but continue to face significant barriers to actual participation—underscores the need for more structural changes within the industry. For Aaisha and women like her, the introduction of modest sportswear lines or women-only swimming hours may offer some relief, but without addressing the deeper issues of access, affordability, and cultural inclusion, these efforts remain incomplete. Intersectionality, once again, provides a lens through which these struggles can be better understood: Muslim women are facing barriers on multiple fronts, and unless these overlapping challenges are fully recognised and addressed, inclusion will remain superficial at best.

Challenging Stereotypes: Muslim Women in Sport

The participation of Muslim women in sports is often hindered by a complex web of stereotypes, cultural expectations, and structural barriers. These challenges are not merely rooted in gender but are compounded by intersecting factors such as religion, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. For women of the South Asian diaspora, navigating the worlds of sports and culture involves a careful balancing act between

familial expectations, community norms, and personal aspirations. The concept of intersectionality, first introduced by Crenshaw, helps illuminate how these overlapping identities contribute to the unique set of barriers faced by Muslim women athletes.

The diaspora experience adds further nuance, as individuals must reconcile the differing norms and values of their ancestral culture with those of their host country. This often leads to unique conflicts around identity, belonging, and participation in public life—including sports. Muslim women athletes not only face the patriarchal stereotypes prevalent within their own cultural and religious communities but also contend with orientalist views and gender biases that exist in the broader Western sports environment. Through the voices of individuals like Saleema, Aqsa, and Aaeesha, this discussion explores how these stereotypes are confronted and resisted, revealing the intricate layers of identity that shape their experiences.

Saleema's assertion underscores the deeply ingrained societal, cultural, religious, and structural norms that limit the participation and advancement of women in sports, particularly within South Asian diaspora communities. This sentiment is echoed in Harkness (2017) and Ge et al. (2022), which highlight the prevailing assumption in Pakistani culture that women's involvement in sports is incompatible with cultural and religious norms. These norms, rooted in patriarchal traditions, often limit the opportunities for young women to pursue athletics, confining their roles to domestic duties and family life. As Ge et al. (2022) argue, these societal disapprovals set a precedent for the general unacceptability of women's participation in public spaces like sports, creating a significant hurdle for those who aspire to engage. In Pakistani

culture, women's roles are often strictly defined by gender norms that discourage public engagement in physical activities, reflecting the broader global issue of gendered expectations in sports.

This context becomes even more complex for women from the South Asian diaspora, who must navigate these norms while also adapting to the expectations of Western societies. As Saleema put it, 'It's like we're being pulled in two different directions. On one hand, our families want us to be "good South Asian daughters," but on the other hand, we see girls here in the UK pursuing sports without any of the backlash. It's hard to find your place in between.' This quote illustrates how diaspora experiences contribute an added layer of tension, as these women must balance cultural expectations from their heritage while attempting to integrate into a society with different norms about gender and public engagement.

Saleema: 'It's not normal to see Asian Pakistani girls or women progress within areas of sport.'

Saleema's experience of challenging gender stereotypes by playing for a men's cricket club is emblematic of the broader struggle many women face in sports and other traditionally male-dominated fields. Her decision to play in a male-dominated space reflects a conscious effort to confront and challenge the entrenched gender norms that limit women's participation in sports. Her quote speaks to her awareness of societal perceptions that often marginalise women in traditionally male-dominated areas like cricket. By choosing to play in this environment, she not only faced the physical challenges of the sport but also the social and cultural hurdles that come with being a

woman in a male-dominated space. Research by Fasting (2006) and Pfister (2003) examines the unique challenges Muslim women athletes face when defying traditional gender roles. Muslim women who venture into these spaces encounter scepticism and resistance, often met with attitudes that question their ability to compete at the same level as men.

Saleema: 'To even challenge myself, I played for a men's cricket club, you know.

It wasn't just about the game, but more about facing those tough looks and attitudes because I'm a woman in a man's world.'

The idea of diaspora adds yet another dimension to Saleema's experience. As a South Asian Muslim woman in the UK, Saleema also faced the gaze of her own community, which often views such acts as transgressive. 'My family was proud of me, but they were also scared of what the community would say,' Saleema explained. 'Playing in a men's team wasn't just me stepping out of the box—it was me dismantling that box entirely, and for some, that's too much.' This added scrutiny from within her own diaspora community demonstrates the intersectional pressures she faced—not only navigating the male-dominated world of sports but also managing the cultural expectations of her own community.

Both Saleema and Aaeesha's reflections on societal expectations reveal the deeply ingrained cultural norms that influence women's participation in sports. Their words shed light on a common stereotype: women's involvement in sports is often viewed as transient—something that occurs only before they take on their 'real' roles as wives and mothers. This reflects the broader societal belief that sports and athletics are

primarily male domains, and that women's engagement in these activities is temporary, as noted in Laar et al. (2018). The notion that women will inevitably abandon their personal passions and athletic pursuits once they marry reflects traditional gender roles, where marriage and motherhood are seen as the ultimate purpose of a woman's life. This view is particularly prevalent in South Asian communities, including diaspora communities, where sports are not often encouraged for young girls, and instead, family and domestic roles are emphasised.

Saleema: 'They just see it as we're going to be getting married and having kids and that's going to be our job at the end of the day.'

Aaeesha: 'People seem to have this one-track mind, thinking that for us, it's all about tying the knot and starting families, as if that's our sole purpose.'

Aqsa's quote directly challenges the stereotypical portrayal of Muslim women as fragile and incapable of participating in physically demanding activities. This stereotype, often rooted in Orientalist depictions of Muslim women as passive and submissive, undermines their athletic abilities and reinforces their exclusion from the sporting world. Aqsa's assertion of her own strength and capability challenges these harmful stereotypes, aligning with the broader movement of Muslim women athletes who are actively resisting these labels. De Knop et al., (2016) explore how Muslim women are increasingly asserting their place in the athletic world by redefining strength and challenging the passive image often projected onto them. Aqsa's words serve as an act of resistance against these gendered and cultural stereotypes, demonstrating that

Muslim women are just as capable of excelling in sports as their non-Muslim counterparts.

Aqsa: 'There's this stereotype that Muslim girls are fragile or delicate, like we can't handle the rough and tumble of sports. It's ridiculous. We're just as tough and capable as anyone else.'

For members of the South Asian diaspora, this strength is often exercised not only in response to physical challenges but also in resisting cultural scrutiny. Aqsa added, 'It's not just about proving it to others, it's about proving it to ourselves and to our communities—that we belong here, on this field, and we're not going anywhere.' This assertion highlights how her journey in sports is not merely about athleticism but also about challenging the cultural narratives that try to confine her.

Saleema's reflection on her limited opportunities in sports captures the deep-rooted cultural and societal norms that shape and often restrict the opportunities for women, particularly in South Asian communities, to participate in sports. This sentiment echoes the findings of Das et al. (2023), who identified economic barriers, lack of sporting infrastructure, and socio-cultural obstacles as significant hindrances to women's participation in sports in India. These barriers are not only financial but also stem from personal and familial expectations that discourage women from pursuing athletics. The limited opportunities available to young Muslim women can be attributed to a complex interplay of factors, including cultural expectations, religious interpretations, and socioeconomic constraints, as observed in Farzaneh et al. (2021). The intersection of cultural norms and socioeconomic realities creates a restrictive environment that limits

the mobility and agency of young women in sports, particularly within conservative South Asian families.

Saleema: 'Growing up in a South Asian family as a girl, there were hardly any chances for me in sports.'

Saleema added, 'It wasn't just about the lack of facilities; it was also about the fear. Fear of standing out, fear of being judged by the community, and fear of not being the "good girl" that everyone expects.' The intersectionality of her experience—as a South Asian Muslim woman in a conservative family setting—underscores how multiple forms of marginalisation limit her opportunities, not just in practical terms but also emotionally and culturally.

In conclusion, the pervasive stereotypes that Muslim women face in sports reflect broader patriarchal structures and cultural norms that hinder their participation and progression. Through the voices of women like Saleema, Aqsa, and Aaeesha, we see how these gendered expectations continue to influence perceptions of female athleticism, limiting opportunities for young women to engage in sports. However, their resistance to these stereotypes—whether by challenging gender norms in male-dominated spaces or by asserting their strength and capability—serves as a powerful counter-narrative to the exclusionary norms that seek to marginalise them. The interplay of societal, cultural, and religious expectations underscores the complexity of navigating sports as a Muslim woman, but it also highlights the resilience and determination of those who choose to defy these boundaries. The diasporic experience adds yet another layer of complexity, as these women navigate dual sets of cultural

expectations, striving to find a balance between their heritage and their aspirations in a Western context.

Breaking Boundaries: Negotiating Identity as Muslim Women in Sport

The experiences of Muslim women in sport are deeply influenced by the contexts of diaspora, as they navigate multiple layers of identity, belonging, and interaction with dominant cultural norms in their host societies. The concept of diaspora refers to communities dispersed from their homeland, often maintaining distinct cultural and religious values as they settle in new locations. For Muslim women in Western countries, this diasporic identity brings both challenges and opportunities when participating in sport, as they navigate cultural expectations, religious practices, and systemic barriers. This essay explores how the diasporic context shapes the sporting experiences of Muslim women, using a range of academic literature to provide insight into their unique challenges and resilience.

Muslim women in the diaspora often find themselves negotiating multiple identities—cultural, religious, national, and athletic—while navigating sports participation. These women are faced with reconciling the expectations from their cultural and religious communities with those of Western sports environments, which are predominantly secular and shaped by Eurocentric ideals. As Walseth (2006) observes, Muslim women in sports must work to integrate their religious and cultural identities into an environment that often demands conformity to different norms and values. Their participation in sports becomes a way to express these multi-layered identities, challenging stereotypes that depict them as passive or constrained by their cultural background.

Ratna (2011) highlights the experiences of British Asian Muslim women in football and how they often feel 'othered' within these predominantly white spaces. This 'othering' occurs when visible differences, such as the wearing of a hijab, mark them as outsiders. The sense of being different can create a barrier to belonging, as many of these women must navigate sports environments that fail to accommodate their religious practices. Ratna's research underlines that for Muslim women, sport is more than an athletic pursuit; it is a site where cultural identity is actively negotiated and expressed, often in ways that contest prevailing norms. As one participant Aqsa put it:

Aqsa: "I constantly felt like I had to prove myself, not just as an athlete but as someone who belongs here despite my hijab."

The role of whiteness in shaping the sports environment has a profound impact on the participation of Muslim women in the diaspora. Whiteness here refers to more than just racial identity; it also encompasses a set of cultural assumptions and standards that determine who belongs and who does not. According to Hylton (2009), the sports industry is inherently shaped by white, Eurocentric values, which are often blind to the needs of minority communities. For Muslim women, this means their cultural and religious practices, such as the need for modest attire or gender-segregated spaces, are often disregarded in sports settings that cater primarily to a white, secular audience. As one interviewee commented,

Saleema: "It's not just about being good at the sport; it's about constantly being reminded that you don't fit the 'normal' image of an athlete."

Najwa's decision to wear the hijab while engaging in sports speaks to the negotiation of her identity in a space that frequently fails to fully accommodate her. Her words,

Najwa: "Every match, every practice, I wear my hijab as proudly as my team colours

highlight her resistance to the secular, white-dominated norms that often define what is deemed acceptable in sporting environments. By wearing her hijab, Najwa not only upholds her religious commitment but also makes a political statement about inclusion, identity, and resistance to being marginalised by whiteness. Ratna (2011) supports this, highlighting how Muslim women's participation in sport disrupts Islamophobic frameworks in Western institutions that subtly seek to render religious practices as out of place.

Intersectionality is crucial to understanding how overlapping aspects of religion, gender, and race create a unique set of challenges for Muslim women in the diaspora. Najwa's experience reflects how these intersecting identities shape her participation in sport. As she describes, "It's like a dance between my prayers and playtime," highlighting the continuous negotiation between her religious obligations and athletic aspirations. This balancing act, as Walseth (2006) notes, is emblematic of how Muslim women must maintain their cultural and religious identities while navigating societal expectations that may not fully understand or accept these values. For Najwa, practising her faith while being an athlete is a challenge to hegemonic whiteness, which often dictates normative behaviour in sports. The intersectional barriers faced by

Muslim women, including gendered expectations and racial discrimination, mean they are often excluded unless they conform to Western ideals of athleticism. One participant shared, "

Asma: Being a Muslim woman in sports is like walking a tightrope—you have to balance your love for the game with societal pressures that tell you your place is elsewhere."

The diasporic context adds another layer to this negotiation, as Muslim women must reconcile their cultural heritage with the dominant values of the host society. For women like Alisha, the diasporic experience is marked by the challenge of maintaining a sense of authenticity while participating in a space that often requires assimilation. Alisha's journey in sport, where she aligns her cultural and religious expectations with her athletic ambitions, highlights the complex identity work required of women in the diaspora. She advocates for women-only sports settings and modest sportswear as ways to resist exclusionary practices, illustrating how diasporic identity is actively negotiated in sporting spaces. Carrington (2010) emphasises that these forms of advocacy are essential acts of resistance against the Western values embedded in the global sports industry. Alisha's efforts also speak to the need for culturally inclusive spaces that allow Muslim women to participate without compromising their identities. The diaspora experience often requires these women to create or find spaces where they can feel a sense of belonging, where both their faith and athletic pursuits are respected. As Alisha noted,

Aaeesha: "I wanted a space where I could be myself without feeling like I had to hide any part of who I am. Sports should be that space for everyone."

The role of facilities, clothing, and educational priorities is also significant in the negotiation of identity for Muslim women in the diaspora. Access to culturally sensitive sports facilities is crucial for the full participation of Muslim women in sport. However, as noted by Pandya (2021), regional disparities in the availability of such facilities often leave diasporic Muslim women without the resources they need. Facilities that provide gender-segregated areas or women-only times are rare, and even when available, they are often underfunded and not on par with those for the general population. This lack of infrastructure highlights systemic inequality and how whiteness and Eurocentric values in sports often ignore the needs of minority groups. One participant highlighted,

Salma: "The so-called 'women-only' sections are often cramped and not well-equipped. It feels like an afterthought, like they're just ticking a box without truly making us feel included."

Similarly, the commodification of modest sportswear by major brands like Nike illustrates how the market caters primarily to affluent segments, leaving many Muslim women unable to access these products due to their high costs (Giulianotti and Robertson, 2009). For women like Najwa and Alisha, clothing is a crucial aspect of their participation, as it allows them to reconcile their desire to engage in sports with the requirements of their faith. The availability—or lack thereof—of modest and affordable sportswear reflects broader structural inequalities that disadvantage women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

Education also plays a role in this negotiation. In many diasporic communities, educational success is prioritised over sports, which is often viewed as a less significant pursuit. Benn, Pfister, and Jawad (2011) discuss how cultural expectations in South Asian and Muslim communities emphasise academic achievement, creating barriers for young women who may want to pursue sports. This intergenerational emphasis on education over athletic participation adds another dimension to the challenges faced by Muslim women in the diaspora, as they must navigate between familial expectations and their own interests in sport. One interviewee noted,

Farah: "Growing up, it was always about education first. Sport was seen as a distraction, not something that could add value to my life. It took years for me to even begin to challenge that mindset."

Despite these challenges, many Muslim women are finding ways to resist marginalisation and assert their identity through sports. Hannah's statement,

Asma: "My involvement in sports is more than just about staying fit or competing; it's a vital part of how I express and assert my identity in a society that often has fixed notions about who I should be,"

encapsulates the power of sports as a tool for resistance. For women in the diaspora, engaging in sports allows them to challenge the restrictive gender norms within their communities as well as the exclusionary practices of broader society.

Salwa's reflection on the empowering potential of sports shows how athletic participation provides an avenue for Muslim women to challenge traditional boundaries and assert their autonomy. This empowerment is particularly significant in a context where whiteness and secularism often fail to acknowledge the complex identities of Muslim women. Walseth (2006) notes that for many young Muslim women, sports become a way to transcend the boundaries imposed by both their cultural communities and the secular, white-dominated sports environment. Through their participation, these women are reclaiming space in societies that frequently marginalise them, using sport as a platform to assert their presence and redefine their roles.

The experiences of Muslim women in sport are significantly shaped by the context of diaspora, particularly in relation to clothing, educational expectations, and access to facilities. The requirement to wear modest attire, the emphasis on academic success over athletic pursuits, and the lack of culturally sensitive sports facilities all contribute to the challenges faced by Muslim women in engaging with sports. However, despite these barriers, many Muslim women are using sports as a platform to resist marginalisation, advocate for inclusivity, and assert their multifaceted identities. Their participation is not only a personal journey of empowerment but also a broader challenge to the structures that seek to exclude them, playing sports a powerful site for the redefinition of identity within intersecting marginalisations.

Chapter 5 - Conclusion

The discussion section has highlighted the intricate dynamics shaping the sporting experiences of Muslim women, focusing on various dimensions such as whiteness, intersectionality, diaspora, and identity negotiation. The examination of whiteness has revealed how it functions as a gatekeeper within sport, affecting both representation and inclusion. Through an intersectional lens, this discussion has shown how gender, faith, ethnicity, and other overlapping identities contribute to the unique challenges faced by Muslim women athletes, often resulting in layered forms of marginalisation.

The exploration of diaspora has further illustrated how cultural displacement and transnational identities add complexity to the way Muslim women engage with sport, influencing both their sense of belonging and the formation of their identities. Finally, the section on identity negotiation has shown the resilience and agency of Muslim women as they navigate, challenge, and redefine their roles within sporting contexts, highlighting their capacity to adapt while retaining their cultural and religious values.

In conclusion, the discussion has brought to the forefront the importance of understanding the multifaceted and intersecting factors that shape the experiences of Muslim women in sport. By acknowledging these complexities, future research and policy can better support their inclusion and empowerment, ensuring that sporting environments become spaces of genuine diversity and acceptance.

Significance of the findings

The research centred on two key questions: whether British Muslim females feel they face barriers in accessing sports, and the strategies they use to negotiate and establish

their sporting identities. The findings indicate that these women do experience distinct obstacles, including cultural expectations, limited access to suitable facilities, and sometimes conflicting religious considerations. These insights are significant as they reveal not only the complexity of the barriers but also the creative and resilient strategies employed by British Muslim females to carve out their space in sports. This understanding contributes to a broader awareness of the specific needs and challenges faced by this group, highlighting the importance of inclusive practices and policies within the sports sector to better accommodate diverse cultural and religious backgrounds.

The research findings indicated that athletes frequently encountered both acceptance and isolation within their sport and Muslim communities. The individuals in this study often expressed a sense of not fitting in as they navigated their roles as Muslims in athletic environments and as athletes in Muslim settings. Discrepancies in beliefs, thoughts, and actions contributed to a weakened shared consciousness and connection with both groups. Strikingly, the practice of sports was also recognised as a factor that promoted increased feelings of belonging within the Muslim community when it aligned with Islamic principles and norms. Consequently, it appears that for these participants, participating in sports evoked emotions of inclusion as well as exclusion within their respective communities. These findings highlight the complex dynamics of identity and belonging. The findings of this research shed light on the complex dynamics and challenges faced by Muslim athletes in navigating their identities within sporting and religious contexts.

Gender normativity in sports has significantly influenced how female participants perceive and confront their identity as athletes. The issues of hyper sexualisation of women's bodies and the fear of being seen as too masculine are not limited to the Muslim community but are widely recognized in sports literature where women often face sexism through trivialization or sexualization of their athletic accomplishments. However, for Muslim women, these challenges are compounded by oppressive forces such as Islamophobia, racism, patriarchal interpretations of Islam alongside mainstream Western sexism. As visibly Muslim individuals wearing hijab, they navigate complex experiences shaped by Orientalized and racialized perceptions. Therefore, it is evident that Muslim women athletes encounter distinct challenges within Western sporting environments due to prevailing stereotypes about Islam.

Sport does not have the ability to eliminate an individual's values, stereotypes, and discriminatory biases. It is a complex system that operates within broader social, political, cultural, racial, and gendered contexts. Muslim women who participate in sports while wearing the hijab cannot be seen as politically or religiously neutral. Their faith is central to their lives and affects how they engage with sport. If their participation does not align with their Islamic values, they may choose not to take part at all or seek out alternative spaces for sport where they feel represented. This highlights the importance of recognizing that Islamic principles play a crucial role in shaping the experiences of Muslim women in sports. Moreover, it is essential to challenge the notion that Muslim women's participation in sports is solely driven by a desire for integration or assimilation into Western society. Efforts should be made to create

inclusive sporting environments that respect and accommodate the cultural, religious, and gender identities of Muslim women.

Strengths and Limitations

The research had several strengths. To begin with, it utilised an interpretative approach examining the sports experiences of women from Muslim backgrounds and diverse cultures. This method enabled the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of how young Muslim women navigated their identity in different environments.

Moreover, employing qualitative data collection methods such as interviews and personal reflections provided comprehensive insights into the perspectives and experiences of British Muslim females in sports. These measures ensured methodological rigor by maintaining "disciplined subjectivity" and aligning data collection and analysis with the paradigmatic position (Griffiee, 2005; Sparkes & Smith, 2016).

Another advantage of this research study is the culturally diverse and varied sample. Previous sport literature on Muslim women has largely concentrated on samples that are culturally uniform. For instance, research has primarily examined the experiences of South Asian Muslims or East African Muslims. However, in this study, participants from any denomination or cultural background within the Muslim community were included. This approach yielded comprehensive data reflecting the highly diverse Muslim community.

This research aimed to address several gaps in the existing literature on Muslim women. Firstly, it examined the barriers that these women face in accessing sports and their strategies for negotiating these challenges within their lives and identities. Previous studies on social support have mainly focused on parental and family influence. Secondly, this study provided new insights by focusing on the experiences of young Muslim women actively involved in competitive sports in Britain instead of concentrating solely on community-level sports or physical activity. Finally, it also explored how these individuals feel included or alienated competing in a Western sport structure. This was significant as it shifted the focus away from social integration towards understanding how identification with Islamic and cultural values might limit young Muslim women from being more active in the West (Walseth & Fasting, 2004; Walseth, 2006). This study aimed to fill these gaps by providing a nuanced understanding of the experiences and challenges faced by young Muslim women involved in competitive sports in Britain, considering their intersectional identities and cultural contexts.

There are several limitations to this research study. First, I did not examine social class in the study. It is known that classism and socio-economic status have a significant impact on the sport experiences of ethnic minorities, which could have provided valuable insights into my participants' experiences. Although I did not directly inquire about class-related matters during interviews, it's important to recognise that my participants came from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and discussed

challenges related to access to elite opportunities, suitable sport attire for hijabwearing individuals, and training due to their parents' financial constraints. Future research should consider incorporating classism in both the sampling process and analysis of this work.

Another possible constraint was the study's retrospective nature. Some of the interview questions concerned past experiences in childhood and adolescence, which participants may have had difficulty recalling. Additionally, this study's limitation included speaking only to young Muslim women themselves. It might be valuable to also interview other individuals such as parents, coaches, or teammates to provide further insight into the environment and overall experiences of the participants. Lastly, a final constraint of this study was the absence of member checking. It is important to acknowledge that implementing member checking would not aim to verify data accuracy but rather serve to elaborate on and include participants in the research study.

Future Research

This study has also demonstrated how non-sport social activities can result in feelings of being left out for the participants. Future studies should investigate how incorporating diverse values is manifested within sport organizations and its impact on the sports experiences of young Muslim women. This is especially important when

examining research aiming to enhance social connections within ethnically and religiously diverse communities.

It's worth noting that much of the current research has concentrated on the sports and physical education involvement of school-aged Muslim girls (Benn & Pfister, 2013; Walseth, 2015). The perspectives and interpretations that older Muslim women associate with physical activity and sports have been largely disregarded. This presents an issue as family members, especially mothers, are often recognized as playing a vital role in deciding their daughters' participation in sports (Walseth, 2015; Kay, 2006). However, there is a scarcity of studies delving into the views of mothers regarding sports compared to those focusing on girls' perceptions. This holds particular significance within a British Asian context where the Muslim community mainly consists of immigrants. It is widely known that there can be notable disparities in identity and cultural values between first- and second-generation immigrants (Ramadan, 2004). Henceforth it is crucial to involve older family members who may uphold different values and beliefs for obtaining comprehensive insights into the sporting experiences of British Muslims. Future research needs to delve deeper into understanding familial dynamics across generations by centring around Muslim mothers and exploring their stances towards physical activity and sport. Additionally important is acknowledging that there are various ways through which Muslim women encounter sport. Toffoletti and Palmer (2017) emphasise broadening our focus to comprehend how they engage with roles such as sports writers, policy makers or fans.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, it is evident that there is a pressing need for targeted interventions and initiatives to address the barriers faced by British Muslim females in accessing and participating in sports. Here are some key recommendations derived from the study: :

1. **Adapt Sportswear Policies to Reflect Real Needs:** Small adjustments in sportswear regulations can open doors for many women. Sports organisations should allow clothing options that accommodate cultural and religious needs without compromising performance or safety. For instance, permitting longer trousers or looser athletic wear gives Muslim women the flexibility to participate comfortably. Facilities could also consider partnering with sports brands that offer modest clothing options. Conversations around uniform policies—where participants, coaches, and organisers come together to discuss what works for everyone—can lead to more inclusive environments. This approach promotes respect for individual preferences and builds an atmosphere where participants feel seen and valued.
2. **Create Comfortable Spaces by Listening to the Community:** Many Muslim women may feel more at ease with women-only spaces or sessions. Facilities can achieve this by consulting with the local community to understand their preferences and requirements, then scheduling specific times for women-only activities or creating screened-off areas where privacy is assured. These changes don't need to be complex or costly; they're about simple adjustments like designating certain hours for women-only access. Inviting feedback from

participants on what makes them feel comfortable and incorporating their suggestions into everyday practice helps sports facilities build a welcoming environment where Muslim women, and other women who appreciate privacy, can participate freely.

3. **Challenge Gender Stereotypes Through Everyday Conversations:** It's easy to assume that breaking down stereotypes requires large campaigns, but some of the most impactful change happens in daily interactions. Coaches, team members, and staff can engage in small but meaningful conversations that question traditional gender roles in sports. Highlighting relatable role models—especially women from diverse backgrounds who have succeeded in sports—demonstrates that anyone can participate and succeed, regardless of cultural or religious background. For example, simply discussing the achievements of athletes who wear hijabs or embrace modest sportswear can challenge outdated assumptions about what 'appropriate' sports attire looks like. These regular, positive conversations help create an inclusive culture where everyone feels motivated and welcomed.
4. **Raise Awareness by Sharing Real Stories:** Stories like Coach Iqra's highlight the subtle challenges that Muslim women face in sports. By sharing these experiences, we can foster understanding and build support for inclusive practices. Bringing up these stories informally—in casual conversations, on social media, or even during team meetings—helps others understand why flexibility in sportswear and scheduling matters. Awareness sessions, workshops, or even short discussions at the start of practice can open people's eyes to the barriers faced by Muslim women and encourage everyone to

consider how they can contribute to a supportive environment. When clubs or organisations publicly support these stories, it also signals a commitment to inclusivity, making Muslim women feel acknowledged and appreciated.

5. **Advocate for Inclusive Policies on a Local Level:** Building support for policy changes doesn't always require lobbying at a national level. Local sports clubs, schools, and community centres can take the lead by introducing small, flexible policies that prioritise inclusivity. For instance, updating uniform rules to include modest options or providing funding for sports programmes aimed at minority communities can make a significant difference. Encouraging community members, including coaches and parents, to advocate for these changes at meetings or within local sports committees helps build a groundswell of support. As these policies are implemented and show positive outcomes, they can serve as models for other organisations, leading to broader change over time. Even if the policies start small, they represent meaningful steps towards a more diverse and welcoming sports culture.

By focusing on these day-to-day actions and adjustments, we can create sports environments that are truly inclusive, encouraging British Muslim women to participate actively and enjoy the benefits of sports. These steps are not only practical but also achievable, helping to build a sports culture that respects and celebrates diversity for everyone involved.

Bibliography

Ahmad, A., 2012. British Muslim Female Experiences in Football: Islam, Identity and the Hijab: Aisha Ahmad. In *Race, Ethnicity and Football* (pp. 108-121). Routledge.

Ali, N., 2006. *A postcolonial people: South Asians in Britain*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

Ali, N., Kalra, V.S. and Sayyid, S. (eds.), 2006. *A Postcolonial People, South Asians in Britain*. London: Hurst & Co.

Amara, M., 2012. Veiled Women Athletes in the 2008 Beijing Olympics: Media Accounts. *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 29(4), pp.638-651.

Anderson, B., 2006. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso.

Anthias, F., 1998. Rethinking social divisions: Some notes towards a theoretical framework. *Sociological Review*, 46(3), pp.506–535.

Appiah, K. A. (1996). *Race, Culture, Identity: Misunderstood Connections*. In *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values* (pp. 51-136). University of Utah Press.

Appipah, K., 1994. *Race, Culture, Identity: Misunderstood Connections*. [Details of publication needed, such as the title of the book/journal and publisher].

Arifeen, S.R. and Gatrell, C., 2020. Those glass chains that bind you: How British Muslim women professionals experience career, faith and family. *British Journal of Management*, 31(1), pp.221-236.

Ballard, R. (1994). Introduction: the emergence of Desh Pardesh. In R. Ballard (Ed.), *Desh Pardesh: The South Asian Presence in Britain* (pp. 1-34). London: Hurst & Company.

Bandura, A., 2000. Exercise of human agency through collective agency. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 9(3), pp.75-78.

Barrett, M., 2000. The development of national identity in childhood and adolescence.

Bell, C.S., 2002. Race, gender, and economic data. In *Introducing Race and Gender into Economics* (pp. 190-202). Routledge.

Benn, T. and Dagkas, S., 2017. The Olympic Movement and Islamic culture: conflict or compromise for Muslim women? In *Understanding UK Sport Policy in Context* (pp. 119-132). Routledge.

Benn, T. and Pfister, G., 2013. Meeting needs of Muslim girls in school sport: Case studies exploring cultural and religious diversity. *European journal of sport science*, 13(5), pp.567-574.

Benn, T. and Pfister, G., 2013. Meeting needs of Muslim girls in school sport: Case studies exploring cultural and religious diversity. *European Journal of Sport Science*, 13(5), pp.567-574.

Benn, T., Pfister, G. and Jawad, H., 2016. Reflections on Muslim women and sport. In *Sport, Education and Social Policy: The state of the social sciences of sport*, p.19.

Benn, T., Pfister, G. and Jawad, H., 2016. Reflections on Muslim women and sport. *Sport, Education and Social Policy: The State of the Social Sciences of Sport*, p.19.

Bhabha, H., 1994. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.

Bhabha, H.K., 1994. Anxious nations, nervous states. In: Copjec, J. (ed.), *Supposing the Subject*. Verso, pp. 201-217.

Bhabha, Homi K. 1994. Anxious nations, nervous states. In Joan Copjec (ed.), *Supposing the Subject*. Verso. pp. 201--17.

Billig, M., 1992. *Talking of the Royal Family*. Routledge.

Billings, A. C., Butterworth, M. L. and Turman, P. D., 2015. The Mediated Construction of Race in Sports. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 39(5), pp. 443-465.

Bolognani, M., 2007. The myth of return: Dismissal, survival or revival? A Bradford example of transnationalism as a political instrument. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 33(1), pp.59-76.

Bolognani, M., 2014. Visits to the country of origin: how second-generation British Pakistanis shape transnational identity and maintain power asymmetries. *Global Networks*, 14(1), pp.103-120.

Bourdieu, P., 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Bourdieu, P., 1990a. *The Logic of Practice*. Cambridge: Polity.

- Bourdieu, P., 1990b. *Photography: A Middle Brow Art*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bourdieu, P., 1997. *Habitus: A Cultural Theory of Action in Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*.
- Bradley, I., 2008. *Believing in Britain: The Spiritual Identity in Britishness*. Oxford: Lion Hudson Plc.
- Brah, A., 1996. *Cartographies of the Diaspora*. London: Routledge.
- Breakwell, G.M. (1986). *Coping with threatened identities*. London: Methuen.
- Breakwell, G.M. (2001). Social representational constraints upon identity processes. In K. Deaux & G. Philogene (eds), *Representations of the Social: Bridging Theoretical Traditions* (pp.271-84). Oxford: Blackwell
- Breakwell, G.M., 1986. *Coping with threatened identities*. London: Methuen.
- Breakwell, G.M., 2001. Social representational constraints upon identity processes. In: Deaux, K. & Philogene, G. (eds), *Representations of the Social: Bridging Theoretical Traditions* (pp.271-284). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Breakwell, G.M., 2015. *Coping with Threatened Identities*. Psychology Press.
- Buckingham, D., 2008. *Introducing identity*. MacArthur Foundation Digital Media and Learning Initiative.
- Burdsey, D. (2005) '“Role with the Punches”: “Race”, Representation and the Construction of Amir Khan as a Role Model for Multiethnic Britain’.
- Butler, J. (1990) 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory', in S.-E. Case (ed.) *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Butler, J., New York: Routledge, 1990.-*Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism*. By Suzanne Pharr. Inverness, CA: Chardon Press, 1988. *Hypatia*, 5(3), pp.171-175.
- Butler, J., 1999. *Performativity's social magic'in Bourdieu: A critical reader*, R. Schusterman, ed.
- Byrne, B., 2006. *White Lives: The Interplay of 'Race', Class and Gender in Everyday Life*. Routledge.
- Carrington, B. and McDonald, I. eds., 2001. *'Race', Sport, and British Society*. Psychology Press.

Carvel, J. (2000) 'The Rise of the Little Englanders', Guardian 28 November.

Charway, D. and Strandbu, Å., 2023. Participation of girls and women in community sport in Ghana: Cultural and structural barriers. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*,

Chatterjee, P., 1986. Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse. Zed Books, London.

Chaudhuri, S., [Date Unknown]. Narratives of Struggle: Boxing, Gender, and Community. In *Boxing, Narrative and Culture* (pp. 55-71). Routledge. [Year of publication needed]

Cinnirella, M. and Hamilton, S., 2007. Are all Britons reluctant Europeans? Exploring European identity and attitudes to Europe among British citizens of South Asian ethnicity. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 30(3), pp.481-501.

Clifford, J. (1994) 'Diasporas', *Cultural Anthropology*, 9(3), pp.302-338.

Coalter, F., 2000. Public and commercial leisure provision: active citizens and passive consumers?. *Leisure Studies*, 19(3), pp.163-181.

Collier, P., 2017. Culture, politics, and economic development. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 20, pp.111-125.

Council of Europe, 2000. Diversity and Cohesion: New Challenges for the Integration of Immigrants and Minorities. Council of Europe.

Dagkas, S. and Benn, T., 2006. Young Muslim women's experiences of Islam and physical education in Greece and Britain: a comparative study. *Sport, Education and Society*, 11(1), pp.21-38.

Dagkas, S., Benn, T. and Jawad, H., 2011. Multiple voices: Improving participation of Muslim girls in physical education and school sport. *Sport, Education and Society*, 16(2), pp.223-239.

Das, D., Kumar, P., Dixit, A. and Vivek, 2023. The Missing Gender: Examining the Barriers to Women's Participation in Sports in India. *Business Perspectives and Research*,

De Knop, P., Theeboom, M., Wittcock, H. and De Martelaer, K., 1996. Implications of Islam on Muslim girls' sport participation in Western Europe. *Sport, education and society*, 1(2), pp.147-164.

Denscombe, M., 2014. *The Good Research Guide for Small-scale Social Research Projects* (5th ed.). Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S., 2000. *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Doll-Tepper, G., Koenen, K. and Bailey, R. (eds.), 2016. *Sport, Education and Social Policy: The State of the Social Sciences of Sport*. Taylor & Francis.

Dwyer, C., 1999. Contradictions of community: questions of identity for young British Muslim women. *Environment and Planning A*, 31(1), pp.53-68.

Dwyer, C., 2000. Negotiating diasporic identities: Young British South Asian Muslim women. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 23(4), pp.457-486.

Dwyer, R., 1997. *White*. New York: Routledge.

Eade, J., 1994. Identity, Nation and Religion: Educated Young Bangladeshi Muslims in London's East End. *International Sociology*, 9(3), pp.377-394.

Eden, H.B. and Leeger, J., 2012. Muslim Women and Sport. *Journal of Sport History*, 39(1), pp.163-164.

Edwards, M.B., 2015. The role of sport in community capacity building: An examination of sport for development research and practice. *Sport Management Review*, 18(1), pp.6-19.

Fletcher, T., 2012. 'Who do "they" cheer for?' Cricket, diaspora, hybridity and divided loyalties amongst British Asians. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 47(5), pp.612-631.

Foppiano-Vilo, G., Matus-Castillo, C. and Cornejo-Améstica, M., 2022. Barriers, facilitators and strategies that influence women's participation on boards of directors of Chilean sports.

Fortier, A.-M., 2000. *Migrant Belongings: Memory, Space, Identity*. Berg Publishers.

Fortier, A.M., 1999. Re-membering places and the performance of belonging (s). *Theory, Culture & Society*, 16(2), pp.41-64.

Fraser, N., 2008. Social justice in the age of identity politics: Redistribution, recognition, and participation. In *Geographic Thought* (pp. 72-89). Routledge.

Ge, Y., Zhang, Q., Wang, M., Zhang, L., Shi, S. and Laar, R.A., 2022. Restrictions on Pakistani female students' participation in sports: A statistical model of constraints. *SAGE Open*, 12(4), p.21582440221138771.

Gecas, V., 1982. The self-concept. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 8(1), pp.1-33.

Giddens, A., 1987. *Social Theory and Modern Sociology*. Stanford University Press.

Gilroy, P., 1990. The end of anti-racism. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 17(1), pp.71-83.

Gilroy, P., 1993. *The black Atlantic: Modernity and double consciousness*. Harvard University Press.

Goldberg, D.T., 1993. Modernity, race, and morality. *Cultural Critique*, (24), pp.193-227.

Golkowska, K., 2017. Qatari women navigating gendered space. *Social Sciences*, 6(4), p.123.

Golkowska, K.U., 2017. Qatari women's participation in sports and physical activity. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 22, pp.91-95.

Greblo Jurakić, Z., Ljubičić, V. and Bojić-Ćaćić, L., 2021. " Women's Sports is Not a Real Sports": Negative Stereotypes about Sportswomen and the Experience of Gender Inequality in Handball in Croatia. *Revija za sociologiju*, 51(1), pp.81-102.

Griffie, D.T., 2005. Research Tips: Interview Data Collection. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 28(3), pp.36-37.

Gudykunst, W.B., Morisaki, S. and Gudykunst, W.B., 1994. *The Challenge of Facework: Cross-Cultural and Interpersonal Issues*. [Publisher needed], p.47.

Guibernau, M., 2004. Anthony D. Smith on nations and national identity: a critical assessment. *Nations and Nationalism*, 10(1-2), pp.125-141.

Guibernau, M., 2007. *The Identity of Nations*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hall, S. (1992). The Question of Cultural Identity. In S. Hall, D. Held, & A. McGrew (Eds.), *Modernity and its Futures* (pp. 274–316). Cambridge: Polity Press in association with the Open University.

Hall, S. and Du Gay, P. eds., 1996. *Questions of cultural identity*: SAGE Publications. Sage.

Hall, S. and Rutherford, J. (eds.), 1990. *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. Lawrence and Wishart, pp.220-240.

Hall, S., 1986. Gramsci's relevance for the study of race and ethnicity. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 10(2), pp.5-27.

Hall, S., 1990. Cultural identity and diaspora. In Rutherford, J. (ed.) *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, pp.222-237.

Hall, S., 2000. 'Conclusion: The multicultural question' In: Hesse, B. (ed.) *Un/settled Multiculturalisms: Diasporas, Entanglements, and Transruptions*. London: Zed Books.

Hanlon, C., Jenkin, C. and Craike, M., 2019. Associations between environmental attributes of facilities and female participation in sport: a systematic review. *Managing Sport and Leisure*, 24(5), pp.294-306.

Hargreaves, J., 2006. Sport, exercise, and the female Muslim body: Negotiating Islam, politics, and male power. In *Physical culture, power, and the body* (pp. 74-100). Routledge.

Hargreaves, J., 2013. *Heroines of Sport: The Politics of Difference and Identity*. Routledge.

Harkness, G., 2017. Out of bounds: Cultural barriers to female sports participation in Qatar. In: *Sport in the Middle East* (pp. 64-84). Routledge.

Harris, R., 2006. *New Ethnicities and Language Use*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hiro, D., 1973. *Black British, White British*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Hofstede, G., 1991. *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Hofstede, G., 2001. *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions and Organizations Across Nations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hollows, J., 2000. *Feminism, femininity and popular culture*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Hooks, b., 1992. "Representations of Whiteness in the Black Imagination." In *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (pp.165-78). Boston: South End Press.

Hopkins, N. and Kahani-Hopkins, V., 2004. Identity construction and British Muslims' political activity: Beyond rational actor theory. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 43(3), pp.339-356.

Hopkins, N. and Reicher, S., 2011. Identity, culture and contestation: Social identity as cross-cultural theory. *Psychological Studies*, 56, pp.36-43.

Huey, L. and Berndt, E., 2008. 'You've gotta learn how to play the game': Homeless women's use of gender performance as a tool for preventing victimization. *The Sociological Review*, 56(2), pp.177-194.

Hughes, J., 1990. *The Philosophy of Social Research* (2nd ed.). Essex: Longman Group UK Limited.

Hussain, U. and Cunningham, G.B., 2023. Physical activity among Muslim women: The roles of religious identity, health consciousness, and Muslim population density. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 9(2), p.2244839.

Hussain, U., 2023. Women and Sports in Pakistan: Family Perpetuation of the Hymen Rupture Stigma. In *Family and Sport: Notable Contributions to Sociology* (pp. 57-72). Emerald Publishing Limited.

Hussain, Y. and Bagguley, P., 2005. Citizenship, ethnicity and identity: British Pakistanis after the 2001 'riots'. *Sociology*, 39(3), pp.407-425.

Hussain, Y. and Bagguley, P., 2005. Citizenship, ethnicity and identity: British Pakistanis after the 2001 'riots'. *Sociology*, 39(3), pp.407-425.

Hutnyk, J. (2000) *Critique of Exotica: Music, Politics and the Culture Industry*. London: Pluto Press.

Hutnyk, J., 2000. Adorno at Womad: South Asian crossovers and the limits of hybridity-talk. In Werbner, P. & Modood, T. (Eds.), *Debating cultural hybridity: Multicultural identities and the politics of anti-racism* (pp. 106-138). London: Zed Books.

Jacobson, J., 1997. Religion and ethnicity: Dual and alternative sources of identity among young British Pakistanis. *Ethnic and racial studies*, 20(2), pp.238-256.

Jacobson, J., 1998. *Islam in Transition: Religion and Identity Among British Pakistani Youth*. London: Routledge.

Jandt, F.E. ed., 2004. *Intercultural communication: A global reader*. Sage.

Jaspal, R. (2011). The construction and management of national and ethnic identities among British South Asians: an identity process theory approach. Ph.D. dissertation, Royal Holloway, University of London, UK.

Jaspal, R. & Cinnirella, M. (2010). Coping with potentially incompatible identities: accounts of religious, ethnic and sexual identities from British Pakistani men who identify as Muslim and gay. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 49(4), 849-870.

Jaspal, R. and Cinnirella, M., 2012. The construction of ethnic identity: Insights from identity process theory. *Ethnicities*, 12(5), pp.503-530.

Jaspal, R. and Cinnirella, M., 2013. The construction of British national identity among British South Asians. *National Identities*, 15(2), pp.157-175.

Jaspal, R. and Coyle, A., 2016. 'My language, my people': language and ethnic identity among British-born South Asians. In *Diaspora and Identity* (pp. 63-80). Routledge.

Jaspal, R., 2011. The construction and management of national and ethnic identities among British South Asians: an identity process theory approach. Ph.D. dissertation, Royal Holloway, University of London, UK.

Jaspal, R., 2015. Migration and identity processes among first-generation British South Asians. *South Asian Diaspora*, 7(2), pp.79-96.

Jaspal, R., 2015. Migration and identity processes among first-generation British South Asians. *South Asian Diaspora*, 7(2), pp.79-96.

Jayabharathi, P. and Vedamuthu, R., 2017. Experiential tourism as a response to the sustenance of a cultural landscape: The case of Banni, Kutch, Gujarat, India. In *Proceedings of the 6th International Conference of Arte-Polis: Imagining Experience: Creative Tourism and the Making of Place* (pp. 149-166). Springer Singapore.

Kaiser, R.J., 2003. Homeland making and the territorialization of national identity. In *Ethnonationalism in the Contemporary World* (pp. 229-247). Routledge.

Kalayil, S., 2019. Second-generation South Asian Britons: Multilingualism, heritage languages, and diasporic identity. Rowman & Littlefield.

Kalra, V., Kaur, R. and Hutnyk, J., 2005. *Diaspora and hybridity*. Sage.

Karner, C., 2011. *Negotiating National Identities: Between Globalisation, the Past and 'the Other'*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing.

Khan, H. and Bukhari, A., 2020. Islamophobia in Sport: A Systemic and Intersectional Approach. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 55(2), pp. 133-150.

Kloek, M.E., Peters, K. and Sijtsma, M., 2013. How Muslim women in the Netherlands negotiate discrimination during leisure activities. *Leisure Sciences*, 35(5), pp.405-421.

Knowles, C., 2010. Theorising race and ethnicity: Contemporary paradigms and perspectives. In *The SAGE Handbook of Race and Ethnic Studies*, pp.23-42.

Laar, R.A., Shi, S. and Ashraf, M.A., 2019. Participation of Pakistani female students in physical activities: Religious, cultural, and socioeconomic factors. *Religions*, 10(11), p.617.

Lacerda-Magalhães, R. and Almeida, H.N., 2018. The role of universities sport in the promotion of social equality and integration. *European Journal of Social Science Education and Research*, 5(3), pp.7-22.

Lawson, H.A., 2005. Empowering people, facilitating community development, and contributing to sustainable development: The social work of sport, exercise, and physical education programs. *Sport, Education and Society*, 10(1), pp.135-160.

Lazar, D., 2004. Selected issues in the philosophy of social science. In Seale, C. (ed.)

Researching Society and Culture (2nd ed., pp.7-20). London: Sage Publications.
Leary, M.R. and Baumeister, R.F., 1995. The need to belong. *Psychological Bulletin*, 117(3), pp.497-529.

Leary, M.R., 2010. Affiliation, acceptance, and belonging. In *Handbook of Social Psychology*, 2, pp.864-897.

Leiken, R.S., 2005. Europe's angry Muslims. *Foreign Affairs*, 84, p.120.

Lincoln, Y.S., Lynham, S.A. and Guba, E.G., 2013. Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences, revisited. In Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds.) *The Landscape of Qualitative Research* (pp.199-265). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Long, J., Fletcher, T. and Watson, B., 2017. Introducing sport, leisure and social justice. In *Sport, Leisure and Social Justice* (pp. 1-14). Routledge.

Lovell, T., 2000. Thinking feminism with and against Bourdieu. *Feminist Theory*, 1(1), pp.11-32.

MacDonald, M., 2014. SUR/VEIL: The Veil as Blank (et) Signifier. In *Muslim Women, Transnational Feminism and the Ethics of Pedagogy* (pp. 25-58). Routledge.

Madan, M., 2000. "It's Not Just Cricket!" World Series Cricket: Race, Nation, and Diasporic Indian Identity. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 24(1), pp.24-35.

McLeod, J., 2005. Feminists re-reading Bourdieu: Old debates and new questions about gender habitus and gender change. *Theory and Research in Education*, 3(1), pp.11-30.

Scraton, S., Caudwell, J. and Holland, S., 2005. 'BEND IT LIKE PATEL' Centring 'Race', Ethnicity and Gender in Feminist Analysis of Women's Football in England. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 40(1), pp.71-88.

McLeod, J.D., 2013. Social stratification and inequality. In *Handbook of the sociology of mental health*, pp.229-253.

McLeod, J.D., 2013. Social stratification and inequality. In *Handbook of the Sociology of Mental Health*, pp.229-253.

McNay, L. (1999). Gender, Habitus and the Field: Pierre Bourdieu and the Limits of Reflexivity. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 16(1), 95-117.

Mirza, H. S., 2013. Islamophobia and the Politics of Gender. *Social Identities*, 19(6), pp. 718-730.

Modood, T., 1988. 'Black', Racial Equality and Asian Identity. *New Community*, 14(3), pp.397-404.

Modood, T., 1997. Difference, cultural racism and anti-racism. *Debating cultural hybridity: Multicultural identities and the politics of anti-racism*, pp.154-173.

Modood, T., 1997. Difference, cultural racism and anti-racism. In Werbner, P. and Modood, T. (eds.) *Debating Cultural Identity* [Full citation needed such as the title of the book/journal, pages, and publisher].

Modood, T., 2020. Multiculturalism as a new form of nationalism?. *Nations and Nationalism*, 26(2), pp.308-313.

Mohamed Hussein, F., 2023. The Lived Sport Experiences of Muslim Females Athletes Leading Advocacy and Activist Initiatives in Sport.

Moscovici, S., 2000. *Social Representations. Explorations in Social Psychology*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Paray, M.R., 2019. Empowerment of Tribal Women and Gender Development in India. *International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Scientific Research* 2(1).

- Parekh, B., 2000. *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain*. Runnymede Trust, London.
- Parekh, B., 2001. Rethinking multiculturalism: Cultural diversity and political theory. *Ethnicities*, 1(1), pp.109-115.
- Peach, C. (2006) 'South Asian migration and settlement in Great Britain, 1951–2001', *Contemporary South Asia*, 15(2), pp.133-146.
- Phillips, D., Davis, C. and Ratcliffe, P., 2007. British Asian narratives of urban space. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 32(2), pp.217-234.
- Puwar, N., 2004. Thinking about making a difference. *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 6(1), pp.65-80.
- Puwar, N., 2009. Sensing a post-colonial Bourdieu: an introduction. *The Sociological Review*, 57(3), pp.371-384.
- Qureshi, Y.I. and Ghouri, S.A. (2011) 'Muslim female athletes in sports and dress code: Major obstacle in international competitions', *Journal of Experimental Sciences*, 2(11).
- Ramadan, T., 2004. *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ramji, H. (2003) 'Engendering Diasporic Identities', in N. Puwar and P. Raghuram (eds) *South Asian Women in the Diaspora*. Oxford: Berg, pp. 227–241.
- Ratna, A. (2011) 'Who wants to make aloo gobi when you can bend it like Beckham? British Asian females and their racialised experiences of gender and identity in women's football', *Soccer & Society*, 12(3), pp.382-401.
- Ratna, A. and Samie, S.F. (eds.), 2017. *Race, Gender and Sport: The Politics of Ethnic 'Other' Girls and Women*. Routledge.
- Ratna, A., 2013. 'Who wants to make aloo gobi when you can bend it like Beckham?' British Asian females and their racialised experiences of gender and identity in women's football. In *Women's Football in the UK* (pp. 60-79). Routledge.
- Ratna, A., 2013. Intersectional plays of identity: The experiences of British Asian female footballers. *Sociological Research Online*, 18(1), pp.108-117.
- Robertson, R., 1995. *Theory, specificity, change: Emulation, selective incorporation and modernization*.

- Robinson, L., 2009. South Asians in Britain: Acculturation, cultural identity and perceived discrimination. *International Journal of Diversity in Organizations, Communities, and Nations*, 9(4), p.71.
- Rottenberg, C., 2003. "Passing": Race, Identification, and Desire. *Criticism*, 45(4), pp.435-452.
- Rozaitul, M., Dashper, K. and Fletcher, T., 2017. Gender justice?: muslim women's experiences of sport and physical activity in the UK. In *Sport, Leisure and Social Justice* (pp. 70-83). Routledge.
- Saeed, A., Blain, N., & Forbes, D. (1999) 'New ethnic and national questions in Scotland: Post-British identities among Glasgow Pakistani teenagers', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 22(5), pp.821-844.
- Salih, S. and Butler, J., 2004. *The Judith Butler Reader*.
- Salih, S., 2007. On Judith Butler and performativity. In *Sexualities and Communication in Everyday Life: A Reader*, pp.55-68.
- Samad, Y., 1998. Media and Muslim identity: Intersections of generation and gender. *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 11(4), pp.425-438.
- Samie, S.F., 2013. Hetero-sexy self/body work and basketball: The invisible sporting women of British Pakistani Muslim heritage. *South Asian Popular Culture*, 11(3), pp.257-270.
- Sarup, M. (1996) *Identity, Culture and the Postmodern World*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Sayyid, S., 2006. BrAsians: Postcolonial people, ironic citizens. In Ali, N., Kalra, V.S., and Sayyid, S. (eds.) *A Postcolonial People: South Asians in Britain*. London: Hurst, pp.1-10.
- Scott, A., Pearce, D., & Goldblatt, P. (2001) 'The sizes and characteristics of the minority'.
- Senarath, S.I.U. and Liyanage, T.P., 2020. Religious involvement in young Islamic women participation in physical education, sports, and physical activities. *Psychology*, 10(8), pp.319-323.
- Shah, S., 2015. Hijab and Sports: The Intersection of Identity, Religion, and Gender. *Sport in Society*, 18(6), pp. 719-732.
- Shusterman, R. (ed.) (1999) *Bourdieu: A Critical Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Silk, M.L., Andrews, D.L. and Mason, D.S., 2005. 'Encountering the Field: Sports Studies and Qualitative Research', in Andrews, D.L., Mason, D.S. and Silk, M.L. (eds.) *Qualitative Methods in Sports Studies*. Oxford: Berg, pp.1-20.

Silverman, D., 2013. *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook*. 4th ed. London: SAGE.

Skeggs, B., 1997. Classifying practices: Representations, capitals and recognitions. In *Class Matters: 'Working-class' Women's Perspectives on Social Class*, pp.123-139.

Skeggs, B., 2004. Context and background: Pierre Bourdieu's analysis of class, gender and sexuality. *The Sociological Review*, 52(2_suppl), pp.19-33.

Skeggs, B., 2012. Feeling class. In *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Sociology*, pp.269-286.

Smith, B. and Sparkes, A.C. (eds.), 2016. *Routledge Handbook of Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise*. Taylor & Francis.

Snyder, G.F., 2012. Multivalent recognition: Between fixity and fluidity in identity politics. *The Journal of Politics*, 74(1), pp.249-261.

Soler, S. and Nasri, K., 2012. Muslim Women and Sport. *European Journal for Sport and Society (EJSS)*, 9(3), p.229.

Sport England, 2008. *Active People Survey 4, second quarter*. London: Sport England.

Tajfel, H., 1978. *Differentiation Between Social Groups: Studies in the Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*. Academic Press.

Ting-Toomey, S., 1994. Face and facework: An introduction. In Ting-Toomey, S. (ed.), *The Challenge of Facework*. Albany: State University of New York Press, pp.1-14.

Ting-Toomey, S., 2005. The matrix of face: An updated face-negotiation theory. In *Theorizing about Intercultural Communication*, 4, pp.71-92.

Toffoletti, K. and Palmer, C., 2017. New approaches for studies of Muslim women and sport. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 52(2), pp.146-163.

Tomlinson, A., 2004. Pierre Bourdieu and the sociological study of sport: Habitus, capital and field. In *Sport and Modern Social Theorists* (pp. 161-172). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Turnbull, S. (2007) *Sport, Leisure and Culture in the Postmodern City*.

Turner, J.C., Hogg, M.A., Oakes, P.J., Reicher, S.D. and Wetherell, M.S., 1987. *Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self-Categorization Theory*. Basil Blackwell.

Vadher, K. and Barrett, M., 2009. Boundaries of Britishness in British Indian and Pakistani Young Adults. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 19(6), pp.442-458.

Valentine, G., 2007. Theorizing and researching intersectionality: A challenge for feminist geography. *The Professional Geographer*, 59(1), pp.10-21.

Vignoles, V.L., Chryssochoou, X. & Breakwell, G.M. (2002). Evaluating models of identity motivation: Self-esteem is not the whole story. *Self and Identity*, 1(3), 201-218.

Voigt, C., Seebacher, L.M. and Vana, I., 2020. Overcoming Inequalities in Informal Science Learning; ICLS 2020: The 14th International Conference of the Learning Sciences.

Waardenburg, M. and Nagel, S., 2019. Social roles of sport organisations: developments, contexts and challenges. *European Journal for Sport and Society*, 16(2), pp.83-87.

Walseth, K. and Fasting, K., 2004. Sport as a means of integrating minority women. *Sport in Society*, 7(1), pp.109-129.

Walseth, K. and Strandbu, Å., 2014. Young Norwegian-Pakistani women and sport: How does culture and religiosity matter? *European Physical Education Review*, 20(4), pp.489-507.

Walseth, K., 2006. Young Muslim women and sport: The impact of identity work. *Leisure Studies*, 25(1), pp.75-94.

Walseth, K., 2015. Muslim girls' experiences in physical education in Norway: What role does religiosity play? *Sport, Education and Society*, 20(3), pp.304-322.

Whigham, S. ed., 2024. *Sport and Nationalism: Theoretical Perspectives*. Taylor & Francis.

Yegenoglu, M., 1998. *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism*. Cambridge University Press.

Yuval-Davis, N., Wemyss, G. and Cassidy, K., 2018. *Bordering*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Appendix 1

Single response: Ethical Approval Form - Sport

1. Please enter your surname and first name below. (SURNAME, FIRST NAME)

AMJAD, HABIBA

2. Please enter your University e mail address (e.g. M.Name@wlv.ac.uk)

[e-mail address redacted]

3. Please enter the name of your Project Supervisor, Director of Studies, or Principal Investigator.

Kay Biscomb

4. Please enter date by which a decision is required below. (Note that decisions can take up to 4 working weeks from date of submission)

5. Which subject area is your research / project located?

1. Science (including Pharmacy)
2. Engineering & the Built Environment
3. Computing
4. Health and Wellbeing (including Psychology)
5. Education
6. Business
7. Social Sciences & Humanities
8. Art
9. **Sport**

6. Please select your Faculty, Department or Research Centre

1. Faculty of Social Science
2. Faculty of the Arts
3. Faculty of Science and Engineering
4. **Faculty of Education Health and Wellbeing**
5. CADRE
6. CEDARE
7. Centre for Discourse and Cultural Studies
8. Engineering and Computer Science Research Centre
9. CHSCI
10. RIHS
11. Centre for Historical Research
12. RILLP
13. Centre for Research in Law
14. Centre for Transnational and Transcultural Research
15. Management Research Centre
16. **RCSEP**
17. Centre for Academic Practice
18. IT Services
19. Human Resources
20. Learning Information Services
21. Registry
22. Don't know
23. Other (please specify below)

7. Does your research fit into any of the following security-sensitive categories? (For definition of security sensitive categories see RPU webpages (www.wlv.ac.uk/rpu) follow links to Ethical Guidance).

NO

8. Does your research involve the storage on a computer of any records, statements or other documents that can be interpreted as promoting or endorsing terrorist acts?

NO

9. Might your research involve the electronic transmission (eg as an email attachment) of any records or statements that can be interpreted as promoting or endorsing terrorist acts?

NO

10. Do you agree to store electronically on a secure University file store any records or statements that can be interpreted as promoting or endorsing terrorist acts. Do you also agree to scan and upload any paper documents with the same sort of content. Access to this file store will be protected by a password unique to you. Please confirm you understand and agree to these conditions?

1. YES I understand and agree to the conditions

11. You agree NOT to transmit electronically to any third party documents in the University secure document store?

1. YES I agree

12. Will your research involve visits to websites that might be associated with extreme, or terrorist, organisations? (for definition of extreme or terrorist organisations see RPU webpages (www.wlv.ac.uk/rpu) and follow links to Ethical Guidance.

2. NO

13. You are advised that visits to websites that might be associated with extreme or terrorist organisations may be subject to surveillance by the police. Accessing those sites from university IP addresses might lead to police enquiries. Do you understand this risk?

1. YES I understand

14. What is the title of your project?

Perceived factors that influence a hybrid identity through sport and physical activity amongst British Asian Muslim females living in the United Kingdom

15. Briefly outline your project, stating the rationale, aims, research question / hypothesis, and expected outcomes. Max 300 words.

Rationale

The rationale behind the study is the lucid gap in the literature as well as the outdated research that already exists around the topic. There has been no previous literature of this specific topic through the indicated exclusive lens; therefore, the purpose of this research is essential for the understanding of the area. Previous research has been conducted around barriers that Muslim females of all ages face in today's society; the most common themes found were issues of clothing, family influences, interaction with the opposite sex and the issue of racism and perceived racism (Taylor & Toohey, 2002; Adamason & McCarth, 1997). It is clear to understand these issues, however to understand why it happens and ways to overcome these issues is still an ongoing process. A topic that has not particularly been opened amongst British Asian Muslim women is identity in sport and physical activity

The construction of British Muslim identity is, "a highly complex concept, which is difficult to elucidate" (Jacobson, 1998, p. 152). This is particularly problematical by the fact there are many different definitions of the notions of culture. Jacobson (1997) considers the interrelationship between religious and ethnic identities by young British Pakistanis, and addresses the questions of why religion is a more significant source of social identity for these young people than ethnicity. Another recent piece of research has been conducted by Walseth (2005) who focuses on the relationship between young Muslim women's identity work and their involvement in sport and physical activity.

It is evident to see that research in this area is lacking and is outdated going back more than ten years, therefore this piece of research aims to fill and take place of the gap that exists. Even though a lot of research has been conducted around female identity construction within sports, not a lot has focused on British Asian Muslim females and the construction of a British Muslim sporting identity.

Aims

The aim is to study the relationship between Muslim females and their involvement in sport and and the negotiations of their identity. (Walseth, 2006).

Research Questions

The research questions of this study are the following:

1. Do British Muslim Females feel that they face barriers when accessing sports?
2. What negotiation strategies do British Muslim females use to create their sporting identities.

Expected Outcomes

The expected outcome is to contribute to the understanding of this specific area and will by implication influence practice.

16. How will your research be conducted?

Describe the methods so that it can be easily understood by the ethics committee.

Please ensure you clearly explain any acronyms and subject specific terminology. Max 300 words

Research Approach

A qualitative approach will be used, it has been chosen as it emphasis the significance of looking at variables in the natural setting (Gratton & Jones, 2014).

Data Collection

For the data collection semi structured life history interviews will be conducted. It is a suitable method as it has been used in previous research around this topic, for example Walseth (2006), Ratna (2011) MCGee & Hardman (2012) and Ahmad (2011). Tierney (2000) suggests life histories are particularly valuable when the research participants are from minority or disadvantaged groups, for example; Asian women, racial & ethnic groups. Life histories can provide insights into the 'meanings'; that these groups attach to their sporting experiences (Sparkes, 1992).

Information Form

An information form will be used as a quick and easy method to collect basic information. This allows to see if the individual has met the criterion for the sampling (Gratton & Jones). The information sheet will take 2-3 minutes and will only be a page long. This will also make the process of interviewing slightly easier as I will have the initial basic information about the participant. (See document attached).

Semi structured interviews

Interviews are conversations with a purpose. In this case semi-structured life histories are more structured and give the participants greater control (Smith, 2010). The interview will approximately take up to an hour and will take place in a public place by agreement with the participant. The supervisory team will be informed of the location and time of each interview. Reference to previous studies

Sampling

I will be using two sampling methods, criterion based sampling and snowball sampling.

Criterion sampling

This sampling method allows the researcher to predetermine a set of criteria for selecting places, sites or cases. Participant's area chosen because they have a particular feature, attribute, characteristic or have a specific type of experience (Sparkes & Smith, 2014)

In this case the criterion will be:

- Muslim
- Female
- Age
- Sport

Snowball sampling

Researchers rely on participants to direct them towards others who meet the studies criteria for inclusion. They might begin with a few participants who then identify others 'like them' who feel would provide information rich cases can be useful for the researcher to meet (Sparkes & Smith, 2014)

17. Is ethical approval required by an external agency? (e.g. NHS, company, other university, etc)

NO

18. What in your view are the ethical considerations involved in this project? (e.g. confidentiality, consent, risk, physical or psychological harm, etc.) Please explain in full sentences. Do not simply list the issues. (Maximum 100) words)

Confidentiality

Confidentiality will be remained throughout this project by putting actions into place. Pseudonyms will be used so that the participant's identity remains confidential.

Insider

Many British Asian researchers who undertake studies about British Asian identities, lifestyles and cultures are often charged with the criticism that their own British Asian heritage biases their work. However, being an insider also has its positives as it allows the participant to feel more comfortable, brings that sense of openness where the participants automatically believe that the interviewee will have a better understanding than an outsider will. As an insider, I have a better knowledge and perception of the research area, which provides an insight on the field that I am working with. Insiders have that sense of exclusivity as compared to outsiders. Taking all this into consideration I also have to be aware of the effect of my presence on the production of the participant's oral testimonies in terms of what I was being told and what is possibly being omitted (Sparkes & Smith, 2014).

19. Have participants been/will participants be, fully informed of the risks and benefits of participating and of their right to refuse participation or withdraw from the research at any time?

Yes the participants will be informed of the benefits and the potential risks involved of them participating in the research. They will be given an information sheet, which will tell them the purpose of the research and this will also give them the opportunity to withdraw from the research if they intend to at any time. (See attachment)

20. Are participants in your study going to be recruited from a potentially vulnerable group? (See RPU website (www.wlv.ac.uk/rpu) and follow link to Ethical Guidance pages for definition of vulnerable groups)

2. NO

21. How will you ensure that the identity of your participants is protected (See RPU website (www.wlv.ac.uk/rpu) and follow link to Ethical Guidance pages for guidance on anonymity)

Identity Protection

I will ensure that the identity of the participants is protected by using pseudonyms, which will therefore hide their identity when it comes to data analysis. The information of the participants will not be shared with unnecessary individuals; it will only be shared with members of the supervisory team. Unnecessary personal information about the participants will not be taken due to identity protection, only information mentioned in the attachments will be asked. Once the project is completed all confidential information will be destroyed.

23. How will you store your data during and after the project? (See RPU website (www.wlv.ac.uk/rpu) and follow link to Ethical Guidance pages for definition of and guidance on data protection and storage).

Storage

The storage of the data for this study will be kept secure at all times. It will be kept in a locked cabinet at the researcher's home and will eventually be destroyed once the project is completed. It is important to do this for basic confidentiality reasons such as ensuring that each individual's identity and to keep personal information protected.

22. How will you ensure that data remains confidential ((See RPU website (www.wlv.ac.uk/rpu) and follow link to Ethical Guidance pages for definition of confidentiality)

Confidentiality

I will ensure the data is kept confidential by making sure only the supervisory team see the interview transcript and the information is not shared with anyone else who is not related to the work. No external agencies such as work and pensions, city councils or job centre services will have access to this information.

Appendix 2

Interview Questions

Can you just tell me a bit about yourself and your family background?

-ethnic background?

-family?

-what area you live in?

Did sport or physical activity play any part in your upbringing?

What sport did you take part in?

When were you playing?

From what age did you start playing?

What opportunities were/are available for you to take part in sports?

Are there any venues suitable for you to take part in sport?

Were the sport/sports you play/played accessible?

Did you ever come across any barriers that have stopped you participating in sport or made your participation more difficult?

Have your experiences of playing sports changed in any way? Examples?

Have you had both positive and negative experiences; can you give some examples?

Are your family cultural/religious?

Does anyone in your family play sport? -

What level?

- What age?

Did they ever talk to you about their experiences?

Does religion or culture play a big part in your life, how?

Has the place that religion or culture played in your life changed over the years?

Can you tell me a bit more?..

Has the role of religion/culture changed throughout your life?

Has religion/culture ever impacted on your sports participation? Can you give examples of this?

How do you feel your sport participation fits in with your culture and religion? (probing)

How do you negotiate these aspects? (mental/behavioural)

Which one out the two is least compatible?

Identity

What does the word identity mean to you?

Have you thought about your own identity?

Well identity is your name or something

What are your thoughts about your identity?

When you get out and play your sport how do you identify yourself?

Do you identify as an athlete or a sport performer?

Appendix 3

Interview Transcription

Interviewer: Just tell me a little bit about yourself and your family background so just in relation to like your ethnic background your family size and like what area you from and you like family like background history kind of thing.

Interviewee: So, hello my name is Asma Ejaz I'm currently living in Birmingham, I am a British Pakistani and so I was born in Yorkshire err, and living well moved move to Birmingham when we were quite young, I am one of seven siblings my parents are Pakistani obviously and I studied and went to school in Birmingham. Originally worked in the industry graduate jobs in industry from there working in industry I went into teaching, secondary education I went into sport and went into coaching sport erm, because growing up as a Pakistani family and a Muslim family it wasn't seen as something that a Muslim girl you know was allowed to do. Really really upset when you're young and you're not allowed to go to P.E and you're not allowed to participate in sports and I loved sports really love sports and I use to race and time myself you know how quickly I could get to the shop and back because that was the only sport I could do and yeah so and then that's when my journey to sport started

Interviewer: Okay, when your journey in sport started what was it like what was a sport that you started it was cricket that you started with

Interviewee: Yes

Interviewer: So, you use to play cricket first or?

Yeah so, So what happened is... obviously, this is very late in my life by the way (giggles) erm, so my kids it was because my kids I would take them to their sports and their swimming and their football and everything and obviously you know growing up watching my brothers play cricket and playing with them watching it in their traditional Pakistani households cricket had to be on the telly you know and so my son really into cricket so started to play cricket with them and go on from there really and from there on to coaching because one of their coaches needed a female coach and then went into coaching but I really wanted to play

Interviewer: Yeah

Interviewee: But I really wanted to play in the women's team and not in a in a mixed team yeah that was very difficult to find anywhere but I found a team which was at Kingsheath cricket where I'd go and play and never played hardball cricket before and thrown into the deep end to play the cricket thought I was rubbish (giggles) but it was great when softballs came out but what I found was I was very good at coaching it I don't know that was because of my teaching was because of the way I am with creative side of my brain yeah that it actually worked well for me to coach cricket and that's what we've been doing for the past ten years

Interviewer: Oh wow, so it's been quite a long time that you've been doing it.

Interviewee: Yeah, yep

Interviewer: Oh okay

Interviewee: But today I went and played softball cricket it was great to get back into playing no playing yeah and supporting the women so yeah.

Interviewer: so, are there any other sports that you were interested in that you took part in or was it just cricket then?

Interviewee: Netball

Interviewer: Oh, okay so when did you play netball

Interviewee: so at school with all but obviously wasn't allowed to pursue that at school and then when I went on my placement year as part of my degree I played for nationwide building society, I played for their company team and then now then in between I've been playing for a mosque team so in Birmingham there's a few mosques that do teams so played for them and now working in the Commonwealth Games we've started, they've started a league, a netball league so I am going to be playing in that because that's just something that I really enjoyed probably I don't know what my fitness level is at the minute it's pretty poor but it's something that I really loved and enjoyed and was really good at and I mean I played for you know like a like normal team and the ladies were like we want you in our league ad I was like I'm not good enough for a league, and they were like nah nah nah you can play in our league so I was like alright then (giggles), and that was in Aston.

Interviewer: Oh okay, this sounds so interesting!

Interviewee: So yeah, that was great but because of my work I've really been on and off stuff but wherever I can play I'll try and have a go and play and it's just great to get involved and be a level where you're able to play competitively.

Interviewer: Yeah, I can imagine, it must be like quite an experience I've not really played competitively myself so other than like in school and stuff.

Interviewee: Giggles you know other than in school like you've said it's really a different ball game.

Interviewer: yeah, yeah definitely

Interviewee: women can get competitive you know and the best thing about me is I'm not. I wanna just go out there and do my best, have a good time for me sport should be about having a good time. Hence why I don't like the gym. I did a personal training course to support me with my coaching, so I'm a PT and you know I have supported women in that, but, I find it so boring cause it's not fun like you're not with the team and you're not enjoying yourself as a team and it's not all that kind of you know, not banter but you know enjoyment, fun and laughter. That makes it great yeah and I don't really check the scoreboard really but I know my team do (giggles) we need to check the scoreboard but yeah it's been great specially now for young women coming up on about it they got great opportunities to play sport in a safe environment female only environment you know I never knew how to swim because you know there was no female only swimming when we were growing up so the youngsters of today the youth of today should really appreciate what is on offer

Interviewer: Yeah

Interviewee: we didn't get any of that and then the other thing we had was culture as well as religion telling us that we weren't allowed people would snare at you if you did so you just didn't your parents didn't want the shame.

Interviewer: Yeah, will come on to that in a bit, so where do you sit amongst the siblings, are you youngest or eldest?

Interviewee: I'm number two.

Interviewer: Aah, so you're one of the eldest?

Interviewee: yeah, I'm the eldest nobody one, I'm the one that's not a favourite.

Interviewer: So, do you have an older brother or sister?

Interviewee: A sister,

Interviewer: Oh okay, that's interesting. So, then you didn't have like older brother doing all the sports and then you guys weren't allowed, what was it like growing up?

Interviewee: yeah, I guess we were we were you know being trained to be homemakers, but my mum wanted us to be educated homemakers, so she wanted us to have the education but not sport.

Interviewer: Yeah, what was her opinion on the sport?

Interviewee: It was a cultural thing, because now my mum is the opposite she and because I mean the kids nowadays can have learnt behaviour of doing sport because we never had it, it's so strange and so weird it's like you know having to do something it's like big deal but my mom you know she does yoga now regular every week she walks everyday she goes to swimming every week this is a woman who never used to do any of that, and not allow us to do it so it's really weird how I think because it was health reasons that she did it you know after a second last of cancer so I think then she realised that you know what people are going to say whatever they want. Bit late for us lot but I mean for the youngsters it's great but at least now, I still feel weird if I've gotta go to classic I think oh my god I still have that kind of feelings yeah, the feeling of am I supposed to be doing this? Am I supposed to be here? Kind of thing

Interviewer: I know what you mean, so what were the opportunities like for you to take part in sport?

Interviewee: Nothing. Other than school which I loved and when we had matches in school that were you know in school time. But during intense matches, my hijab feels like it traps the heat, making me feel overheated. It's like playing cricket under the sun is not enough I have to deal with the heat that is coming off my hijab

Interviewer: yeah

My teachers put me in for those because I was one of those, I was the fastest girl in my high school I outrun the boys.

Interviewer: Oh my god!

Interviewee: Err, and I wish I had training for that cause I think I would have been good now I can't even breathe if I skip (giggles). But that was that was great you know to know that I could beat the boys in running, I was like yeah come on can't catch me! So yeah, used to great so any sport like competitively with other schools we used to play, and it was a great feeling playing for school and to get a Certificate that would say we participated, but, because some of those games were after school games I couldn't attend.

Interviewer: Oh, right okay.

Interviewee: so, it was like half and half, but it was a great feeling to be in a team winning something for our school and you know just being a part of that that success really.

Interviewer: So, what did you study at uni?

Interviewee: So, I did several things, so I did Economics and business degree four years then I did a business degree honours sorry I did the PGCE as well in economics and business and then I did a Chartered Institute of marketing as well.

Interviewer: Oh, right okay so when you were at uni when you did your first undergrad degree did you do any sports at uni then?

Interviewee: Yeah, I use to play badminton.

Interviewer: Oh, right okay did you play for the team, or did you just play casually?

Interviewee: I think it's called student union so me and my friend use to just go and play.

Interviewer: Alright okay

Interviewee: Erm you know I don't think cause we used to commute we couldn't do the games that they would do but we still use to play, and then just get on the train to get home because you know we weren't allowed to stay there (laughs) but actually when we I was on my placement year I actually lived I lived away from home for a year.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Interviewee: But when I say 4 days three nights (laughs), so I played for the Nationwide Building Society in the team head office.

Interviewer: so, was that these ladies only?

Interviewee: Yeah, it was a female team.

Interviewer: So, once you started, was that your first time playing like for a team?

Interviewee: Errrrrm, yeah

Interviewer: Okay, so how was that experience for you like obviously you were that Asian Muslim girl did you wear a headscarf then?

Interviewee: All the time, I've never compromised my headscarf and when I was younger it was difficult for me because you know the white people didn't really know too much about the headscarf and thought it was weird and all the rest of it.

Interviewer: Yeah

Interviewee: But now it's really becoming a bit normal to see women wearing headscarves it's so much easier for people they just expect that yeah you gonna do that whereas when they used to see me wearing like long sleeves under my T shirts and wearing my you know hat and then my headscarf one of those baby ones. There were none of these adidas skinny ones then you know and having to wear tracksuits underneath skirt thing err, they just thought I was being weird so was bit lonely, you didn't really truly feel a part of the team but it didn't bother me cause I just wanted to play sports so I didn't care about it but I can imagine you know it's being really difficult for some people to accept that I've got different mindset but with the way I think, I don't care what people think about the way I look

Interviewer: When you played for the team, what was the experience like? Were your teammates curious about anything?

Interviewee: A lot of people would just ignore me.

Interviewer: Okay

Interviewee: Or... you'd be the girl that they didn't r really want to be in the team but then when I started playing, they'd be like yeah yeah, we'll have that Asian girl.

Interviewer: Aaah, Asian girl. So, you didn't lose your identity?

Interviewee: Nah, never done it never compromised it no matter what I've not compromised it I had to do some coaching exams for cricket, and everyone needs to wear whites, so I thought you know what I'm not compromising my religion or whether I'll wear a white abaya (robe) yeah and I wore that for the training.

Interviewer: Okay

Interviewee: But now obviously I wear cause I'm a lot older I'll wear really baggy tracksuit men's and I'll wear extra extra extra-large men's tops so that they go really nearly down to my knees so that you know your covered in all that region so it's more like a Pakistani kameez (long top) I look really weird and odd but you know I'm not gonna compromise my religious beliefs the first time ever I wore a tracksuit I think was yeah when I had to go and play netball for the team and even then they all had this skirt thing on and I said I'm sorry I can't wear that I think I think that's why they actually halfway through the year they swap sessions and they didn't tell me about them and I think it was because they were going to compete against a different league and I didn't fit the look that's very disappointing for me but you know what it is what it is. People are very closed minded when it comes to what people look like

Interviewer: I think when it comes to sport it can be quite like what's it called. I do feel like there's a stigma in sports where you must look and dress a certain way.

I think what happens is that because now a lot of the Pakistanis are a lot more modern so they see other girls in shorts and I think well why aren't you wearing shorts they're Muslim why can't you wear them? so even like some of the Saltley stallions when I've gone there they've got shorts on because they're comfortable in that and that's their choice and that's great but when an outsider who's a non-Muslim sees that they think that well you're just being difficult because there's other Muslim women and they were alright about wearing it why aren't you?

Interviewer: Oh yeah, I've never thought of that.

Interviewee: Why won't you comply? Cause they're alright about it and they're Muslim they're the same as you and then you get brushed with the same brush. And if there all OK how come you're not? They don't understand the complexities of your beliefs and everybody's beliefs are their own you know. We're followers of the religion of Islam and everyone's take on it is different of how moderate or you know how fundamental you wanna go with it and that's a choice hence why women wearing the niqab (face veil) and things so I can't preach to nobody because I don't believe in that but it's very sad when you get people saying well why can't you just wear that uniform why do you have to be difficult? So, yea sport is you know sport is

if you've got severe talent, they can kind of overlook it but if you're not elite then you are being difficult.

Interviewer: Yeah..

Interviewee: I've been working for England Wales cricket board and we came up and designed for the south Asian action plan while she designed clothing for Muslim women to play cricket so that cricket wouldn't be a barrier for them to play so the shirts and trousers are baggy so you can't see the figure you have a hijab and you have a T shirt that is longer to cover your bum in all those areas and you have skins to cover your arms so why wouldn't women now if that was a barrier now they're making it not a barrier which is great which means more women are now playing cricket which is great for me being a coach of women and girls several clubs it's great to see the women and girls coming and now wanting to compete against other clubs so like for example today I was playing softball cricket but we were competing against six other cricket clubs so it was great because they were all women and our club are very you know supportive so I want that for other women and girls coming through. Another barrier was coaches so for support if there aren't any female coaches then the girls and women won't come. Another barrier is the sports hijabs are so expensive. It is so much cheaper for me to wear my normal headscarf even if it isn't the most appropriate material at least it is a lot cheaper.

Interviewer: yeah yeah..

Interviewee: and that's why I found being a coach female coach a lot of parents allow their daughters to come to sport because they see me there and it's the same with a particular girl who really wanted to compete and because I was there she was allowed to I got her into county, because her family believed and trusted the fact there's another female coach that looks like her. And a lot of people say you can't be what you can't see. But I also know, know I get funny looks, and people do look twice. I know why this is, it's all my headscarf. But this doesn't stop me from doing what I love. It gets to a point where you just get use to it and then you sometimes forget that they're even looking. I hope one day that it can change for the younger girls and that it becomes normal. It's still pretty rare, isn't it, to find Asian Pakistani girls and women breaking through in sports? You don't see them hitting the headlines or standing on the winner's podiums as much as you should. There's a ton of talent out there, but it just doesn't seem to get the same spotlight or chance to shine in the athletic world.

Interviewer:

that's so true, I agree with that!

Interviewee: If there's no one looking like them I feel they're not going to do it and its about getting people to you know go into those fields so that other girls and generations can go into them, especially the younger

Interviewer: Yeah, it's the same with swimming so like there's a lot of a female only swimming sessions but then there the lifeguards are male.

Interviewee: Yeah!! What's that all about? I've not been able to go because of that because my sisters invited me to go but when we've gone, I said well what's the point of that then.

Interviewer: Yeah, even if you're fully covered when swimming I think it's about the comfortability isn't it?

Interviewee: Yeah

Interviewer: That's why now, I teach adults and kids swimming but like I've never come across a female.

Interviewee: I need to come to you.

Interviewer: I've never come across a Muslim swimming instructor let alone a lifeguard.

Interviewee: WOW, where do you do that?

Interviewer: We are based in Walsall and Willenhall; we have a couple of venues.

Interviewee: Wow, that's amazing. So, you know working for the Commonwealth Games now we've got massive Sandwell aquatic centre an international venue for swimmers and divers and thing opening and I'm thinking you know that's a great opportunity for Smethwick and the communities in Smethwick which is very diverse to take advantage of that facility that's going to be there. But if they don't have instructors there that represent them, they're not gonna come and that somewhere that I'd love to go, and you know go be at, but you can't coz yeah you want to be with females only.

Interviewer:

Interviewer: The business is doing well we've had a lot of Muslim women who have joined to learnt to swim, it really has helped being an all-female business now and being an Asian instructor. A lot of women were initially shocked me be being their instructor.

Interviewee: Wow that's amazing. I'm going to have to come to Walsall.

Yeah, you should come and check us out one of the days. Have you ever come across any barriers that have stopped you taking part in sport or made it more difficult for you?

Interviewee: Well, loads of barriers obviously external and internal to me so internal for me has been time, erm... you know accessibility, the environment and whether its suitable for me the environment whether it's female only one here and what you got to wear has been a big barrier and then the coaches have been a massive barrier in terms of having female coaches to supply and support the activities we want to do and also sometimes the cost is a big barrier

Interviewer: Yeah definitely

Interviewee: Because you know you go to a session and it's like 'how much!?' that is tough for a single parent with kids and a household and everything else do your kind of like leave it because you think oh well, got bills to pay (laughs).

Interviewer: That's so true, there's so many factors that must be considered. You're your experiences of playing sports changed in any way so from when you started, to now?

Interviewee: Yeah, I'm more confident I'm not body conscious well actually that's weird because I'm more body conscious now than I was then.

Interviewer: Yeah

Interviewee: probably because I was like a skinny little thing and now obviously with age and with medical problems I've had, obviously I've put on weight and I've got tummies now, so you just want something looser, but I don't care what people think what I wear. I'm more confident in terms of just wanting to come here to enjoy myself and have fun and yeah so that's changed, whereas before I was more conscious about what people would say what people would think now, I don't care, and it feels great.

Interviewer: yeah, I can imagine, you just do what you need to do

Interviewer:

Interviewee: Even if I'm falling flat on my face I don't care (laughs), just having a go, I did quite a bit where we did this thing with a lady she's a mixed martial art (MMA) boxer and she would come into this hijama (cupping) thing that I was doing at the time and started coaching us and we all started training with her it was so great you know, I've got two left feet it was so funny but it was just great to be able to you know work with someone who's like you know who's got medal.

Interviewer: Is she based in London?

Interviewee: No, in Birmingham yeah.

Oh okay, I'm thinking of someone else. So, how many kids have you got then?

Interviewee: Two boys

Interviewer: So, you know your family now and before were they quite religious or cultural what are your family values?

Interviewee: Yeah, I'd say both religious and cultural, but they've gone more lenient as we've grown up OK in a sense that my nieces and everyone now, they will wear western clothes whereas that was something I've never been able to do.

Interviewer: Oh, right okay yeah that makes sense. So does anybody else in your family, your siblings take part in sport I know your mum now does yoga.

Interviewee: So, my sisters one of them does a lot of walking and hiking, the other does a lot of badminton at a club, but she hasn't been for a while because she got an injury but no not really. They all play cricket now, so I've got them to do softball cricket but its more social for them when they've got time because their kids are younger it's about putting the kids first before yourself so it's that culture where it's not a necessity to go and sports.

Interviewer: Yeah. So, in your life now does culture or religion play a bigger part?

Interviewer:

Interviewee: So, I'm not really that cultural okay I respect culture because of my parents, and you know things that happen, but for me it's the religion, which is more important to me, so I suppose that's more important to me so for example my son got married this week, I didn't do any mehndis (henna party). Do you know what mehndi's are?

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, I know what they are.

Interviewee: It was just a Nikah (wedding ceremony). People were like aaaah, why!? And shocked that I didn't do it, but I was like that's culture not religion really and it's not needed. Whereas my sister's son is getting married and she's doing the mehndi (henna party) and she's saying were doing this this day, that the next day. So, it's very different. (laughs).

Interviewer: So, are you from Mirpur (town in Pakistan) then?

Interviewee: So, my parents are from Mirpur F1 which is in the city and my in-laws are from Pindi. So, it makes no difference because I've been to Pakistan once (laughs), and there's nobody there.

Interviewer: Oh okay (laughs)

Interviewee: So, everything that we have the culture everything else is from here, from people who passed it on from there. And I follow a Sheikh (teacher) from Morocco which is very different so yeah.

Interviewer: So, has the role of religion changed over your life?

Interviewee: I think it's got better for me... not really understanding it when you're growing up but then you know now, we've got opportunities to go to classes and you take part in courses and do courses and things like that, it's great. I went through I think about 10 years I was I was teaching Quran (Islamic holy book) to girls and even other stuff related so that was great I loved that.

Interviewer: I was going to ask you how did religion or culture impact your sports participation?

Interviewee: I thought it was not allowed because that's what our parents taught us, it's not a thing for grown women or women or girls to go and dance around and parade around and you know get all sweaty or whatever with either boys or just generally.

Interviewer: Yeah

Interviewee: It was only when I explored the religion and realised the teachings of the religion that I realised well actually that was a load of rubbish and then realising how you know our Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) would even race with his own wife and things like that that I realised that Oh my God what happened here?! But I think it was more a fear the fact that our generations came to western country and in a stage in a time warp whereas people back home actually progressed, and people here didn't progress.

Interviewer: I think it's starting to change now, because like you said you parents didn't really let you take part in sports but as you've got older and understand thing differently when you've had kids you have let them take part in sports, the generations and culture is changing, and we are starting to see that now.

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah there's more accessibility more environmentally safe places for women go to and I'm not saying that in a you know there's been a women's session that my mums attended and I've dropped her off and I've sat there on the side to watch and there's been more female white women as well, so it's not as if this is a like just for you know Muslim women or you know Asian women are actually white British women also prefer safe spaces and being in the women only setting which is great cause that gives us more opportunities to be a part of the sport

Interviewer: Yeah, even within the gym like a lot of women prefer women only gyms.

Interviewee: Yeah, and that was unheard of before and now that they have that women can go on to compete and do things for themselves.

Interviewer: Yeah, how do you feel that's taking part in sport fits in with your religion or culture?

Interviewee: Now it fits in good today if they understand me, so today I stopped for my prayer and did my prayer. What is a barrier is where there is no place to pray, I mean today it was a massive field so I just found a place which was right when no one was around and did my prayer but most the time they you know if you're in a game situation they don't stop they don't stop to understand that you want to read a prayer. I think the only one that is an issue is in the winter maghrib prayer (sunset prayer) it doesn't have the flexibility that the others have. The others have you know you could get away with those you know reading later or earlier or whatever but maghrib (sunset prayer) is one that you can't really shift around unless you are missing it and reading it late. I think as I've got older, I'm like well no, it's prayer time so I'm going to pray.

Interviewer: Yeah

Interviewee: It's just a mindset now I'm thinking well what important to me and what important to the place I'm at, at the minute.

Interviewer: I see, so when you're playing sport and like you're competing what do you how do you see yourself, where does your identity stand?

Interviewee: I wanna show women that women that look like me can compete and can play but I also want to show others that look it's okay to compete because look at that woman she looks like me and she's competing which means that you're opening the doors for younger generation. So, there's a two prong to that one. And that's the same with my coaching the reason I've been in coaching is to keep that accessibility to women. Me and a friend of mine we last week we did our first ever women and girls' section at a particular club, now we didn't really advertise and just told them wed have females coaches we had 40 women and girls turn up without any adverts, 40! We thought we were going to have 12 girls! (laughs)

Interviewer: Where was that?

Interviewee: Solihull, Mosely CC. And the number of inquiries we've had this week.

Interviewer: Is this for children?

Interviewee: For girls and girls over the age of I think 7 or 8, and women so all the way up so we had girls we had a group of the younger ones, a group of like teenagers, hard ball, all cricket related.

Interviewer: wow that's amazing.

Interviewee: it was amazing, and I was like wooaahh we didn't expect this and then a woman said I have loads of women that wanna play cricket or whatever, but we want to have a social we don't want to compete, so some people are doing it for fitness.

Interviewer: OK yeah. So, what do you do for the Commonwealth?

Interviewee: So, I'm a community engagement manager for them.

Interviewer: So, what do you have to do?

Interviewee: So my role is to be the interface between the federation Commonwealth Games, were the OC so we're actually hosting the games and we run forums for all stakeholders to let them know about what's going on with the games and also we will be doing a games come off games road show so will be travelling all 19 venue events and running events for four areas of deprivation where they won't back to be able to get to the games so we're taking the games to them so we're going to be providing activities so you know like the big vans will have screens on them like it will have activities that Oh yeah see if you can box you know the strength of a boxer or bowl as fast as the spinner or whatever sport is and it's all sports

Interviewer: yeah

Interviewee: and then what we're doing is if these organisations were running events and if they catch them, we can attend we will bring our we will go there and compete so were dealing with internal stakeholders and external ones and with the public in terms of making sure that Birmingham games has a legacy.

Interviewer: okay yeah, that sounds cool.

Interviewee: so, we engage with communities that don't really engage in sports, that's a great thing that's what I do, if I can change one person's life, I'm happy.

Interviewer: so how do you into this is it through your coaching that you got into all the sports side?

Interviewee: So, I work for England and Wales cricket board doing their program's national programmes, but I also work for you know Edgbaston cricket ground I work for the indoor school I run all their kids' programmes.

Interviewer: Oh okay, so you design the programmes for that.

Interviewee: No, I run I coached the programmes.

Interviewer: OK

Interviewee: Yeah, and then one day when ECB England Wales cricket board started their women's softball tournaments five years ago, I hosted it for this region.

Interviewer: okay oh wow.

Interviewee: so motivationally to motivate women and girls to get involved in sports and take it up professionally and when you see it happening it's amazing to watch being a part of someone's journey.

Interviewer: That's what I want to do so I would like to set up sport programmes and like train people to become coaches etc, so that this more like diversity and ethnicity in sport for them to become like professional athletes.

Interviewee: For me it's important for you to do exactly that you will leave a blueprint for others to continue that journey because life happens with us and things change but I've been with like the Asian woman coach for Warwickshire for a long time until the young girls have come forward. You want to promote them and get them involved and then get more in

Interviewer: yeah

Interviewee: So, I think you should do that, especially with swimming when there's not many. I've got a niece who is an absolute fish, she's such a good swimmer and did all those courses but only because like now we can do those courses and they were allowed to do them.

Interviewer: Yeah, is there anything else you'd like to add?

Interviewee: No, I think that's it.

Interviewer: It's been great talking to you, it's been so interesting hearing your story.