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# Gender, Leadership, and Governance in English National Governing Bodies of Sport: Formal Structures, Rules, and Processes

## Abstract

Within this article we explore the extent to which the administrative and governance hierarchies, rules, and processes of England Golf and the LTA reproduce or resist gender segregation and male dominance within their leadership and governance. Drawing on Bourdieu’s theory of practice, we seek to expand upon current literature in the field to better understand the workings of gender power relations at the structural level of organisational practice. Semi-structured interviews with male and female leaders were supplemented by an analysis of formal documents from the two organisations. We found that gender power relations that privilege dominant men were simultaneously conserved and resisted within the two NGBs. Whilst resistance to male-dominated leadership and governance was evident, transformational organisational change was found to be lacking. This highlighted the limitations of leadership and governance changes being primarily driven through top-down, policy-based approaches. We end the article by emphasising the importance of a combined approach at the structural, cultural, and individual levels to enable sustainable and transformational organisational change.

**Key words:** Gender equity, sport governance, sport leadership, gender power relations, transformational organisational change

## Introduction

Researchers from a wide range of nations and regions have identified sport leadership and governance as being gender-imbalanced and gender-inequitable. This includes scholars from Africa (Titus, 2011), Australasia (Adriaanse & Schofield, 2013, 2014), Europe (see a range of chapters in Elling, Hovden, & Knoppers, 2019), and the United States (US; Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Burton, Grappendorf, & Henderson, 2011). The benefits of gender-balanced organisational governance are increasingly being documented by both academics and advocacy groups. Outside of sport, research has found that gender-balanced boards have a positive impact on overall performance (Desvaux, Devillard, & Sancier-Sultan, 2009), financial performance (Krishnan & Park, 2005), and corporate social responsibility (Setó‐Pamies, 2013). Additionally, research has suggested that, on average, women leaders use more effective leadership styles than men (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003). Within sport, researchers have argued that women bring new and different perspectives and ideas to the boardroom and improve the atmosphere of meetings (Pfister, 2010), as well as creating a trickle-down effect resulting in more women working in sport (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014) and creating role models for younger women (Whisenant, Pedersen, & Obenour, 2002).

 Most research in this field has focused on organisational culture or the individual gendered experiences of sport leaders. Reported cultural barriers influencing gender-imbalanced sport governance include gender discrimination, gender stereotyping, gendered language, gendered dress codes, and informal gender segregation (Piggott & Pike, 2019; Shaw, 2001, 2006b; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Shaw & Slack, 2002). Reported gendered barriers experienced by individual sport leaders include gendered expectations and norms leading to gendered leadership experiences and behaviours (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008, 2012). Few scholars in this field have previously engaged in organisational-focused research exploring the gendered influences of formal administrative and governance structures, rules, and processes.

We investigate the administrative and governance structures and practice of two long-established English NGBs: England Golf and the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA). The roles and responsibilities of English NGBs broadly include the management of major facilities, the development of their sport from grassroots to international level, and the performance of national teams (Walters, Tacon, & Trenberth, 2011). Within the voluntary governance hierarchy, the board is the highest decision-making level within an English NGB and is typically concerned with the development of strategy to improve or maintain the organisation’s performance. Within the paid administrative hierarchy, the executive leadership team (ELT) – the equivalent of the ‘senior management team’ in other organisations – oversees the various departments of an NGB, led by a Chief Executive Officer (CEO), to make operational decisions on the delivery of organisational strategy. The aim of this study is to explore the extent to which the administrative and governance hierarchies, rules, and processes of England Golf and the LTA reproduce or resist gender segregation and male dominance within their leadership and governance.

## The Gendering of Organisational Structure, Policy, and Formal Practice

Research has consistently found women to be underrepresented within leadership positions and overrepresented within positions located at the bottom of the organisational hierarchy and at the periphery of sport organisations (Adriaanse & Claringbould, 2016; Elling, Knoppers, & Hovden, 2019). Kanter (1977) described organisational teams with a large preponderance of one social group over another (e.g. a typological ratio between 100:0 and 80:20) as skewed, with the numerically dominant group controlling the team and its culture. Whilst English sport governance has historically been gender-skewed in favour of men, with women lacking control over both sport policy and culture (White & Brackenridge, 1985), recent sport policy change has resulted in increased numerical representation of women in English sport governance. A new sports governance code was introduced in 2016 that included a 30% minimum gender representation target for the boards of all English NGBs applying for public funding(Sport England & UK Sport, 2016). Latest national figures report that average female representation on the boards of English NGBs is 40% (Sport England & UK Sport, 2019), which Kanter described as ‘gender-balanced’ (a typological ratio between 60:40 and 50:50), and average female representation on the ELTs of English NGBs is 36% (Women in Sport, 2017), which Kanter (1977) described as ‘gender-tilted’ (a typological ratio between 80:20 and 60:40).

 Kanter (1977) discussed how gender-tilted leadership teams begin to move toward less extreme distributions and less exaggerated gendered effects, and gender-balanced teams start to move toward a more balanced culture and interaction. Outcomes for individuals and groups of individuals will depend on other structural and personal factors, however (Kanter, 1977). For example, whilst funding-related targets have been positive in achieving ‘gender-balanced’ boards across English sport governance, they can also lead to NGBs viewing gender representation as a box to tick to obtain funding rather than striving for sustainable organisational change. Furthermore, women can lose respect and authority if they are seen as ‘token women’ from having gained their position solely so that NGBs reach funding targets (Velija, Ratna, & Flintoff, 2014).

 When women do break through into sport leadership positions, trends show that men still conserve their place in roles that offer the most authority and prestige (Women in Sport, 2018). For example, Velija et al. (2014) discussed how women leaders tend to occupy roles that are considered ‘soft’, such as focusing on sport development, child safety, and equity. In contrast, they suggest that men tend to occupy roles that are considered ‘hard’, such as performance-related roles and roles related to the management of sport organisations. The terms ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ roles are constructed out of “the assumed ‘natural’ differences between men and women”, demonstrating how dominant binary conceptualisations of gender continue to influence the gendered demography of sport organisations (Velija et al., 2014, p. 215).

Similar trends have also been found outside of the English context. For example, Sibson (2010) reported that in Australian sport organisations women directors were expected to carry out tasks related to clerical work and catering, whereas the male directors tended to carry out tasks associated with facility management and maintenance. Additionally, Shaw (2006a) found that within New Zealand Regional Sports Trusts there were approximately five times more women than men working with young people, whereas more men worked with older athletes and in performance and coaching roles. Furthermore, Adriaanse and Schofield (2013) reported that in one Australian national sport organisation, men controlled all of the significant positions such as those responsible for finance and strategic decision-making.

 Acker (1990) argued that organisational practices and processes can reinforce gender segregation, create income and status inequality between men and women, and disseminate cultural images of gender. Furthermore, Acker (1990) suggested that the exclusion of women within organisational leadership continues to be maintained through gendered hierarchies because of the continued perceptions that women’s reproduction, emotionality, and sexuality have negative effects on organisations. Researchers have identified that sport organisations are gendered institutions that reinforce masculine domination and subordinate women through certain institutionalised practices (Burton, 2015). For example, Pfister and Radtke (2009) found that governance rules within German sport organisations lacked any form of term limits, which profited male leaders because more men than women hold sport board positions and therefore men stay in their seats for long periods of time (Pfister & Radtke, 2009). This makes it difficult for a new generation of both women and men to be appointed to boards and results not only in men conserving their leadership positions, but also the conservation of a traditional (male-dominated) organisational culture. Furthermore, Hovden (2000) emphasised how leader election and selection processes provide “a site for identifying constructions of gendered substructures” (p. 17). This is because, through their very nature, election and recruitment practices are designed to examine the extent to which an individual and their (gendered) embodied dispositions are harmonious with the formal (and informal) rules and requirements of the field and position that they are applying (Daulay & Sabri, 2018).

A further structural process identified as contributing to gender-inequitable sport governance is the merging of sporting bodies governing men’s and women’s sports. Researchers have found that mergers can result in women experiencing reduced autonomy and control over their sport. For example, the merging of the (English) Women’s Football Association (WFA) and the (English men’s) Football Association (FA) in 1993 allowed men to wield a great deal of power over the development of women’s football (Hargreaves, 1994). Similarly, the merger between the Women’s Cricket Association (WCA) and the (men’s) England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) in 1998 resulted in no women on the ECB’s Board until 2010 and the redundancy of the majority of female coaches who had previously carried out the coaching and training of squads (Velija et al., 2014). Liston (2006) argued that football governing bodies gain mass acceptance when incorporating the women’s game into a continued male-dominated structure through a “pseudo inclusion” of women’s football at a superficial level and the legitimation and normalisation of men’s dominant position within the organisation (p. 373). This is an example of what Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) term symbolic violence: the legitimation and normalisation of symbolic systems that profit dominant groups and often make the existence of power relations unrecognisable to social agents.

Within this article, we present findings that contribute new knowledge on the influence of the administrative and governance structures and processes of sport organisations in creating inequitable leadership opportunities for female and male leaders. We next outline our theoretical framework that has informed and enhanced our analyses to enable us to make sense of the complex gender power relations that exist within English sport organisations.

## Theoretical Framework

### Bourdieu’s Theory of Practice

Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice, and particularly his concept of the field, informs our analyses of the gendered administrative and governance structures and rules of England Golf and the LTA. The focus of the theory of practice is the ways that cultural resources, processes, and institutions continually hold individuals within hierarchies of domination. The concept of the field refers to a semi-autonomous, objective hierarchy that is constituted by individuals and institutions who follow the same sets of rules, rituals, and conventions (Webb, Schirato, & Danaher, 2002). The rules of the field are legitimated by the very act of individuals following them (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

 Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) developed the concept of a “field of forces” to describe how actors seek, “individually or collectively, to safeguard or improve their position” within the field (p. 101). Additionally, Bourdieu (1993) introduced the concept of a “field of struggles” to describe when a field of forces is either transformed or conserved depending on the success of individuals and groups of individuals in obtaining positions of power (p. 30). According to Bourdieu (1993)*,* there are three types of field strategies that are employed by individuals to preserve or change their position within the field: conservation strategies (employed by those who hold dominant positions within a field to safeguard or enhance their position), succession strategies (implemented by those who have less or no seniority and seek advancement of position within the field), and subversion strategies (adopted by dominated agents to attempt to transform the field’s system of authority and rules of the game to their own benefit).

Everett (2002) theoretically positioned organisations as sub-fields “in which a game takes place” because all organisations are formed of “relations between individuals who are competing for personal advantage” (p. 60). Ozbilgin and Tatli (2005) highlight the usefulness of conceptualising the organisational context as a (sub-)field because it allows the researcher to go “beyond the visible, surface-level indicators of discrimination and intergroup relationships in the workplace” (p. 867). It also “provides an analytical perspective to investigate the structure without ignoring the agency of the individuals” (Ozbilgin & Tatli, 2005, p. 867). England Golf and the LTA are examples of organisational sub-fields comprised of both voluntary governance hierarchies (led by the board) and paid administrative hierarchies (led by the ELT) in which individual sport leaders follow the rules of the field whilst competing for personal and professional advantage (Everett, 2002). Within this article, the concept of the “organisational sub-field” has provided a very useful tool to understand how agents consciously and unconsciously reproduce and resist gendered sport administrative and governance hierarches by following formal organisational rules and practices.

In addition to Bourdieu’s field strategies that are employed by either dominant or dominated agents, strategies can also be implemented at the organisational level (e.g. by the board) or the external governance level (e.g. UK Sport and Sport England) to improve the position of dominated social groups within organisational sub-fields. These strategies, that are implemented by leadership teams consisting of both dominant (male) and dominated (female) agents, can improve the position of dominated individuals whilst continuing to conserve the power of dominant men and resist transformation of the gendered logic of practice of the organisation. This will be discussed further when presenting our findings.

In addition to the field, Bourdieu also developed two further primary concepts that interlink to form the theory of practice. First, the concept of capital is a resource that generates power. Sport leaders’ access to economic (income, wealth, and monetary assets), cultural (consumption of cultural goods and expression of taste), social (social connections and group membership), and symbolic (authority, prestige, and reputation) capital influence their opportunity to gain advantage within the organisational field (Bourdieu, 1977). Second, the concept of the habitus refers to “systems of durable, transposable dispositions” which are both “structured structures”, that are impacted by the behaviours and interactions of individuals, and “structuring structures”, that impact upon the future actions and behaviours of individuals (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72). Bourdieu uses the term “dispositions” instead of “rules” because, unlike the formal rules of the field, habitus regulates behaviour outside of any explicit rules or laws, and outside of the consciousness of social agents through the development of social norms (Bourdieu, 1990).

We are interested in exploring the role of organisational habitus within the sub-fields of England Golf and the LTA in placing individual leaders into gendered hierarchies of domination. Organisational habitus conceptualises the ‘informal, unconscious practices which interact to guide the dispositions of the organisation as a whole’ (Kitchin & Howe, 2013, p. 129) and ‘governs the allocation of power positions in the organisational context’ (Tatli, 2010, p. 12). Organisational habitus is field-specific and can profit certain social groups more than others (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Next we provide context to the two organisational sub-fields under study.

## Research Context

England Golf and the LTA were selected as research sites because they are large NGBs that provide ideal sites for multi-layered organisational analyses. The depth of conducting multi-level organisational analyses of two organisations was valued more highly than the breadth of a study that offers a surface-level analysis of a larger number of organisations. Additionally, both England Golf and the LTA have achieved Sport England and UK Sport’s (2016) 30% gender representation target for boards, allowing the research to offer insight on the extent that organisational processes and practices are gender-equitable within organisations that meet gender governance requirements. Furthermore, tennis and golf are two of the oldest modern sports in England, allowing for an analysis of the construction, formation, and development of gender power relations across their governance over time.

 In addition to governing two of the longest-standing sports in England, England Golf and the LTA also both govern sports that have historically been dominated by men of the upper-middle class (Ceron-Anaya, 2010; Lake, 2015b). Bourdieu’s work explored how status, distinction and social class contribute to the development of complex structures of power (Bourdieu, 1978), and throughout the histories of golf and tennis, social groups have battled to reinterpret or maintain social order. Within golf, men of the dominant upper-middle class have historically worked to maintain power and perceived social order through the exclusion of women and the working class. For women, this included being denied full membership in golf clubs, having no voting power, and having limited access to club facilities (Hargreaves, 1994).

 Within tennis, men of the upper-middle class fought to maintain power and social order through an unwritten code of sportsmanship and restrained behaviour, rooted in upper-middle class values, that marginalised both women and the working class (Lake, 2015a). Although women have participated in tennis alongside men from the earliest days of the sport, traditional, binary notions of upper-middle class female-appropriate behaviour were reinforced through conservative dress and playing a passive role both in clubs and on court (Lake, 2012). Women’s achievements were often trivialised, and women’s active participation was only able to survive when assumed that it was inferior to men’s (Hargreaves, 1994). Whilst England Golf and the LTA are both actively working towards increased diversity across all areas of the two sports, the governing bodies are situated within sports that have seen men of the dominant class resist any change that threatens their power and dominance. This means that organisational change to achieve gender equitable leadership and governance is not a linear, straightforward process for the two organisations, but a complex process that requires transformational change of long-standing, deep-rooted organisational habitus that has historically been controlled by men of the dominant class.

 All facts and figures presented were accurate at the time of research. Sport organisations are fluid and so there is always the potential for change during organisational research, which can present challenges. We provide an addendum at the end of the paper that demonstrates governance changes that have occurred within each organisation since data collection took place.

### England Golf

The Royal and Ancient Golf Club (R&A) was established as the first governing body of golf in 1887, and was regarded as the governing authority over men’s golf in both the UK and abroad until 2003 (The Royal and Ancient Golf Club, 2018). The first governing body for women’s golf was the Ladies’ Golf Union (LGU), that was established in 1893 (Browning, 1990). The R&A and LGU merged in 2017, leading to the integration of the LGU’s business operations and staff into the R&A group of companies (R&A, 2018).

The governance of English golf became increasingly complicated as more governing bodies began to emerge throughout the 20th century. The English Golf Union (EGU) was established in 1924 to serve as the governing body of male amateur golf in England (Woodhall Spa Golf Club, 2018). This did not replace the R&A but worked alongside it. The EGU acquired Woodhall Spa Golf Club in 1955, and this remains the home of the National Golf Centre. In the women’s game, the English Ladies’ Golf Association (ELGA) was formed in 1952 as a branch of the LGU, which later became the English Women’s Golf Association (EWGA) in 2008. The ELGA, and later the EWGA, were responsible for the running of amateur women’s golf within England (English Women's Golf Association, 2009).

 The English NGB for golf today is England Golf, which was formed on 1st January 2012 with the merging of the EGU and the EWGA. England Golf’s key roles include the development of a broad strategy for performance, development, and competition of amateur golf, and the coordination of actions required to implement this strategy (England Golf, 2012). The merger was proposed jointly by the two organisations in 2011, with a plan for the EWGA to join the EGU under a modified structure (English Golf Union & English Women's Golf Association, 2011). Claimed benefits of the merger included speaking with one voice, having a unified marketing campaign, being a greater attraction to commercial partners, enhancing efficiency, and improving media coverage (English Golf Union & English Women's Golf Association, 2011). We will provide further discussion and analysis on the consequences of this merger when presenting our research findings.

 At the end of 2016, England Golf had a membership of 678,372 and an income of £8,680,000, making it one of the largest NGBs in England (England Golf, 2016). The voluntary governance structure of England Golf is typical of an NGB and is formed of a board, council (called Voting Members), member county organisations, and club committees. Figure 1 displays the governance structure of England Golf and how it intersects with the ELT.

**[INSERT FIGURE 1]**

**Figure 1. The Voluntary Governance Structure of England Golf (England Golf, 2012)**

In terms of the decision-making relationship between the groups outlined in Figure 1, the Board is responsible for the strategic decisions of England Golf and consults with the Voting Members (Council) on some issues. The Voting Members are split by gender because most of the men’s County Golf Unions and women’s County Golf Associations have not yet merged to form one united body. The Voting Members act as a two-way communication stream between the Council and their County Unions/Associations (England Golf, 2012). It is the responsibility of the ELT to implement the strategy set out by the Board and oversee the day-to-day running of the organisation (England Golf, 2012). England Golf has a permanent paid workforce of 86 employees.

### The Lawn Tennis Association

The first governing body of tennis, the All England Croquet Club (AECC), was established in 1868. The AECC changed its name to the All England Croquet and Lawn Tennis Club in 1877, and the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club (AELTC) in 1899 (All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club, 2018). In 1888, the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) was established as the British NGB for tennis, and the AELTC abdicated its legislative responsibility whilst retaining complete administrative control over The Championships at Wimbledon (Walker, 1989). The LTA has always governed both women’s and men’s tennis in the UK, but control of the sport has historically been male-dominated and has shown resistance to women accessing positions of power (White & Brackenridge, 1985).

 At the end of 2016, the LTA had 727,664 registered tennis club members (Lawn Tennis Association, 2016a) and an income of £64,478,000, which is nearly eight times the income of England Golf (Lawn Tennis Association, 2016b). The discrepancy in income for the two NGBs is due to the large revenue that the LTA receives from the Wimbledon Championships (£37,719,000 in 2016) and its major events (£12,128,000 in 2016) (Lawn Tennis Association, 2016b). England Golf runs only amateur events that do not contribute to the NGB’s income (England Golf, 2016).

 Whereas England Golf is the governing body for golf in England, the LTA governs tennis in Great Britain, the Channel Islands, and the Isle of Man. The voluntary governance structure of the LTA is similar to that of England Golf, with it being formed of a board, council, and member bodies (predominantly composed of county LTAs). This, and how it intersects with the ELT and Leadership Team, is displayed in Figure 2.

**[INSERT FIGURE 2]**

**Figure 2. The Voluntary Governance Structure of the LTA (Lawn Tennis Association, 2015)**

As with all NGBs, governance of the LTA is headed by the Board that consults with the Council on strategic matters (Lawn Tennis Association, 2015). Councillors are not split by gender and are nominated by the various member and player organisations, or the LTA Board (Lawn Tennis Association, 2015). The professional structure of the LTA is made up of 300 paid employees and is headed by the ELT and Leadership Team.

## Methods

### DataCollection

The findings presented in this article form part of a wider study that adopted an ethnographic approach to explore the complexity of gender equity within the leadership and governance of England Golf and the LTA through semi-structured interviews and participant observation. Official documents from the two organisations were also drawn upon to add specific detail or fill information gaps during the collection, analysis, and write-up of data. This article focuses specifically on findings that have been thematically grouped as relating to formal organisational structures, rules, and processes. Although an ethnographic approach was adopted to reveal “unconscious actions that can inadvertently marginalise groups, or reveal how dominant agents wield strategies to maintain inequality” (Kitchin & Howe, 2013, p. 132), this research cannot be classed as a full organisational ethnography because it was not possible to have “direct and sustained contact with human beings, in the context of their daily lives, over a prolonged period of time” (O'Reilly, 2012, p. 3).

Whilst we have drawn upon data from interviews and supporting documents throughout our discussion of findings, we have not drawn upon observations in this article. This is because formal administrative and governance structures and rules are, in their very nature, explicitly and consciously implemented, regulated, and monitored. This meant that the administrative and governance structures and rules of the two organisations were more easily understood and analysed through in-depth interviews and official documents. Nevertheless, participant observation was paramount in the development of rapport with participants and created a snowball effect that resulted in more interview opportunities and the opportunity to access more documents. Additionally, it allowed the accumulation of field-specific knowledge in the forms of jargon, people and roles, current organisational priorities, and current organisational challenges. This was instrumental in contextualising the interviews and documentary evidence.

The research sites were the National Golf Centre in Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire (headquarters of England Golf) and the National Tennis Centre in Roehampton, London (headquarters of the LTA). Data collection took place during October 2016 at England Golf and between March and May 2017 at the LTA. Thirty-three semi-structured interviews were conducted with female and male Board Members (n=13), Executive Leaders (n=14), individuals in middle-management positions (n=2), and further employees of interest to the project (n=4). These interviewees were identified as being those who could provide the greatest insight into the gendered experiences of current, past, and prospective leaders of the two organisations. The sample size was deemed large enough to generate knowledge from different positions, perspectives, and genders because of the variability of roles (both vertically and horizontally) represented across male and female participants.

The interviews lasted between 35 and 100 minutes and were conducted using interview guides that consisted of between fifteen and thirty questions. Central interview themes included backgrounds/motivations for becoming a leader, recruitment processes, leadership experiences, organisational culture, barriers for women leaders in sport, and strategies to increase the number of women in sport leadership. The CEOs of both organisations agreed to their organisations being named in the research if individual participants remained anonymous. We have anonymised the positions of all LTA female leaders because there is only one female Executive Leader. Therefore, we have described all female Board Members and the Executive Leader as ‘LTA Leaders’.

Fourteen of the participants were female and 19 were male. All interviewees were white, middle-class and all but one was non-disabled. Female and male leaders were interviewed to investigate gendered governance structures and rules from both a privileged and subordinate perspective. This is often absent in feminist research but is important because “without males as allies in struggle [the] feminist movement will not progress” (hooks, 2000, p. 12). The lack of race and class diversity amongst participants demonstrates trends that privilege white, middle-class leaders. In their *2018/19 Annual Survey: Diversity in Sport Governance*, Sport England and UK Sport (2019) report that 5% of board members were of Black, Asian and minority ethnic representation (BAME), 5% of board members declared or considered themselves to have a disability, and 3% of board members identified as being openly LGBT+. With no working class or minority ethnic representation amongst our interviewees, it would also suggest that class and race are bigger barriers in obtaining leadership positions than gender.

Whilst we acknowledge that an intersectional approach to research on gender equity in sport governance is important, including analysing the practice of whiteness amongst all-white leadership teams like those of England Golf and the LTA, the focus of this research was primarily on gendered governance practices to enable us the scope to conduct in-depth gendered analyses of the two organisations. We hope that future research in this field adopts an intersectional lens and fills some of the knowledge gaps on the intersectional experiences of women in sport governance that we do not address in this paper.

Official documents were obtained before, during, and after data collection from several sources, including the websites of the NGBs, the archive of England Golf, and via a memory stick or emails from organisational representatives. As all documents were sourced directly through the two NGBs, this ensured their authenticity and reliability. Broadly speaking, the documents included annual reports, financial reports, strategic plans, policies, governance documents, merger documents, and handbooks. Several factors were considered when drawing data from documents, including when the documents were written, who they were written by (and their position), the purpose of the documents, and the conditions under which the documents were produced. This ensured that the documents were utilised authentically when supporting other data collected within the research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

### DataAnalysis

All interview data was manually analysed using thematic analysis. Supporting documents were not formally analysed as they supported, informed, and contextualised the primary data collected through observations and interviews rather than forming a separate data set. Braun, Clarke and Terry’s (2012) ‘six phase approach to thematic analysis’ was drawn upon as an analytic framework: 1) familiarising yourself with the data, 2) generating initial codes, 3) searching for themes, 4) reviewing potential themes, 5) defining and naming themes, and 6) writing the report. We drew upon this analytic approach because of its strong focus on familiarity with the data, its thoroughness, and its methodical and easy-to-follow structure. Data was analysed separately for each organisation and subsequently brought together during the write-up phase as similar themes were drawn from each organisation.

## Findings and Discussion

Within this section we present our findings on the influence of the formal administrative and governance structures and processes of England Golf and the LTA in conserving and resisting inequitable leadership opportunities for female and male leaders. We present our findings across two broad sub-sections that are broken down into several sub-themes: (1) organisational gender segregation and (2) gendered administrative and governance structures, rules, and processes[[1]](#footnote-2).

### Organisational Gender Segregation

English NGBs are gendered organisational sub-fields that continue to preserve male dominance numerically, structurally, culturally and agentically [references to be added post-review]. Within this sub-section, we will discuss three forms of gender segregation that were evident within the two organisations: vertical gender segregation, the exclusion of women from the highest leadership positions, and the gendered distribution of tasks.

***Vertical gender segregation.*** Vertical gender segregation refers to the dominance of one gender over others in the most senior positions of an organisation (Bloksgaard, 2011). Tables 1 and 2 display the prevalence of vertical gender segregation at the time of research within the two hierarchies of England Golf and the LTA: the voluntary governance hierarchy and the paid administrative hierarchy, respectively.

**[INSERT TABLE 1]**

**[INSERT TABLE 2]**

Both England Golf and the LTA had gender-tilted boards (31% and 30% female representation, respectively) and gender-skewed ELTs (0% and 13% female representation, respectively). The LTA also had a gender-tilted Council (26% female representation), whereas England Golf’s Council was gender-balanced (51% female representation) due to the split of member counties and their voting members by gender.

 At the LTA, a key outcome of vertical gender segregation across the paid administrative hierarchy is that women earn, on average, 31% less than their male counterparts across the organisation (Lawn Tennis Association, 2018). Since April 2017, organisations with more than 250 staff have been required by British law to publish annual figures on the gender pay and bonus gap within their organisation (Government Equalities Office, 2017). This means that the LTA are required to publish these figures, but England Golf are not. England Golf did not have any data on their gender pay and bonus gap. Figure 3 demonstrates more specifically how vertical gender segregation across the paid workforce impacts upon the earnings of male and female employees within the LTA. Within this figure, salaries across the organisation are split into four quartiles, and the proportion of men and women within each quartile are highlighted.

**[INSERT FIGURE 3]**

**Figure 3. Gender Split of Pay Quartiles at the LTA (Lawn Tennis Association, 2018)**

 Figure 3 shows that, at the LTA, there is an inverse relationship between representation of women and lucrativeness of position. The representation of women is highest in the lowest pay quartile (61%), and lowest in the upper quartile (34%). This demonstrates how women accumulate significantly less economic capital than their male counterparts within the LTA, a result of men holding the most powerful and lucrative positions within the organisational sub-field. In their own analysis, the LTA (2018) suggest that the gender pay gap can be attributed to more men than women in senior roles, men outnumbering women in high-performance roles that can receive large bonuses, and more women in part-time roles. These suggestions focus only on the demography of the organisation rather than attempting to understand the reasons for the pay gap, however.

***The exclusion of women from the highest leadership positions.*** It was evident within the two organisations that a ‘glass ceiling’ existed within certain leadership positions, with a distinct lack of women occupying the most senior positions (Kanter, 1987). For example, neither organisation has ever had a female CEO nor Chair, and in its 129-year history the LTA has only had one female President who was not appointed until 2014. Interviewees at the LTA discussed the role of the President and the continued trend of male-dominance within the esteemed position. Joyce (Former LTA Leader) explained that the President acts as “an ambassador for the whole of British Tennis”. Until 2012, the President was also Chair of the Board, and so was the most powerful position in the LTA.

 The decision-making power of the President has been reduced since the appointment of an Independent Chair. Appointing an Independent Chair (and Independent Directors) is an important step in NGBs creating social change as it disrupts the prevalence and power of field-specific dominant male habitus (i.e. dispositions developed through involvement in tennis) on the board. Tension is created between the sub-field and the habitus of those occupying it by appointing leaders whose habitus has developed outside of the sub-field of tennis and the wider field of sport (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Despite the appointment of an Independent Chair reducing the decision-making power of the LTA President, the President does still hold significant symbolic capital as the figurehead of the organisation. For example, it is the President who represents the LTA at the prize-giving ceremonies for the men’s and women’s singles finalists at The Championships, Wimbledon, one of the most high-profile sporting events in the world.

 Bourdieu (1993) stressed that, in order to compete for dominant positions within a field, an individual has to accumulate the forms of capital that are most highly valued within that field. The President of the LTA is elected from within the (male-dominated) Council, and Jill (LTA Leader) suggested that a key factor in the President being such a consistently male-dominated role is because more male Councillors hold “highly professional jobs” within sectors such as banking, law, and accountancy. Jill suggested that these jobs hold more symbolic capital on the Council than “lower level” jobs within sectors such as administration that more women hold. In this case, cultural capital in the forms of work experience and qualifications in traditionally male-dominated sectors were reported to be a particularly convertible form of capital in Councillors being legitimised and elected as President. This is an example of a conservation strategy that allows male Councillors to retain their position at the top of the organisational field. With a decrease in gender segregation in the upper occupational orders of professional and managerial occupations in the UK (Wright, 2016), it would be expected that there would be an increase in women viewed as eligible for the most senior positions in voluntary sport governance, and subsequently an increase in female representation within these positions. However, organisational change is not a straightforward, linear process and the capital accumulation of women leaders is one of many factors at the structural, cultural, and individual levels that influence gender-balanced and gender-equitable sport governance.

England Golf were pre-emptively concerned about similar male-dominance within the role of President following its merger in 2012. To address this, one of the terms of the merger was that “the President will be supported by the President Elect and the Immediate Past President in meeting the duties assigned to the President. One of these three office holders shall be a woman” (England Golf, 2012, p. 26). Daniel (England Golf Executive) explained that having this rule in place was particularly important because it “just breaks the Chief Exec male, Chair male, President female … it just breaks that trend a little bit”. This is an example of a strategy implemented at the organisational level to improve the representation of (dominated) women within one of the most high-profile positions within the organisation. This is not an example of a transformative strategy, however, as the England Golf Board and the key decision-making positions (Chair and CEO) remained male-dominated.

***The gendered distribution of tasks.*** Female leaders within both organisations explained how certain tasks are perceived as ‘female issues’ that are assigned only to women leaders. Charlotte (LTA Leader) explained that throughout her working life she has found that “there are certain agendas that are women’s agendas which really upsets me”. Sally (England Golf Board Member) also highlighted how the England Golf Board “are wanting us to concentrate on the ladies’ issues, or female issues”. Such ‘female issues’ included managing people and the female side of the sport. Gendered task segregation is a conservation strategy that preserves the power of men and is problematic for three key reasons. First, women’s sport has historically been undervalued compared to men’s sport (Francombe-Webb & Toffoletti, 2018), and so these tasks assigned to women likely hold less symbolic capital within the organisation. Second, ghettoising ‘women’s issues’ implies that only women can bring about change towards gender equity. And third, women are challenged to bring about change whilst working within existing and constraining male-dominated sport cultures, which makes achieving change particularly challenging (Squires, 2007). Therefore men, as well as women, need to be provided the opportunity to develop women’s sport. This can help to increase its symbolic status within the organisation, develop greater understanding across the organisation of the issues and challenges that women face in sport, and start to move away from binary conceptualisations of gender-appropriate tasks and gendered organisational habitus within sport organisations.

### Gendered Administrative and Governance Structures, Rules, and Processes

This sub-section will outline how administrative and governance structures, rules, and processes of England Golf and the LTA impact upon gender segregation and male dominance within their leadership and governance. The voluntary governance hierarchies and the paid administrative hierarchies are two different but interlinked hierarchies within NGBs, so we will discuss these separately within this sub-section.

Voluntary sport governance hierarchies. NGBs have traditionally developed with a representative voluntary governance structure where the board is oriented towards member representation rather than being commercially-oriented (Taylor & O'Sullivan, 2009). This is because NGBs are not-for-profit organisations, and so “are motivated by a preponderance of goals, are not solely driven by financial gain, and instead are charged to protect service-to-mission” (Ferkins, Shilbury, & McDonald, 2009, p. 247). England Golf and the LTA have some commonalities in their voluntary governance hierarchies, such as having a board, a council, and county or member organisations largely made up of individuals who have developed through the sport. Simultaneously, they have unique rules and structures that are influenced by their history, size, wealth, and demography of members, amongst other factors.

One unique governance rule that England Golf implemented following the merger in 2012 is that, of the 10 Directors who are elected from the Voting Members to the Board, six male Directors should be elected from Voting Members of the men’s County Golf Unions and four female Directors should be elected from Voting Members of the women’s County Golf Associations (England Golf, 2012). In other words, the six male Elected Directors are elected by male Voting Members and the four female Elected Directors are elected by female Voting Members. The rationale for the ‘six to four rule’ is not stated within the *Rules of England Golf* (England Golf, 2012)*,* but it became apparent through a number of interviews that the premise for the rule was that the uneven gender split of Elected Directors on the Board represents the (men’s) England Golf Union (EGU) having significantly more members than the England Women’s Golf Association (EWGA) before the two organisations merged to form England Golf in 2012 (interview with James, England Golf Board Member).

Clive (England Golf Executive) explained that ‘six to four’ was chosen as the ratio so that men could never override women when it came to vote, as this requires a 75% majority. A rule was also put in place to protect the position of women on board sub-committees to ensure there is always a minimum of two men and two women on every sub-committee (interview with James, England Golf Board Member). Whilst both of these rules are positive in ensuring female representation on the Board and its sub-committees, they still form conservation strategies that give more voting influence to male Board Members. The quorum for England Golf Board meetings is “six eligible Elected Directors for so long as there are 10 Elected Directors” on the Board, “reducing to three eligible Elected Directors where there are fewer than 10 Elected Directors” (England Golf, 2012, p. 22). Furthermore, the quorum must feature at least one male Elected Director and one female Elected Director. The combination of the ‘six to four rule’ and the quorum means that there can never be fewer than two male Directors and one female Director present at Board meetings for decisions by voting to be made. Whilst it is positive that the representation of one female Elected Director is protected here, the formal governance rules of England Golf create a field of struggles that conserves male power by providing a greater opportunity for men to make the most important organisational decisions than women.

 There were differing opinions from interviewees as to whether the ‘six to four rule’ is fair and effective. For example, Michael (England Golf Executive) argued that the rule discourages a sustainable transformation of male-dominated governance because “you will always get those percentages if you discourage women in that way”. Sarah (England Golf Board Member) questioned the central positioning of gender in the rule and argued that appointments to the Board “should be on their ability” rather than gender. Other interviewees voiced concerns about the impact on the Board’s gender balance if the ‘six to four rule’ was removed. This is because the ‘six to four rule’ guarantees four female Elected Directors, which gives the Board the 30% female representation required for Sport England and UK Sport’s (2016) minimum gender requirement. James (England Golf Board Member) saw a particular positive of the rule being that a female “presence is protected” and Clive (England Golf Executive) doubted whether there would be as many women on the Board without the rule, despite paradoxically claiming that “there’s no real reason for there not to be more women coming up through the Board”. Michael (England Golf Executive) suggested that an organisational strategy to make this governance rule gender-equitable whilst still maintaining a minimum female representation could be to introduce “a minimum number of men and a minimum number of women and the rest are made up of whatever because you then start to get into the debate about the best person for the job”.

 Whilst the ‘six to four rule’ directly impacts upon gender balance within the voluntary governance hierarchy of England Golf, it also has cultural implications due to the large proportion of Elected Directors that sit on the Board as a result. Within *A Code for Good Governance*,Sport England and UK Sport (2016) recommend that no more than a third of sport boards should be made up of Elected Directors to avoid governance structures safeguarding the positions of ‘insiders’, and to “ensure better informed and more rounded decisions” (Sport England & UK Sport, 2016, p. 33). At England Golf, 10 out of a total 13 Board Members (77%) are Elected Directors. Such a high proportion of Elected Directors is particularly problematic for England Golf because golf has a history of sexism and male-dominance at all levels of the game (Hargreaves, 1994). This means that the gendered habitus of individuals and groups of individuals that have developed from within the game can penetrate the boardroom and influence organisational habitus, resulting in the conservation of male power on the board.

Several interviewees spoke of the sexist and old-fashioned behaviours of male Voting Members and Board Members. Sally (England Golf Board Member) explained how “there’s many who would prefer us to be in the kitchen washing up or doing the ironing. And certainly not on the golf course \*laughs\*. And certainly not around the board table”. Additionally, Mary (England Golf Board Member) described how most of the male Board Members are “ex-voting member traditionalists … [who] don’t want to see change”. An example that Mary gave was reluctance by male Board Members to appoint an Independent Chair, which is a recommendation within *A Code of Sports Governance* to “offer the potential to have a more detached, objective view” (Sport England & UK Sport, 2016, p. 37). As aforementioned, the appointment of an Independent Chair is an important step in disrupting the (male-dominated) logic of the field because the habitus of those occupying powerful board positions has been developed outside of the organisational sub-field (England Golf; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Therefore, overrepresented elected male Board Members blocking progressive measures like the appointment of Independent Directors is an example of a conservation strategy to maintain long-standing, traditional male-dominated ways of working.

Paid Administrative Hierarchies. As part of a process of modernisation over the past two decades, NGBs in England have been encouraged to professionalise their administrative structures (Houlihan & Green, 2009). This includes a general increase in the numbers of paid employees across NGBs. England Golf and the LTA both have paid employment numbers well above the national average of 27, with 83 and 293 employees, respectively (Walters et al., 2011). The LTA has a significantly larger paid workforce than England Golf, which impacts upon both its structure and the resources it has available. We will discuss two key issues relating to the administrative structures and practices of the paid workforces of the two NGBs that were reported within interviews: a lack of opportunity for internal progression and the England Golf merger.

Interviewees at both England Golf and the LTA spoke of senior leaders staying in their positions for long periods of time, resulting in a lack of opportunity for individuals, and especially women, to access dominant positions and compete for power (Bourdieu, 1993). Clive (England Golf Board Member) explained that, once an individual has made it onto the ELT, there are few options to progress within the wider world of golf administration. This is because England Golf is one of the biggest golf organisations in the world. Furthermore, Clive suggested that some of the positions on the ELT, such as Performance Director and Championship Director, require specialist knowledge and so are not particularly transferable to executive positions within sport more widely. This means that many Executive Leaders “haven’t got anywhere else to go”, and so individuals tend to stay in their position for a long time, leaving few opportunities for the high proportion of women who sit on the level below the ELT to employ succession strategies and be promoted (interview with Clive).

Organisational scholars have argued that flat organisational structures empower underrepresented groups and reduce the degree of organisational inequality, but only when most responsibility and decision-making authority is distributed across the organisation (Acker, 2006; Kanter, 1976, 1993). Both England Golf and the LTA have relatively flat organisational structures, with England Golf having one level of leadership and the LTA having two, but it became clear that responsibility and decision-making authority was largely limited to the relatively few senior leadership positions within the two organisations. Therefore, in order to progress, women at colleague or middle-management level felt that they had to leave the organisation in order to progress their careers, resulting in a lack of improvement in female representation across executive leadership positions. For example, Tracey (England Golf Middle Manager) spoke of how “the obvious next step for me would be to leave England Golf, and I’m quite open with them about that”. Additionally, Fiona (LTA Middle Manager) spoke of “boomerang employees” who leave the LTA once there are no more development options for them, “go and learn something”, and then return to the organisation once they have developed the skills to be considered for more senior positions.

Another key structural factor that influenced gender balance on the ELT of England Golf was the effects of the merger between the EWGA and the EGU in 2012. Most of the individuals interviewed, both male and female, expressed their belief that the outcomes of the merger are positive for the game, particularly with regards to efficiency and the sharing of resources. The process of the merger was discussed with less positivity, however, due to the apparent domination of the EGU throughout the process. In particular, this was regarding the terms of the merger resulting in the EWGA’s head office in Birmingham being closed down, and the new body being be based at the National Golf Centre in Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire (English Golf Union & English Women's Golf Association, 2011). This is 114 miles from EWGA’s former head office which meant that any EWGA employees who wished to transfer their employment to England Golf had to move closer to Lincolnshire.

The reason for the merged body being located at Woodhall Spa, despite it being “a bit of an outpost” due to its lack of central and accessible location, was because of the EGU’s £10 million investment in the land, building, and golf course that make up the (since-renamed) National Golf Centre (interview with James, England Golf Board Member). James spoke of the attitude of those within the EGU at the time, regarding the location of the merged body: “we just said no, we own it, we’re keeping it, we ain’t going anywhere, if you want to merge, you come here”. This is an example of the influence of the economic capital accumulated by the EGU on the terms of the merger. The lack of economic capital of the EWGA, who were in rented accommodation and had few monetary assets, put them in a financially vulnerable situation with less influence to compete for power and position in the newly formed organisational sub-field (interview with James).

The assets of the Woodhall Spa Estate have continued to be owned by the EGU, under the separate company name of Woodhall Spa Estate Management Ltd, who rent the accommodation to England Golf on a “special levy” (interview with James). James explained that economic profit is not at stake for the individuals who invested in the facilities because there is no record of investors or the amount they invested. Therefore, this continued EGU control over the assets appears not to be for the sake of preservation of economic capital, but for its conversion into symbolic capital. That is, maintaining ownership of the facility acts as a ‘trophy’ that displays how the EGU were the more financially successful organisation in the merger, and therefore is a conservation strategy that safeguards their dominant position within the newly merged organisational field (Bourdieu, 1993).

In addition to logistical challenges around the merger, there were also some cultural challenges that were discussed in bringing the two organisations together. For example, Clive (England Golf Board Member) spoke of how “in some respects EWGA did lose their identity … in some respects it wasn’t a merger it was a bit of a takeover”. Ruth (England Golf Colleague) discussed how this ‘takeover’ was influenced by a lack of openness for change on behalf of former EGU employees who remained within their place of work and saw little logistical change in their everyday working lives:

Rather than bringing on board the good bits of both it seemed that … this is how the men have done it so this is how we’re gonna do it. ... They didn’t sort of take on board the good bits that EWGA had … it just drove me mad really.

Ruth is describing a form of symbolic violence, where the symbolic and cultural systems of the dominant group (the EGU) became normalised and accepted (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

A combination of structural, logistical, cultural, and individual factors resulted in the initial ELT of the merged body of England Golf being made up of entirely ex-EGU employees, all of whom were male except one. Furthermore, only three (female) less-senior employees transferred from the EWGA to the EGU. This demonstrates that individuals from the women’s organisation became peripheralized and lost autonomy as a result. Therefore, whilst the structure of the EGU changed to incorporate the EWGA, the (male-dominated) ideological and cultural systems were largely conserved and maintained.

Career advancement planning was identified by leaders within both organisations as a strategy that can help to overcome the challenges of promoting more women into a limited number of leadership positions. At England Golf, Michael (England Golf Executive) explained that a key part of improving women’s chances of gaining dominant positions within the organisation is to better understand the career goals of female employees and develop female employees who want to progress to the next hierarchical level. This is so that they have the skills and experience when a more senior position becomes available. He felt that “because we have pretty good [female] representation at all other levels of the organisation, apart from that management team, you’d like to think that [career advancement planning] would help tackle that problem” (interview with Michael). At the LTA, Fiona (LTA Middle Manager) described a similar programme in the form of a People Strategy that has been in place since 2016. The programme aims to work with the ELT to understand the needs of their teams against the organisation’s strategy and the skillsets of the employees within those teams. This includes discussions with employees about their personal development and training needs that are informed by the identification of potential vacancies in the future (interview with Fiona). Career advancement planning is an example of an agency-focussed organisational strategy that aims to increase the institutionalised cultural capital of individual women leaders by supporting them to meet the entry requirements for dominant positions within the organisational field.

## Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the extent to which the administrative and governance hierarchies, rules, and processes of England Golf and the LTA reproduce or resist gender segregation and male dominance within their leadership and governance. Previous research in the field has largely focused on organisational hierarchies, processes, and practices either preventing women from accessing leadership positions (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007; Hovden, 2000; Pfister & Radtke, 2009), peripheralizing women who obtain leadership roles (Shaw, 2006a; Sibson, 2010; Velija et al., 2014), or reducing the autonomy and control that women have over their sport (Hargreaves, 1994; Liston, 2006; Velija et al., 2014; Whisenant et al., 2002).

 Some of our findings aligned with this existing scholarship. This included the prevalence of organisational gender segregation through male-dominated leadership teams and conservation strategies leading to the exclusion of women from the highest leadership positions and the gendered distribution of tasks. We found that gendered administrative and governance structures, rules, and processes contributed to existing gender segregation and the conservation of male dominance within the two organisations. Within England Golf there were examples of very clear and direct conservation strategies within both the voluntary governance hierarchy (such as the ‘six to four rule’) and the paid administrative hierarchy (such as the terms of the merger). At the LTA, conservation strategies were more subtle and indirect within both the voluntary governance hierarchy and the paid administrative hierarchy. This included the high valuing of work experience and qualifications of those from traditionally male-dominated professions when appointing the President, and the impact of (mostly male) executives staying in their positions for long periods of time. These findings contribute new knowledge on the workings of structural barriers and conservation strategies that continue to directly and indirectly prevent women from accessing both paid and voluntary sport leadership positions (Bourdieu, 1993).

 Whilst there was evidence of the conservation of male-dominance within England Golf and the LTA, it became clear that gender power relations in sport organisations are not uniform and organisational change towards gender-equitable sport leadership and governance is not a linear process. This study goes beyond existing research in the field to demonstrate that English national governing bodies are fields of struggles that simultaneously conserve and resist male-dominated gender power relations (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The governance of the sector has seen fast-paced change over the past five years, with the introduction of strategies to increase female representation across English sport governance (Bourdieu, 1993). This includes the introduction of a national sport governance code with gender targets for sport boards attached to funding requirements (Sport England & UK Sport, 2016) and changes to organisational structure, policy, and practice.

 With both England Golf and the LTA meeting the gender representation target set out in Sport England and UK Sport’s (2016) *A Code for Sport Governance*, this study provided an opportunity to assess the extent to which this national governance policy has resulted in transformational organisational change. It was clear from the findings that there were direct attempts by both organisations to increase female representation within their leadership and governance, including the introduction of career advancement planning within the administration of the two organisations and new governance rules to ensure minimum female representation on the board. However, these were examples of regulated liberties: small exercises of power that arise within the context of the existing social order (Bourdieu, 1991). Organisational change was not transformative of the two NGBs’ (male-dominated) gendered logic of practice (Bourdieu, 1992; Pape, 2020).

Key indicators of a lack of transformative change included continued male dominance in the most senior positions across the governance and administrative hierarchies of the two organisations (CEO, Chair, and President), and the stark underrepresentation of women on both ELTs. Both of these forms of gender segregation sit outside of the governance requirements set out in the national sport governance code. This demonstrates that top-down governance requirements tied to funding that only target the voluntary governance hierarchies of sport organisations do not go far enough in transforming the deep-rooted organisational habitus of NGBs, and particularly within long-standing organisations such as England Golf and the LTA that have historically seen resistance to any change that threatens the power of men of the dominant class.

A Bourdieusian theoretical lens was central to this study revealing the complex, multi-faceted, and non-linear nature of gender power relations across the various layers of sport organisations. Bourdieu’s theory of practice enabled the development of a greater understanding of the interrelation between the structures of organisational sub-fields, gendered organisational habitus, and the impact of gender on the resources (capital) available to individual sport leaders to progress within organisational hierarchies. Through this heightened understanding of the interrelated nature of gender power relations in the governance of sport organisations, it became clear that structural, top-down efforts to create organisational change need to be combined with organisational cultural change and increased support for individual women leaders to work towards genuine and sustainable organisational change. This is because top-down interventions that do not transform organisational habitus become absorbed into the (male-dominated) internal logic of the sub-field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992).

A limitation of Bourdieu’s theoretical lens is that it is determinist and lacks in-depth theorising about strategies for change to transform hierarchies of dominance. Similarly, gender organisational theorists (such as Acker and Kanter) have tended to focus more on demonstrating the existence of gendered organisations rather than theorising about organisational change to advance gender equity (Lewis & Simpson, 2012; Nkomo & Rodriguez, 2019). Some sport sociologists have examined *existing* strategies for change in sport governance, with a primary focus on the effectiveness of affirmative action policies (e.g. Skirstad, 2009). There are also isolated cases of sport organisational researchers developing practical implications and recommendations from their work, with a focus on shifting from gender equality strategies (e.g. affirmative action) to gender equity strategies (e.g. policies and processes to ensure fairness to meet the possible diﬀerent needs of women and men; Sotiriadou & de Haan, 2019). As sport governance continues to change and develop, more scholarship is required globally across a diversity of organisations to explore the continued structural challenges facing organisations, the adequacy of top-down policy and bottom-up organisational interventions, and ultimately understand what is required to achieve transformative change in the gendered logic of sport leadership and governance.

# Addendum

Tables 3 and 4 provide timelines of key events post-data collection within England Golf and the LTA that impact upon the gender balance of their senior leadership teams. The information presented has been drawn from the websites of the two organisations. These changes, most of which are positive changes towards more gender-equitable governance, demonstrate the fast pace that English sport leadership and governance changes and develops.

**[INSERT TABLE 3]**

**[INSERT TABLE 4]**

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1. All rules and statistics outlined were accurate at the time of research within each organisation. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)