



Political advances for women and sport in the mid-1990s

Journal:	<i>International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics</i>
Manuscript ID	RISP-2020-0121.R3
Manuscript Type:	Research Article
Keywords:	women and sport, social movement, United Nations, International Olympic Committee, advocacy

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1 **Political advances for women and sport in the mid-1990s**

2 3 **Abstract**

4 The topic of women and girls' rights, access and inclusion in sport and physical activity has
5 become a mainstay of sporting and non-sporting organisational discourse. Notwithstanding,
6 there is little published on why, how and who enabled these topics to become politicised to this
7 extent. For example, academic texts state key moments for the advancement of women and
8 sport, such as conferences and resolutions, but rarely provide further detail. By explaining how
9 transnational women and sport advocacy groups lobbied the United Nations (UN) and the
10 International Olympic Committee (IOC) into actions for women and sport in the mid-1990s,
11 this article adds to knowledge about how advocacy groups in international sport succeeded in
12 working together to collectively effect change despite demonstrating contention amongst one
13 another. Data from archival analysis of papers and correspondence of key agents involved in
14 these processes were complemented with semi-structured interviews with some of the same
15 individuals decades later. Using terms and concepts from social movement studies, the article
16 shows how the International Working Group on Women and Sport (IWG) and WomenSport
17 International (WSI) developed in relation to each other and the political environment in which
18 they were playing a key role in shaping. Their relationship was not straightforward, due in part
19 to the formations and structure of each group, but their purposive efforts with other agents
20 contributed to a collective endeavour that achieved milestones for the political legitimacy of
21 women and sport.

22 23 **Keywords**

24 Women and sport, Social movements, United Nations, International Olympic Committee,
25 advocacy

27 Introduction

28 The 1970s and 1980s saw the growth of national advocacy groups for women and sport. Their
29 documented histories show a pattern of informal networks with limited resources mobilising
30 around the common aim of change for women's sport and women *in* sport (Hall 1995). A
31 plethora of topics, including greater access and inclusion to participation, leadership positions,
32 and safer environments for women and girls in sport and physical activity, have formed some
33 of the objectives of the advocacy. Gradually, these groups interacted with governmental and
34 corporate institutions, often resulting in internal conflict about working with or against liberal
35 and conservative ideologies. By the early 1990s, advocates with national experiences were
36 engaging with each other in European, Commonwealth and North American networks
37 (Hargreaves 1999).

38 WomenSport International (WSI) emerged from an American sport science research group,
39 dissatisfaction with an existing organisation established in the 1950s, and a faltering
40 information exchange mechanism. Formally established in February 1994, WSI was an issues-
41 based and action-oriented non-governmental organisation (NGO). Its aim was to bring about
42 increased opportunities and positive change for women and girls at all levels of involvement
43 in sport and physical activity (WSI, c1995). It achieved particular success with international
44 task forces addressing topics such as the female athlete triad and sexual harassment in sport.
45 Despite this global advocacy, WSI struggled with resources and diversifying its predominantly
46 Western demographic (Hargreaves 1999). It was primarily coordinated by what became an
47 exclusive voluntary executive committee. Led by executive vice-president, Elizabeth 'Libby'
48 Darlison ¹, the committee included Celia Brackenridge (UK), Kari Fasting (Norway) and
49 Barbara Drinkwater (USA), all of whom had substantial academic expertise and national

¹ Darlison was former Deputy Manager of the Australian Sports Commission and a lecturer in Sociology at the University of Sydney.

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3 50 experiences of advocacy for women and sport. WSI had a constitution, sub-structure (including
4
5 51 an advisory board), aims, and objectives determined before the first World Conference on
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7 52 Women and Sport in Brighton, UK, in May 1994.
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10 53 Titled ‘Women, Sport, and the Challenge of Change’, the Brighton Conference convened
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12 54 approximately 280 delegates from over eighty countries, including representatives of major
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14 55 sporting and non-sporting organisations. Hosted by the Great Britain Sports Council and
15
16 56 supported by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the delegates contributed to a more
17
18 57 coordinated and purposeful International Strategy for Women and Sport (see *Author 2020*).
19
20 58 The International Working Group on Women and Sport (IWG) was formulated in the months
21
22 59 following the Brighton Conference. Originally, it was a group focused on coordinating and
23
24 60 monitoring the implementation of the Strategy which was comprised of the *Brighton*
25
26 61 *Declaration on Women and Sport* ², international co-ordinating mechanisms and regular
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28 62 conferences. The IWG was different to WSI in that it was comprised of chosen representatives
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30 63 of identified organisations and regions globally. It was not an NGO, nor was it strictly
31
32 64 composed of governmental representatives. Its secretariat was based at the GB Sports Council
33
34 65 and co-Chairship was shared by Anita White (UK) and Pendukeni Iivula-Ithana (Namibia) ³,
35
36 66 owing to Namibia offering to host the second World Conference in 1998. Immediately after
37
38 67 Brighton, both WSI and the IWG worked to establish themselves in sporting and non-sporting
39
40 68 sectors to lobby for women and sport advances. This included approaching the United Nations
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42 69 (UN) and the IOC, though little analyses of the effectiveness of such advocacy organisations
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44 70 for women and sport exists (Talbot 2000).
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56 ² A set of ten principles that when adhered to will ‘develop a sporting culture that enables and values the full
57 involvement of women in every aspect of sport’ (IWG, 1998, p. 51).

58 ³ White was Assistant Director of National Services at the GB Sports Council in 1994 before being promoted to
59 Director of Development. Iivula-Ithana was Namibian Minister for Youth and Sport in 1994 and Minister of
60 Lands, Resettlement and Rehabilitation from 1996.

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3 71 From 1975 to 1985, three UN Conferences for Women recognised the worldwide discursive
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5 72 oppression of women (Saavedra 2012). The fourth UN Conference for Women in Beijing,
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7 73 China, in September 1995, reflected on the previous decade and identified critical areas for
8
9 74 concern that formed a Platform for Action – ‘an agenda for women’s empowerment...requiring
10
11 75 a strong commitment on the part of governments, international organisations and institutions
12
13 76 at all levels’ (UN 1995). Sport and physical activity were subsumed under women’s health by
14
15 77 the UN and generally considered somewhat tangential to concerns such as poverty, literacy,
16
17 78 war, genital mutilation, and human trafficking. WSI and the IWG identified the importance of
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19 79 Beijing as a major opportunity to ‘recognise that sport is a legitimate topic for discussion on
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21 80 the women’s agenda’ (Iivula-Ithana, 1995).⁴
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27 81 Elsewhere, statistics laid bare the inequality for women in the Olympic Movement going into
28
29 82 the 1990s. At the 1988 Summer Olympic Games in Seoul, South Korea, women comprised
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31 83 26% of the athletes. Regarding leadership, 3% was the same total for the number of women
32
33 84 presidents or general secretaries of National Olympic Committees as it was for International
34
35 85 Federations (Kluka 1993). From 1987 to 1995, the IOC added 54 members, of which only three
36
37 86 were women, despite Juan Antonio Samaranch (IOC President 1980-2001) calling the 1981
38
39 87 election of the first two women, Flor Isava Fonseca and Pirjo Häggman, a ‘revolution’ (Wilson
40
41 88 1996). Pape (2020, p. 100) explains that from 1967-1995, the IOC was ‘able to construct
42
43 89 leadership as gender-neutral and meritocratic in large part because the inclusion of women
44
45 90 athletes under conditions of segregation established women’s lesser status and ability as an
46
47 91 organisational norm’. As such, the IOC ignored the discursive barriers and challenges
48
49 92 encountered by women leaders whilst discounting the privilege afforded to men. Women’s
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51 93 leadership in sport is symbolic to advocacy efforts because of the control and power afforded
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53 94 to decision-makers in sport. Throughout the 1980s, research, workshops and conferences
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60 ⁴ Sport was first specifically recognised as a human right in 1978 by UNESCO.

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3 95 heightened the significance of women's underrepresentation as leaders in sport to the extent
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5 96 that it became a core component of advocacy efforts ever since (Fasting 1993a).
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8 97 The month of September 1995 was very important for women and sport advocacy. The UN
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10 98 published the Beijing Platform for Action and, in doing so, for the first time included three
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12 99 statements explicitly relating to women, physical activity and sport. The same month, the IOC
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14 100 signed the Brighton Declaration and discussed proposals to increase women as decision-makers
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16 101 in the Olympic Movement. Just over a year later, the IOC had a working group, hosted its own
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18 102 World Conference, and produced a resolution on women and sport. Notwithstanding, little is
19
20 103 known about how and why these events happened, who was involved, nor the relations between
21
22 104 those who were influencing the direction for women and sport advocacy and advances.
23
24 105 Hargreaves (1999, p. 466) provides a critical summary of the aims and intentions of the IWG
25
26 106 and WSI and the environment they were engaged with but does not analyse their inter-relations
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28 107 nor provide any depth to the changes made by the IOC. It is important to understand how these
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30 108 relations contributed to the political advance of women and sport advocacy.
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36 109 Therefore, this article focuses on events and activity between May 1994 and October 1996 to
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38 110 explain the reasons for why the UN and the IOC addressed the topic of women and sport,
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40 111 including the significance of advocacy by the IWG and WSI. This article also shows how the
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42 112 composition and resources available to the IWG and WSI enabled and constrained their ability
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44 113 to influence dominant political organisations such as the UN and the IOC, including
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46 114 manoeuvring through formal and informal organisational cultures and processes. Inter-
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48 115 relations between the IWG and WSI in the push for change are explored, including
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50 116 understanding the relationship between NGOs and government-oriented organisations.
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118 **Social movement studies**

119 Social movement studies comprise a broad field of approaches that are employed to understand
120 social movements. Scholars have discussed whether a movement for women and sport exists
121 (see *Author 2019*, Hargreaves 1999). Of interest to this article is the use of concepts from the
122 resource mobilisation approach. Formed in the 1970s, its proponents argued how social
123 movements move from interdependent networks of dissatisfied people to co-ordinated
124 movements of mobilised resources aiming to directly influence and lever change. Thus,
125 ‘instead of trying to discover *what* grievance gave rise to *which* movement, the focus of
126 attention should be upon *how* social movements mobilise successfully’ (Chesters and Welsh
127 2011, p. 7). The ability to measure social movements through units of analysis was kickstarted.
128 The concept of a social movement organisation (SMO) is used to describe groups that identify
129 with and attempt to implement the goals of a movement, with ‘the amount of activity directed
130 toward goal accomplishment being crudely a function of the resources controlled by an
131 organisation’ (McCarthy and Zald 1977, p. 1221). The concept ‘helps us to understand that
132 movements are a complex system of connected, interdependent organisations’ (Della Porta and
133 Diani 2006, p. 139). The IWG and WSI are examples of SMOs.

134 A political opportunity structure helps to contextualise how movements emerge and impact
135 upon society. The term is used to explore relationships between constantly negotiating political
136 environments. It allows scholars to account for why social movements thrive in some societies
137 and not others by moving the focus of analysis away from social movements and towards the
138 dynamics of society (Klandermans and Staggenborg 2002). In other words, it is ‘the relation
139 between social movements and their political environment – the system of alliances and
140 oppositions, and the structure of the state’ (Giugni 1998, p. 381). Political structures are not
141 static. The actors that comprise political structures are constantly shifting and changing in

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3 142 response to ideological objectives (Kriesi 2004, Tilly 1995). As such, Tarrow (1998, p. 71)
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5 143 argues that, ‘when institutional access opens, rifts appear within elites, allies become available,
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7 144 and state capacity for repression declines, challengers find opportunities to advance their
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9 145 claims’. During the twentieth century, women’s movements diversified to an extent that
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11 146 feminisms gradually influenced state and institutions through equality laws and gender
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13 147 mainstreaming (Staggenborg and Taylor 2005). This article shows how women and sport
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15 148 SMOs negotiated the institutional opportunities and allies accessible to them, though this was
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17 149 not straightforward.

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22 150 Social movement studies have also explored relations *within* a movement. This is important
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24 151 because advocacy by SMOs is complex and nonlinear. Della Porta and Diani (2006, p. 157)
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26 152 provide an overview of interorganisational relationships and how, even though advocacy
27
28 153 efforts may appear desirable and worthwhile, they ‘vary markedly in both content and intensity,
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30 154 so we can ask whether SMOs are in competition ... [for] ... essential resources for action by
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32 155 tapping the same (limited) mobilisation potential’. Figure 1 shows various patterns of
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34 156 interorganisational relations among SMOs.

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42 158 *INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE*
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48 160 Most of the time, SMOs have *neutral* relations. They have forged their own niche in the
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50 161 movement and are pursuing their aims within sectors different to other SMOs. Even though
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52 162 each SMO has an affinity to the overall goal of the movement, there is little direct cooperation
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54 163 or competition for resources between SMOs here.

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58 164 *Non-competitive cooperation* is when different movements and SMOs coalesce around a
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60 165 similar agenda because they have ‘sufficient interests and motives for convergence to activate

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3 166 joint mobilisations' (Della Porta and Diani 2006, p. 158). For the women and sport movement,
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5 167 SMOs around the world left the Brighton Conference under the consensus of the International
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7 168 Strategy, and particularly the Brighton Declaration (see Author 2020). They approached their
8
9 169 national governments, ministries and sports federations calling for change.
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13 170 *Competitive cooperation* is when two or more SMOs are keen to work together on a particular
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15 171 issue or approach an organisation 'but at the same time they find themselves facing stiff mutual
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17 172 competition for the same support base, and for similar sectors of public opinion whose interests
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19 173 they wish to represent' (Della Porta and Diani 2006, p. 159). This article identifies how WSI
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21 174 and the IWG both wished to influence the IOC but were competing against each other whilst
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23 175 doing so to earn legitimacy for themselves within and outside of the movement.
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27 176 A lack of cooperation mixed with high levels of competition leads to *factionalism*. Della Porta
28
29 177 and Diani (2006) cite examples of highly competitive dynamics between SMOs that eventually
30
31 178 leads to absent cooperation and, then, division. The differences between SMOs are emphasised
32
33 179 because of their constrained potential to mobilise resources. During the efforts to lobby the
34
35 180 IOC and the UN, WSI and the IWG also demonstrated conflict between each other. This was
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37 181 predominantly born out of the increasing formalisation of the IWG that threatened similar aims
38
39 182 already established by WSI. Importantly, this strained relationship was never made public to
40
41 183 avoid threatening the legitimacy of the SMOs and damaging the cohesiveness of the movement.
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43 184 As such, this example affords an opportunity to manoeuvre within the typology because
44
45 185 factionalism does not adequately explain the strained relationship.
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51 186 Instead, *contentious cooperation* is more apt. This is an extension of the typology that sits
52
53 187 between competitive cooperation and factionalism to explain how transnational SMOs in sport
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55 188 succeed in collectively effecting change despite conflicting with one another. It is a more
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57 189 dynamic relationship than one that may lead to division, and is replete with contradictions and
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3 190 tensions, which in turn has consequences for how groups themselves develop and change. Each
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5 191 SMO is working toward the end goal of the movement and by cooperating and competing for
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8 192 resources available, continually negotiate their relationship based upon the differences in their
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10 193 ideologies.

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13 194 Introducing contentious coordination enables an exploration of disagreements and challenges
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15 195 to the ideologies and outlooks of each SMO rather than focusing attention on relations about
16
17 196 accruing resources. Indeed, the resource mobilisation approach has been critiqued because of
18
19 197 its rationality and economically determined foundations (Giugni 1999). The role of politics,
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21 198 identity and emotions by and with movement actors are seen as relative constants when
22
23 199 interacting with resources. Thus, it is important to humanise this approach and its useful terms
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25 200 and concepts. Moreover, the method employed for this project meant the experiences of SMO
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27 201 leaders were core to exploring SMO relations.
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35 203 **Method**

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38 204 Data was collated as part of a broader project critically examining the origins, development
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40 205 and outcomes of a social movement for women and sport. An interpretive thematic analysis of
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42 206 documents housed in the Anita White Foundation (AWF) International Women and Sport
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44 207 Archive at the University of Chichester were complemented by semi-structured interviews with
45
46 208 24 individuals principally involved with advocacy for women and sport since the 1980s.

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50 209 The Archive contains over one hundred EcopHant archival quality storage boxes containing
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52 210 private and public correspondence, meeting minutes and reference papers belonging to donors
53
54 211 who were core to advocacy efforts. The Archive was identified in May 2010 as the central
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56 212 repository for historical documentation about the IWG and also contains comprehensive private
57
58 213 communications and official publications of WSI (AWF 2020). Two-thirds of the boxes were
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3 214 analysed over a six-month period, with approximately 450,000 words typed onto a laptop
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5 215 because many documents are not digitised, and included developments and relations within
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8 216 and between sports organisations and transnational, continental and numerous national women
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10 217 and sport SMOs. The remaining boxes were not central to the scope of the research given they
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12 218 include hardcopy research papers of prominent figures in the field, conference materials and
13
14 219 delegate packs, and extensive coverage of the development of the Women's Sport Foundation
15
16 220 in the UK (since renamed the Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation and now called Women
17
18 221 in Sport). Data were chronologically ordered into time-periods to be manageable ahead of an
19
20 222 interpretive thematic analysis into higher and lower-order themes based on key terms and
21
22 223 concepts from social movement studies. This included: the processes involved with the
23
24 224 formulation and development of SMOs; SMO relationships between each other; and, SMO
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26 225 relationships with institutions inside and outside of sport.

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31 226 Semi-structured interviews with original or co-founding members of WSI, secretariat members
32
33 227 or representatives for the IWG in the mid-1990s, and a member of the IOC are most pertinent
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35 228 for this article⁵. As will be shown, these organisations were at the forefront of coordinating and
36
37 229 negotiating such advocacy efforts and, for the purposes of this article, their insights and lived
38
39 230 experiences are crucial. The key criteria for inclusion was that interviewees were a leader or
40
41 231 major representative of any transnational or national women and sport SMO since the 1980s.
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43 232 Interviewees not included in this article took stewardship of these organisations after the time
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45 233 period for this article, represented other SMOs who were not as closely involved with such
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⁵ *Celia Brackenridge* was an academic and was central to the creation of WSI and the national women and sport advocacy organisation in the UK. *Anita DeFrantz* competed in the Montreal Olympics in 1976, was involved with the Organising Committee of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, and was elected as a member of the IOC in 1986. *Margaret 'Ann' Hall* is an academic who played formative roles in the creation of WSI and the national women and sport advocacy organisation in Canada. *Sue Neill* was Head of Policy, Research and Planning at Sport Canada and was IWG co-Chair from 1998-2002. *Margaret Talbot* was an academic and held senior positions in European and international women and sport, recreation and dance advocacy organisations throughout the 1990s. *Anita White's* designation can be found in footnote three.

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3 234 discussions, or were academics operating within the advocacy sphere. Interviewees were
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5 235 contacted via email to participate in the study in most instances. The researcher's connections
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7 236 with the AWF were significant here and facilitated access to many key figures, though snowball
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9 237 sampling did result in securing DeFrantz and Hall. Interviews were conducted in-person or via
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11 238 Skype, with the average duration being two hours. Interviewees were asked for reflections,
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13 239 experiences and information about their involvement with SMOs, key events and their thoughts
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15 240 on advocacy for women and sport.

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17 241 The researcher acknowledges his demographic as a cisgender man when conducting this
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19 242 women-centred research, the impact of men conducting research on women (Oakley, 2005;
20
21 243 Stanley and Wise, 1993), and the role of malestream texts that have dominated the social study
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23 244 of sport. Kimmel (1998) and bell hooks (2000) argue that men should contribute to feminist
24
25 245 discourse in order to better understand gender relations of power, though acknowledge men
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27 246 should not be central to the discourse. As such, this research amplifies the voices of women
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29 247 engaged in advocacy for women and sport.

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31 248 Working with the AWF – a women and sport advocacy organisation headed by Anita White –
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33 249 certainly benefitted the legitimacy of the researcher to the interviewees. Nonetheless, as a man
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35 250 with a significant age gap to the women interviewees, the researcher still felt a need to earn
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37 251 their respect. After archival analysis was completed, the researcher often found himself aiding
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39 252 the interviewees in pinpointing dates or events that they had forgotten. A stronger connection
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41 253 resulted during the interviews because his knowledge was recognised by the interviewees. They
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43 254 sometimes spent time richly articulating their version of events too. Many had never been asked
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45 255 to share their histories for an academic purpose in this way before, so reflected that they
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47 256 enjoyed reminiscing on the advances and challenges they had encountered.

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258 Findings

259 The remainder of this article is ordered into three overlapping sections to show that, despite
260 being broadly collaborative in their efforts, the IWG and WSI exhibited competitive
261 cooperation and contentious cooperation when lobbying the UN and the IOC in the mid-1990s.

262 The first section reveals the extent of the strained relations and why much of the conflict
263 emanated from the characteristics of the SMOs themselves. From mid-1994 to late-1996, there
264 was collaboration on behalf of the IWG to WSI, but scepticism and concern on behalf of WSI
265 to the IWG. The reasons for this emanate from the development of the IWG, the resources
266 available to both SMOs, and how both SMOs competed for relations with powerful sporting
267 and non-sporting bodies. For example, Neill recounted that ‘I think one of the things that caused
268 WSI to get their knickers in a knot was the thought that the IWG might become a structured
269 organisation like they are and become yet another organisation that winds up competing for
270 scarce resources’.

271 The second and third sections show how, despite the strained relations, agents from both SMOs
272 continued the advocacy momentum to lobby for greater rights for women and girls in sport and
273 physical activity in official publications and actions of both the UN and the IOC. Across each
274 section, the significance of the shifting politicisation of women and sport is demonstrated.

275

276 Competitive and contentious cooperation

277 The ‘IWG’ first appears in correspondence in July 1994, when White (1994) tells Darlison how
278 the IWG’s lifespan depended upon its effectiveness leading up to the next World Conference
279 in Namibia in 1998 and that the ‘crucial and important difference’ to WSI was that the IWG
280 was not a membership-based organisation. White (1994) also stated that the IWG’s rationale
281 is to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the Strategy agreed at Brighton, including

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3 282 communicating with a range of sporting and non-sporting organisations, such as the IOC and
4
5 283 the UN. This intention was to be a root cause of tension for WSI over the next year, mainly
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7 284 because WSI's executive board felt they had stated their position and aims strongly before,
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9 285 during, and after Brighton, yet the emerging IWG was disrupting their progress and expanding
10
11 286 beyond the remit agreed by conference delegates (Darlison, 1994b). Nevertheless, WSI agreed
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13 287 to be represented by Darlison as the sole NGO on the IWG.
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16
17 288 Brackenridge (interview) believed that because both groups formed in the same year, the IWG
18
19 289 'a little hijacked the foundation of WSI because women who had never heard of either got
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21 290 confused and thought, "oh, which one should I join?" and didn't understand the differences or
22
23 291 the objectives'. For example, Darlison had invited Iivula-Ithana onto WSI's advisory board yet
24
25 292 did not know she had already accepted co-Chairship of the IWG in preparation for the 1998
26
27 293 Namibia Conference. White (1994) told Darlison that Iivula-Ithana 'did not realise that WSI
28
29 294 was a different organisation' and said Iivula-Ithana had asked, "Anyway the difference is
30
31 295 almost the same isn't it?".
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37 296 Worries that the Iivula-Ithana example was being replicated elsewhere, as well as the uncertain
38
39 297 objectives and undetermined timeframe for IWG's existence, concerned WSI. The annual
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41 298 membership fees of \$15-150USD were a key financial resource to WSI and were used to pay
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43 299 for Darlison's travel, office space, and communication costs. Despite making new contacts at
44
45 300 Brighton, Darlison (1995b) stated that 'without a strong membership we will simply not
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47 301 survive beyond June [1995] and we will be criticised for being elitist and non-representative'.
48
49 302 In contrast, IWG was resourced by the GB Sports Council which was significant for several
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51 303 reasons.
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56 304 Firstly, an international women and sport SMO had been professionalised. Ann Hall
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58 305 (interview), who helped found WSI, acknowledged the IWG was an example of 'whole-change
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3 306 in sport; we basically moved from a volunteer kitchen-table type organisation to organisations
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5 307 that are now fully-funded and hire professional staff'. Unlike the origins of national advocacy
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7 308 groups (see Hall 1995), from its inception the IWG immediately had communications resources
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9 309 from the Sports Council (office, desk, computer) and 10-20% of the staff time of Andreas
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12 310 Hansen who acted as general secretary for the IWG.

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15 311 Secondly, Darlison (1994a) recognised that this resource meant that White carried
16
17 312 'baggage...In other words she has her political masters and must be seen to be doing certain
18
19 313 things if the group is to get secretariat funding and ongoing support'. The SMO had not *become*
20
21 314 institutionalised but existed *because of* the politicisation of women and sport throughout the
22
23 315 1980s and early 1990s. In the early 1990s, the Sports Council was developing the concept of
24
25 316 sports equity, despite increasing governmental influence toward international excellence and
26
27 317 performance discourse (Houlihan and White 2002). As such, the IWG was receiving criticism
28
29 318 that it was not going to 'challenge the male-dominated and male-defined nature of sport' (Hall
30
31 319 1996, p. 102). However, White (interview) stated the Sports Council 'permitted the women and
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33 320 sport work even though it was not aligned to their priorities at the time'. For example, Hansen
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35 321 was based in the International Affairs Unit at the Sports Council, whose brief was international
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37 322 relations and increasing the UK's international influence in sport. As such, directing his
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39 323 resource to the IWG adhered to Sports Council expectations of international leadership and
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41 324 excellence.

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48 325 WSI (1995) openly stated that they were 'simply not interested in "adding more women and
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50 326 stirring", but in working to change sport itself so it becomes more "female friendly" and
51
52 327 responsive to women's needs and interests'. WSI's concerns with IWG's development
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54 328 heightened from March-May 1995 during the first of a series of carefully prepared faxes
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56 329 between Darlison and White. Darlison (1995g) argued that decisions taken at the IWG's first
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58 330 annual meeting in Ottawa, Canada, in November 1994 meant the IWG was looking 'much

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3 331 more like another international women and sport “organisation” than an interim Working
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5 332 Group’. The fear by WSI was that the IWG would approach international organisations, act as
6
7
8 333 a knowledge exchange mechanism, and compete for similar resources (Darlison 1994a).
9
10 334 Unfortunately for all involved, a WSI representative invited to the Ottawa meeting was unwell
11
12 335 and failed to report its content back to WSI, resulting in ‘knowledge deficit’ (Darlison 1995h).
13
14 336 The result was a confusing and tense period between the SMOs made more significant because
15
16 337 WSI were in progressive communication with the IOC and had been to the UN in New York
17
18
19 338 (see next sections).

20
21
22 339 White (1995b) believed ‘a common philosophy, but different emphases and methods can be
23
24 340 very positive’ between WSI and the IWG, yet Darlison (1995h) argued the duplication of work
25
26 341 would be damaging. She bemoans the fact that WSI is membership-based, whilst the IWG
27
28 342 pursues representatives to join it, resulting in people not paying for WSI membership because
29
30 343 they think both groups replicate each other. Darlison (1995h) bluntly summarises, ‘I don’t think
31
32 344 that it is very productive to continue talking about areas of concern between the IWG and WSI
33
34 345 unless they are going to change and I think we both know they are not’.

35
36
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38
39 346 The issue continued into the next IWG annual meeting in July 1995. It was acknowledged that
40
41 347 the IWG would focus on policy and international strategies and WSI would concentrate on
42
43 348 issues and implementation of policies, though the division ‘cannot be a hermetically sealed
44
45 349 one’ (IWG 1996). Moreover, the governmental-oriented IWG ‘felt that it was necessary to
46
47 350 maintain and build-up contact’ with international sport federations and agreed to inviting a
48
49 351 representative from the IOC onto the IWG. The non-governmental WSI disagreed with this
50
51 352 ambition. Darlison relayed her thoughts and experiences of the meeting to the WSI Executive
52
53 353 Board and Brackenridge (1996) responded, ‘you appear to be fighting a lonely battle against
54
55 354 an ever-expanding and well-resourced IWG. I think [IWG] are progressing on the basis of
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3 355 optimistic pragmatism – in other words, they’ll keep going “til the bubble bursts and/or the
4
5 356 money runs out”.

7
8 357 The Brighton Declaration’s traceability to the IWG was also not lost on Darlison (1995k) who
9
10 358 believed the IWG were “playing smart” and getting a great deal of publicity and recognition
11
12 359 by “monitoring and coordinating” and getting others (e.g. regional governments) to do the
13
14 360 actual work’. Indeed by 1996 the Declaration was becoming part of the global language of
15
16 361 sport with 51 national and international organisations having endorsed it (IWG 1996).

17
18 362 The impact of resources on the relationship between WSI and IWG was intensifying. Darlison
19
20 363 (1995k) gradually became aware that ‘having those sorts of resources makes a big difference’.
21
22 364 Over the next year, being an NGO was both a blessing and a curse to WSI. The following
23
24 365 sections will show how WSI managed to directly impact both the UN and IOC whilst
25
26 366 progressing their issue-based task forces. But in doing so, it spread its initiatives so wide that
27
28 367 in November 1995, Darlison (1995n) claimed ‘the workload has been full-time for much of the
29
30 368 time, but the pay well below the poverty line’.

31
32 369 Conversely, the thrust of the IWG’s advocacy efforts were due to their representative links. It
33
34 370 was indicative of the IWG’s development and WSI’s problems that the support of the Sports
35
36 371 Council enabled White and Hansen to attend and contribute to conferences, workshops and
37
38 372 meetings in Canada, Colombia, Egypt and Indonesia during this period. However,
39
40 373 correspondence within the Sports Council throughout early-1995 shows that there was ‘a
41
42 374 general lack of progress since December [1994] due to pressing commitments’ in White and
43
44 375 Hansen’s day-jobs, signifying that the resources were not equitable to the workload (IWG
45
46 376 1995a).

47
48 377 The relationship between the two SMOs during this time was ‘difficult’ (Brackenridge
49
50 378 interview) and ‘delicate’ (Neill interview) but demonstrates how social movement
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3 379 development is not linear and involves challenges between SMOs. It is clear from
4
5 380 correspondence that WSI were unhappy at the IWG's development. Brackenridge (interview)
6
7 381 called their overlap 'fuzzy'. Yet White (interview) acknowledged that whilst 'there were some
8
9 382 tensions in relation to establishing our legitimacy with the UN and IOC, our relationship was
10
11 383 generally collaborative'. The tensions were kept private and Neill (interview) agreed that there
12
13 384 was a strong mutual respect for the work each was achieving. These comments are
14
15 385 demonstrative of contentious cooperation given that there were 'tensions' between the
16
17 386 cooperative efforts of each SMO as they competed to establish themselves in an emerging
18
19 387 political environment. The structural organisation of each SMO enabled and constrained them
20
21 388 in various ways. Both WSI and IWG had socio-organisational resources through their networks
22
23 389 and contacts, but crucially IWG had greater material resources through its financial dependency
24
25 390 on the Sports Council (Edwards and McCarthy 2004). This also meant IWG had to cater to the
26
27 391 Sports Council's ideology and direction.
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37 **The UN Beijing Platform for Action**

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39 394 Producing the Beijing Platform for Action was a complicated process. A UN governmental
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41 395 Platform for Action was formed from the 39th session (15th March-4th April 1995, New York,
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43 396 USA) of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) – 'the principal global
44
45 397 intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the
46
47 398 empowerment of women' (UN Women 2020a). Here, UN member states, NGOs and regions
48
49 399 reported on the status of women and considered ten critical areas of concern identified by the
50
51 400 UN (e.g. the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women). At the accompanying
52
53 401 NGO Forum to the session in New York, an NGO Platform for Action was considered. It was
54
55 402 based on the UN governmental version but had many amendments, additions and redefinitions
56
57 403 resulting from regional NGO forums around the world. The NGO Platform for Action would
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2
3 404 be used to lobby the UN governmental Platform for Action in the hope that the Final Draft
4
5 405 going to the Beijing Conference in September 1995 was as suitable as possible. Before these
6
7 406 events, sport and physical activity had never been on any UN Women's agenda. This section
8
9 407 outlines how WSI, the IWG and national SMOs manoeuvred the topics into major non-sport
10
11 408 discourse for the first time.

12
13
14
15 409 WSI wrote a comprehensive report to the UN in November 1994 and were granted NGO
16
17 410 official status and accreditation for the Beijing NGO Forum soon after. The IWG secretariat
18
19 411 had applied to attend but experienced constraints due to its governmental relations. The UK
20
21 412 government did not have a Ministry nor Minister for Women. As such, the lack of 'a convenient
22
23 413 single point of focus and an authority on behalf of women's issues' meant that 'coordinating
24
25 414 Sports Council activities on women in sport with the rest of the Government is more
26
27 415 complicated' (Public Policy Unit 1995). The Sports Council were advised that their language
28
29 416 needed to be consistent with government policies on women and those of the delegation being
30
31 417 sent to Beijing, led by the Department for Employment. The correspondence ends with a
32
33 418 recommendation that 'it may be helpful to remind Employment Ministers of the Prime
34
35 419 Minister's interest in promoting competitive sport as an essential tool for instilling "discipline,
36
37 420 commitment and courage" in young people' (Public Policy Unit 1995). Such a narrow view of
38
39 421 sport for women and girls had been critiqued in literature (Hargreaves 1994) and explored at
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41 422 length at the Brighton Conference.

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49 50 51 424 ***The NGO Forum and CSW Session in New York***

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54 425 National women and sport SMOs in Canada and Australia had lobbied their national
55
56 426 governments to ensure sport and physical activity were included in their governmental reports
57
58 427 to the UN (IWG 1995b). In Canada's case, this resulted in a statement getting through the
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3 428 Regional Forum into the Draft NGO Platform for Action under the strategic objective of
4
5 429 Health. The organisational advocacy undertaken since the early 1980s in Canada had led to
6
7 430 national recognition of the barriers encountered by women in sport and were redefined under
8
9 431 broader objectives to suit global discourse for women generally (Ferree and Mueller 2004).

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12
13 432 Darlison's (1995f) comprehensive reflections on the NGO Forum in New York provide a
14
15 433 unique perspective on the political manoeuvrings undertaken to get three statements to sport
16
17 434 and physical activity into the Final Draft of the Platform for Action. Darlison reflects she was
18
19 435 one of 1,700 women at the Forum, though only she, Marg McGregor (the executive-director of
20
21 436 the Canadian women and sport SMO) and later Orié Rogo-Manduli (Chair of a Kenyan women
22
23 437 and sport SMO) were lobbying for women, sport and physical activity to be an issue of concern.
24
25 438 All realised that sport was regarded as a luxury in many countries, whereas physical activity
26
27 439 could be linked to empowerment, human rights, and health which were more easily understood,
28
29 440 despite not being a reality for all. Their dialogue when lobbying NGOs changed to account for
30
31 441 this, especially as 'we were competing for priority with war, genital mutilation, trafficking and
32
33 442 prostitution, amongst others' (Darlison 1995f).

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38
39 443 Darlison (1995f) admitted that utilising her governmental (Womensport Australia) and NGO
40
41 444 (WSI) expertise was 'an advantage'. She also reflected that lobbying with McGregor had, 'at
42
43 445 the risk of sounding unduly modest (Joke!!!) worked miracles and we ended up managing to
44
45 446 get two more statements in the Draft NGO Platform for Action' (Darlison 1995f). The
46
47 447 document still needed be accepted by the NGO Forum, by the CSW, and then pass through
48
49 448 discussions to determine whether any amendments, revisions, or additions were to be included
50
51 449 in the governmental Platform for Action.

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56 450 Most NGOs did not have consultative status to influence the CSW but were given accreditation
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58 451 to attend the 39th session as observers, including WSI. However, Darlison managed to secure
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3 452 a pass and lobbied governmental delegations. She also spent much time with Iivula-Ithana
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5 453 (1995) who, whilst representing the Namibian government in one capacity and IWG in another,
6
7 454 made an impassioned speech on the topic. Iivula-Ithana had commented on the Draft
8
9 455 governmental Platform for Action and Darlison (1995f) used UN computers to amend the
10
11 456 document and got it photocopied onto Namibian government-headed paper so that it would be
12
13 457 placed on the desks of all government delegates. Darlison (1995e) was told by a representative
14
15 458 of the European Commission that the amendments would have more chance of being accepted
16
17 459 if they were tabled by a non-Western country. Indeed, Namibia successfully tabled two new
18
19 460 statements (Health and Education) and added a sentence to one other (Health). The Brighton
20
21 461 Declaration is briefly mentioned but it is uncertain what influence it had.
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27 462 Darlison (1995e) reflected the conference in New York was ‘crazy’ and that, despite creating
28
29 463 the wording for much of the document that Iivula-Ithana helped put forward, ‘you can be sure
30
31 464 that WSI will receive absolutely no credit for all of this and at one level it doesn’t matter as
32
33 465 long as the issue gets up but it’s not a very cooperative working environment’. Darlison’s
34
35 466 comment also belies the continually strained relationship between WSI and IWG at this time.
36
37 467 She had been surprised to hear the IWG described as an ‘intergovernmental group’ after Iivula-
38
39 468 Ithana was given special dispensation, meaning she had to ‘sit in a special place on the floor
40
41 469 and not with her government delegation’ (Darlison 1995f). The description enhanced WSI
42
43 470 concerns that the IWG’s role was expanding. Moreover, White’s (1995a) commendation of
44
45 471 how WSI and the IWG had worked together also made WSI sense that people were not grasping
46
47 472 just how important Darlison’s and McGregor’s political manoeuvrings had been to ensure
48
49 473 either Namibia or Kenya tabled the statements (Brackenridge 1995a). Darlison’s comments
50
51 474 signify contentious cooperation between leading SMOs who were contributing to the ultimate
52
53 475 ‘end-goal’ of the movement but were irked at the lack of intra-movement recognition (Della
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55 476 Porta and Diana 2006).
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56 478 ***The NGO Forum and UN Conference for Women in Beijing***
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9 479 Nearly 30,000 non-governmental activists attended the NGO Forum that accompanied the
10
11 480 fourth UN Conference for Women in Beijing (UN Women 2020b). There was more focus on
12
13 481 women, sport and physical activity compared to the New York NGO Forum. Workshops were
14
15 482 hosted by the IOC and an American SMO, the Women's Sports Foundation, for example. This
16
17 483 meant other SMO personnel were in attendance and enabled Darlison (1995l) to meet with IOC
18
19 484 member, Anita DeFrantz. As such, more delegates were made aware of the benefits of physical
20
21 485 activity and sport for women and girls.
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26 486 The Beijing Conference itself was 'a different ball game' (Darlison 1995l). Governmental
27
28 487 representatives from 189 countries engaged with complex bureaucracy and formal constraints
29
30 488 which meant that any lobbying and amendments to the final document were difficult. Attempts
31
32 489 at late revisions were unsuccessful but women and sport SMOs were generally pleased that the
33
34 490 following statements were included in the Beijing Platform for Action (UN 1995)⁶:
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41 49142 *Strategic objective – Education and Training of Women*
4344 493 B.4. Develop non-discriminatory education and training.
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47 494 Paragraph 83 (m): Provide accessible recreational and sports facilities and
48
49 495 establish and strengthen gender-sensitive programmes for girls and women of
50
51 496 all ages in education and community institutions and support the advancement
52
53 497 of women in all areas of athletics and physical activity, including coaching,
54
55

57 ⁶ In addition to the statement paragraphs, there was also recognition under the *Women in Power and Decision-*
58 *making* strategic objective that the 'underrepresentation of women in decision-making positions in the areas
59 of art, culture, sports, the media, education, religion and the law have prevented women from having a
60 significant impact on many key institutions' (UN 1995, para. 183).

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3 498 training and administration, and as participants at the national, regional and
4
5 499 international levels
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11 501 *Strategic objective – Women and Health*
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14 502 C.2. Strengthen preventive programmes that promote women's health.
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16

17 503 Paragraph 108 (f): Create and support programmes in the educational system, in
18
19 504 the workplace and in the community to make opportunities to participate in
20
21 505 sport, physical activity and recreation available to girls and women of all ages
22
23 506 on the same basis as they are made available to men and boys
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25
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27 507

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30 508 *Strategic Objective – The Girl Child*
31
32

33 509 L.4. Eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development and
34
35 510 training.
36
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38 511 Paragraph 280 (d): Promote the full and equal participation of girls in
39
40 512 extracurricular activities, such as sports, drama and cultural activities.
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46 514 The statements were a culmination of decades of lobbying intended to demonstrate the
47
48 515 significance of access and involvement in sport and physical activity for women and girls.
49
50 516 Political opportunity structures had shifted to recognise such actions as part of broader
51
52 517 discussions about empowerment, the development and strengthening of educational
53
54 518 programmes, and the elimination of discrimination against women and girls. Such work has
55
56 519 continued in the sport for development sector (see Chawansky and Hayhurst 2015).
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3 520 Similar to the Brighton Declaration, the Beijing Platform for Action was a globally agreed
4
5 521 document that was not a legally binding treaty or convention. However, it was a ‘very strong
6
7 522 moral imperative used in conjunction with a range of other treaties’ (Darlison 1995) and thus
8
9 523 was another symbolic, material resource for the movement (Edwards and McCarthy 2004).
10
11 524 This was also at a time of growing momentum for the use of sport in development agendas and
12
13 525 towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (Kidd 2008). Further insight is required
14
15 526 to understand the role and influence at this time of agents in the development sector upon sport,
16
17 527 and vice versa, when it comes to advancing rights for women and girls. What is known,
18
19 528 however, is that unlike the close relationship between the IWG and the Brighton Declaration,
20
21 529 the efforts of SMOs such as WSI is harder to link to the Platform for Action because of the
22
23 530 influence of multiple stakeholders. September 1995 was also the same month that the IOC
24
25 531 introduced leadership targets for women and sport, as will be explored in the next section.
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37 534 **The IOC leadership targets, Working Group and Conference**

38 535 ***Background***

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43 536 According to Pape (2020, p. 99), previous attempts to address unequal leadership in the
44
45 537 Olympic Movement in the 1970s and 1980s were led by individuals, rather than ‘a sustained
46
47 538 push’, and did not result in meaningful action until ‘international shifts in gender politics’ led
48
49 539 to firmer policies (2020, p. 101). However, advances by the IOC are difficult to address because
50
51 540 ‘there are relatively few documented and analysed records of women’s experiences within the
52
53 541 system’ (Talbot 2000, p. 4). This section demonstrates how the IOC were influenced to
54
55 542 establish an IOC Women and Sport Working Group, a World Conference on Women and Sport,
56
57 543 and leadership targets for women during a short period in the mid-1990s.
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3 544 The IOC met to discuss prominent issues for the Olympic Movement at its Centennial Congress
4
5 545 in September 1994 in Paris, France. Fasting (1994 emphasis in original) represented WSI and
6
7 546 reflected that the Congress was a male-dominated, ‘gender-blind ... [and] ... extremely
8
9 547 depressive environment’. There were few women speakers and women were ‘very seldom
10
11 548 mentioned in any of the speeches. *If they are it is by male journalists or male athletes*’.

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15 549 The opportunities to network led Fasting (1994) to speak to female IOC members such as Mary
16
17 550 Glen-Haig and Häggman and realise ‘the only chance for change is that the pressure from
18
19 551 outside becomes very strong’. This was despite Glen-Haig (1994) writing to the IOC President
20
21 552 celebrating the Brighton Conference and lobbying for the IOC to sign the Brighton Declaration.
22
23 553 Samaranch (1994) responded positively, indicating that the Centennial Congress would be an
24
25 554 ‘excellent opportunity’ to share the work.

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30 555 In the plenary session of the Congress, Samaranch stated ‘the participation of women at all
31
32 556 levels of sports organisation must be encouraged’ (IOC 1994a, p. 400). Fasting (1994) called
33
34 557 this ‘very interesting – he is smart’. Two of the 61 points included in the final Congress Report
35
36 558 concerned women, which surprised Fasting (1994) because ‘this wasn’t said very much during
37
38 559 those four days but perhaps “someone” in the programme-committee thought it was important’.
39
40 560 One of the points stated that ‘women’s accession to positions as sports leaders must be
41
42 561 encouraged and accelerated’ (IOC 1994b, p. 5).

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46 562 Over the following months, Darlison (1994c, 1995a) continued to lobby the IOC and position
47
48 563 WSI as a group which, despite being a representative on the IWG and also a distinct separate
49
50 564 organisation, could aid the IOC with regard to its enhanced focus on women and sport. Indeed,
51
52 565 a full-page feature on the Brighton Conference in the Olympic Review – the official publication
53
54 566 of the Olympic Movement – is notable because the lead contact for further information about
55
56 567 the International Strategy are WSI (IOC 1994c). This demonstrates how WSI had manoeuvred
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3 568 itself after Brighton, yet may have also contributed to confusion from outsiders between it and
4
5 569 the IWG. Hansen (1995) called the coverage 'excellent', WSI as a contact point 'surprising'
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7
8 570 and the whole scenario as potentially 'embarrassing' to the IWG should they contact the IOC.
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10 571 The lobbying was benefitted by Darlison's relationship with Kevan Gosper; a Vice-President
11
12 572 of the IOC from 1990-1994. Gosper was her former boss and helped to broker conversations.
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14
15 573 In February 1995, Darlison (1995c) was told by Gosper that WSI communications had been
16
17 574 received 'extremely positively' and that a Centennial Congress Study Commission had been
18
19 575 established to study and follow-up the Congress outcomes and 'I believe that out of this, it is
20
21 576 just possible that a Commission of Women may be set up'. The straightforward, constructive
22
23 577 lobbying appealed to the IOC and, a month later, Fekrou Kidane (1995), the Director of
24
25 578 Cooperation at the IOC, told Darlison, 'the only concerned and very constructive organisation
26
27 579 on women and sport is yours'. He also recommended to the IOC Executive Board that it should
28
29 580 cooperate with WSI and, as editor-in-chief of the Olympic Review, praised WSI for 'moving
30
31 581 intelligently in the right direction ... to ... discover and tackle subjects of importance for
32
33 582 women in the areas of sport and physical activity' (IOC 1995a, p. 60). The IWG had sent
34
35 583 communications to Kidane but received little response.
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41 584 The progress by the IOC should not be exaggerated, despite platitudes by Samaranch
42
43 585 continuing in meetings. After praising WSI, the following pages of the Olympic Review (IOC
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45 586 1995a, p. 64-67) listed the twelve newly co-opted members from the Centennial Congress in
46
47 587 Paris; all of whom were men. Indeed, Darlison (1995d) bemoaned to Kidane that many women
48
49 588 had 'given up in frustration at what they see as the IOC's intransigence and lack of action when
50
51 589 it comes to promoting the advancement of women in sport'.
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55 590 This 'long and a sensitive process' (Darlison, 1995g) of relationship-building took place during
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57 591 Darlison's preparation and involvement in the NGO Forum in New York, and the strained
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3 592 relations with the IWG. In May 1995, Darlison (1995i) issued a stern warning to the IWG
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5 593 Secretariat that communications with the IOC had taken six months and she 'did not want
6
7 594 anything to jeopardise the hard work', including cooperation with the IWG; signifying the
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9
10 595 strength of contention by WSI to the IWG. At its annual meeting shortly after, the IWG stated
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12 596 it would approach the IOC and International Federations to become representatives, confirming
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14 597 the initial thoughts of WSI's executive board that the IWG was 'untrustworthy' (Darlison
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16
17 598 1995j).
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23 600 *Leadership targets*

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26 601 The Centennial Congress Study Commission met over several meetings from 1994-1996.
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28 602 Talbot (2000) obtained the minutes of these meetings which were the founding discussions for
29
30 603 the IOC leadership targets. She states that 'it was clear that I was reading illustrations of
31
32 604 struggle for and resistance to gender equity in the Olympic Movement, which are rarely
33
34 605 available'. When interviewed, Talbot said 'I got riveted because it actually showed how tough
35
36 606 it was for Anita DeFrantz and how leading people were quite resistant'. DeFrantz (interview)
37
38 607 said she was 'an outsider and once I got inside I worked on making sure there was sports for
39
40 608 women'. She was an advocate within an institution other SMOs were trying to influence.
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45 609 Pape (2020, p. 92) identified that in the decades preceding the 1990s, 'IOC leaders increasingly
46
47 610 resisted recognising the absence of women from their ranks as discriminatory, preferring
48
49 611 instead to frame leadership in the organisation as based on the neutral criteria of merit and
50
51 612 ability'. According to Talbot (2000), the minutes broadly testify to this continued practice. One
52
53 613 recorded dismissal of the potential targets by an IOC Member was because 'a quota of 10%
54
55 614 women was not possible for developing countries ... It was difficult to find women who were
56
57 615 able or willing to take up positions in African countries'. Another dismissal, by Isava Fonseca,
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3 616 is that women 'were merely not interested in playing a role in sports leadership because of
4
5 617 other demands placed upon them' (Talbot 2000). Due to the strength of opposition by vocal
6
7 618 IOC Members, at a meeting in April 1995 DeFrantz 'agreed to drop the call' for targets (Talbot
8
9 619 2000). Gosper, who was in contact with Darlison throughout this period, re-proposed the idea
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11 620 but it was rejected and 'the issue appeared to be closed' (Talbot 2000).

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15 621 It was not until September 1995 that the issue re-appeared. Talbot (2000, interview) stated that
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17 622 the IOC President personally intervened in a meeting and completely redirected discussions
18
19 623 toward women's participation in sports governing bodies. Samaranch suggested the Olympic
20
21 624 Movement introduce a progressive target that 'at least 10% of seats on decision-making bodies
22
23 625 were occupied by women in the year 2000 and 20% by the year 2005 and hoped a proposal
24
25 626 could be with him by the end of the week'. In subsequent discussions, DeFrantz focussed on
26
27 627 the importance of the 'at least' part of Samaranch's statement and there was reference to the
28
29 628 Brighton Declaration, but it is unclear to what extent. Talbot (2000) surmised:

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34 629 'It was very clear that the IOC President's personal intervention had been
35
36 630 crucial. What is not known, however, is how he was informed of the lack of
37
38 631 support for the issue being shown by the Commission, or the ways in which it
39
40 632 was decided that his intervention should be made'.

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44 633 The IOC was working closely with the UN and Samaranch was due to speak at the UN General
45
46 634 Assembly in New York a few months later. Thus Talbot's (interview) assertion that 'I think
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48 635 Samaranch knew the time was now, you know, that if the IOC didn't show some kind of
49
50 636 commitment they would be even more criticised' rings true. In a feature about the Beijing
51
52 637 Conference earlier that month, the Olympic Review states that, 'for its part, the IOC
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54 638 acknowledges that it will have to work much harder to further women's integration into its
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56 639 technical and administrative structures' (IOC 1995b, p. 55). Moreover, the Brighton
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3 640 Declaration was gaining traction globally and attendees at the Brighton Conference, which
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5 641 included representatives of National Olympic Committees and International Federations, had
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7 642 returned home and lobbied for actions like meetings, workshops and conferences (IWG 1998).
8
9
10 643 The political opportunity structure of sport was shifting slightly, albeit significantly, away from
11
12 644 male-dominated hegemony and toward greater recognition of, and accountability for, the
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14 645 inclusion of women and girls. As a result of the above, Samaranch and the IOC *had* to start
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16 646 changing. The IOC endorsed the Brighton Declaration that same month (IWG 1998).
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20 647 The proposal for targets to be introduced by the IOC was announced a few weeks later in
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22 648 October 1995. The most powerful organisation in sport had, in principle, committed to making
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24 649 sure that at least a tenth of all leadership roles would be staffed by women. Moreover, the
25
26 650 Olympic Charter would be amended to explicitly include reference to action needed on women
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28 651 in sport ⁷. Upon hearing the news, Brackenridge (1995b) admitted to ‘nearly falling off her
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30 652 breakfast stool’. Darlison (1995m) confirmed the news in more detail after receiving
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32 653 information from Kidane and speaking to Gosper, who told her ‘the fight was long and hard to
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34 654 get this modest increase and that the attitude and the work of WSI has been instrumental in
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36 655 getting them this far’. WSI were increasingly well-connected within the IOC, primarily because
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38 656 of the purposive commitment shown to the SMO by its core women (Taylor 1989), including
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40 657 Darlison (1995n) who was by this point working ‘below the poverty line’.
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46 658 There is a general sense through correspondence that the targets were ‘lower than what we
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48 659 would have liked’ (Darlison 1995o), and even ‘paltry’ (Darlison 1995m), but that they could
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50 660 have considerable impact and very positive consequences. Indeed, White (interview)
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52 661 recognised them as an important first step as ‘the IOC are a very, very powerful voice in
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54 662 international sport so to have them singing from the same hymn-sheet so to speak was

⁷ The addition under rule 2 of the Olympic Charter was ratified in July 1996 by the 105th IOC Session in Atlanta, USA (IOC 1996a).

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3 663 absolutely great'. Talbot (interview) added that DeFrantz 'was actually quite brave to push it
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5 664 through ... you have to admire her tenacity in pushing it'. DeFrantz (interview) herself was
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8 665 'delighted' that the targets were passed but was reserved regarding her role in the process:
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11 666 'You know, from time to time because it is an organisation where people can
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13 667 speak their mind we have met with some resistance and again sometimes we
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15 668 move backwards instead of forwards but over time I think the IOC has become
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18 669 very comfortable with the notion that we have to do more for women'.
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21 670 Her statement complements Talbot's (2000) assertions that DeFrantz's 'public presentation of
22
23 671 the targets has (to my knowledge) never reflected these dynamics, or her own part in them;
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25 672 they are presented as unproblematic in their production, if not in their achievement'. The lack
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27
28 673 of acknowledgment masks the complex realities of gendered practice and formulating policy
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30 674 in sport decision-making (Evans and Pfister 2020, Houlihan and Lindsey 2013).
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35 676 *Working Group and Conference*

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39 677 According to Darlison (1995a, 1996b), who had met DeFrantz in Beijing during the UN
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41 678 Conference for Women in September 1995, DeFrantz did not want an IOC Women and Sport
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43 679 Commission because she thought it further marginalised women in the IOC and would lead to
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45 680 'all issues to do with women only ever being dumped in its lap'. DeFrantz (interview) echoed
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47
48 681 similar sentiments when interviewed decades later: 'I didn't believe ever that it should be a
49
50 682 Commission exclusively to work on women's promotion because I believe that the IOC needed
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52 683 to always be working for the promotion of all humanity'. She got her wish in December 1995
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54 684 when a Working Group was established 'to advise the IOC Executive Board and its President
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57 685 on the measures which should be taken to enhance women's participation in sport and in its
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59 686 administrative structures' (IWG 1998, p. 16). The movement had another SMO working toward
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3 687 a similar end-goal, this time principally within the Olympic Movement; a structure very
4
5 688 different to those WSI and the IWG were operating in. Its first meeting was in March 1996 in
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8 689 Lausanne, Switzerland.
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11 690 Darlison (1996a) was invited by Samaranch to become a member of the Working Group and
12
13 691 informed WSI's Executive Board of its 'fascinating' composition and membership: 'obviously
14
15 692 very carefully picked to suit several IOC purposes'. She continues that '[WSI] needs to have
16
17 693 an influence on this body so if you know anyone, let's do some lobbying – fast because you
18
19 694 can bet the IWG and other bodies will do the same' (Darlison 1996a). She was fearing a
20
21 695 repetition of events that occurred after the IWG was formed. However, Hansen (1996) found
22
23 696 it 'somewhat disappointing' that it was not informed of the creation of the group or invited to
24
25 697 join it, especially due to Darlison's involvement. He ends by acknowledging 'it is good news
26
27 698 that the IOC has given the issue such high and public priority. We can't work against them, so
28
29 699 let's work with them'. This is further evidence for the competitive relations between WSI and
30
31 700 the IWG throughout the IOC developments, at a time when WSI was 'simply out of funds'
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33 701 (Darlison 1996b) and the IWG were positively affecting global activities.
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39 702 Nonetheless, the relations did not derail the intentions of both SMO's to lever change. White
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41 703 (1996) and Darlison (1996c) recognised the importance of the first IOC World Conference on
42
43 704 Women and Sport to their SMOs but, more significantly, as a pivotal moment to form a critical
44
45 705 mass to influence the IOC. Planning for the Conference occurred from February 1996⁸ and
46
47 706 included session proposals developed by a range of women and sport SMOs eager to influence
48
49 707 the IOC (Darlison 1996b). Darlison (1996c) wanted the mass 'to stand by their principles and
50
51 708 not be either frightened, or seduced by, their association with the IOC'. Darlison, DeFrantz,
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53 709 Fasting, and White were all among the speakers and Kidane was the Conference Director.
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59 ⁸ DeFrantz (interview) and White (interview) both acknowledged how the IOC and IWG World Conferences
60 were staggered to avoid competition.

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3 710 White (1996) reflected afterward that ‘it seemed to me (and others) that the IOC had seen the
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5 711 Conference as an end in itself’ and had not considered actions that may result. She praised
6
7 712 ‘pressure from the floor and behind the scenes’, particularly by a small group of individuals,
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9
10 713 including herself and Darlison, who ‘worked hard to ensure that the Conference came up with
11
12 714 a comprehensive but realistic set of proposals and resolutions’. The Resolution produced from
13
14 715 the Conference (IOC 1996b) was strongly influenced by collaborative efforts between
15
16 716 personnel from women and sport SMOs such as WSI and the IWG. It contains seventeen points
17
18 717 which range from requesting that women and sport commissions be formed at national and
19
20 718 international level to urging the IOC to discontinue the process of gender verification during
21
22 719 the Olympic Games. Significantly, the document served as another important recognition that
23
24 720 women were subordinated in sport and that change needed to occur. One of the more immediate
25
26 721 changes was that DeFrantz became an IOC Vice-President in 1997. The pace of progress by
27
28 722 the IOC was also not lost on Darlison (1996c) who stated that in just over one year, the IOC
29
30 723 had managed to ‘somehow be able to elect more women than they have since women were first
31
32 724 on the IOC. Amazing what you can do if you try – or if you have to’.

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38 725 Darlison (1996d) believed that WSI was ‘the only’ SMO able to offer leadership and guidance
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40 726 at the international level after the Conference. However, WSI was by now critically short of
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42 727 resources and went on to suffer from scant communication between its voluntary executive
43
44 728 committee until late-1997. It has since been restructured a few times, continued to achieve
45
46 729 success with its task forces (WSI, 2020), notably wrote an issue of *Women2000 and Beyond*
47
48 730 on women and sport for the UN Division for the Advancement of Women, which was published
49
50 731 to promote the goals of the Beijing Platform For Action (UNDAW 2007), and attained United
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52 732 Nations Expert Status with the Economic Social Council in 2011. The IWG has hosted
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54 733 quadrennial World Conferences on Women and Sport and continued to influence governments
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56 734 and NGO networks for women and sport ever since. In 2014, the Brighton Declaration was
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3 735 updated by the IWG to become the Brighton Plus Helsinki Declaration to better reflect
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5 736 contemporary issues and advances within existing topics for women and girls in sport and
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7 737 physical activity (IWG 2018). The Declaration has been signed by nearly six hundred
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9 738 organisations (IWG, 2020).

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13 739 The IOC Women and Sport Working Group kept statistics and monitored change (see Henry
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15 740 and Robinson 2010), hosted leadership seminars and advised the Executive Board until the
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17 741 third IOC World Conference on Women and Sport in Marrakech, Morocco, in March 2004,
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19 742 when it eventually became the Commission for Women and Sport (DeFrantz interview).
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21 743 DeFrantz (interview) blamed herself for the length of time this transformation took:

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24
25 744 'I kind of stuck with having it called a Working Group until finally I realised
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27 745 that was just my silliness and it needed to be called a Commission because in-
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29 746 house at the IOC, Commissions have more stature. So for too long it was called
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31 747 a Working Group but again, that was all me! It always had the stature and
32
33 748 structure of a Commission but it was called something different'.

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37 749 In 2018, the IOC published a Gender Equality Review report to address the continued unequal
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39 750 gendered representation, funding, portrayal, leadership and organisational cultures throughout
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41 751 the Olympic Movement (IOC 2018). Further insight is needed into the advocacy behind this
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43 752 document, given that linear development and progress toward gender equality are presumed
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45 753 throughout the publication.

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50 51 52 53 755 **Summary**

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56 756 This article has sought to bring attention to May 1994 to October 1996 – a significant period of
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58 757 political progress for women and sport. The mid-1990s saw outcomes of decades of advocacy
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3 758 at national, regional and international levels for women and sport. In just over a year, the women
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5 759 and sport movement had its own self-produced resource in the Brighton Declaration, could
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7 760 leverage to their advantage the three statements for women and girls' participation in sport and
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9 761 physical activity in the UN Beijing Platform for Action, and saw the most powerful sport
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11 762 organisation amend its Charter, introduce targets for women leaders, create a Working Group,
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13 763 and host its own World Conference with resultant Resolutions.
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17 764 These advances were not solely down to the SMOs named in this article, but their role was
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19 765 significant. The IWG was predominantly comprised of governmental representatives and
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21 766 support, yet also welcomed NGO representation from WSI. Led by a core group of academics
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23 767 and sport practitioners, WSI felt aggrieved at the growing development of the IWG, fearing it
24
25 768 could harm their own ability to accrue, use and mobilise resources needed for advocacy in their
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27 769 formative period. The IWG were coordinating an International Strategy and, by inviting WSI
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29 770 to become a representative, signified a hierarchy between them that WSI were displeased with.
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34 771 Analysis of correspondence at the time and interviews conducted decades later acknowledge
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36 772 multiple relations between the IWG and WSI occurring at once. In their broader advocacy
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38 773 toward the end-goal of the movement, non-competitive cooperation defined their relationship.
39
40 774 But when it came to clarifying their *modus operandi* and lobbying significant constituencies
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42 775 such as the UN and, particularly, the IOC, the relationship was competitive, cooperative and
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44 776 contentious all at once. This points to the need for a different term to define this dynamic
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46 777 relationship; one of contentious cooperation.
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51 778 Collaboration between the IWG and WSI may not have always been harmonious but was crucial
52
53 779 to ensure the momentum for change continued. Their similarities and differences defined them
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55 780 and enabled a collective capacity to pursue policy change on several fronts that might not have
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57 781 happened if there was a single SMO. Their interdependency, and different resources and
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3 782 capacities, meant they succeeded collectively in instigating change despite their contentious
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5 783 cooperation. Moreover, the development of WSI and the IWG occurred in relation to a shifting
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7 784 global discourse toward both ‘women’, and ‘women in sport’. The growing politicisation of
8
9 785 women and sport as an issue added significant credence to their lobbying efforts because it
10
11 786 provided SMOs with politically legitimised resources for activism. WSI (1996) heralded how
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13 787 women’s previously marginal voice in sport was now central to policy and social change going
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15 788 forward in sport.

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20 789 The advance by the IOC in the mid-1990s raised consciousness about women in sport in the
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22 790 most powerful and dominant sport structures globally. But among the interviewees was a
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24 791 feeling that the IOC was reacting to the work of *their* movement rather than being proactive
25
26 792 toward the issue. For example, Neill (interview) said ‘there had been so much good done by the
27
28 793 IWG, the fact [was] that the IOC totally didn’t recognise that work and the world of women
29
30 794 and sport began when the IOC decided to do something about it’. This quote is indicative of the
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32 795 complexity of efforts by multiple agencies to drive social change. Further insights are needed
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34 796 into the lobbying efforts for social change in sport, including the relations between adherents
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36 797 and adversaries.

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	Cooperation	Lack of cooperation
Competition for similar constituency	Competitive cooperation	Factionalism
Lack of competition	Non-competitive cooperation	Neutrality

Figure 1. Patterns of interorganisational relations among SMOs (Della Porta and Diani 2006, p. 157)