

Gender representation & policy in international sports governance



Dr Jordan Matthews
@DrJordMatthews



Institute of Sport,
Nursing and Allied Health



Dr Lucy Piggott
@lucypiggott



Norwegian University of
Science and Technology



Overview



*powering success
inspiring impact*

2020-21

- Female representation and policy in international sport governance

2022-23

- Analysis of career pathways of British senior postholders in International Federations



Phase I: Female representation and policy in international sport governance



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What we did

Sample	n	%
International Multi Sport Organisations	5	8
Continental Olympic Associations	5	8
Continental Paralympic Associations	5	8
Summer Olympic International Federations	33	56
Winter Olympic International Federations	7	12
IPC-recognised International Federations	4	7
Total	59	100

- Extensive and focused website trawl for data
- Orgs were offered the opportunity to confirm accuracy

Data collection period Jan-Feb 2021; data accurate as of 19th Feb 2021



What we found

	<i>Board/Council</i>		<i>President/Chair</i>		<i>CEO/ED/SG</i>	
	Women on the highest governance body		Women in the highest governance position		Women in the highest leadership position	
	<i>Frequency/ total positions</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Frequency/ total positions</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Frequency/ total positions</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Total across organisations/ Percentage	251/1138	22%	3/57	5%	12/55	22%

Representation of women in senior decision-making positions across intl sport orgs



<i>Gender and governance action</i>	<i>Frequency (percentage)</i>
Targets	16/56 (29%)
Quotas	39/56 (70%)
Election and recruitment rules	22/56 (39%)
Gender-, equality-, diversity- and inclusion-focused groups	36/56 (64%)
Official documents	26/55 (47%)
WLDPs	20/54 (37%)

Prevalence of gender and governance action across the organisations (%)*

- A Winter Olympic IF (2018) required a minimum of one of each gender on their 19-member Council, translating to a quota of 5% women
- A Summer Olympic IF (2018) required a minimum of two of each gender on their 34-member Board, translating to a quota of 6% women
- Another Summer Olympic IF (2021) required three women on their 43-member Council, translating to a quota of 7% women

Quality over quantity

- Overall, we see that organisations with a critical mass of women on their highest governance body ($\geq 30\%$) were found to be implementing gender and governance actions that were more ambitious, process-driven and embedded across the organisation than those with lower female representation on their highest governance body

Phase 2: Analysis of career pathways of British senior postholders in International Federations



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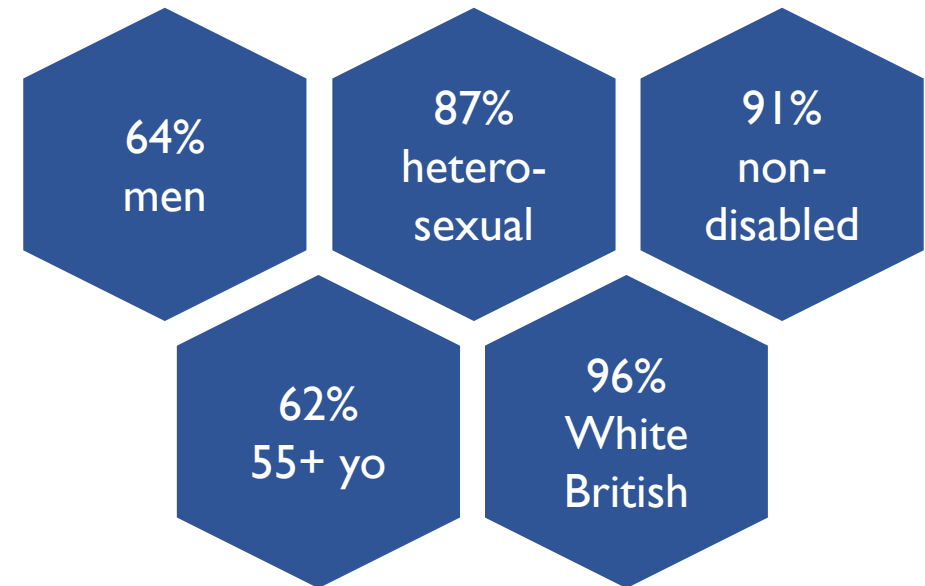
Analysis of career pathways of British senior postholders in International Federations

- Existing research has focused on the backgrounds, career paths, and experiences of sport leaders at national and sport-specific level, and less so international level
- What we are doing
 - Online survey (Jun-Aug 2022)
 - Interviews (Nov 2022 – Feb 2023)

What we have found so far

DEMOGRAPHICS

- A lack of diversity amongst the sample (n=55)



AWARENESS OF A LACK OF INCLUSIVITY

- **60%** of respondents reported that international sport governance is not inclusive enough.

“It is still very white, western, male dominated. There is a need to increase the pool of available talent from other groups.” (Male respondent)

“In my sport there is a clear lack of gender balance in governance, as well as a clear lack of ethnic diversity.” (Male respondent)



INTERNATIONAL SPORT GOVERNANCE IS HIGHLY POLITICAL

- Individual postholders reported this as a barrier in their work.
- This can be a significant barrier to developing inclusive organisations.

“Congress just supports what they think president wants to get more money.” (Male respondent)

“Politics and bias are rife and still too many decisions are made by the few for the benefit of the few.” (Male respondent)



A NEED FOR PERSISTENCE, RESILIENCE AND DETERMINATION

- Focus on individual responsibility.
- Lack of focus on organisational change.



“It's a long journey, there will be many obstacles but persevere.” (Male respondent)

“It's really hard and don't take anything personally as there is a lot of politics.” (Female respondent)

INTERCULTURAL LEARNING IS NEEDED AND A CHALLENGE

- Neo-colonial ways of working
- Problematic for wider inclusivity

“[There is a need] to recognise sport in its global capacity and not just through the eye of the developed sporting nations.” (Male respondent)

“My experience is that British post holders are sometimes considered to be very self important and unwilling to listen to the views of others.” (Female respondent)



Summary

- Our research shows women continue to be poorly represented in the senior leadership and governance of international sport
- Gender and governance actions should be ambitious, process-driven and embedded throughout the organisation
- A lack of diversity exists amongst British senior postholders in IF's, though these individuals do recognise this
- Both direct and indirect gendered practices exist in IFs that negatively influence the experiences of women and minorities

jordan.matthews@chi.ac.uk

lucy.piggott@ntnu.no