

Gender representation and policy in international sport governance

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Rationale

- Existing knowledge on barriers and challenges for women leaders in sport since 1980s (see Burton & Leberman, 2017; Elling et al., 2019; Evans & Pfister, 2021)
- Historic poor female representation in international sport governance (see Adriaanse, 2016; ASOIF, 2020; Schoch and Clausen, 2019)
- Lack of research on the variety of 'gender and governance actions' being implemented in international sport governance (see Adriaanse & Schofield, 2014; Pfister, 2010; Sisjord et al., 2017)

Gender and governance actions
Targets
Quotas
Election and recruitment rules
Official documents referring to gender
Gender/EDI working groups, committees or commissions
Women's leadership development programmes

Method

1. Extensive and focused website trawl for data
2. Communication with the organisations for accuracy

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

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

Theory

- Critical mass theory (Kanter, 1977): categorising varying proportional compositions of female representation

Category	Minority representation
Uniform	0%
Skewed	1-20%
Tilted	21-40%
Balanced	41-60%

- Compliance theory: Understanding what motivates and/or regulates the extent to which organisations adopt or resist gender and governance actions

FINDINGS

1. Representation of women in decision-making positions of international sport organisations
2. Prevalence of 'gender and governance actions' across international sport organisations
3. Nature of 'gender and governance actions' across international sport organisations

Representation of women in senior decision-making positions across six different groups of international sport organisations

	Women on the highest governance body		Women in the highest governance position		Women in the highest leadership position	
	<i>Frequency/total positions</i>		<i>Frequency/total positions</i>		<i>Frequency/total positions</i>	
International Multi Sport Organisations	18/67		0/5		2/5	
Continental Olympic Associations	19/95		0/5		0/5	
Continental Paralympic Associations	8/34		0/3		1/3	
Summer Olympic IFs	181/817		2/33		8/31	
Winter Olympic IFs	15/86		1/7		1/7	
IPC-recognised IFs	10/39		0/4		0/4	
Total across organisations/ Percentage	251/1138	22%	3/57	5%	12/55	22%

Female representation on the highest governance bodies of international sport organisations using Kanter's critical mass theory

Composition	n
Skewed (1-20%)	26
Tilted (21-40%)	27
Balanced (41-60%)	3
Uniform (100%)	0

Data was unavailable for three organisations

Prevalence of gender and governance action across the organisations* within each group of international sport organisations (%)

<i>Gender and governance action</i>	IMSOs (n=4)	COAs (n=5)	CPAs (n=3)	Summer IFs (n=33)	Winter IFs (n=7)	IPC- recognised IFs (n=4)	Frequency (percentage)
<i>Targets</i>	2	0	1	11	2	0	16/56 (29%)
<i>Quotas</i>	2	3	0	28	6	0	39/56 (70%)
<i>Election and recruitment rules</i>	3	1	0	15	3	0	22/56 (39%)
<i>Gender-, equality-, diversity- and inclusion-focused groups</i>	4	5	1	23	3	0	36/56 (64%)
<i>Official documents</i>	2	1	0	18/32	5	0	26/55 (47%)
<i>WLDPs</i>	3	2/4	1/2	13	1	0	20/54 (37%)

It's the content, not the prevalence, that matters...

- Overall, organisations with better female representation on their highest governance body 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

Summary and Implications

- International sport governance continues to be numerically, and in turn culturally, dominated by men
- The extent to which organisations are implementing effective 'gender and governance actions' differs significantly
- Current self-regulation of gender and governance actions across international sport organisations is not effective

- Drawing on compliance theory, international sport organisations sit within four categories:
 1. Organisations perceiving gender-balanced boards as a genuine opportunity to achieve gains and benefits
 2. Organisations responding to ‘bandwagon pressure’ to do something, but not enough.
 3. Organisations failing to see the need or benefits of gender and governance actions.
 4. Organisations lacking the resource and support to implement gender and governance actions.

(Geeraert, 2019; Mensi-Klarback et al., 2021)

Thank you for listening.
We welcome any questions

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