

INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 1

STATE OF PLAY

WOMEN IN DECISION MAKING ROLES IN EUROPEAN SPORT & BEYOND

A mapping report of current knowledge, resources, strategies and initiatives related to gender equality in sports governance, and in comparison with other sectors

SWinG

Supporting Women IN achieving their Goals



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This document is part of a series of outputs that can be read in conjunction with each other or as standalone documents. This research report has been produced Adam B Evans and Gertud Pfister from the University of Copenhagen, under the supervision of the applicant FFSE, the SWinG project leader Carole Ponchon and in collaboration with the whole partnership.



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BEFORE WE START

The SWinG project

THE SWING PROJECT IN A NUTSHELL

The SWinG project is focussed upon creating seeds for better governance in sport. Co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union, the project which runs from January 2019 to December 2021- has been created to facilitate and support emerging/aspiring women sport leaders in achieving a change-making position in sport governing bodies.

The Project does so by developing a European wide concept to empowerment and working on the skills, incentives and support needed by emerging women leaders in sport.

The aim of the SWinG project is to identify and support emerging women leaders and empower them to become CHANGE and DECISION MAKERS whose impact is real in the sport and physical activity sector. In practice, the 3-year project supports 20 women to access game-changing positions of decision makers in each area and on each level in the governance of sport.

WE BELIEVE IN DIVERSITY IN SPORT GOVERNANCE! NOT TO COPE WITH QUOTAS BUT TO SEIZE OPPORTUNITIES!

The SWinG consortium conducting the project and delivering the results is unique and gathers sport and business stakeholders in a collaborative approach to ensure that education and training provision is fit for purpose and in line with the needs of the emerging leaders. Led by the French Federation for Company Sport (FFSE), it brings together two local clubs, one national federation, two pan-European sport associations, one Non-Governmental Organisation, one university and two business-oriented networks from seven different countries, including the US.



THE SWING OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS

The project is providing an excellent opportunity to develop, transfer and implement innovative practice firstly at a European level. It will then serve as an example of best practices and a basis for larger implementation later on. Indeed, we are planning to have in-depth monitoring and evaluation to be able to identify the key factors of success and the transferable elements of the approach.

The SWinG framework of action is based on three sets of outcomes:

- A diagnostic assessment of the European sports landscape and the brakes and levers influencing women's access to leadership positions in sport
- The creation and testing of a matrix for change, building upon the concept of empowerment, which is still underdeveloped in European culture
- The development and delivery of a communication campaign targeting sport organisations in Europe to increase the number of female decision makers

The nine SWinG Intellectual Outputs[1] provides a framework for a strategic approach to ensure appropriate education, training and support systems are delivered, aimed at an increase of gender diversity in decision making committees of sport organisations:

- **IO 1 – State of Play: Women in decision making roles in European Sport & beyond**
- IO 2 – State of Play: Initiatives developing empowerment and leadership opportunities for women
- IO 3 – The SWinG Model: from concept to action
- IO 4 – Training Handbook: "Power can change" – the SWinG learning and support environment
- IO 5 – Toolkit 1: How to build my election agenda and become an elected decision-maker
- IO 6 – Toolkit 2: How to run an election communication campaign
- IO 7 – Toolkit 3: How to be an effective leader once elected
- IO 8 – Report at a Glance: What did we achieve in SWinG?
- IO 9 – Recommendations to sustain and transfer the SWinG approach

1 - The SwinG project includes the development and publication of nine documents to communicate and ensure the transferability of findings. These documents are referred to as Intellectual Outputs. The 9 SWinG Intellectual Outputs can be read in conjunction with each other or as standalone documents. All of them are to be found on the SWinG website: www.gamechangeher.org/intellectual-outputs/



Definition of key terms of the SWinG project

LEADERSHIP

«Leadership is a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, towards the achievement of a goal.»

Kevin Kruse

«Leadership is getting results in a way that inspires trust.»

Stephen M.R Covey

In other words, leadership can be described as the art of motivating a group of people to act/work towards achieving a common goal. It is based on the capacity (not necessarily on a position of power) to create a vision and to translate it into a form of reality so that others want to contribute to and to maximize their contribution to this vision. Therefore, leadership implies managing the resources at disposal but also communicating, inspiring and serving the team/group (not the other way around).

DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

Decision-making positions in sport are found in the governing bodies of the organisations as long as those one are currently providing leadership; i.e. a vision and guidance for the organisation. Within the SWinG project, decision-making positions were defined as members of an elected Executive Board.

EMPOWERMENT

«Empowerment is a multi-dimensional social process that helps people gain control over their own lives. It is a process that fosters power in people for use in their own lives, their communities and in their society, by acting on issues they define as important»

Nanette Page and Cheryl E. Czuba

MENTORING

Mentoring is a protected mutual relationship with an intentional agenda on a mid or long term perspective. It is a safe space where learning and experimentation, together, with the passing on of life's wisdom from one individual to another, can occur. Mentoring needs and creates an enabling environment where the potential of individuals and groups can be developed and the results of the interactions can be measured.

These definitions were supported/shared by a large majority of the members of our 'sample', i.e. of the individuals working in sport organisations who were consulted as part of the project.

Further information about the project can be found at www.gamechangeher.org

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Women in decision making roles in European Sport & beyond

WHAT'S THE CURRENT SITUATION?

In Sport:

Gender inequality in sports governance is endemic, particularly at the level of 'apex,' or primary boards in sports organisations at international, national and local levels. For example:

View from SWinG Litterature Review

- Very few countries achieved a 'critical mass' of 30% female representation on boards, which is a widely accepted target threshold for gender equity on such boards (Adriaanse, 2016, Adriaanse, 2018)
- Figures from 2010/2012 suggest Women = 19.3% of Board Members of the 1600 National Sports Organisations from 45 countries

Where women are elected to boardroom positions, they tend to be offered positions which are more marginal, such as positions related to women's sport, pastoral care, or media relations, for example.

View from SWinG survey

- The share of Women in key position in the SWinG surveyed sport organisations* is:

25.9% of all board positions (Members)

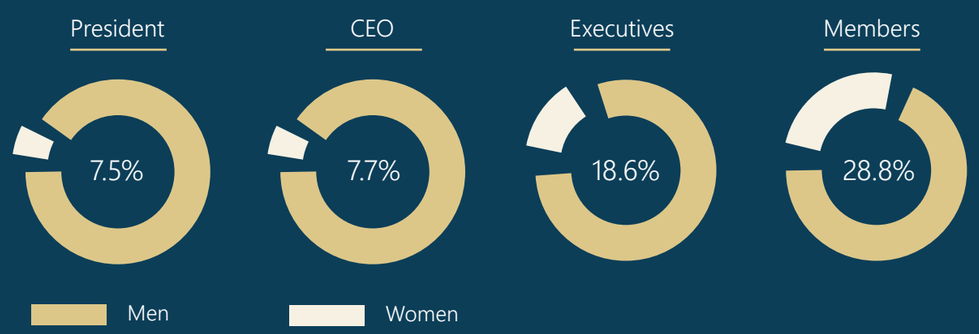
20.3% as Executives (in 'key decision making' positions)

*In total, 41 sports organisations were surveyed (9 International organisations, 24 national organisations and 6 'local' organisations).

In Business:

Putting things into perspective

Share of Women in key positions in the largest publicly listed companies in EU Member States, Oct 2019



WHAT ARE THE FACTORS INFLUENCING OR INHIBITING WOMEN'S ELECTION TO THE APEX BOARDS OF SPORT ORGANISATIONS?

FACTORS

- Organisations with strong voluntary and communitarian objectives are more likely to be receptive to move towards gender equality.
- Existing experience of governance at these levels may be essential for future election to apex boards.

FACTORS

- Organisational cultures in sport tend to be structured around -and reproduce- masculine norms and ideals.
- Micro-level evidence (i.e. at the level of personal experience) is less well-established, but has begun to outline how both women and men often internalise gendered norms in organisational cultures.
- Organisations representing primarily 'private' concerns (e.g. governing bodies for elite national leagues) are likely to be difficult to change – although not impossible.
- Election procedures in sports organisations can heavily favour existing members and those with established links to a sports organisation.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS?

• Quotas as a solution?

Evidence regarding the effectiveness of **quotas is contentious.** Many quotas have had an impact, and yet research suggests that such policies and laws can be perceived by some organisations to represent maximum targets, or else to undermine women's credentials. The way sports organisation boards have reacted to such laws also remains unclear, but there are suggestions that they adapt in ways which enable men to maintain powerful positions (such as increasing board size or creating specific marginal roles).

Setting time-bound targets for change could be more effective.

• How to challenge the status quo?

Research suggests that programmes which locate the 'problem' of inequality around women's lack of skills tend to be ineffective.

Instead, a combination of upskilling and systemic change (i.e. changes to gendered cultures, policies and practices) could be more effective in creating change.

What's more, such changes can be hugely beneficial to organisations in multiple ways.

Women in decision making roles in European Sport & beyond

Few concrete elements to challenge the status quo:

HELP INDIVIDUAL BUILD THEIR ASSETS MAP

ORGANISATION EXPERIENCE & KNOWLEDGE

Insider knowledge' and experience of the modus operandi of specific sports organisations would be significantly advantageous to any prospective board member. Intimate knowledge of local and sports-related contexts could be considered essential.

RELATIONSHIPS / SOCIAL CAPITAL

- SWinG community
- Mentors
- Family
- Work relationships

PERSONAL SKILLS / HUMAN CAPITAL

- Leadership
- Visionnary
- Authenticity
- Leading by example
- Forging strong relationships
- Transformational style of leadership

MEANINGFUL ADD-ONS

- Academic background
- Experience on TedX
- Various membership
- Publication

ADVOCATE FOR SYSTEMIC PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

- Review of election process: transparency of statues and procedures
- Existence of diversity policies (particularly ones which explicitly focus upon gender)
- Affirmative actions is not enough, we need clear implementation of existing law and/or strategy on Gender Equality

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Note: The report was produced between January and June 2019 and updated in June 2020. It utilised both primary and secondary data sources including peer reviewed articles, and information about sports organisations collected from websites, organisational statutes, meeting minutes and other documentation. It also utilised some interview data obtained from staff at selected sports organisations. Data were combined and analysed under a scoping review study design.



INTRODUCTION

About the SWinG Intellectual Output 1

WHY THIS STATE OF PLAY?

We live in a patriarchal world that has been very slow to change. Despite this, for centuries, pioneering women have broken through the glass ceiling and led in multiple social domains from politics to education, science to business, and everything in between. Yet there continues to be a limited number of seats for women at the tables of leadership in multiple sectors, including in sport. Whilst women trailblazers might be present in given times and places, they tend to be exceptions that prove longstanding 'rules.' Such women often remain the 'first' or the 'only' women in such positions due to a variety of internal, institutional, and socio-cultural factors that limit many other women who are inspired to take leadership roles.

Such barriers are often normalised, presented as logical, as 'just the way things are.' What's more, they are often uncritically accepted by many. For example, according to a study conducted in 2016 for the Rockefeller Foundation[2], 1 in 4 Americans think it is more likely humans will colonize on Mars before half of all Fortune 500 CEOs are women. This is a dismal statistic. Nevertheless, given the current status of only twenty-one Fortune 500 female CEOs, a mere 4% representation, maybe this notion is not that far-fetched after all.

With the most recent push from movements like #MeToo and #TimesUp, the gender equality discussion has shifted to the forefront of workplace conversation and strategic planning. Organisations are increasingly seen to be searching for ways to promote gender equality, but are seemingly yet to identify the principal challenges or barriers which can promote such outcomes. Yet the will to move towards gender equality is present in some contexts. For example, 4 out of 5 Americans believe that men and women should be equally represented in the upper echelons of business in the Rockefeller study quoted above, even if only a third believe that companies actually prioritize this ideal. Such observations seem to indicate a wider belief that gender equity will continue to live as an ideal, rather than a lived reality.

What's more, although the study presented above relates to gender inequality in business leadership, the same disappointing statistics apply to sport leadership as well. Furthermore, the governance of sport is murky, mired in ambiguous and variable mandate periods, opaque election procedures, limited transparency, and minimal diversity in the governance structures of many sports organisations.

Therefore, in order to create programmes that can assist women to enter leadership positions in sport, we must first understand why the sports administrative system has historically excluded them, as well as which barriers contribute to a continued patriarchal governance system in sport. The goal of this report is therefore to contribute to the identification of internal and external barriers associated with the advancement of women as leaders in order to work towards potential solutions through the overarching SWinG project.



2 - Source: "Women in Leadership: Why It Matters", a Global Strategy Group's research report from 2016, commissioned by the Rockefeller Foundation

WHERE DID WE LOOK AT TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION?

Data was obtained to produce this intellectual output between January and June 2019. It took the form of a desk-based study utilising both primary and secondary data sources. This included peer reviewed articles, sports organisational websites, statutes, minutes and other documentation alongside a survey and interview data.

Data were then combined and analysed under a scoping review study design.

HOW CAN WE EASILY MAKE SENSE OF THE LITERATURE?

NAVIGATING THE REPORT

The primary goal of the report was to map current knowledge, resources, strategies and initiatives related to gender equality in sports governance, and in comparison with other sectors.

In particular, the report presents (1) **an outline of the current state of play with regards to women's prevalence in decision-making and board-level positions in sports organisations** at the international, national and local levels. Also, in accordance with academic literature which has studied women's inclusion in sports governance, the report presents (2) **evidence which outlines factors that influence the prospective appointment of women to such positions** at the structural (macro), organisational (meso) and personal (micro) levels.

There is a long and widespread acknowledgement that modern sport is a patriarchal institution, shaped by historical and cultural factors such that it tends to be shaped by men for men (e.g. Hargreaves, 1990). Although great strides toward gender equality have been made in recent years in some countries, such advances have tended to be best made in sports participation and volunteering. Conversely, change towards gender equality has been far slower in sports governance. As we will outline, although many organisations now recognise the need to produce equality and diversity policies and the like, the willingness and possibilities to implement real change in practice is less evident. This is no more apparent than in sports governance and administration, within which women's representation remains low, and has been so for at least as long as evidence has existed (Adriaanse, 2016). This problem is particularly acute amongst 'apex' boards (i.e. the principal and most powerful boards in sports organisations). Much still needs to be done in order to shift towards gender inclusiveness.

We therefore present a current 'state of play' of gender inequality in sports governance in the following report.

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

DECISION MAKING POSITIONS

Gender equality is used in international public policy in reference to advancing equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of women and men at all levels across a wide range of arenas (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, 2007). The preferred term in corporate governance policy is gender diversity. In the context of governance, this primarily refers to gender parity in terms of the number of directors on the board. As a measure of gender parity, a minimum of 40% representation of each gender on the board is generally adopted (Adriaanse and Schofield, 2014). In social science, the notion of equality is traditionally associated with liberal approaches, including liberal feminism, that tend to associate numerical equality between genders with fairness, inclusion and power balance. Equality policies can also be associated with neoliberal approaches which tend to advocate equal support for all groups independent of structural inequalities. As such, equality as a goal can be contrasted with more critical approaches which highlight how equality should also include cultural, political and structural changes which are not always synonymous with numerical equality. Equality-oriented approaches therefore are differentiated from **equity** policies, which tend to advocate the provision of greater support for groups at greater disadvantage. This approach can be likened to the principle of 'proportionate universalism' advocated by Michael Marmot in relation to health inequalities. Our approach and understanding of gender equity therefore must be inclusive of both quantitative and qualitative factors, and incorporates structural, cultural and political considerations, in accordance with our standpoint that achieving equality is not purely a matter of individual choice or equal numbers, but also of structural and cultural change.

GENDER

Second, we consider **gender** to be a contested, fluid and context-specific term that is socio-culturally constructed. Gender can and must be differentiated from biological sex, which is often expressed in binary terms (i.e. male-female). This binary tends to ignore the hugely complex and fluid elements of gender, which are shaped by cultural, political and psychological factors. Gender is contested. It is power-laden. It is historical. It produces and is influenced by stereotypes. It is learned. What's more, rather than being a binary distinction, gender exists on a continuum (typically from masculine to feminine), and consequentially is relative and relational. It also must incorporate numerous related and intersecting factors which differentiate men from men and women from women. These factors include race/ethnicity, class, (dis)ability, age and sexuality (Spaaij et al., 2019b). Gender must therefore be understood as a complex term, and has been conceptualised according to numerous theoretical concepts. For example, it has been described and understood as discursive (e.g. Evans and Allen-Collinson, 2016, Markula-Denison and Pringle, 2006), as a regime (e.g. Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005), or as an embodied way of being, or physical culture (e.g. Thorpe, 2010, Allen-Collinson, 2011). In short, how we understand gender is a field of research in and of itself.

SPORTS ORGANISATIONS

Finally, we consider **sports organisations** to be any institution or association whose primary concern is the governance and regulation of any social activity recognised as sport, exercise or, in some cases, physical activity. This definition of sports organisations is therefore inclusive of multiple organisational structures, remits and missions, including single and multi-sport organisations, professional and amateur sports concerns, and at multiple scales (from global to local). It also includes both for-profit and charitable organisations, as well as organisations structured as trusts or as private-member clubs, for example. It must be noted, however, that the study of sports organisations is also a field in its own right, and that here we use only the simplest of conceptualisations.



METHODOLOGY

Information about the collection of data - our methodology

REPORT METHODS AND STUDY DESIGN

The overall study design was aligned with a systematic narrative review methodology (Jones, 2004). This method combined elements a more traditional integrative review with iterative discussion of the resultant narrative with project partners in reflective panels, which guided and informed the review process (*see below).* This enabled us to produce an initial review 'narrative;' that is, to provide a detailed 'telling' of the state of play of research in the field (Smith, 2016). Our work therefore involved inductive synthesis of ideas and evidence through collective deliberation and meaning-making from the steering group's multiple perspectives, including researchers, service providers, policy makers and service users. Seventeen of the 21 members of this panel were women, aged between 27 and 73, with varying degrees of experience and expertise which ranged from Academic Professor to Entrepreneur. Members of the panels represented ten nationalities from Europe, Africa and North America. The intention of this process was to foster openness and creativity in producing this report, rather than relying upon a limited number of 'experts'. The systematic narrative review was therefore a co-operative, qualitatively-oriented approach. It is presented in full here, and in abridged form elsewhere (Evans and Pfister, 2020)

Several developmental meetings and periods of reflection and feedback took place which guided the development of the review process and construction of the resultant narrative. Multiple issues were discussed through a process of analytic induction (Ratcliff, 1994). This process involved generation of initial ideas, and latterly shifted to reflexive practice and critical review of the narrative and its subsequent reviews. The aim was to develop consensus about the aims of the review which incorporated the perspectives and contributions of all members.

REVIEW AIMS

The report aims and research questions were initially discussed amongst the steering group of the SWinG Project at a meeting in February 2019 in Paris, France. The following research questions, aims and objectives were agreed;

The **central research question** guiding this report is:

"What is the current evidence relating to the proportion of women's representation within 'leadership positions' (i.e. decision making and 'boardroom' positions) in international, national and local sports organisations, and what characteristics do women in such positions possess?"

The **objectives** of this Intellectual Output are as follows:

- To outline the **extent** of inequality in positions of sports governance
    - Quantitatively via a survey conducted with project partners
- To outline the **nature** of inequality in positions of sports governance
    - With regards to the influence of governance positions in organisations understood by comparing women's representations in key decision making positions versus 'other' boardroom positions

- To outline how women's representation in sporting leadership positions compares with positions in other industrial sectors

In order to achieve these objectives, several **ancillary questions** were incorporated. These included:

- To what extent has gender inequality in sports leadership been conceptualised and explored in previous research, and what key points of consensus or debate can be established?
- What proportion of positions in decision-making roles in sports governance is filled by women at the time of the report in a sample of sports organisations?
- What are the electoral procedures in place with regards to appointments to these positions, and are they amenable for the promotion of gender equality?
- Do opportunities or strategies currently exist in order to address inequalities and shortfalls in terms of women's representation?
- What are the characteristic competencies and responsibilities typically associated with these positions by people in sports governance?

REVIEW PROCEDURE

SEARCH METHOD

As part of Intellectual Output 1 for the SWinG project, we conducted a systematic narrative review of academic literature (see also Evans and Pfister, 2020). The objectives of the review were to focus on literature concerning women in leadership positions in sport outside coaching roles, particularly those concerned with key decision-making positions in sports governance. Any sports organisations were considered relevant, including sports governing bodies, clubs and national/international federations.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria were developed. We focused on literature concerning women in leadership positions in sport excluding coaching roles: the focus was upon 'key decision-making' positions in apex boards in the administrative structures of sports organisations. All papers explicitly concerned with characterising or exploring gender and gendered experiences at this level were therefore included, and studies related to coaching were excluded. Any sports organisations of any structure or scale were considered relevant, including sports governing bodies, clubs and national/international federations. Papers relating to all forms of sport (including professional, mass participation, voluntary and amateur sport) were also included. Our primary search was also concerned with social-scientific studies (i.e. primarily historical, sociological, psychological and pedagogical papers), although studies were not excluded according to methodology; Quantitative, Qualitative and grey literature were incorporated. Papers were excluded if they were adjudged to lack any empirical or theoretical content. For example, some sources produced in the search provided very limited information about the introduction of a specific gender-equality and were excluded.

The review was conducted in a procedure broadly coherent with an integrative review (Schulenkorf et al., 2016, e.g. Andersen et al., 2018). The primary search was conducted on EBSCOHost Academic Search Complete (which includes 35 academic and grey-literature databases), including 'grey' literature (i.e. sources without peer review). An initial search provided 10,694 hits, and was therefore refined using Boolean search strings. Refined searches were limited to papers published after 1990, written in English or Scandinavian languages. The adapted search produced 2,106 hits, almost half of which were duplicates which were removed. Next, key information including title and key words were scanned for the remaining 1,278 papers. A total of 137 papers were selected and were analysed and reduced further first by reading abstracts and then the entire papers. This resulted in a final sample in the database search of 104 papers. Table 1 illustrates the search terms used, along with the number of results obtained in each search.

DATABASE	EBSCOHost databases (Academic Search Complete
INITIAL SEARCH TERMS	Sport AND (management OR governance OR leadership) AND (gender OR women OR female)
SEARCH RESULTS	10694
REFINED SEARCH TERMS	NOT (physical education OR rehab*) NOT (animal OR fish*) NOT (physiology* OR bio*OR coronary OR health OR surgery) NOT (undergraduate OR child*OR parent*) NOT (coach*OR trainer OR spectator*) NOT sport+management+digest NOT (injury*OR nutrition OR food) NOT (intervention* OR interaction OR RCT)
SEARCH RESULTS	2106 (1278 items)
PAPERS INCLUDED AT STAGE I: Reduction via content of Titles, keywords and primary information	137
PAPERS INCLUDED AT STAGE 2: Reduction via Abstracts and availability	115
PAPERS INCLUDED AT STAGE 3: Reduction via reading entire article	105

Table 1: Outline of search criteria

Additional searches were conducted independently by the authors using the Royal Danish Library search engine (REX), Worldcat, and a more informal search on google scholar. Results were then compared. These additional searches provided six additional papers. Manual searches within reference lists provided an additional 15 sources, including two edited collections (in which each of the 29 cited chapters is counted once), leaving a total of 154 papers. The systematic narrative review was constructed from these papers by the authors (Evans and Pfister, 2020).

The necessity of presenting findings at multiple scales was consistently highlighted. Indeed, Burton (2015) also refers to research at three levels; the **Macro level**, relating to research on general trends of gender in sports governance at the national and international level, the **Meso-Level** concerned with organisational cultures and processes, and the **Micro-level**, with focus upon lived experience of gender inequality at the individual and smaller group levels. We present the results below.



STATE OF PLAY OF GENDER EQUALITY IN SPORTS GOVERNANCE

LITTERATURE REVIEW

UNDERSTANDING INEQUALITY IN SPORTS GOVERNANCE AT BOARDROOM LEVEL

Women's representation in sports governance remains low, with **a global average of just 19% of women in sports organisational boards** (Adriaanse, 2016). As Shaw and Frisby (2006) outline, gender not only shapes identities, but also constitutes an axis of power around which interactions, structures and processes in sports governance rotate. Moreover, Knoppers (2015) notes the organisation of sport is formally structured on the basis of dichotomies of gender and impairment, and yet it is non-disabled men who primarily make decisions about sports governance. Many studies demonstrate how men have historically dominated in leadership positions in sport (Acosta and Carpenter, 2012, Smith and Wrynn, 2013, Lapchick, 2016), and often hold many of the most senior decision-making positions in various sports governance contexts (Lapchick, 2012, Claringbould and Knoppers, 2008). Such patterns can be reproduced through the very structures that exist within sports organisations (Pfister, 2010a).

In general, evidence suggests the situation in sports governance broadly parallels that of corporate governance, despite consensus that gender diversity has a positive impact in many board level and personal interactions (Terjesen et al., 2009, Joecks et al., 2013, Torchia et al., 2011). What's more, **despite the existence of various target quotas for women's representation and gender equality in many sports organisations, women's representation in sports governance (particularly in board-level positions) remains low** (Adriaanse, 2016). This inequality is even greater in senior (or decision-making) managerial positions. These have been defined by several researchers as relating to presidential, vice-presidential and treasurer roles, together on some occasions with senior executives. Acknowledging and understanding both cause and effects of this inequality is crucial, because as Knoppers and Anthonissen (2005) outline:

> ***«Most senior managers, including those in sport, hold a great deal of power. They are key figures in organisational processes such as hiring and firing decisions, evaluating personnel and policy, developing marketing and pricing strategies, and, creating and implementing policy. Senior managers often have high salaries and share options, enjoy administrative support, and have access to valued networks consisting of other managers and CEOs. Their practices and discourses obviously impact organisational culture»*** *(p. 123)*

It is also clear that organisational culture and constructions of gender operate at multiple levels in sports governance. We must therefore recognise that sports organisations are multilevel entities that both shape and are shaped by a myriad of factors (Cunningham, 2010, Burton, 2015). In a recent review of women's representation in sports organisations, conducted from a predominantly North American perspective, Burton (2015) acknowledged **the importance of understanding the multifaceted nature of gender inequality in sports governance by taking a multi-level approach** to documenting research on this issue, and we echo this approach in the current review.

Burton refers to research at three levels:

- The **Macro level**, which examines general trends of women's representation in sports governance at the national and international level, often from a numerical perspective;
- Second, work at the **Meso-Level** is concerned with work at the organisational level, and tends to examine organisational culture, procedures and selection criteria;
- Finally, research at the **Micro-level** tends to focus on the the lived experience of gender inequality insports governance at the level of individuals and smaller groups.

In this case we outline studies conducted at the macro-level first; that is, those which examined institutional practices. Second, we outline how practices and issues of discrimination are described at the meso-level, including practices relating to hiring new board members. Finally, women's experiences of leadership in sports organisations are described at the micro-level.

MACRO-LEVEL RESEARCH

RESULTS AT THE MACRO LEVEL

THE GLOBAL EXTENT OF GENDER INEQUITY IN SPORTS GOVERNANCE

Studies of the proportion of women in executive boards in specific contexts are relatively common, perhaps due to the wealth of publicly available data concerning international and national-level sports organisations. Multiple studies explore questions relating to gender distribution on boards and the barriers preventing women obtaining decision-making positions, as well as the effectiveness of strategies which attempt to address such barriers (Adriaanse and Schofield, 2013). Evidence consistently and emphatically suggests men are almost always represented on sport organisation boards, even in organisations and boards concerned with women's sport (Adriaanse, 2018). The reverse is less true; women are less common on boards concerned with men's sport (Yiamouyiannis and Osborne, 2012). In short, gendered practices in sports leadership are often institutionalised (Walker et al., 2017).

Comprehensive, comparative studies at the global scale demonstrate that women are underrepresented across all regions and in all sports. For example, Hartmann-Tews and Pfister (2003) demonstrated that in 16 countries in North and South America, the Middle East, Oceania, Africa and Europe chosen according to socio-economic, political and cultural factors, «*with a few notable exceptions, most senior positions in the national governing bodies across all the countries analysed … are held by men and there is no general tendency towards any increase, rather in some countries, female representation is even decreasing* » (Hartmann-Tews and Pfister, 2003 p. 275). More recent studies reflect similar trends. For example, Adriaanse (2016) collated data from 1600 National Sports Organisations from 45 countries between 2010 and 2012 via the *Sydney Scoreboard* website. Data was obtained through self-report measures contributed by the International Working Group on Women and Sport (IWG). Organisations were selected for inclusion if they were the 'peak' boards in the principal organisations in a particular sport (i.e. they made important decisions affecting hundreds of thousands of physically active men and women from grass-roots to elite level). Findings suggested that globally, 19.7% of National Sports Organisation boards were women (ranging between 5% and 50.5%). Only the Cook Islands had achieved gender parity, and **only four of 45 countries had more than 30% of women on their boards.**

Moreover, only 22 countries had women's representation of more than 20%. In senior management positions with key decision-making roles, 19.7% of board directors, 10.8% of chairs and 16.3% of board executives were women (Adriaanse, 2016).

Very few countries therefore achieved a 'critical mass' of 30% female representation on boards, a widely accepted target threshold for gender equity on such boards

(Adriaanse, 2016, Adriaanse, 2018), and no continent achieved this proportion of female representation in the three key roles of director, chair or executives. A similar trend was also found by Tranter et al. (2016), who demonstrated how women's representation in international Olympic committees fell from 17.6 to 16.6% between 2014 and 2016, whilst it remained static at around 18% in international sports federations from their sample of 29 countries (Tranter et al., 2016). Furthermore, **the latest data suggests that women constitute only 6.3% of national Olympic Committee presidents**, and 15.3% of their secretary generals (Sportanddev.org 2019). Unfortunately, the causative mechanisms behind such changes remain unexplored by the same authors. Nevertheless, it has been highlighted in **the European context** that **more gender-balanced sports tend to have more gender-balanced boards**, whilst the reverse is also often true (Elling et al., 2018b)

A number of comparative studies between smaller selections of states also exist, predominantly from pan-European (Elling et al., 2018b) and Northern European perspectives (Pfister et al., 2003, Ottesen et al., 2010, Strittmatter and Skirstad, 2017, Elling et al., 2018a). All demonstrate similar evidence to that outlined above, and yet also suggest that national context can play an important part in gender equity trends. We found only two additional comparative studies from outside the 'Western' context. Both examined differences and similarities in boards in Western versus Chinese and Islamic Societies. Both Chen and Henry (2012) and Chin et al. (2009) highlighted how the NOC boards of 'Western' countries (or 'secular liberal democratic groupings') did not necessarily have a higher level of women's representation in sports leadership positions than in East Asian or Islamic countries. Both had comparable levels of (low) representation although these studies highlighted how patriarchy was imposed in different ways in these countries than has been observed in European and North American contexts. Hence, whilst women's representation on boards globally is almost exclusively low, the causative mechanisms behind these trends are varied, multiple and complex.

Indeed, across the vast majority of studies the importance of local socio-cultural contexts and specific constructions of gender are highlighted as determinants which shape women's involvement in sports governance.

At the same time, patriarchal practices and meanings attached to gender equity are globally interdependent in some ways. For example, they can exhibit post-colonialist influences in the Global South (Palmer and Masters, 2010, Henne and Pape, 2018).



Confirmatory evidence of women's under-representation has also been shown in multiple local settings. These include:

	The United States' intercollegiate sports system (Kuga, 1996, Whisenant et al., 2002, Christy, 2008, Grappendorf et al., 2008, Whisenant, 2008, Yiamouyiannis and Osborne, 2012, Bower and Hums, 2013, Bower et al., 2015, Whisenant et al., 2015), sport in the USA more generally (Burton et al., 2011, Schull et al., 2013, Hancock et al., 2018a)
	The Netherlands (Knoppers and Anthonissen, 2001, Knoppers and Anthonissen, 2003, Claringbould and Knoppers, 2008, Claringbould and van Liere, 2018)
	Australia (McKay et al., 2001, Stronach and Adair, 2009, Sibson, 2010, Adriaanse and Claringbould, 2016, Adriaanse, 2016)
	Canada (Shaw and Slack, 2002)
	Germany (Hartmann-Tews and Combrink, 2005, Doll-Tepper, 2006, Pfister and Radtke, 2009, Wicker et al., 2012, Hartmann-Tews, 2018)
	New Zealand (Shaw and Frisby, 2006, Palmer and Masters, 2010, Leberman and Shaw, 2015)
	Norway (Hovden, 2000a, Hovden, 2000b, Hovden, 2010, Sisjord et al., 2017, Fasting and Sisjord, 2018)
	The United Kingdom (Shaw and Penney, 2003, Shaw and Hoeber, 2003, Velija et al., 2014, Pike et al., 2018, Heffernan, 2019, Dennehy and Reid, 2018)
	Denmark (Pfister, 2010)
	Scandinavia (Pfister, 2006, Ottesen et al., 2010)
	Sweden (Hedenborg and Norberg, 2018)
	South Africa (Titus, 2011, Ndimande-Hlongwa, 2016)
	Spain/Catalonia (Perez-Rivases et al., 2017, Valiente, 2018, Soler et al., 2018)
	Poland (Jakubowska, 2018)
	Hungary (Gál and Földesi, 2018)
	Turkey (Koca et al., 2011, Koca and Öztürk, 2015, Şahin Karaçam and Koca, 2018)
	The Middle East (Megheirkouni and Roomi, 2017b, Megheirkouni and Roomi, 2017a, Megheirkouni, 2014)
	International Olympic federations (Henry and Robinson, 2010, Tranter et al., 2016)



As can be observed from the above list, the majority of studies were conducted in North American, Australasian and European contexts. This distribution of studies produces a tendency for the 'problem' of women's under-representation in sports governance to be framed according to 'Western Liberal' values. The importance of freedom, gender equity and democracy are emphasized, in which equal 'representation' is often considered an important illustrative element to describe gender (in)equity more generally. This trend also suggests a tendency towards use of a gender-binary (men-women) conceptualisation of gender in sports governance at the macro-level, despite the recognition in many theoretical approaches that femininity and masculinity exist in a multiplicity. What's more, the common use of the term 'representation' suggests – perhaps unintentionally - that somehow men 'represent' men and women 'represent' women. Alternative socio-political or socio-cultural framing of the 'problem' of women's under-representation is less common (e.g. conservative or religious framing is largely absent, as are 'Eastern' interpretations). Those studies that do frame the problem from a non-Western perspective, however, have seriously questioned the appropriateness of notions that a 'modern Western' versus 'traditional Eastern' distinction can be made when the causes of gender inequity in sports governance (Chin et al., 2009, Henry and Robinson, 2010, Chen and Henry, 2012). Nevertheless, papers from the 'Global South' and the East are less common in the English-language literature, resulting in a paucity of alternative explanations.

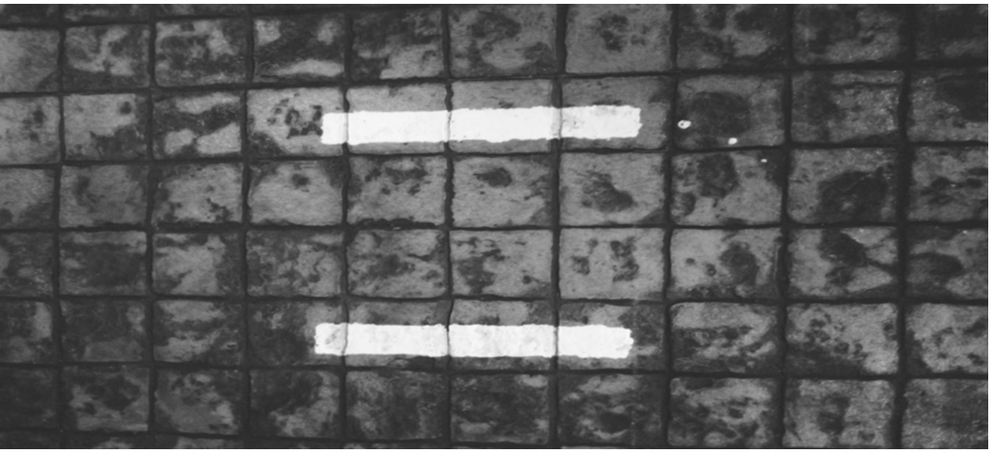
In comparison to the evidence presented above, relatively few longitudinal studies exist, and **problems have been noted in monitoring long-term change due to inconsistencies in data collection in many contexts.** (Elling et al., 2018b). Those studies which take an historical perspective at the macro-level suggest that movement towards gender equity is evident (White and Kay, 2006), but only at a very slow rate in specific sports and contexts (Skirstad, 2009, Acosta and Carpenter, 2012, Lapchick, 2016, Tranter et al., 2016). For example, in the Norwegian context (one of the most studied and most gender equal sports governance contexts in the World), whilst women's representation shifted from 8% to 39% over a period of 37 years (Skirstad, 2009), it has risen only 3% since 2009 (Adriaanse, 2016, Adriaanse, 2018). Very few other countries have seen even this level of movement towards gender parity. Indeed, in some cases mergers and structural changes have actually disempowered women (Velija et al., 2014), and elsewhere trends are actually regressing (Tranter et al., 2016). Hence, although policies and interventions have been enacted to increase gender equity in sports governance (e.g. Pike et al., 2018), including quotas, there remains a strong argument to suggest; 'they are not sufficient to disrupt the pervasive and deeply entrenched imbalance of power in the social relations between men and women' (Ely and Meyerson, 2000 p. 131)

We now outline the evidence relating to such policies.

ACTION AT THE MACRO-LEVEL: QUOTAS, INTERVENTIONS AND EQUITY LAWS

It has been noted that **policies and strategies to promote gender equity in sports organisations has tended to take one of two directions; either 1) to attempt to empower individual women, or 2) to challenge gendered structures within sports governance** (Hovden et al., 2018). Both approaches frame the problem of gender inequity differently, with the first approach (otherwise called 'individual track discourses') tending to locate gender inequity at the level of the individual and therefore, through application of meritocratic principles, work to enable women to compete with men (Schull, 2017, Leberman, 2017, Wells and Hancock, 2017). Often, the values attached to such strategies are defined by men in governance, and can appear to aim to 'fix individual women.' Notably, notions of 'fixing men' are usually absent, enabling men to maintain the hegemonic positions (Hovden et al., 2018). Such programmes are often intended to provide women the opportunity to develop their skills and connections and include, for example, the Women's Sport Leadership Academy in the UK (Pike et al., 2018), and have been criticised for taking a liberal feminist approach which tends to either attempt to 'fix the women' or to 'add women and stir.' Indeed, it has been argued that neither action addresses problematic organisational cultures. However, as Pike et al. (2018) argue, such programmes may be necessary before more radical solutions can be implemented.

Conversely, the second kind of intervention ('structural track discourses') tend to recognise that gender inequity can be a structural problem, and tend to implement active structural methods such as quota provisions that might seek to 'force' recruitment of women through application of democratic principles (Hovden et al., 2018). Such strategies have been described as amongst the most efficient means to engender gender equity by some authors (Hovden et al., 2018). Hence, quotas are often seen as a 'fast track' option to enact gender change, and have become popular due to the failure of 'incremental' policy changes over the past few decades (Hovden, 2015). Indeed, in countries such as Spain (Soler et al., 2018, Valiente, 2018), England (Pike et al., 2018), Norway (Fasting and Sisjord, 2018) and France (Caprais and Delorme, 2019), where quotas are accompanied by sanctions if gender ratio targets are not met, quota policies have been relatively effective. The target of 20% women's representation (with a minimum of three women on each board) in leadership positions in the International Olympic Committee through the Brighton declaration is one further trans-national example of such effectiveness (Smith and Wrynn, 2013). In such cases, quotas and targets have increased the proportion of women on sports organisation boards (Hovden, 2000a, Skirstad, 2009, Ottesen et al., 2010, Valiente, 2018). Similarly, 'Title IX' in the USA, in which equal opportunities are enshrined in law (Lopiano, 2014), has been shown to have had an initially considerable impact on participation rates and representation in educational institutions, although inequity still remains (Christy, 2008, Acosta and Carpenter, 2012, Yiamouyiannis and Osborne, 2012). Indeed, it has been outlined how inequality tends to be greater at the highest level in these settings, whilst change is more easily enacted at lower levels (Whisenant et al., 2002). Nevertheless, assuming women are present on a board, quotas can affect gender relations both in terms of production (who does what and who has the opportunity to be a board member) and in relation to power (who has the most significant roles) (Adriaanse and Schofield, 2014).



Conversely, the introduction and impact of gender quotas remains debated (Adriaanse, 2017). In some cases (e.g. China and Denmark), quotas and gender equity policies have had a minimal impact (Chin et al., 2009, Ottesen et al., 2010), have been ignored (Şahin Karaçam and Koca, 2018, Jakubowska, 2018, Gál and Földesi, 2018) or even resisted in favour of individual track options (Hartmann-Tews, 2018, Claringbould and van Liere, 2018, Hedenborg and Norberg, 2018). In such cases, evidence suggests quotas can be viewed as coercive, or undermine the credibility of women who do obtain leadership positions; in other words, they imply appointments are due to legal requirements, rather than a candidates' ability to fulfil a role (Pfister, 2010a, Pike et al., 2018). What's more, the imposition of quotas can have unintended consequences. For example, recent research suggests that the introduction of a quota in France can indeed 'fast track' women into positions of governance, often via uncontested elections and by the expansion of board size (Caprais and Delorme, 2019). Hence, the effectiveness of quotas appears dependent upon regional, national and organisational acceptance, and their application varies globally and is still debated. One possible reason for the inconsistent implementation of and varied impact of quotas may be due to the reported confusion between (mandatory) quotas and (voluntary) targets. One consequence of this confusion is that quotas can be considered a maximum number in some contexts, rather than a foundation from which to build (Rich et al., 2004, Adriaanse and Schofield, 2014, Caprais and Delorme, 2019). Where **consensus** does exist, however, is that **quotas are considered insufficient to ensure gender equity** when implemented alone and without supporting policies, legislation and affirmative action (Adriaanse and Schofield, 2014).

GENDERED SELECTION PRACTICES IN SPORTS GOVERNANCE

Given the trends noted above, what is the likelihood of change at this Macrosopic level? Well, it has been noted how **gendered selection practices within sports organisations can become normalised and institutionalised as 'just the way things work'** (Cunningham, 2008, Walker et al., 2017). Yet, research which examines gendered processes within electoral procedures of sports organisations is more limited. Recent research by Caprais and Delorme (2019) and (Caprais et al., 2020) has begun to highlight how elections to sports organisations in France can be relatively limited affairs which favour men. The authors highlight how election procedures are often less openly 'democratic' than is sometimes claimed, and can be contoured by personal networks and informal selection procedures. Elections might also include the employment of multiple 'stages' of vetting and shortlisting before an 'actual' election is conducted in order to shape candidate shortlists, which are in turn shaped by local laws (including quotas) and by the patronage (or absence of support) from existing members, particularly an organisation president. Such processes favour the appointment of insiders, and which in turn reproduce and normalise gender inequity and 'masculine' practices throughout an organisation. This can serve to reproduce gendered inequity (Cunningham, 2008, Burton and Leberman, 2017).

Several complex, simultaneous and often contradictory components of these gendered selection practices have been outlined in informal contexts outside elections, including a tendency towards careerism, informalism (i.e. operation of 'old boys' networks'), an emphasis upon entrepreneurialism and financial acumen, paternalism and a tendency towards authoritarianism (Knoppers and Anthonissen, 2005, Katz et al., 2018). Professional managerial experience is also considered important in some settings (Hovden, 2000a). Language, culture and policies in sports organisations also tend to normalise these practices (Shaw and Slack, 2002), which become synonymous with masculine behaviour and male privilege, leadership and decision-making acumen (Shaw and Frisby, 2006, Shaw, 2007). What's more, other stakeholders, including sponsors, fans and media corporations, can also play a part in the reproduction of these norms and expectations (Claringbould and Knoppers, 2012, Schull et al., 2013, Walker and Sartore-Baldwin, 2013).

Moreover, **studies show multiple additional elements influence this reproduction of patriarchal practices and norms, including whether women are perceived to follow a gendered 'fit' with the leadership expectations of a sports organisation** (i.e. have no young children, are well educated, have flexible schedules, have previous high-level jobs, behave 'properly' according to the gendered norms of the organisation, and have detailed knowledge of the sport), **and are not openly 'feminist'** (i.e. might challenge or upset the gendered, normative practices of the organisation). **Conversely, men who value gender equity were far more likely to be appointed.** In some cases, board members are even expected to accept gender inequity in board memberships as normal (Knoppers and Anthonissen, 2008, Claringbould and Knoppers, 2012, Piggott and Pike, 2019). Such attitudes can also extend to active discrimination, and several studies have outlined how, in some contexts, the perception is that if women are employed in leadership positions, they would be 'eaten up alive' (Schull et al., 2013).

The gendering of working practice can lead to the assumption that women have aptitude and preferences for different positions and work than men, which in turn can reproduce binary notions relating to which job roles are normative for men or for women (Ely and Padavic, 2007). Because masculinity is often an operating principle in sports organisations, this has meant that men tend to dominate in terms of controlling who is appointed to decision-making positions in sports organisations. This tendency has been described as a process of 'homologous reproduction,' or the maintenance of influence by those in power by selecting those they perceive to have similar characteristics to themselves (Burton, 2015, Walker et al., 2017). Conversely, women can be perceived as less likely to actively seek senior positions (Pfister, 2010a), and are instead assumed to be more interested and competent at dealing with issues that relate specifically to women's sport (Knoppers and Anthonissen, 2008, Claringbould and Knoppers, 2008, Claringbould and Knoppers, 2012, Yiamouyiannis and Osborne, 2012).

Such trends and observations exist despite evidence in some contexts to suggest men and women apply for jobs at a similar rate (Cuneen and Sidwell, 1994, Ottesen et al., 2010, Leberman and Shaw, 2015, Hancock et al., 2018b). Yet, awareness and training relating to gender equity appears to be limited to formal education contexts. For example, although gender equity education is a key component of many sports management education programmes (Hums et al., 1996, e.g. Humberstone, 2009, Sauder et al., 2018), **the lack of mentoring for women moving into sports governance roles outside formal education is considered a problem** (Bower and Hums, 2013, Bower et al., 2015), including amongst athletes (Schull, 2017). The combined consequence of all the shortfalls and inequalities outlined above is the reproduction of unequal selection practices, which can deny women access to positions (i.e. access discrimination) (e.g. Pedersen and Whisenant, 2005, Whisenant, 2008, Claringbould and Knoppers, 2007, Hoffman, 2010), and the denial of resources to women when they are in a board position (i.e. treatment discrimination) (Cunningham and Sagas, 2007, Grappendorf et al., 2008, Hoffman, 2010, Sibson, 2010). Hence, the continued existence of a so-called 'glass ceiling' for women in sports governance has been suggested. When coupled with notions of a career 'labyrinth' facing women in sports governance, it is clear that women's work can become challenging and conflict-ridden (Taylor, 2016, Hancock and Hums, 2016, Hancock et al., 2018b, Hancock et al., 2018a, Taylor et al., 2018, Walker et al., 2017). Such conflicts, when they occur, can be sufficient to induce some women leaders to leave their positions (Pfister, 2010b, Sibson, 2010). It is to studies of such 'meso-scale' issues that our narrative now turns.

MESO LEVEL RESEARCH

POWER AND THE OPERATIONALISATION OF GENDER INEQUITY IN SPORTS ORGANISATIONS

The operation of patriarchy at the meso-level is important because it directly shapes women's experiences (Shaw, 2007). Studies at this level of abstraction often take post structural (e.g. Spaaij et al., 2019a) or critical feminist approaches (Knoppers and Anthonissen, 2008, Anderson, 2009, Henne and Pape, 2018) which highlight the complexity of gendered power relations. These studies outlined how men can be constructed as powerful and women compliant through actions and attitudes towards change. **Whilst there is overwhelming evidence of a gendered and unequal balance of power between men and women in sports governance, there is also convincing evidence that many in sports governance are fully aware of this inequity.** Multiple post-structuralist studies highlight how gender equity can be an object of discussion amongst male board members, and yet affirmative action in pursuit of equity can be more limited (Claringbould and Knoppers, 2007). This has been described as **'gender passivity'; that is, the uncritical acceptance of the status quo with regards to gendered practices, representation, and recruitment and retention policies** (Knoppers and Anthonissen, 2001, Knoppers and Anthonissen, 2003, Claringbould and Knoppers, 2007, Claringbould and Knoppers, 2008, Knoppers and Anthonissen, 2008, Claringbould and Knoppers, 2012). Indeed, the tendency towards self-proclaimed gender-neutral attitudes amongst board members and the prevalence of the assumption that gender equity has been reached have been highlighted, even in contexts where gender equity is far from a demonstrable reality (Hovden, 2000b, Hovden, 2006, Ottesen et al., 2010, Pfister, 2010b).

GENDERED ORGANISATIONAL CULTURES

Similar observations are made in studies of organisational culture, which is of importance to both implementation of gender equity policies and belief systems about the competencies of women and men (Schull et al., 2013, Kihl et al., 2013, Burton, 2015). **Studies highlight that sports organisations can and do enact gender equity policies primarily as a means of meeting funding expectations at the policy level. Yet the translation of policy into practice can be limited.** Often this failure is assigned to the perception amongst decision-makers that implementation of gender equity is costly, difficult and time consuming (Hoeber and Frisby, 2001, Shaw and Penney, 2003, Hoeber, 2007), or because gender equity is perceived to be a 'liminal' issue (Claringbould and Knoppers, 2008 p. 81). Indeed, organisational cultures often tend towards similarity, such that demonstrable changes towards gender (and other) diversity can be slow to be enacted (Fink et al., 2001, Cunningham and Fink, 2006, Cunningham, 2008). For example, White and Kay (2006) found that in Britain, older associations in particular were less likely to change than newer organisations due to their inherent conservativism.

Another reason offered for the slow rate of change is that many leaders in sports organisations engage in 'distancing practices'; that is, they reproduce opinions and views that place the fault for low levels of gender equity in leadership positions with women's personal decisions and qualities, thus absolving themselves and their organisations from the responsibility to change (Hovden, 2000a, Hovden, 2006, Pfister, 2010a, Spaaij et al., 2019a). Such a position reflects **an observed lack of structural thinking amongst board members, who have been shown to place the onus for change more on women's development, rather than considering whether institutional and structural practices reduce opportunities for women** (Pfister, 2010a). At the same time, there is a recognition that the notion of 'gender equity' itself is polymorphous, and can be understood in multiple ways by different stakeholders, such that it can be difficult to define within sporting subcultures (Hoeber, 2007). Quite simply, we must note that not all board members think about gender in the same way, irrespective of their gender. Indeed, such an observation draws the notion of 'women's representation' into question.



GENDER STEREOTYPING AND 'IDENTITY' CREATION

The uncritical acceptance of gendered roles and practices can result in the recurrence of patriarchy and gender stereotyping. Multiple studies have demonstrated how employees' competencies can be stereotyped according to gendered belief systems and role allocations (Hovden, 2000a, Hovden, 2000b, Sartore and Cunningham, 2007, Burton et al., 2009, Hovden, 2010, Knoppers et al., 2015, Spaaij et al., 2019a, Grappendorf and Burton, 2017). Such notions, and how they influence perceptions of leadership, have been shown to be developed relatively early in life (Mullen and Tuten, 2004). In turn, gender stereotyping can result in the construction of gendered identities and interactional politics. For example, sports organisations are frequently based upon masculine conceptualisations of appropriate operational practices, such that humour, use of dress codes, informal networking and even informal gender segregation reproduce implicitly patriarchal forms of inequity (Shaw and Frisby, 2006, Shaw, 2007, Claringbould and Knoppers, 2008, Piggott and Pike, 2019). In addition, women's network influence is far less likely to influence men's career progression in the same way as men's network influence appears to affect women's career progression (Shaw, 2006). Other gender stereotypes are also suggested. For example, gendered notions about the balance between working and family life, which is assumed to impede women's ability to fulfil their duties, has also been demonstrated to be a consideration in terms of the way organisational practices in sports organisations are gendered (Dixon and Bruening, 2005, White and Kay, 2006, Leberman and Shaw, 2015, Hovden, 2010, Leberman and Palmer, 2009). These stereotypes, often described in Europe or North American, also appear to be more widespread than this tendency would suggest. For example, studies conducted in Turkey and South Africa suggest similar, stereotypical perceptions of leadership qualities, feminine roles and gendered characteristics exist outside 'Western' settings (Koca et al., 2011, Titus, 2011, Koca and Öztürk, 2015, Ndimande-Hlongwa, 2016).

It has been argued that **such stereotypes can lead to the development of a masculine 'leadership prototype' which serves as a barrier to women's aspirations to leadership positions** (Cunningham, 2008, Knoppers and Anthonissen, 2008, Burton et al., 2009, Hovden, 2010). This prototype is associated with more instrumental forms of leadership and the exhibition of passion for sport (Knoppers and Anthonissen, 2008). For example, Hovden (2000b) outlined how board leaders in sport organisations are often expected to be results-oriented, cooperative, courageous, determined, impartial, and loyal. They also appear to have to have a good reputation, extensive social, business and political networks, and various specific organisational experiences. Collectively, Hovden (2000b) characterized these factors as producing a 'male heavyweight' profile. Similarly, Knoppers and Anthonissen (2008) described how managers are rated in relation to specific managerial skills, including toughness/perseverance, constant availability, relatability, instrumentality, relationality and emotionality/passion. What's more, Knoppers and Anthonissen (2008) suggest that emphasis upon these characteristics works to exclude women from senior management positions in sports organisations, and some evidence suggests that more 'feminine' sub-roles in sports organisations are perceived to be more prevalent in entry and middle-level positions (Burton et al., 2009, Burton and Parker, 2010). Some caution must be exercised with regards such conclusions about personal qualities, however, as we feel they run the risk of reproducing gender-binary thinking and the simple attribution of qualitative characteristics to one gender against the other.

In conjunction with these observations, research suggests women are generally less likely to be considered for senior leadership roles in sports governance, or are required to exhibit stereotypically masculine behaviours and qualities which can be considered incongruent with their prescribed gendered roles (Eagly and Karau, 2002, Burton et al., 2011). In turn, this can lead to situations where woman board members adopt stereotypically 'masculine' behaviours and avoid 'feminine' behaviours, particularly when women perceive they are 'token' members of a board. Such tokenism often serves to highlight difference and enhance their 'visibility' and openness to scrutiny. Conversely, in more gender-balanced boards, such feelings tend to be less prominent (Claringbould and Knoppers, 2008). Finally, a small number of studies also demonstrate how, in some ways, gender stereotypes can occasionally be positive for a limited number of women. For example, more informal roles are often considered 'feminine,' such as those with an emphasis upon caring or pastoral care or ethics, and are more likely to be allocated to women due to assumptions about their competencies (Shaw and Frisby, 2006, Shaw, 2006, Sibson, 2010).

THE INFLUENCE OF OTHER DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

Many of the studies outlined above, naturally, focus upon gender as a defining principle of inequity. Yet, the impact of other stratifying factors on women's prevalence in sports governance is considerable. Relatively few studies describe the demographic make-up of women in leadership positions, however, yet those studies which examine these data suggest that women in sports administration constitute a relatively homogenous group (Grappendorf et al., 2004, Lapchick, 2012, Bower and Hums, 2013, Melton and Bryant, 2017). For example, Bower and Hums (2013) found that in American intercollegiate athletics 30.7% of women in administrative positions were between 45-54 years of age, whilst 83.2% were 'white.' Similarly, Grappendorf et al. (2004) found 94.7% of female sporting directors in American athletics departments were white, with an average age of 50.21 years. Other studies also found that women in such positions tend to be highly educated, with one study reporting that 72% of women in American intercollegiate athletics departments held a Master degree (Grappendorf et al., 2004). Moreover, many tend to be highly active, with 76% of women directors having played university level sport in one study (Bower and Hums, 2013), and another reporting 84.2% of women had played at least one varsity sport in school (Grappendorf et al., 2004). The vast majority of women in these studies were recruited or appointed to their board positions from within sport, with 44% of women moving from coaching into administration in one study (Bower and Hums, 2013) and 100% in another (Grappendorf et al., 2004). These trends suggest continuation of a long history of governance of women's sport by primarily white and wealthy women (Vertinsky and Gils, 2016, Melton and Bryant, 2017).

It has also been noted that women from indigenous and ethnic minority backgrounds can be under-represented in both coaching and management positions (Knoppers and Anthonissen, 2001, Knoppers and Anthonissen, 2005, Palmer and Masters, 2010). Although few studies have examined the intersectionality of ethnicity and gender in sport leadership, those studies which have done so have highlighted women's experiences of racism and marginalisation can be shaped by ethno-cultural and gendered identities (Palmer and Masters, 2010, Melton and Bryant, 2017, Walker and Melton, 2015a, Walker and Melton, 2015b). Furthermore, there have been calls to examine the impact of other factors, including sexuality, in supporting or impinging upon gender diversity (Melton and Cunningham, 2014). Finally, only one study examined the relationships between governance, gender and disability (Wickman, 2011). This study highlighted how gender can become a subsidiary form of differentiation to disability in shaping women's experiences and resistance towards exclusionary discourses in disability sport.

RESISTANCE TO AND TRANSFORMATION OF GENDER INEQUITY

The narrative thus far is suggestive that gender inequity in sports governance is complex, yet endemic. This is not to say, however, that imbalanced and discriminatory gendered practices in sports governance cannot be disrupted or resisted. Several studies have highlighted how the actions of women in positions of power can 'undo' and challenge gendered practices by using alternative images and meanings of gender, by engaging in actions considered incongruent with 'normal' board practice, or obtaining 'allyship' from male board members (Hovden, 2006, Sibson, 2010, Claringbould and Knoppers, 2012, Strittmatter and Skirstad, 2017, Heffernan, 2019). Examples of such actions are, however, relatively few in the literature. Nevertheless, evidence suggests that more equitable and diverse workplaces in sports organisations can have a positive impact on sports organisations as a whole, particularly when upper management are perceived to support such policies (Wicker et al., 2012, Spoor and Hoye, 2014, Perez-Rivases et al., 2017). For example, Wicker et al. (2012) found evidence to suggest that perceptions of crises and organisational problems could be lower in organisations with more gender-equal boards. Similarly, talent tends to increase as the full talent pool is utilised (Brown and Light, 2012).

In sum, what is clear is that a **complex combination of factors influences gender relations within sports organisations, and whether gender diversity is produced (or not). Such factors include the organisation of board business and who does what, the exercise of authority and decision making, the expression of emotional responses, the views and meanings that prevail with regards gender equity and the prospects for gender equity** (Adriaanse and Schofield, 2013). Such factors influence women's lived experiences of governance at the micro-level, which we now discuss.

MICRO-LEVEL RESEARCH

Research into women's lived experiences of leadership in sports organisations has focused upon the meanings participants attach to their experiences, their understanding of power dynamics, policies and operational procedures, and the assumptions they make during their interactions within their organisations (Burton, 2015). Frequently, such studies have utilised discourse analysis to understand how such personal experiences intersect with organisational cultures, power inequalities and the development of social capital (e.g. Claringbould and Knoppers, 2012, Claringbould and Knoppers, 2008). Social capital in this context has been used in relation to the level of training, education and job experience that can create relationship networks with peers, managers and others. Unsurprisingly given the emphasis on 'old boys networks' highlighted above, mobilisation of personal networks can be more influential for men than for women (Sagas and Cunningham, 2005, Sartore and Cunningham, 2007, Sibson, 2010, Walker and Sartore-Baldwin, 2013, Walker, 2018, Piggott and Pike, 2019, Walker et al., 2017). Indeed, perceptions of the barriers facing women's appointment to sports administrative roles amongst female sport management students are complex, and young women tend to be aware of the potential that they might face gender stereotyping, discrimination and challenges in developing support networks in their future career (Harris et al., 2015, Hancock et al., 2018b, Hancock et al., 2018a).

Recent research at this level has also highlighted how change towards gender equity can occur, or be resisted, linguistically. For example, Spaaij et al. (2019a) highlight how language can be used to resist increased diversity in sports clubs, particularly when those in powerful positions draw on discourses of colour and gender-blindness. This resistance strategy places value upon difference, and yet is often reflected in language constructions which fail to recognise systemic discrimination (e.g. by emphasizing how individuals can be different, but that sports clubs and teams are for 'everyone'). Such constructions often serve to locate the 'problem' of diversity at the level of the individual and suggest failure to be appointed is more likely to be due to a woman's 'decision' not to stand for election, for example. The suggested commonality of such beliefs reflects **a failure to recognise the systemic discrimination that a woman might face in sports governance.** Similarly, such constructions often demonstrate moral boundaries between groups by emphasising the positive characteristics of those in dominant groups (e.g. self-reliance), thereby positioning others in 'deficit' positions. Again, this positions the 'problem' of gender inequity with the individual, not the system. Other constructions are also common, such as using essentialist explanations to explain inequity ('just the way things are done here'), denying inequity is a problem or silencing those who highlight it, self-victimisation (i.e. pointing out the limitations an organisation faces in promoting diversity), and inscribing values onto the bodies of women and others a sense of 'otherness' and non-normativity. Indeed, sports governance roles and other leadership positions can be embodied in a gendered way; the body plays an important role in defining who is and who is not perceived to be leadership material in many institutional contexts (van Amsterdam et al., 2017). Such work is in its infancy, however, and more studies are needed that investigate these micro-politics of exclusion.



WEAKNESSES IN CURRENT RESEARCH AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Whilst there is extensive research which has focused upon gender inequality in sports governance, there remains several under-researched areas. Primary amongst these is a lack of depth regarding how the intersectionality of race/ethnicity, socio-economic class, age and other demographic features intersect with gender. For example, very few studies have examined the socio-economic background of women in sports leadership positions, despite indications that women in such positions tend to be from a relatively homogenous and privileged group. More studies from the Global South and contexts outside Europe, North America or Australasia would seem to be needed to investigate this issue further. This is coupled with the fact that many studies, although conceptualising gender explicitly as a fluid, contested and culturally-specific term, often are reduced to direct comparisons between men and women as if both are mutually exclusive, homogenous groups. This can mask nuance, and betrays a tendency in some research in favour of relatively simplistic, liberal feminist solutions to overcoming gendered inequality in sports governance (e.g. equal numbers of men and women). This fails to account for the heterogeneity of women in such positions, and whether specific sub-groups of women are under or over-represented. It also leads to an implicit tendency to assume that 'women' on boards are more likely to represent 'women' participants, which overlooks other inequalities and different concerns within groups of both men and women (e.g. ethnicity, disability and socio-economic class). By presuming that women in sports governance speak for 'all women', the complexities of gender inequality can be downplayed.

Finally, aside from the fact that relatively little 'micro-scale' research has been conducted with women in sports governance (at least, in relation to macro- and meso-scale research), very few studies focus upon the experiences of women who either fail or step down from leadership positions. This leaves us reliant upon women's accounts of structural and personal barriers to equality who ultimately overcame, or at least managed, those barriers. As a consequence, further research may be necessary to understand the experiences of women for whom barriers to election or selection were insurmountable, and suggests that our present picture may actually under-estimate the difficulties in overturning gender inequality in this case.

Several suggestions have been made about the need for future academic research into women's role in the governance of sports organisations. A future focus upon institutional culture from an institutional theory-led perspective might be beneficial, as it could highlight how institutional culture can be adapted to more equal gender policies and practices. Further research that investigates the influence of other stakeholders in institutional policy, including fans, investors and the media would also seem to be merited. The impact of gendered organisational practices also requires further research, particularly in relation to how these practices can be resisted or transformed, particularly through the actions of both men and women (Burton, 2015). Further research into the ways in which gender-equal policies can have a positive impact of the experiences of all employees is also needed, as most research at present focuses upon barriers, rather than enabling factors. Finally, there would appear to be a need for further research which focuses upon interventions to encourage women's access into sports governance; relatively few such studies exist, perhaps because of the fact that such programmes are a relatively new approach to tackling gender inequality.

ADDITIONAL GROUP REFLECTIONS ON THE NARRATIVE

The systematic narrative review presented above was discussed with the reflective panel of project partners, as previously outlined. Partners felt the narrative was largely credible, resonating with their lived experiences of gender in their professional lives. The age of some the studies presented, however, was highlighted as a point of caution, particularly if studies pre-dated quotas and gender equity legislation. Nevertheless, several key points were made relating to areas of weakness or uncertainty in the evidence.

First, **the lack of studies which described the relationship between organisation type, structure and geopolitical context with gendered practices and policies was highlighted as a shortfall.** This was exacerbated by some of the self-report measures used in some of the literature which made global comparisons in 'representation,' which was often based upon research where a lack of distinction was made between organisational structure and mission-statements. For example, it was highlighted how boards of private or professional leagues (which might not even have electoral procedures) could not easily be compared against those of national federations or voluntary organisations with a focus upon public service targets. Similarly, the panel highlighted how national federations could have vastly different structures to one another with drastically different impacts upon the possibility for gender equity. This heterogeneity was rarely accounted for, making it difficult for the panel to draw conclusions about who boards actually 'represented' (e.g. federations, clubs, individuals, all men and women of different ages or sub-groups). Therefore, **the panel highlighted the need to assess organisational statutes, mission statements, remits and policies both within and beyond the boardroom in relation to 'gendered representation.'**

From their experiences, the panel discussed how such differences could be defining factors in organisational culture, election procedures and the likelihood for change. For example, change could be slower in organisations with statutes stipulating that board members are elected from existing regional or local federations, as opposed to open elections for all members, athletes and volunteers. **A need for further research which highlights the influence of organisational policies and procedures on the gender balance of boards was therefore considered essential.** In a similar regard, the lack of evidence with regards election procedures was noted, particularly in relation to the practical structure of elections. For example, the association between the practical structure of elections (or the absence of transparency) and gender-biased recruitment was considered an area in which evidence was urgently needed, as evidence of best practice is lacking, reducing the possibility to enact practical gender equity policies and culture change. In short, the panel felt that the literature had little to say about the best course of action to take in order to ensure women's pathway into governance remained open.

Third, **the lack of consensus about the impact of quotas was a point of concern.** In particular, a lack of evidence about how governing bodies or boards could apply quotas or targets – if at all, was considered a shortfall, and partners who were members of NGOs and sport governing bodies felt unclear about exactly why some quotas were successful and others less so. For example, several of our panel highlighted that they remained unsure about the extent to which they should censure national or regional federations or clubs for failure to enact quotas. Such an observation represented something of a disjuncture between findings in the literature, which tended to emphasize the need for culture change, and the practical realities of policy environments and the limitations of sport federation powers. Similarly, the impact of national and international laws, and how these interplayed with quotas, electoral procedures and gender equity policies, remained unclear, and the panel once again highlighted a need for additional research in this field.





STATE OF PLAY OF GENDER EQUALITY IN SPORTS GOVERNANCE

DESK RESEARCH

Results from the SWinG Desk Research amongst a sample of international, national and local level sports organisations.

Between March and May 2019, SWinG partners and their affiliates provided and collected data concerning gender representation on the boards of their 'apex' sports organisations, and the 'apex boards' of a selection of the boards of their affiliates and partners. Data were collected in their original language and translated from multiple sources by project partners. Data sources included:

- Online information from both the home sites of sports organisations, as well as from internal documentation and other online sources
- Organisational statutes
- Interviews with organisational staff
- Minutes of relevant meetings
- National archives
- Newspaper and media reports concerning governance within the organisation
- Other publically available data, such as reports, audits and evaluations

The data collected focused upon a set-list of information on organisations selected by SWinG partners, and included:

- Details on data sources, organisational contact details, webpage and other identifying information
- Organisation remit, mission statement and aims and objectives
- A brief overview of the organisational structure
- The gendered distribution of the principal board of the organisation, including the distribution of men and women in 'key decision making positions' (i.e. President, Treasurer, Chief Executive), and in the boards more generally
- The date of the next election and election procedure
- Whether the organisation had ever had a woman president historically
- Any mission statements or policies with regards to gender equality
- Any national or state policies or laws regarding gender equality

Information was collected from a total of 41 organisations from a total of 18 countries, although some organisations are transnational and had several 'home' states; the address given in the organisations' contact details was utilised to highlight the 'home' state in such cases. Data from two organisations were excluded due to incomplete records or a lack of data, leaving a total of 34 organisations included in the survey. Table 2 gives a brief outline of the organisations from which data was collected.

ORGANISATION	ACRONYM	SCALE OF OPERATION	HOST COUNTRY	ORIGIN OF DATA	ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION USED (beyond initial data searches)	WEBSITE
	ENGSO Youth	International	Lithuania	Online, standing orders and interviews	-	www.youth-sport.net
	ENGSO	International	Sweden	Internal documentation	-	www.engso.eu
	FIFA	International	Switzerland	Online	FIFA Women's Football Survey 2014	www.fifa.com
	FINA	International	France	Online	FINA Constitution 2017	www.fina.org
	ICC	International	Dubai (UAE)	Online	-	www.icc-cricket.com
	NHL	International	USA Canada	Online & Interview	-	www.nhl.com
	EFCS	International	France	Online & Interview	-	www.efcs.org
	FIH	International	Switzerland	Internal Documentation / Interview	FIH Gender Equality Policy 2017	http://www.fih.ch/
	IOC	International	Switzerland	Online	IOC Gender Equality Review Project 2018	www.olympic.org
	LFP	National	France	Online	-	www.lfp.fr
	FFF	National	France	Online	-	www.fff.fr
	KNHB	National	Netherlands	Internal Documentation / Interview	-	www.knhb.nl

ORGANISATION	ACRONYM	SCALE OF OPERATION	HOST COUNTRY	ORIGIN OF DATA	ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION USED (beyond initial data searches)	WEBSITE
	SHF	National	Slovenia	Internal Documentation / Interview	-	http://zhnts.si
	BHF	National	Bulgaria	Internal Documentation / Interview	-	http://www.bghockey.org/
	DBSV	National	Germany	Annual Statistics, Interview	-	www.betriebssport.net
	CONI	National	Italy	Publically available documentation	Leadership Al Femminile: Le donne sanno vincere 2019 Legge-n.-8-dell-11-gennaio	www.coni.it/it/coni
	FIC	National	Italy	Publically available documentation	FIC Statuto 2019	www.canottaggio-org
	The FA	National	UK	Publically available documentation	Rules and Regulations of the Association 2016	www.thefa.com
	O.C. Slovenia	National	Slovenia	National archive	-	www.stara.olympic.si/en/
	S.U.Slovenia	National	Slovenia	Interview	Pravila sportne unije Slovenije – Zveze Drustev za Sportno Rekreacijo in Sportno Vzgojo	www.sportna-unija.si
	DBU	National	Denmark	Online	-	www.dbu.dk
	DGI	National	Denmark	Online	-	www.dgi.dk
	TD	National	Denmark	Online	-	www.teamdanmark.dk
	DIF	National	Denmark	Online	Diversitet i DIF: Strategi fo øget diversitet 2016-2021 Love for Danmarks Idrætsforbund	www.dif.dk
	E. Netball	National	UK	Online	The companies act: 2006 articles of association of all England netball association Ltd. England Netball Diversity Action Plan 2017-2021	www.englandnetball.co.uk

ORGANISATION	ACRONYM	SCALE OF OPERATION	HOST COUNTRY	ORIGIN OF DATA	ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION USED (beyond initial data searches)	WEBSITE
SPORT ENGLAND	S. England	National	UK	Online	Sport England Diversity Action Plan 2017-2022	www.sportengland.org
England Rugby	RFU	National	UK	Online	-	www.englandrugby.com
FROS MULTISPORT VLAANDEREN	FROS	National	Belgium	Online, Internal Documentation	FROS Multisport Vlaanderen vzw & Statuten	www.fros.be
MLS	MLS	National	USA	Online & Interview	The 2018 Racial and Gender Report Card: Major League Soccer	www.mlssoccer.com
PGA	PGA	National	USA	Online & Interview	-	www.pga.com
LŽRF	LHF	National	Lithuania	Interview	-	www.zoles-riedulys.lt
USA	USS	National	USA	Online	Bylaws of the United States Soccer Federation	www.ussoccer.com
NEMZETI VERSENYSPORT SZÖVETSÉG	HCSF	National	Hungary	Archive, Interview	-	www.nvesz.hu
ffse	FFSE	National	France	Online, Internal Documentation	-	www.ffse.fr
CROS AUVERGNE RHONE-ALPES	CROS	Local	France	Online	-	www. crosauvergnerhonealpes.fr
AS PIERROTS VAUBAN STRASBOURG	ASPV	Local	France	Online & Interview	-	www.aspierrotsvauban.fr
ufolep TOUS LES SPORTS / AUTREMENT	UFOLEP	Local	France	Online & Interview	-	www.cd.ufolep.org/paris

ORGANISATION	ACRONYM	SCALE OF OPERATION	HOST COUNTRY	ORIGIN OF DATA	ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION USED (beyond initial data searches)	WEBSITE
CIRCOLO CANOTTIERI LAZIO	CC Lazio	Local	Italy	Publically available Documentation	-	www.canottieririlazio.it
ATLETSKO DRUŠTVO PARTIZAN ŠKOFJA LOKA	Partizan S-L.	Local	Slovenia	Online & Interview	Pravila Sportnega Drustva Partizan – Drustva za Sportno Rekreacijo in Telesno Vzgojo: 2006	www.sdpartizan.si
ŠPORTNA ZVEZA LJUBLJANE	S.A Ljubljana	Local	Slovenia	Online	Statut: Sportne Zveze Ljubljane	www.szlj.si

The following sections outline the key trends, consistencies and points of difference amongst the data collected. It is organised into several sub-sections relating to the key points of the research, including;

- An outline of the mission statements, goals and responsibilities of the sample of organisations;
- Observations relating to organisational structures;
- The proportion of women present in the principal boards of these organisations;
- The prevalence of diversity and equality policies within the sample of organisations (i.e. whether there is a stated aim for change); and
- An outline of electoral procedures within the sample of organisations (i.e. the potential for change).

Two further points must also be made. First, we note that there was a general difference in structures and selection/election procedures between boards for 'professional league' organising organisations, such as the LFP, MLS and NHL (whose boards tended to be made up of owners of professional sports clubs), and those sporting organisations with a wider sports governance remit. The comparison between these two types of organisation is difficult, and meaningful conclusions are hard to draw because of the completely different operational standpoints between these two groups of organisations (private versus public). We can note, however, that the boards of the former type of organisation were more heavily skewed towards men.

Second, we must note that an organisation's scale of operation (international, national, local) did not appear to be a key actor in defining which organisations were more (or less) gender equal. Although considerable heterogeneity existed between the data relating to our selected organisations, this did not appear to have any real correlation with the proportion of women on boards. Put simply, larger organisations might have more board members, but the proportion of women on boards was not predicted by organisational size.

Similarly, the definition and number of 'members' of an organisation varied according to organisation scale (e.g. international organisations' members tended to be national federations, national organisations tended to be sports associations and clubs, and local level organisations tended to be individual members). However, scale did not appear to be a defining factor in terms of the way equality policies were constructed, how election procedures were enacted or how apex boards were structured. Hence, it was not necessary to provide separate analyses for each scale of operation or number of members in the following sections of the report.

OUTLINE OF ORGANISATIONAL MISSION STATEMENTS AND PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES

COMMON GOALS IN MISSION STATEMENTS

The presence of mission statements and key goals were almost ubiquitous amongst our sample of organisations, but focused upon a wide range of concerns and priorities. Specific configurations of goals depended upon the principal remit of the organisation. Some organisations are focused primarily upon professional sport (E.g. the PGA, NHL, MLS and LFP), or competitive and elite sport (e.g. TD). Others focus upon specific target groups (e.g. FFSE and the EFCS with regards professional employees, or ENGSO youth, which targets young people). A third category of organisation focused principally upon mass participation in the general population (e.g. Partizan S-L, DGI, FROS, Sp. England, CROS). Finally, many national and international organisations emphasised a mixture of both mass participation and professional or competitive concerns (e.g. CONI, the FA, the DBU, FIFA, the ICC and HCSF). The IOC is relatively unique in that it is concerned with periodic, specific and unique events, and its mission statement appears to support this.

Notwithstanding this evidence, although mission statements and targets were common, they were not universal. Indeed, the principal remit of some organisations was less clear. For example, a clear mission statement proved difficult to find for FINA and S.A. Ljubljana, and the representative of the North American Women's Soccer League admitted that it did not possess such documentation.

Nevertheless, the configuration of specific aims and objectives appeared to be allied to specific or contextual political and cultural tendencies. For example, neoliberal goals and ideologies are most clearly observable in North American and global organisations such as FIFA, FIH, the ICC and MLS. These organisations made frequent references to the market and market-oriented targets, such as gaining commercial partners. Such organisations also tended to have goals which prioritised the ongoing development of relationships with the media. In some cases, such organisations were governed almost entirely by private interests (e.g. MLS, LFP and PGA), although this was not always the case. For example, the FIH explicitly outlines how it wishes to ensure it has a *«fan-focused entertainment portfolio, world class TV production and distribution, joined-up global marketing, commercial partners who share tour vision, and maintain high-performance sport.»*

A rather different approach is evident elsewhere. For example, more communitarian goals are clearly recognisable in organisations based in Slovenia, Denmark and Lithuania, as well as some international organisations such as EFCS and ENGSO/ENGSO Youth. Such organisations frequently situate themselves as agents for the creation of social cohesion and the best interests of the 'community.' They most often speak in terms of social capital, of developing links, and emphasise their social responsibility. Finally, many organisations feature elements of both approaches, and apparently seek to balance their social and community responsibilities with commercial acumen. Such organisations tended to include those situated in the United Kingdom, Italy, the Netherlands, Bulgaria and France. For example, the Hockey Federation of the Netherlands outlines its three core goals as supporting 'lifelong hockey, ensuring a positive social impact, to be globally competitive and to ensure financial management.'

Despite these politico-cultural differences, several general trends are observable in terms of how our sample of organisations defined their principal roles and targets. Most frequently, organisational mission statements highlighted the organisation's commitment to;

- Ensuring the laws of a sport or organisation, or both, are upheld,
- Ensuring disciplinary procedures are followed,
- Ensuring financial wellbeing of the sport or organisation
- Ensuring that competitions are organised and run smoothly, and
- Ensuring that partnership working with relevant partners outside the organisation, as well as effective co-ordination within the organisation is maintained

Less common, but still highly prevalent, were references about the need to work with volunteers (e.g. by DGI and DIF, E. Netball). Educational principles and programmes are also fairly common amongst national and local-level organisations (e.g. S.U. Slovenia). Finally, some goals were more specific to just one or a small number of organisations. Such goals were often made in relation to a specific target group. For example, FFSE outlines how supporting the health, wellbeing and integration of employees through sport is a primary concern. Similalry, the goals of Partizan S-L. are unusual, as they include reference to *«ensuring the implementation of body culture»* and to promote «*humane relations between people, based on fellowship.*» Similarly, DGI in Denmark emphasizes the centrality of the sports association as a source of social 'joy,' and its aim of maintaining these organisations. The latter examples would appear suggestive of some organisations willingness to take on a social-stewardship role with regards to their local communities and culture. Such goals are not widespread, however.

EVIDENCE OF GENDER EQUALITY AS A GOAL IN MISSION STATEMENTS

Gender is often an implicit consideration in most organisational mission statements, which frequently refer to the interests of their 'members.' Who and what a 'member' is conceptualised as was very heterogeneous, however, and, as outlined above, could be related to individual participants in a sport, to professional athletes, to clubs, to local or regional associations or even national governing bodies and federations. One would assume that, if 'members' include both men and women, that women members' concerns would fall under the remit of the primary mission statement of the organisation. This is particularly common amongst organisations with goals oriented towards mass participation, in which general statements directed at work at the population level are common.

What's more, some organisations explicitly stated that part of their central remit was to be inclusive and to combat exclusion and inequality. Indeed, equality and diversity statements were evident in relation to both professional and amateur sport depending upon the principal remit of the organisation and the way in which a specific sport is organised. However, inclusion and diversity policies tended to 'lump together' multiple excluded groups under a single banner of exclusion, whether exclusion is conceptualised as relating to race/ethnicity, class, disability or age, for example. Hence, gender inequality was often included in general diversity and equality goals. For example, CONI states that it *«dictates principles against exclusion, inequalities, racism and against discrimination based on nationality, sex and sexual orientation…»*

Put simply, gender inequity was rarely recognised as a specific form of discrimination or exclusion. Exceptions to this were evident, however. For example, specific goals with regards to gender were evident in football, for the ICC and for the IOC. In football, FIFA, FFF and FA have a specific goals aimed at 'female football,' (or 'feminisation' for the FFF), and specifically referred to a target of doubling the numbers of players and fans who follow 'female' football. Whilst the term 'female' can be problematic (mainly due to the tendency for such nomenclature to reproduce a biologically essentialist binary between men and women), the recognition of gender as a specific issue, and the inclusion of such gender-specific goals, is encouraging. Similarly, the IOC has committees specifically set up for 'women's sport'. On the other hand, the inclusion of many such policies and goals tended to relate to wider participation and membership targets, and only rarely refers to gender equity in sports governance.



TRENDS AND CONSISTENCIES IN BOARD STRUCTURES

There are some considerable consistencies which can be observed in the structural organisation of the boards at the apex of our sample sports organisations. This observation holds across the full spectrum of organisation scale, remits, aims and objectives, particularly with regards the number and function of leadership positions in an organisation. Almost all organisations have a single board of directors at the 'apex' of their structure. Larger International and National organisations often have a number of subsidiary boards or committees concerned with specific elements of sports governance, such as disciplinary committees or corporate committees. Frequently, a member of the apex board will act as chair of a specific subsidiary committee.

The apex board in most organisations typically consists of multiple recurrent roles, several of which can be considered key decision-making positions. A President, one or more Vice Presidents, a Treasurer, and often an Executive Director are particularly common. Usually between 5 and 15 other board positions are in evidence, most commonly in larger international organisations and for multisport organisations. These can include honorary positions, typically held by a dignitary (e.g. a Royal Prince in the United Kingdom or Denmark) or former presidents of the organisation (e.g. for the IOC and FINA). General secretarial positions are also common, although they are not universal, and many such positions are professional.

A wide range of other, more specific positions are evident however. These tend to vary more widely between organisations. Such roles include specific positions concerned with Public Relations, Corporate Representation or Representatives of particular subsidiary organisations and committees (e.g. a regional association, a representative of clubs and representation for professional athletes). Other positions are concerned with specific elements of sports governance (e.g. diversity, youth sport, disability sport or women's sport). Positions related to some variation of athlete welfare or pastoral care are also evident. Many national organisations also have board structures rooted in geographical boundaries, with representation from specific regions or local associations. For example, the statues of CONI state explicitly that the organisation is concerned with sports activities in the Italian territory alone, and hosts representatives from various regions. These are sometimes coupled with representation from specific sectors or interests, such as schools and governmental organisations. For example, the RFU is represented by 35 county-level constituent bodies, by three members from the British Armed Forces, by Oxford and Cambridge Universities, and representatives of schools and students. Other organisations at both the national and international scales are constituted by representatives of specific associations, including organisations such as the FIFA, the ICC, CONI, DIF, O.C. Slovenia and HCSF.

The level of direct political involvement in organisations is also highly dependent upon their location and scale of operation. For example, some organisations operate under a 'society' business model, being neither charitable organisations nor PLCs, and with minimal direct governmental involvement (e.g. the RFU). Conversely, other organisations, such as CONI for example, outline in their statutes that the organisation is directly supervised by the 'Presidency of the Council of Ministers' as a 'vigilant authority.' TD also sees members of the board directly selected by the Danish Ministry for Culture. Many organisations operate somewhere between these two poles, and in many cases have to balance professional sports governance against both governmental and private concerns in equal measure (e.g. the FA, E. Netball, DBU). In yet other cases, boards are run almost entirely by private concerns. In several such organisations (e.g. LFP, MLS, PGA and NHL), boards almost entirely consist of private owners of professional sports franchises, who typically nominate and elect themselves to board positions.

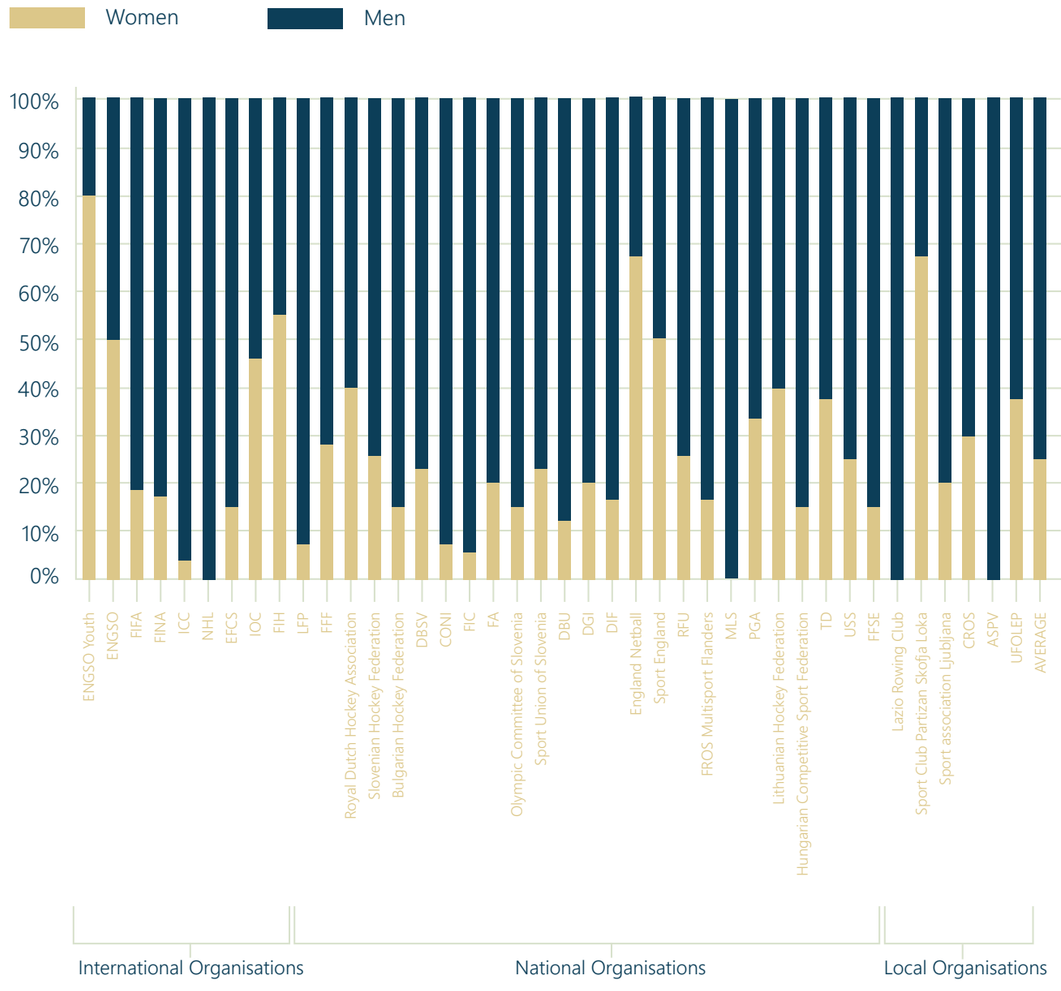
As a consequence of this variety of political concerns, funding of organisations comes from a huge range and variety of sources, including governmental sources, sponsorship, ticket sales, merchandise and licensing, membership fees and television rights. Funding rarely applies to support of board members, however, and **the vast majority of board positions on the principal board of the organisation are voluntary, with an average of 74.3% of positions in our sample being recorded as unpaid in nature.** Professional roles tend to relate specifically to technical positions, such as communications officers or project managers. In addition, in some occasions, the president is also part- or fully-professional. Professional roles tend to be outnumber voluntary roles only in the United Kingdom. Here, for example, the RFU and Sp. England have apex boards which consist entirely of professional employees. These observations will be revisited and expanded upon below, as we examine the potential for change. Having outlined some of the general characteristics of the sports organisations in our sample, however, it is now necessary to focus upon the gendered distribution in their leadership positions.

GENDER DISTRIBUTION ON PRINCIPAL BOARDS OF GOVERNANCE

We analysed the current balance of men and women in the apex boards of our sample of sports organisations. The results can be observed in the following three graphs, which show the overall percentage of men and women on boards, the proportion of men and women in 'key decision-making positions,' and the percentage of men and women in 'other' board positions across the organisations.

Figure 1: Overall balance of board representation on the principle board of the organisation

Graph to show the overall percentage of men and women on the board of sample sports organisations



As can be observed in the previous graph, women board members represent an average of 25.9% of all board positions across all sampled organisations. This relates to a total of 124 women compared with 437 men. No significant differences exist in the numbers of women appointed to apex boards between organisations at the International, National and Local levels, with significant heterogeneity between organisations at each level. Organisations with a higher proportion of women than men include ENGSO Youth, ENGSO, FIH, Partizan S-L and E. Netball (competitive netball is played entirely by women). Only ENGSO Youth and E. Netball have gender imbalanced boards in favour of women. North American organisations including the MLS and the NHL, together with CC Lazio, have no women representatives whatsoever. Both the ICC and LFP have only one woman representative. In the ICC, this board member is dedicated to women's cricket. Interestingly, the only women on the board of the LFP is the President (Nathalie Boy de la Tour).

Figure 2: Gender balance in key decision-making positions (President, Vice-President(s), Treasurer) on the principle board of the organisation.

▲ Graph to show percentage of men and women in key decision-making positions on sample sports organisation boards

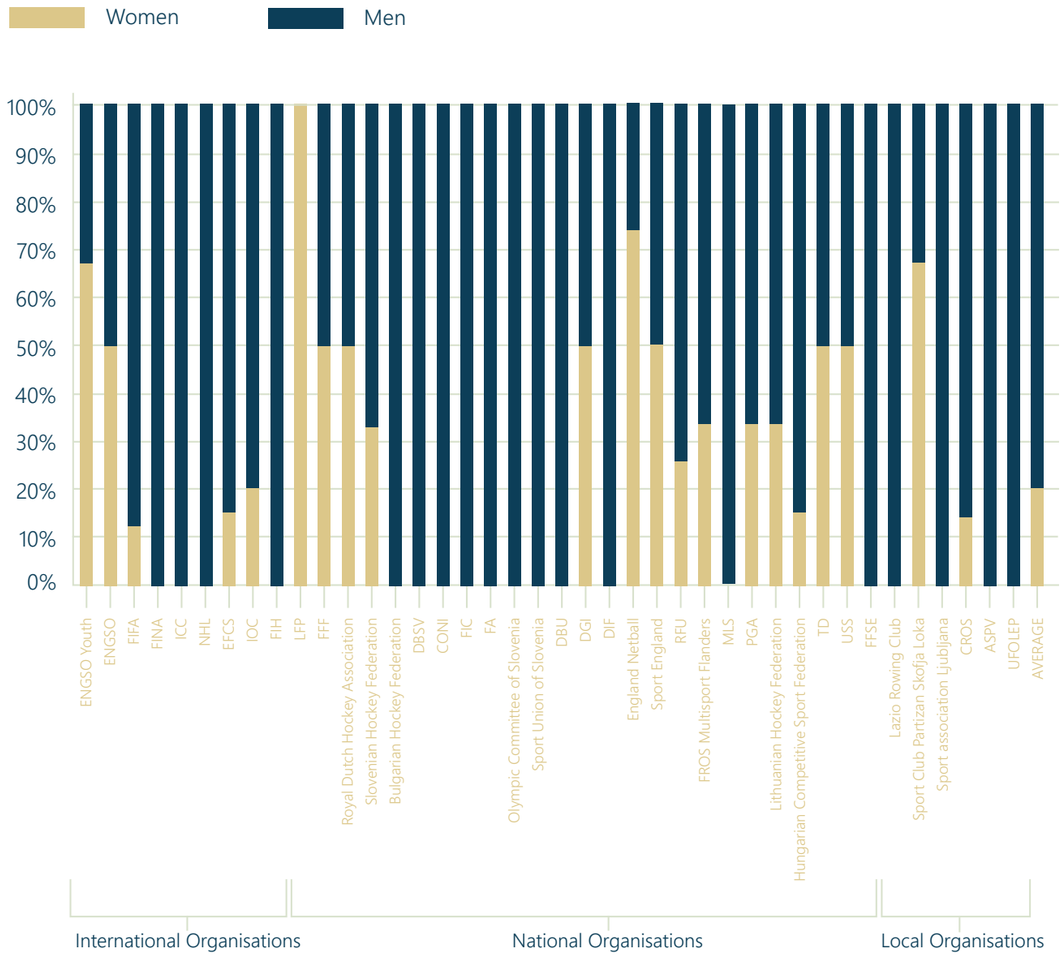
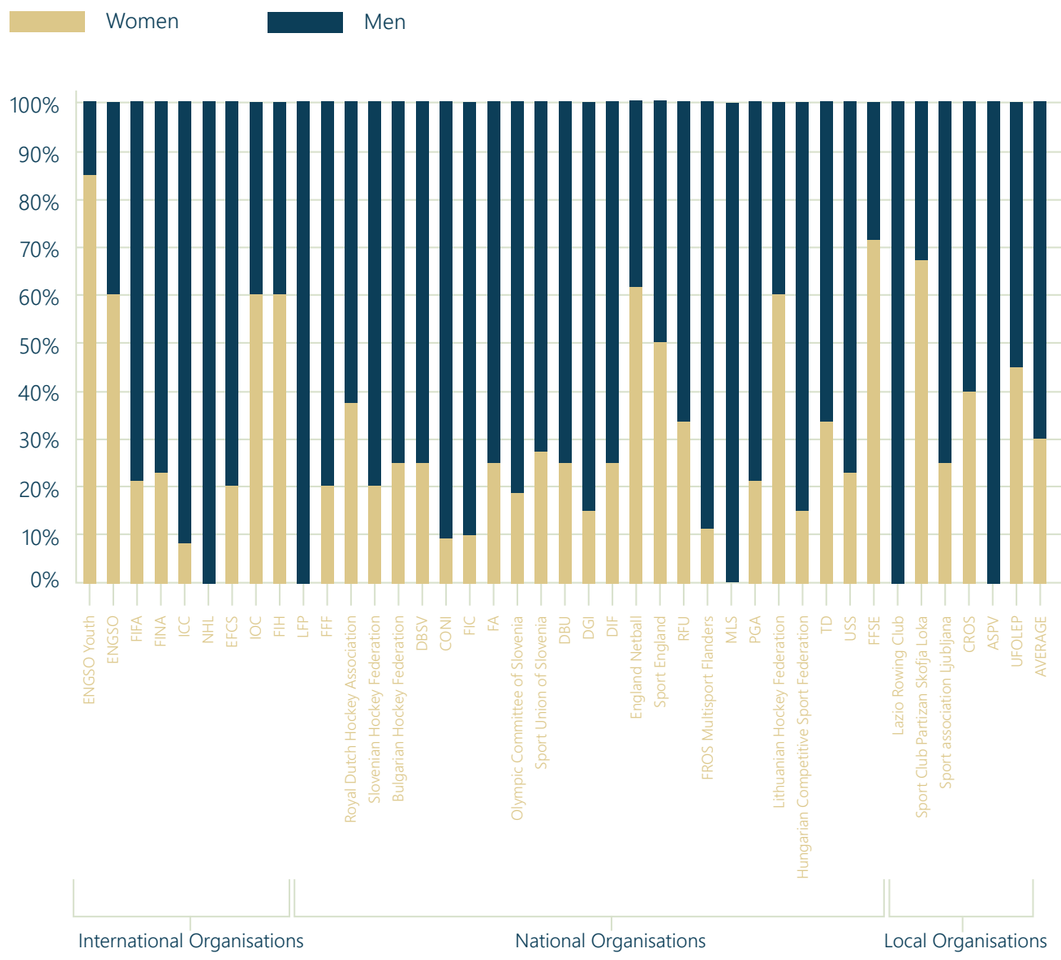


Figure 3: Gender balance in 'other board positions on the principle board of the organisation

▲ Graph to show percentage representation of men and women in 'other' board positions on sample sports organisation boards



The percentage of women in key decision-making positions (president, vice-president and treasurer) is lower than that across all positions on the boards, averaging only 20.3%. This figure excludes the LFP, for whom only one (woman) board member was explicitly identified as a decision maker. Around half of all organisations surveyed have zero women in decision-making positions, including FINA, the ICC, the NHL, the FIH, the Bulgarian Hockey Federation, DBSV, CONI, FIC, the FA, O.C. Slovenia, S.U of Slovenia, DBU, DIG, MLS, the FFSE, ASPV, UFOLEP, CC. Lazio and SC Ljubljana. Conversely, ENGSO Youth, E. Netball and Partizan S-L have more women than men in decision making positions, whilst 7 other organisations (FFF, TD, USS, ENGSO, Dutch Hockey, DGI and Sp. England) have gender balanced appointments in these positions.

The percentage of women in non-key decision making roles on apex boards is slightly higher, averaging 25.8%. Clearly, women remain under-represented in almost all boards. As noted previously, three boards have no women representatives at all. The IOC, the FIH, ENGSO Youth, E. Netball, the LHF and Partizan S-L have a higher proportion of women than men, although only ENGSO Youth, E. Netball and FFSE have gender imbalanced boards in favour of women. Where the specific remits associated with such positions are named, women typically fulfil roles associated with athlete welfare, women's sport, youth sport or media relations and public relations. Several general secretaries and 'treasurer-secretaries' are also women.

There are several trends in selection policies, for which the IOC is a case in point. In the spring of 2017, 31 of the 102 members of the IOC were women. The organisation also released data on the current composition of its various committees; however, in all of them women remain a minority. The Executive Board of the IOC is made up of 15 members, 11 men (including the male president as well as three male co-presidents) and four women (including one co-president). Only three women are among the 41 honorary members of the organisation (see IOC Commissions, Revised in 2017). Men dominate also in the numerous committees which are responsible for various tasks, reaching from the development of the program of the Games to ethics or to responsibility for Olympic Education. Moreover, in 2018, it was announced that «42.7 percent of the positions across the 26 IOC commissions will now be held by women – a historic high.» Yet, there are large differences between the responsibilities and tasks of these committees and the influence of their members. Currently only four of 15, i.e. 27% of places in the Executive Board of the International Olympic Committee are taken by women.

We can draw several clear conclusions from these data. First, we can say that women are underrepresented in a majority of boards. Second, we can note that exceptions do exist, and gender equality is clearly possible. In some cases, these exceptions can result in gender imbalanced boards towards women. Third, we can conclude that women are particularly underrepresented in key decision-making positions, although again, exceptions do exist. Gender imbalance in such roles is, however, more likely due to the extremely limited number of such roles (typically between 3-5 positions). Put differently, with such small numbers of board members in such cases, gender inequality can be caused by a single board member. Finally, we can conclude **that organisation scale (local, national, international) does not seem to have a systematic impact on the propensity for a board to be gender imbalanced. Hence, we can assume other factors than organisation scale might help explain why gender imbalance re-occurs.**



GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES: A STATED AIM TO CHANGE?

The desire to commit to gender equality is prevalent amongst many organisations both within and outside our sample (e.g. Spaaij et al., 2019a). As noted above, however, gender is often subsumed within general policies which target an increase in diversity (e.g. for the PGA, USS, the FA, Sp. England, FIH and many others). Elsewhere, gender equality is included as a stand-alone policy target (e.g. the FA, the DBU, FFSE). Most often (and with good reason, based on the data presented above), a core assumption seemed to be that gender equality should target and support women (e.g. the FA and FFF). Clearly, in most cases this is highly appropriate; the exception to this rule could be E.Netball, which has almost non-existent participation amongst men (although clearly men are involved in coaching, volunteering and governance). There are some exceptions, including ENGSO Youth and E. Netball, who explicitly include targets for both men and women in their policies. In most cases, however, gender is often considered a problem for and about women. What's more, such policies tend to be focused primarily upon participation (i.e. playing sport) and volunteering, rather than upon governance or management, for example.

In some rare cases, however, governance is considered, and specific target numbers of representatives are explicitly mentioned. For example, OC Slovenia aims for a minimum of 10 women on its board, and DIF have an aim for a 30/70 distribution of women to men in all 62 of their member federations' boards by 2025 – equating to 75 more women appointed to governance positions. In other cases, targets are given, but reflect a bare minimum for women's inclusion. For example, FIFA aims to have at least one 'female' member on each council (NB the biological terminology once more in football). It is hard to see past these targets as anything other than quotas, however. Finally, some organisations have a dedicated diversity commission (e.g. the FA; EFCS), suggesting the willingness to change does exist.

Such commissions and targets tend to be backed by state legislation, which tends to focus upon equality and diversity as synonymous, and also tends to subsume gender amongst a list of categories of marginalised groups (e.g. in Germany the UK, Lithuania and Denmark). In France, for example such policies are backed by a legal quota system. At the same time, these regulations are rather vague in real terms with regards to what they mean for recruitment and employment, and whether or not they apply to sports organisations in the same way as to other fields. For example, many 'privately owned' organisations tend to be listed as companies or similar in such policies, and so may be subject to separate regulations to many voluntary sports organisations. This is not the case in all countries, however, and no policies were provided for Bulgaria and Hungary. What's more, several organisations have no stated aim to increase diversity (e.g. NWSL, Lazio CC, MLS and BHF), had diversity policies which were either unclear or difficult to find details on (e.g. TD, FINA, CROS, ICC) or were non-specific in terms of highlighting any group or target, stating simply that the sport should be 'for all' (e.g. NHL).

Overall, therefore, it would seem that there is a range of readiness and pro-activeness in relation to the potential for change in gender distribution in sports leadership roles. Where policies exist, they are often backed by state legislation, albeit in an often vague and imprecise way. Equality and diversity policies are far from universal, however, and several organisations show little evidence to suggest that equality of any kind remains a principal target. It would seem, therefore, that a highly context-specific, varied and sometimes contradictory picture exists with regards policy.

ELECTION PROCEDURES: THE POTENTIAL FOR CHANGE?

Having outlined some key trends in policy concerning gender equality, we also examined organisational election procedures as a way of assessing how easy it could be to transfer gender equality from policy into practice. We included observations in relation to election openness, inclusiveness and mandate length, which provide some indication about the potential for change. Yet, as in the prevalence of gender-equality policies, we found a large range of election procedures, mandates and levels of flexibility existed.

Commonly, the mandate for a position in an apex board in our selection of sports organisations ranged between 2 to 5 years. Most organisations had a stipulated maximum number of terms for re-election, usually between 2-4 occasions. This therefore suggest that a board-members' position on a board might last a maximum of 8-15 years. Typical organisations demonstrating such rules included LHF, who have a mandate of 4 years and a maximum of 3 candidacies, and similar arrangements are apparent for CONI, HCSF, FIH, NASS, the FA, and others. Such regulations imply that, for suitable candidates, a reasonably regular change of personnel is a possibility, particularly when elections take place amongst a general assembly or a similarly wide population of 'members' (e.g. for S.U. Slovenia).

Conversely, there is evidence to suggest many such democratic regulations are somewhat superficial. As was be outlined in the systematic review above, very recent research by Caprais et al., 2020 suggests that elections can have a multi-stage structure that is not always clear to external parties, such that by the time the 'election' is held, candidates have already been vetted (often by the existing board), selected and elected in all but name. These regulations are not always transparent, and could prove difficult to negotiate by external candidates. Aside from the possibility of opaque election procedures, the extent of potential change was evidently limited severely in our sample by other requirements that members of the apex board should typically be:

- An existing member, president or member of the sports associations, clubs or boards in the organisation (e.g. ICC, E. Netball or FIH)
- Are nominated or supported by an existing board member (e.g. EFCS, ENGSO Youth)
- Votes are cast by a limited number of individuals, typically the representatives of member organisations (e.g. LHF or FIC), member sports federations (e.g. FIFA, CONI and DBSV), other boards of representatives (e.g. DBU) or politicians (e.g. TD)
- Board positions are professional and are therefore likely to be appointed by a pre-existing interview panel (e.g. Sp. England and the RFU)

Hence, very few organisations appeared to actively encourage those from outside their ranks to stand for election. Such stipulations suggest strongly that familiarity with an organisation, and ideally a long-established role within the organisation, are essential in order to increase the likelihood of a successful election bid. What's more, still other limitations exist. For example, ENGSO Youth disqualifies those who are or will become aged 36 or more during their current term. It is also unclear whether geographical residency plays a part, as many international and national organisations tend to have positions related to particular countries or regions. One would therefore assume that such stipulations would limit the number of positions one could be appointed to (i.e. those outside a region of residency). Finally, in some cases the openness of boards is limited by governmental concerns. For example, TD has its board selected by the Danish Ministry of Culture through means which remain unclear.

In sum, therefore, **although democratic principles are clearly apparent within the statues of many organisations, in reality these could be more limited than first appearances might suggest.** In turn, this suggests that significant change in terms of governance personnel is unlikely in the short-term, and when change does occur, the potential for the reproduction of inequality is high unless considerable numbers of women are already members and involved in governance of organisations at other levels of administration. In other words, where patriarchy exists, it is likely to recur.

We must also emphasize that such cases represent the best case scenario. Indeed, it would appear that the potential for change in several organisations would be at or approaching zero. For example, election procedures in several organisations are opaque and not readily available to the public. Some organisations, for example, do not give details about the maximum length of a mandate for board membership (e.g. MLS, NHL), have life members (e.g. USS and, possibly, FINA), and do not give details about re-election procedures (e.g. the NWSL). In such organisations, democratic principles and statutes appear minimal, or are at the very least not immediately obvious. Particularly in organisations representing private concerns, boards tend to be made up of club owners (often with great personal wealth) who typically re-elect themselves for indeterminate periods. Such organisations appear to have had board members in position over very long periods of time indeed. For example, Don Garber, chair of the MLS, was voted into position in 1999 and currently has a contract extension until 2023, whilst Gary Bettman has been commissioner of the NHL since 1994, with no signs of plans for him to step down. Women's representation on these boards tends to be amongst the lowest in our sample, with close to zero women in any positions now or in the past. The exception is MLS' Maribeth Towers, who fulfils the role of Senior Vice President for Consumer Products, a peripheral role which is not clearly included in the board, and for which Marybeth appears to have been specifically selected based upon her past retail experience. The potential for change in such organisations therefore appears minimal and could take a significant period of time to enact. As outlined by our respondent from the PGA, 'someone's path to the national office could take decades, as they must work their way up through the voluntary leadership chairs.' The potential for women to be elected into the apex of such organisations would therefore appear minimal in the short-term.

SUMMARY OF THE SURVEY

The results of our survey highlight several considerations:

1 - That sports organisations we sampled are highly heterogeneous in multiple ways, including:

- Variations in structure
- A wide range of missions, remits and stated aims
- A varying level of awareness concerning the need for gender equality and
- Various election procedures

2 - However, consistencies exist in terms of the size and organisation of many 'apex' boards, particularly in the number of 'decision making' positions contained within them.

3 - We have observed how women are largely underrepresented in both board positions and in decision-making positions. Yet, exceptions can and do exist, suggesting gender equality is not an impossible goal.

4 - Most organisations also possess equality and diversity policies and statements, although these frequently focus upon participation in sport and volunteering, and often include gender inequality amongst a long list of other inequalities. The existence of such policies is, however, indicative of awareness for a need to change.

5 - We have also observed how election procedures in sports organisations can heavily favour existing members and those with links to a sports organisation, and may in many cases be less open and democratic than might be expected. Real change could therefore be difficult to promote, particularly from outside the organisations in question. It could also be a long, drawn out process in many cases.

6 - Finally, we have highlighted how some types of organisations are more amenable to change than others. Organisations with strong voluntary and communitarian objectives are more likely to be receptive to change towards gender equality. Conversely, organisations which are primarily concerned with private interests and elite competitive leagues are likely to be most difficult to change – although not impossible (as demonstrated by the current president of the LFP, who is a woman). What is clear, however, is that local political contexts, laws and cultural conceptualizations of sport play a key part in defining the likelihood of such change.



— INTO THE MIRROR

Looking into the mirror of women's representation and participation in society and in the business world

The aim of the partnership was also to explore the status of women in decision making role and in society while conducting some lighter research on existing data.

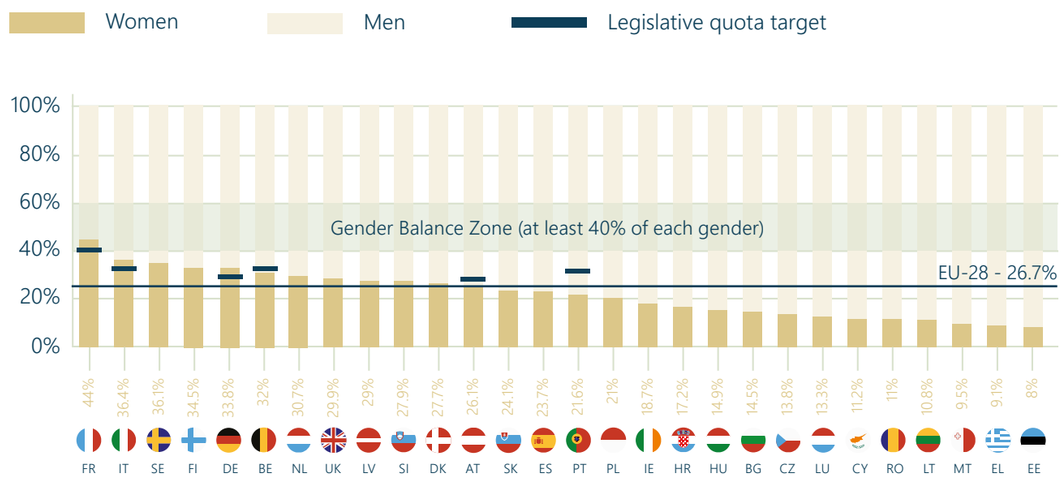
The following chapter therefore describes the overall context of women in decision making positions in the business world. This will give the initial findings described within the sport sector a wider perspective. In fact, sport can and should be considered a constituent element of society, and therefore it is crucial to consider the wider social context in order to assess the scale of gender inequity, and to gain insights into women's struggles and achievements to date.

WOMEN IN COMPANIES' GOVERNING BODIES

A EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

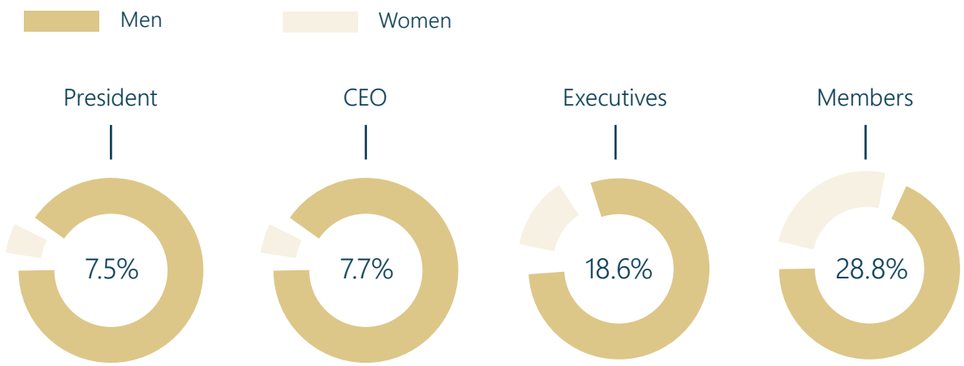
Men outnumber Women in leadership positions in the EU's corporate sector. Figures from 2019 highlight that, women have difficulty in accessing senior positions at the European level: in 2019 only one in three management positions is held by a woman and, the proportion of women managers does not exceed 50% in any Member State. Corporate governance is still predominantly dominated by men, and women account for only 6.3% of CEOs, 18.6% of executive managers and 28.8% of non-executive positions. What's more, although these figures are low, they actually represent an historic high in terms of women's representation![3]

Figure 4: Proportion of women and men on the boards of the largest publicy listed companies in the EU, October 2018



3 - Source: Statistical brief: gender balance in largest listed companies, July 2020, European Institute for Gender Equality

Figure 5: Share of Women in key positions in the largest publicly listed companies in EU Member States, Oct 2019



These figures can be compared to the figures from 2016, at which time an average of only 23.3 % of board members of the largest publicly listed companies in the EU were women. Even these figures marked a significant increase from the 11.9 %of women CEOs in 2010, when the European Commission first placed the issue of women in leadership positions high on the political agenda[4]. Nevertheless, the annual rate of change has slipped since 2015.

Furthermore, it is notable that surveys and **data analysis from the EU demonstrate most of the significant improvements took place in countries that have taken legislative action and/or have seen an intensive public debate on the issue.** To date, 19 EU countries as well as Norway, Iceland and the United Kingdom in the broader European region have passed legislation to promote gender balance in the boardrooms of various types of companies. France, Italy, Belgium, and Germany have also been applying binding quotas. A different approach is preferred in 12 other Member States (Denmark, Ireland, Greece, Spain, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Finland and Sweden) including legislative measures that are restricted to state-owned companies, or applied without sanctions in Greece, Slovenia, and Spain[5].

Clearly, whilst some progress has been made, much remains to be done, particularly when considering critical positions within executive boards in which the presence of women is marginal or, at best, unequal.

THE FRENCH CONTEXT

As of 2019, France is the only country in the EU where 'gender balance' has been achieved on company boards (45.2 %). That's the reason why a specific focus on the French case is introduced with the intention to highlight the specific reason that may have allow this success.

There is evidence that this success can be directly linked to the Copé-Zimmermann law passed in 2011. At that time France followed the example of Norway (2003) and Spain (2007), who were among the first to adopt a legislation to promote gender balance in boardrooms. The Copé-Zimmermann law imposes quotas (40%) for women on the boards of directors and supervisory boards of listed companies.

Set up in 2013 as part of the follow-up to the Copé-Zimmermann Law, the «Palmarès de la féminisation» (Women's ranking) is an annual ranking of the 120 largest French companies, highlighting their commitment to the feminisation of their management bodies and, more generally, to professional equality between women and men. This ranking is established based upon of figures provided by the companies on a voluntary and declarative basis.

According to the 2018 ranking, women represent 43.4% of the members of the boards of directors and supervisory boards of the large listed companies. They are also making a significant breakthrough in «Comex», the management committees of these large companies, rising from 15.1% in 2017 to 18% in 2018. France was thus trailing Great Britain, which has 18.7% of women in 2018 in listed companies (FTSE 100), but is now well ahead of Germany, where this feminisation is less important, with 8.2% of women on the management committees of HDAX 160 companies. In 2019, the rate of feminisation of the Executive Committees passed the 20% mark, with an increase of 8.4% between 2013 and 2019 (21.4%)[6].

However there is still significant room for improvement, partculaly in relation to top executives. For example:

- Out of 120 major listed companies, only 11 + 5 (CEGINA, Sodexho, Maison du Monde, ENGIE, Dassault Systemes, Korian, Air France KLM, Solvay, CGG, Eurazeo, Virbac, Eramet, Europcar Mobility Group, Renault, Trigano, Vallourec) have a woman as Chief Executive Officer or Chair of the Board of Directors.
- None of the companies listed in the CAC 40 is led by a woman.
- Some prestigious companies from the CAC 40 still have no woman on their Board.



4 - Source: Gender balance on corporate boards Factsheet, July 2016, EU Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers

5 - Source: 2019 Report on equality between women and men in the EU

6 - Source : Palmarès de la féminisation des instances dirigeantes des entreprises du SBF120

THE BACKGROUND REALITY: A BRIEF LOOK AT WOMEN'S RIGHTS & GOVERNMENTAL ACTIONS

To understand the reality of women in society, something clearly shaping the overall context and providing a different lens to analyse and act on leadership positions, the partnership examined the history of women's rights and governmental actions in relation to gender equity.

The section below provides some key insights for each of the countries involved in the SWinG partnership, and therefore offers an interesting suite of analytics. It especially focuses upon 4 key dimensions:

- ECONOMIC/EDUCATION RIGHTS
- POLITICAL RIGHTS
- FAMILY RIGHTS
- SPORTING RIGHTS



BELGIUM

In 2019, Belgium ranked 8th on the Gender Equality Index, which ranks EU member states according to the effectiveness of their efforts to reach gender equality goals. Since the beginning of the 2000s, Belgium has made significant progress towards gender equality, though at a slower pace than some other countries. This is due, for the most part, to a growing level of inequality when it comes to the allocation of time: housework and family responsibilities still tend to occupy a much larger part of women's timetables than men's. In the meantime, Belgium has improved its distribution of decision-making positions in both political and economic arenas[7].

Timeline of women's rights changes in Belgium[8]



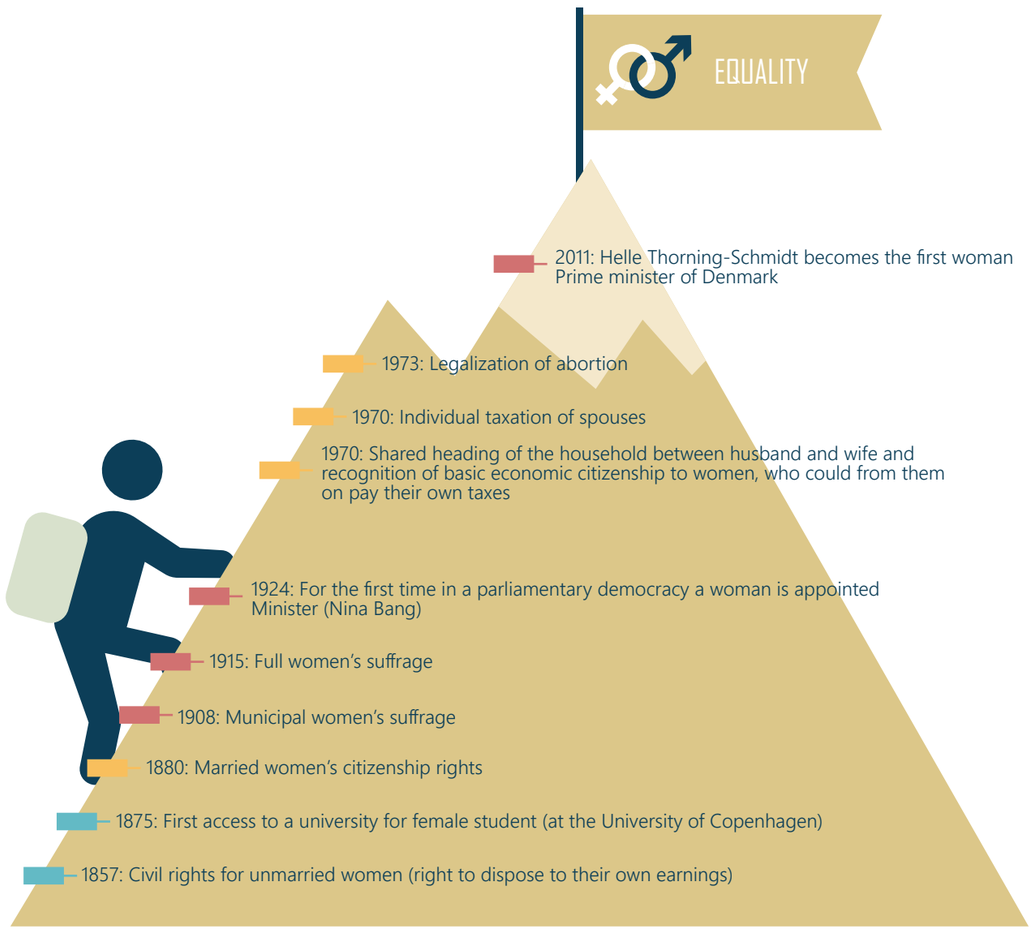
7 - Source : https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2019/BE
8 - Source : https://www.rosavzw.be/english_site/facts.htm

DENMARK

While still facing a great imbalance in the distribution of decision-making positions, Denmark is a top scoring Member State. It ranked second in the EU on the 2019 Gender Equality Index, particularly because of the quality of access to health for both genders. Another major reason for this good result is the decrease in the gender wealth gap. This achievement relies on many different strategies and contextual factors. Denmark indeed separated the taxation of husbands and wives a year before Sweden, and fostered policies to encourage the desegregation of job sectors. In 2011, for example, gender stereotypes in education and employment where addressed through three communication campaigns. One of them, called "Change your job, not your gender" incited unemployed men to seek jobs in female-dominated sectors. The other two campaigns, named "The future is yours" and "Practice as a problem solver" encouraged girls and women to choose untraditional career paths, notably in natural science and technology.

Women are also represented in decision-making positions in Denmark. Most governing coalitions include a Minister for Equality while about 40 % of the representatives in Denmark's parliament and executives in government are women.

Timeline of women's rights changes in Denmark



9 - Source : https://vbn.aau.dk/ws/portalfiles/portal/16110138/FREIA_wp_67

FRANCE

In 2019 France ranked third in the EU on the Gender Equality Index, which sorts EU member states by the effectiveness of their efforts to reach gender equality goals.

WOMEN AND THEIR FREEDOM

It all began with the «Declaration of the Rights of Women and Women Citizens» (1791). Olympe de Gouges feminized the «Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen» of 1789, which had previously 'omitted' women. In 1907, a working married woman owned the right to get her own salary (more than 100 years after the declaration of rights). In 1944, women were granted the right to vote (100 years after men).

Five years later, Simone de Beauvoir published *Le Deuxième sexe* (The second sex). It denounced the alienating society for women, who must escape it in order to gain freedom and called for women's struggle for their independence. In 1965, women could work without her husband's permission and open a bank account. In 1967, the Contraception Act was introduced (Neuwirth Act). In 1975, Voluntary Interruption of Pregnancy (VIP) was authorized (Veil law). It will be reimbursed in 1982.

THE WOMAN AND HER WORK

It is interesting to note that for the past seventy years, laws were passed to allow women and men to earn the same wage. However, pay inequalities are still observed today. Seven laws exist in total, two of which were supported by women and which have pushed employers to tackle equality. The first law with the principle of «equal pay for equal work» appeared in 1948. A second law was passed in 1972 to support the original one and «the right to earn as much as a man of equal value». In 1983, a third law brought back the principle of «professional equality between women and men» (Roudy law). In 2001, the Génisson law again took stock of «professional equality between men and women». In 2006, the same was true. In 2014, a law appeared for equality that would be «real between women and men (family, societal, political, public)». Things have not changed much with these various laws, as they are not very enforced and without specific sanctions, so a new law appeared in 2018. This law has been called the «freedom to choose your professional future». It imposed a common methodology for companies to measure the so-called 'unexplained' wage gap, and was applicable as of 1 January 2019 for companies with more than 250 employees and from 1 January 2020 for those with between 50 and 250 employees.

With the latest developments, equal pay in companies is now obligatory, and no longer simply an obligation of means. This measure also had the advantage of creating more transparency in organisations (each company will publish its results on its website). Five corrective actions will be planned and each company will have 3 years to make up the salary. Companies that have not caught up in 3 years could be sanctioned up to 1% of the wage bill. It is positive to note that the legislative power is committed to greater equality in corporate governance. It is a pity, however, that it took seventy years to put such measures in place, vs. the original law introduced in 1948.

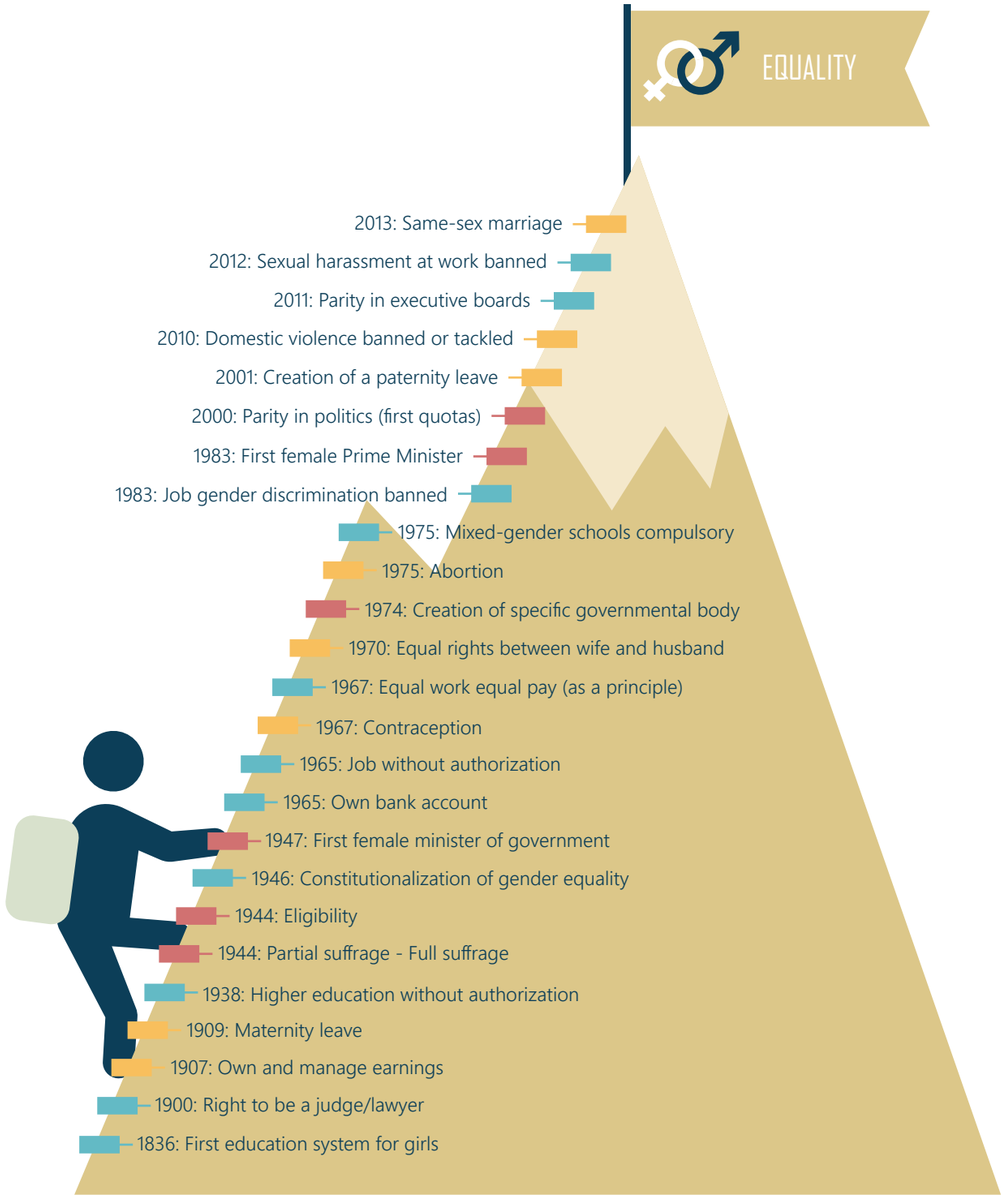
As for the presence of women in management bodies, the Copé-Zimmermann law from 2011 law has made it possible to improve their representativeness in the Boards of Directors for listed companies and public companies. A 40% quota for women was requested for 2017, however (rather than 50%). Otherwise, the appointment of men would have been nil. Nevertheless, no law is yet planned concerning women in other higher governing bodies (CODIR or COMEX), and perhaps one day they will be created to further balance the governing bodies.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

In 1970, parental authority replaced paternal authority (removal of the notion of head of the family, the woman has her own place in the education of children). In 2002, paternity leave (14 days in total) was introduced by Ségolène Royal. Men can officially take care of their children and a better balance is beginning to develop. In 2010, a law on violence against women was passed. And in 2012, a law on sexual harassment at work was added.

Below we find the timeline of women's rights in France. This timeline has been inspired by the initial work from Pascal, Sexton (2016) and modernized for the purpose of the SWinG project.

Timeline of women's rights changes in France

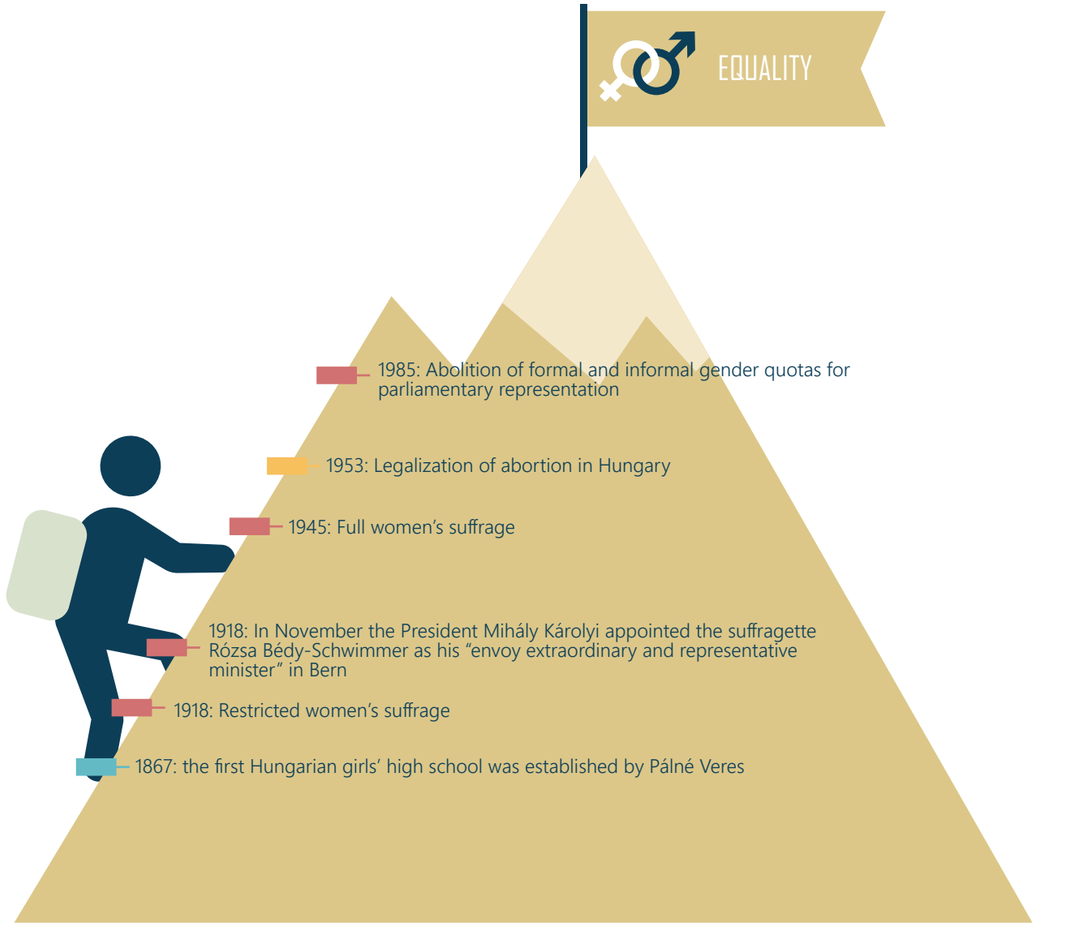


HUNGARY

Alongside Greece, Hungary is one of the Member States that has the worst results in tackling gender-related inequalities. There are improvements; for instance, income levels, have been converging for a decade between men and women with similar jobs and responsibilities. Whilst the gender pay gap is slightly smaller than the average in the EU, progress towards gender equity has been slower than in other EU countries, and is restricted to the specific areas of the pay gap and health gap. Hungary therefore ranked 27th in the EU on the 2019 Gender Equality Index.

Gender inequalities are most pronounced in powerful positions (the vast majority of decision-makers are men) and the distribution of domestic work (the vast majority of domestic-workers are women). What's more, making way for women in political and economic decision-making positions has not been framed as a necessity. In 2015, only 9.7% of Hungarian MPs were female, compared to the EU average of 27.7%. On the other hand, late governments have been promoting a conservative family setting and openly opposing the notions of gender roles and gender mainstreaming. Instead, the current government focuses its gender policy on sexual violence. Its declared national agenda is to reduce domestic violence and integrate women with a migration background into the labour market, while its international claim is to combat gender-based crimes in conflicts.

Timeline of women's rights changes in Hungary



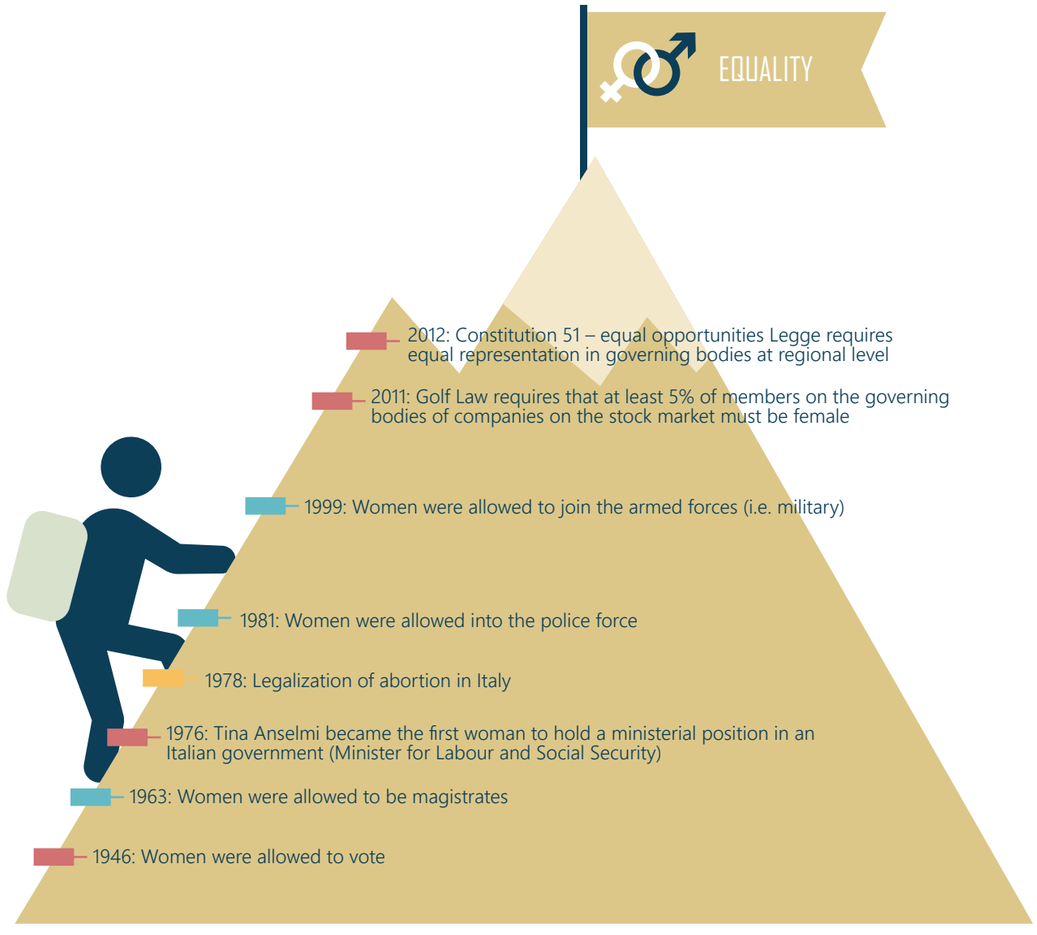
10 - Source : http://adapt.it/adapt-indice-a-z/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Gender_policy_resources_2011.pdf

ITALY

The National Code of Equal Opportunities between Women and Men of 2006 is considered the current Italian legal framework on gender equality. Along with a set of new regulations, it introduced the notion of gender mainstreaming (i.e the obligation for the government to take gender problematics into account). From then on, the gender equality approach was made systematic, allowing a better understanding of the relationship between issues women face as far as employment, education, health, and violence are concerned.

This new perspective relied on the obligation to adopt EU directives and on the deployment of specific funding programs within the EU, and its implementation is rather inconsistent. Or rather, it largely depends upon regional politics. Some northern regions, particularly Piedmont and Emilia Romagna, tend to have reduced the gender gap more rapidly than southern regions. Despite legal progresses, Italy still hasn't achieved its goal to position gender equality as a criterion to assess laws, regulations and businesses. In 2019, it ranked 14th on the Gender Equality Index[11].

Timeline of women's rights changes in Italy



11 - Source : https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/countries/italy

LITHUANIA

The situation in Lithuania appears to be stagnant. After a sharp decrease during the 1990s, equal participation to the labour market has lately recovered. The employment rate is now roughly equivalent to what it used to be under Sovieti rule, at 77 % for women and 79 % for men.

Still, economic sectors are sharply segregated and positions of power are for the most part occupied by men. For instance, women made up 10% of mayors in 2012. Outside of the labour market, women take over most of the housework and compensate a fragile childcare system by devoting a lot of their time to educate young children. Furthermore, the research on gender-based social inequalities is not yet publicly funded. Gender inequalities are therefore a concern in a country that ranked 23rd in the EU on the 2019 Gender Equality Index[12].

Timeline of women's rights changes in Lithuania



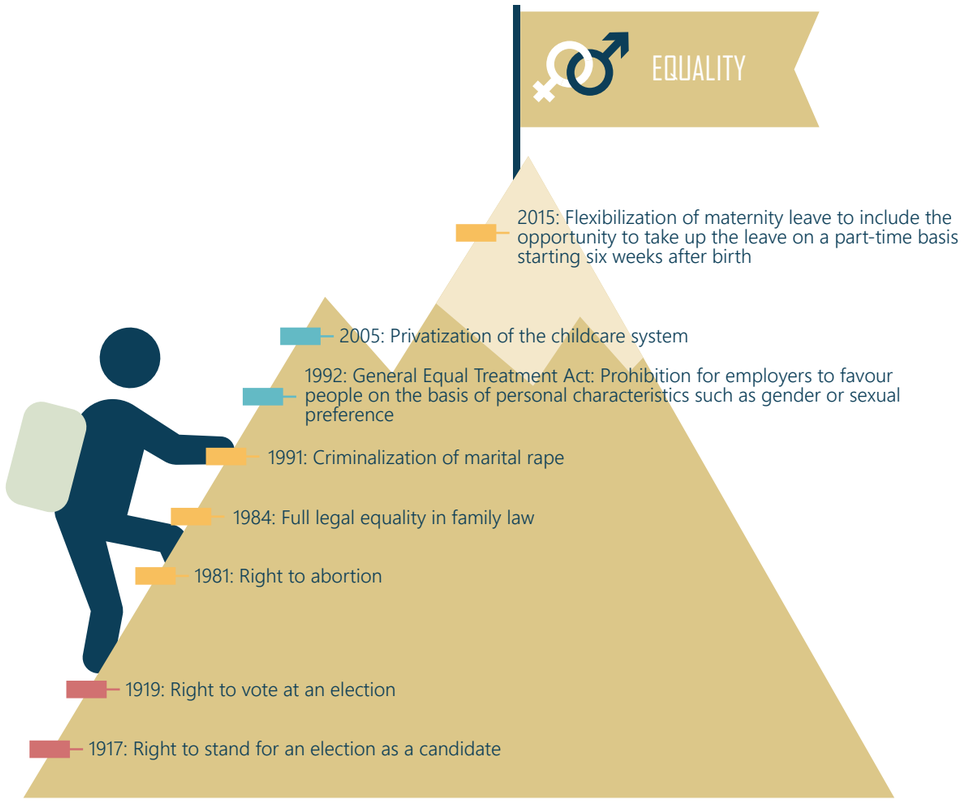
12 - Source : https://docs.euromedwomen.foundation/files/ermwf-documents/5140_1.59.thepolicyongender.pdf

NETHERLANDS

While women's rights here were established historically early, the Netherlands still faces a challenge to increase female participation in economic and political spheres, especially at the decision-making level. Along with Germany and Austria, this Member State was identified by the European Commission as a country with poor integration of women in the workforce. The average Dutch father works five days a week when the average Dutch mother works three days a week, and women accomplish about twice as much domestic unpaid work as men. As a consequence, the facts that the vast majority of part-time workers are women and that the majority of working women are part-time workers has become a public concern and a topic of research. Recent policies have improved the allocation of power within the economic sector, but these efforts where not sufficient to compensate a regression in the distribution of social power. A lot more women have become part of the boards of publicly listed companies (from 7% in 2005 to 30% in 2019). On the contrary, women comprise slightly less than a third of board members in research-funding organisations, publicly owned broadcasting organisations and national Olympic sports organisations. This lack of gender diversity in decision-making positions causes the Netherlands to rank sixth in the EU on the 2019 Gender Equality Index.

The national focus has historically been on emancipating citizens and allowing anyone to be independent. Although the notion of gender mainstreaming is not used, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is responsible for coordinating the efforts of all ministries of the government in this direction. This specific culture of equality through autonomy has resulted in an extensive legislation on equal treatment and antidiscrimination, a very effective gender-sensitive healthcare policy and a gender pay-gap that is close to the EU average[13].

Timeline of women's rights changes in the Netherlands



13 - Source : https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2015/519227/IPOL_IDA(2015)519227_EN.pdf

SLOVENIA

Slovenia is one of the highest-ranked countries in the world when it comes to gender equality and women's involvement in society. Currently situated in fourth place (of 152 countries) on the Global Women, Peace and Security Index, for example, it is also fifth, immediately after the Scandinavian countries and Canada, on the index produced by the American Woodrow Wilson Institute and the UN Development Programme (UNDP) on women in leading positions in the public sector.

In 2019, Slovenia also ranked 11th in the EU on the Gender Equality Index. According to the European Institute for Gender Equality, the country remains the top-ranked new member in the area of equality between women and men, due in part to the high proportion of women in decision-making positions.

Slovenia operates a quota system for political parties' lists of candidates': 25% of candidates must be of a non-male gender. Eleven women were elected (12.2 %) at the elections in 2004, and 12 women became MPs, after the final distribution of seats in the 90-member Parliament, accounting for 13.3 %. Moreover, women were still largely underrepresented in local authorities, and only one minister in the government at the time was a woman.

In 2014 the elections showed that 'the Law on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women' from 2004 was effective. In the 2014 European elections 37.5% of women were elected, which is satisfactory, and in the 2019 elections, the level stood to 50%.

PRINCIPLE OF PROFESSIONAL EQUALITY

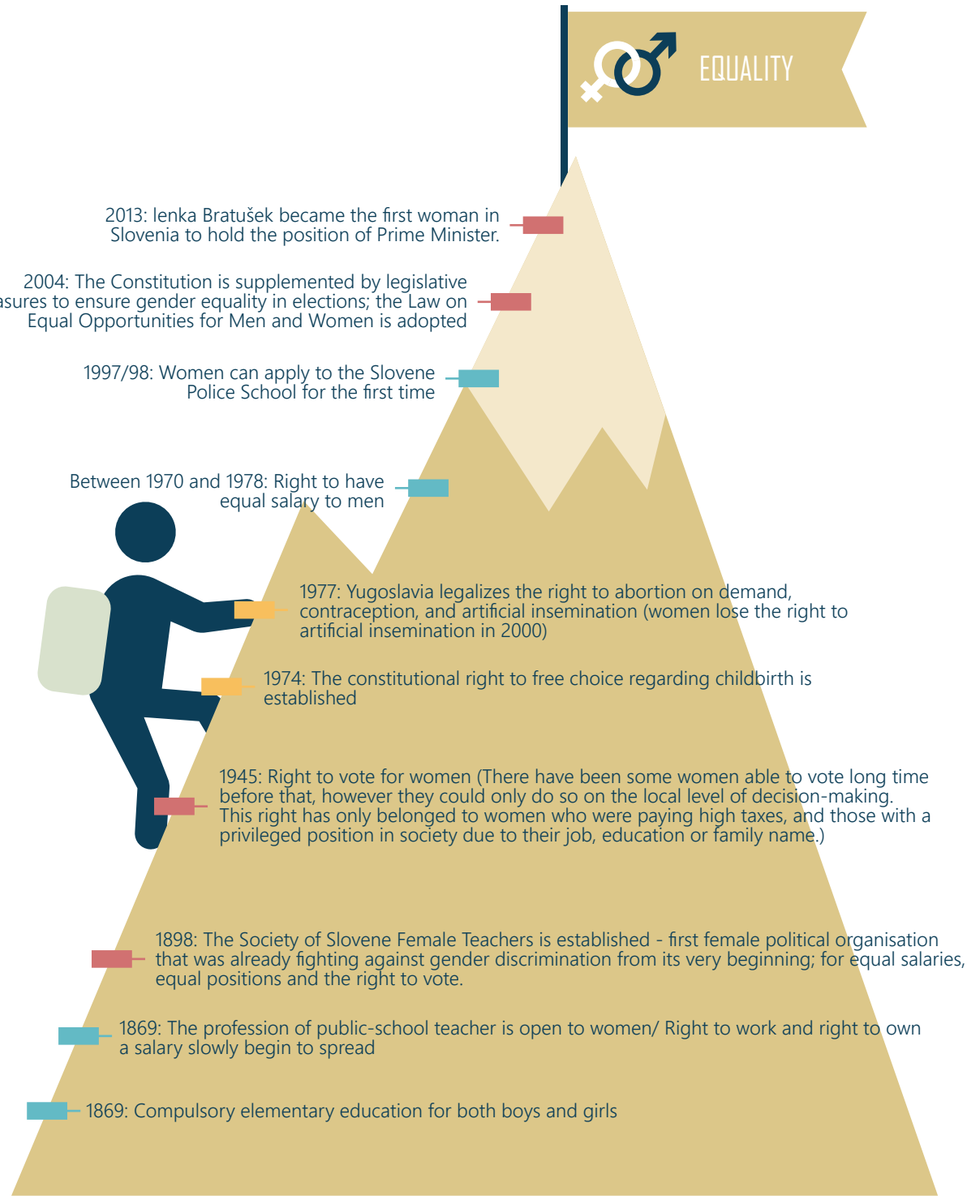
The Equal Opportunities Act of July 2002 provides a common basis for creating equal opportunities for women and men through further legislation. The Act defines and prohibits both direct and indirect discrimination. Moreover, the Act allows for positive measures to ensure equality and foresees the creation of Ombudsperson who will handle cases of unequal treatment.

The Law on Labour Relations of 1 January 2003 introduced several new provisions on equal opportunities and equal treatment for women and men, partly in preparation for EU accession.

In March 2004 the Penal Code was amended with numerous modifications relating to women's issues inter alia, to misuse of prostitution, pornography, trafficking in human beings. The new amendments and supplements entered into force in May 2004.

Gender equality was initially the responsibility of the Office for Women's Policy, established in 1992. Currently gender equality is under the responsibility of the Office for Equal Opportunities established in 2003. Its tasks include monitoring and coordinating gender equality issues towards all the ministries and to participate in the preparation of laws and regulations. It also performs policy analysis and advocacy.

Timeline of women's rights changes in Slovenia



SWEDEN

Often declared to be the best place for women to live, Sweden actually ranked first in the EU on the 2019 Gender Equality Index. Housework and family work the most evenly distributed in Europe, and health inequalities are the lowest. These excellent results are attributed to three main policies: the separation of income taxation in married couples, the development of an effective public child care system, and the neutralization of gender in allocating paid parental leaves. Gender mainstreaming has become a habit, in a country where, although quotas are not mandatory, all organisations are expected to have 40% of the underrepresented sex in decision-making positions.

Public agencies devoted to these goal keep suggesting improvements, for example in the field of public research. For example, far fewer women than men pursue third-cycle studies and benefit from research grants. Although public funds are not perfectly equally distributed between genders, Swedish policies are considered exemplary in tackling gender-related issues. The Swedish government has even achieved a leadership position on the international level through its 'Feminist Foreign Policy'. This global awareness and action plan focuses on 'three R's': the Rights, Representation and Resources of women[14].

Timeline of women's rights changes in Sweden



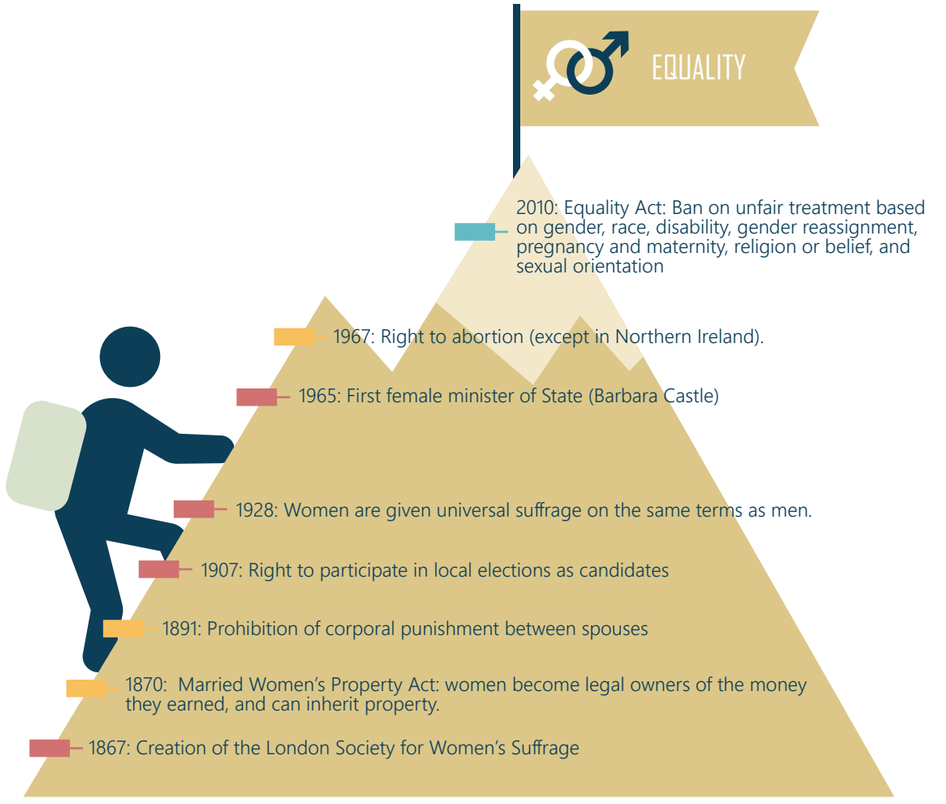
14 - Source : https://www.government.se/4adb29/contentassets/efcc5a15ef154522a872d8e46ad69148/gender-equality-policy-in-sweden

UNITED KINGDOM

The United Kingdom ranked fifth in the EU on the 2019 Gender Equality Index. Interestingly, the principles of gender equality are not enshrined in Constitution in the UK, as they are in other countries. Without a formal strategy document, gender mainstreaming in the UK is fragmented and differs between England, Scotland Wales and Northern Ireland. There is, for example, little gender budgeting and gender impact analysis in England, while these practices are embedded in policy in Scotland. Reporting on progress and evaluation of public policies vary so much that demonstrable data gaps have been reported by the National Reporting Platform. There are legal requirements on maternity/paternity leave, childcare (recently there is statutory support), separation of income tax, and leave is independent of gender (as in Sweden). The one area where there is little regulation is wages, and parental rights are heavily skewed in favour of women.

There's a continued gender pay gap. But, while women are under-represented in managerial and high-paying professional occupations, their participation in politics is improving. Between 2005 and 2018, the share of women ministries has gone up from 26% to 31%, and the share of women MPs rose from 19 % to 29 %[15].

Timeline of women's rights changes in UK



15 - Source : https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/countries/united-kingdom

UNITED STATES

One of many hot topics as far as women's rights are concerned in the US is the questioning of the right to abortion, that was secured for women in 1973. In 2016, the state of Indiana passed and anti-abortion law that prohibited abortion on the basis of the fetus' gender, race, ethnicity or disability. The US Supreme Court ruled in 2019 that this regulation was anti-constitutional. In another judiciary case, legal appeals continue to challenge the Trump administration's decision to restrict public funding of family planning facilities. Besides, 'rape culture' is regularly publicly debated

The women's rights movement started to organize at the beginning of the 19th century. State by state, it took a century for a full acknowledgment that women are as capable of reasoning as men, as capable to testify for themselves, and as capable to own property in their name. When, in 1789, the US Constitution was ratified, the terms 'persons', 'people' and 'electors' where nonetheless still exclusive of women and people of color. But those notions made different interpretations possible. In 1920 the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution insured women's suffrage.

A proper gender equality policy was gradually developed. In 1961, a President's Commission of the Status of Women was funded and chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt, and worked towards lessening workplace discrimination. The Equal Pay Act that soon followed made it illegal to pay female workers less than men workers for the same job. From 1968 on, job advertisements could not be sex-segregated anymore, allowing women to apply for higher-responsibility and higher-paid jobs. The job market being desegregated; education was also bit by bit opened to women. In the meantime, sexual and marital violence was prohibited.

Real participation in economic and political organisations remains, to this day, imperfect. Slightly fewer than 20% of congressional seats are held by women, whilst slightly more statewide elective positions are held by women. The numbers even indicate a decrease in political representation, after the 2001 peak. Though egalitarian, the US political culture is rather traditional, discouraging women from running and acquiring leadership skills. As to economic integration, the US has a rather low percentage of women engaged in the workforce compared to other industrialized countries. This can partly be explained by the inexistence of a systematic paid parental leave policy. Fully paid maternity leave is provided by less than 20% percent of employers in the US. Another hypothesis is the stagnation of the gender pay gap since the 1990's, a discrimination that could discourage women to apply for untraditional jobs[16].



16 - Source : https://www.history.com/topics/womens-history/womens-history-us-timeline

Timeline of women's rights changes in USA

EQUALITY

2013: The ban against women in military combat positions is removed

1997: Madeleine Albright appointed as the first female United States Secretary of State

1981: Sandra Day O'Connor appointed as an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States She was the first woman to serve on the Court.

1978: The Pregnancy Discrimination Act bans employment discrimination against pregnant women.

1973: The US Supreme Court declares that the Constitution protects women's right to terminate an early pregnancy, thus making abortion legal in the U.S.

1972: Title IX protects people from discrimination based on sex in education programs or activities that receive Federal financial assistance.

1964: The Title VII of the Civil Rights Act includes a prohibition against employment discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, or sex.



1937: The US Supreme Court upholds Washington state's minimum wage laws for women.

1920: Ratification of the 19th Amendment, which granted women the right to vote in elections throughout the country.

By 1900, every state has passed legislation to grant married women some control over their property and earnings.

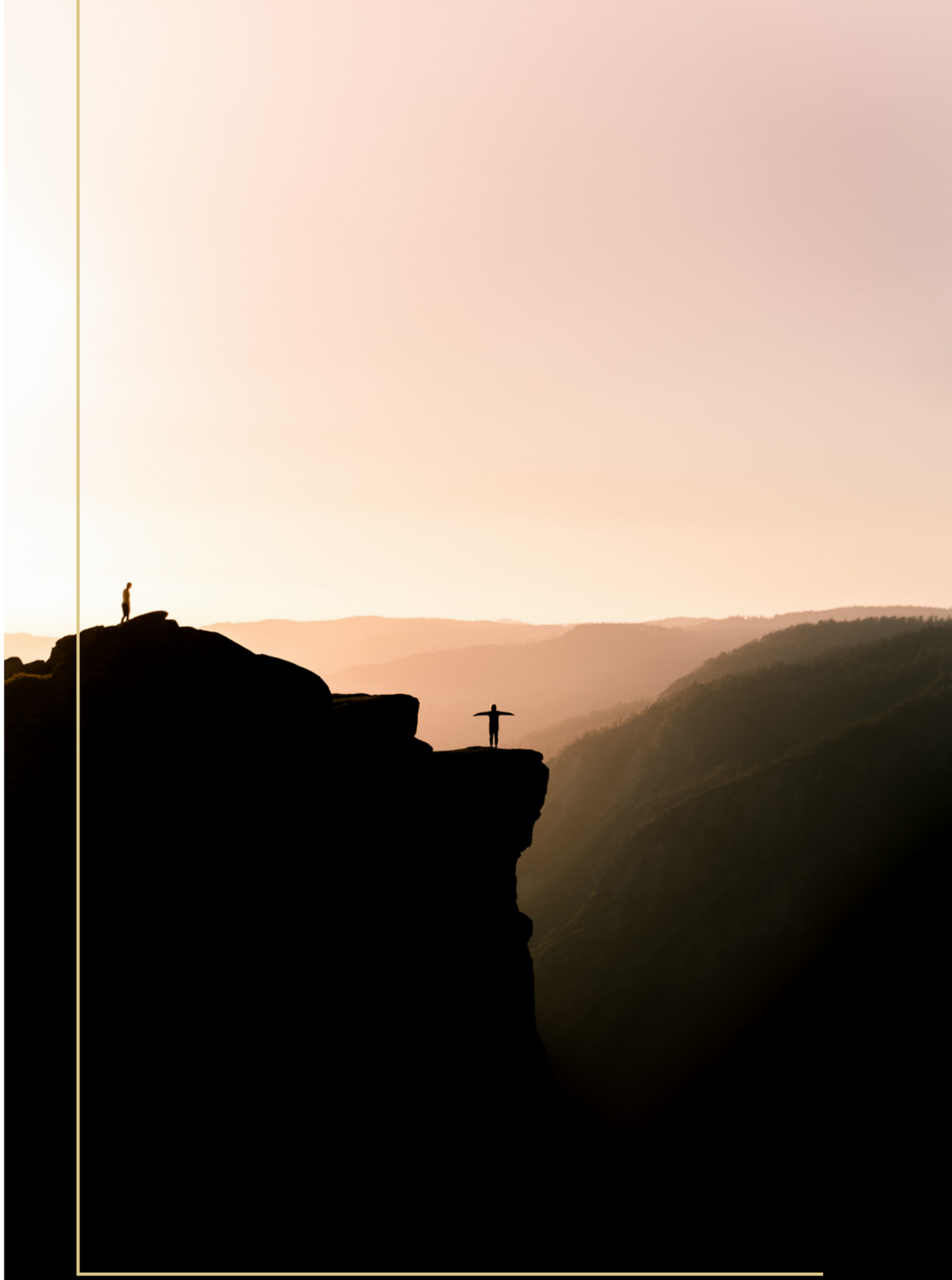
1890: A first state grants women the right to vote in all elections (Wyoming)

1869: A first state passes a woman suffrage law (Wyoming)

1848: 300 women and men sign the Declaration of Sentiments, a plea for the end of discrimination against women in all spheres of society (New York)

1839: A first state grants women the right to hold property in their own name, with the required permission of their husbands (Mississippi)

1777: All states pass laws which take away women's right to vote.



CONCLUSIONS

The examples of the countries studied clearly demonstrate how far we still are from equality as reprised in the table below.

	BE	DK	FR	HU	IT	LT	NL	SI	SE	UK	US
First education system for girls	1864	-	1836	-	-	-	1867	1869	1843	1880	1839
Right to be a judge/ lawyer	1922	-	1900	-	1963	-	1991	-	-	1919	1879
Own and manage earnings	1900	1970	1907	-	-	-	-	1869	-	1870	1839
Maternity leave	1898	-	1909	-	-	-	1991	-	1955	1993	1993
Higher education without authorization	-	-	1938	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Own bank account	1900	-	1965	-	-	-	-	-	-	1870	1960's
Job without authoriza-tion	-	-	1965	-	-	-	1960'	-	-	-	1970's
Equal work equal pay (as a principle)	2008	-	1967	-	1977	-	-	1970	-	1971	-
Mixed-gender schools compulsory	1982	-	1975	-	-	-	-	-	-	2010	1973
Job gender discrimina-tion banned	1978	-	1983	-	-	2016	1992	2002	1980	1975	1964
Law to enforce parity in companies' executive boards	2011	-	2011	-	2011	-	2011	-	-	None	None
Sexual harassment at work banned	2002	-	2012	2003	2009	1998	None	2008	2018	2010	1995
Partial voting right	1920	1908	-	1919	1925	-	1919	1942	1919	1918	1890
Full voting right	1948	1915	1944	1945	1946	1918	1919	1919	1921	1928	1920
Eligibility for election	1948	-	1946	-	-	-	1917	-	-	1928	-
Constitutio-nalization of gender equality	2002	-	1946	-	-	-	-	2004	1923	-	-
First female minister of government	1965	1924	1947	1958	1976	-	1956	None	1947	1965	-
Creation of specific go-vernmental body	2002	-	1974	-	1984	2001	-	1992	-	-	-
First female Prime Minister	2019	2011	1983	None	None	1990	None	2013	None	1975	-
Parity in politics (first quotas)	1994	-	2000	banned	2003	-	-	1987	2006	None	-

	BE	DK	FR	HU	IT	LT	NL	SI	SE	UK	US
Contracep-tion right	1898	-	1909	-	-	-	1991	-	1955	1993	1993
Equal rights between wife and husband	1976	1970	1970	-	1975	1998	1984	-	-	1975	-
Abortion right	1990	1973	1975	1953	1978	-	1981	-	1938	1967	1973
Creation of a paternity leave	2001	-	2001	-	2013	-	2019	-	1974	2002	-
Domestic violence banned or tackled	2001	-	2010	-	-	-	1991	2009	1965	2004	1994
Same-sex marriage	2003	2012	2013	banned	2016	None	2001	None (partnerships allowed)	2009	2013	2015
First sport licence delivered to a woman	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
First sport club or section welcoming women	-	-	1906 ("Ondine" in Lyon and Paris)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Boxing is allowed for women	-	-	1998	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Gender diversity ordained in PE	-	-	1970	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

It is worth keeping in mind that it took more than two hundred years of struggle to achieve rights for women which were considered common place amongst men! Given this history, we now give examples of some of the inspirational women who fought for these rights throughout history.





INSPIRING WOMEN FIGURES

They opened the doors for others

Throughout the project, while gathering experience from the participants and the partners, and going deeper into the Literature research it has become clear that we need to do more to shine a light on the ambitious, successful women who dreamt big and achieve/achieved their personal and professional goals.

SWinG is about Supporting Women in achieving their Goals and therefore we wanted to demonstrate the existing impact of women in various leadership roles.

From our perspective, it is crucial to highlight and quickly tell the story of such successful women who are or have been making changes in as many contexts as possible in order to inspire other women to design their unique path.

In the section below you will find some figures from the various countries involved in the partnership.

BELGIUM

Catherine De Bolle
Born in 1940 - Dared to lead
Police Woman

Catherine Bolle broke barriers in 2012 by becoming the first female and also the youngest commissioner-general of the Federal Police ever in Belgium. She became a special European role model in March 2018 when she was elected director of Europol, the most prestigious police function in the EU.

«It remains important that I am a woman... It shows that there is still a glass ceiling, but that this ceiling can be broken.»

Isala Van Diest
1842-1916 - Dared to instigate sorority
Medical Doctor

Isala had to travel to Switzerland in order to enrol in high school and university because female students were not yet permitted in Belgium. Isala Van Diest worked in England until she was legally allowed to practice medicine in Belgium. Besides her official job, she used to provide care to former prostitutes, fought the trafficking of women and children and founded the Belgian League for Women's Rights alongside with Marie Popelin.

«I choose to study medicine because I realise only too well the moral impact one has as doctor on a female patient. While one soothes their physical suffering, women open their heart to you. I see medicine as a way to help women get out of their dull resignation, to get them to help each other and make them stronger so that they will demand that which they have a right to.»

Hélène Dutrieux
1877 – 1961 - Dared to fly
The First Pilot

Hélène Dutrieux lived an adventurous life. She was a Belgian cycling world champion, stunt cyclist, stunt motorcyclist, automobile racer, stunt driver, pioneer aviator, wartime ambulance driver, and director of a military hospital. When she was 14 years old, she had to leave school to help her family's bad financial situation. Following the step of her older brother, she became a professional cyclist – and quite a successful one! She broke the women's world record for distance cycled in one hour and was awarded the Cross of St. André by King Leopold II.

In 1910, she became the fourth woman in the world (and the first Belgian woman) licensed as an aeroplane pilot. During her flying career, Dutrieux was a trailblazer – she was the first woman in the world to take a passenger along with her, the first woman who flew for a long distance over land without stops, and later the first woman to pilot a hydroplane. She also broke several elevation and duration records.

Kim Clijsters
Born in 1983 - Dared to come back
Tenniswoman

Kim Clijsters is a Belgian professional tennis player. She started her professional career in 1997 and has won a total of six Grand Slam tournament titles, four in singles and two in doubles. She initially retired from tennis in 2007 at the age of 23. She returned to the sport two years later as a mother. She is regarded as a source of inspiration to mothers on the WTA Tour, a role she embraced with vigour. She is one of three mothers to win a Grand Slam singles title, and her three titles are tied with Margaret Court for the most of all-time. Additionally, Clijsters is the only mother to be ranked No. 1 in the world since the start of the WTA rankings in 1975.

«I always try every day to be a good person and to be nice to others, and I think that's probably the most important thing. I'm proud that I won tournaments and everything, but I want players to think that Kim was a nice person.»



DENMARK

Ester Boserup
1910-1999 - Dared to analyze women's role in economic development
Economist

She studied economic development and agricultural intensification. Her 'Boserup's theory' countered Malthus's theory by positing that demographic change affects agricultural production, not the other way around. Nevertheless, her magnum opus was her 1970 book 'Womens' Roles in Economic Development'. She inaugurated decades of research connecting issues of gender and issues of economic development. Ester Boserup participated in the debate on women in the workforce and human development, especially as she worked at the UN and other international organisations.

«Somebody should have the courage not to specialise and to look at how one can bring things together. That is what I have tried to do.»[17]

Margrethe Rask
1930-1977 - Dare to do her job where it was most needed
Physician and surgeon

Margrethe Rask practiced medicine in Zaïre for several years in more than basic conditions, and founded a hospital in the town of Abumombazi. While treating her patients, she contracted an unknown virus that has become known as HIV. Doctors were at a loss to explain the series of deadly symptoms she suddenly experienced. She died soon after she had returned to Denmark, and was cared for by her partner during her final months.

Nadia Nadim
Born in 1988 - Dared to play and be an advocate for change
Football player

Nadia is an Afghan-Danish football player born in Herat, Afghanistan, and raised there until her father, an Afghan National Army (ANA) general, was executed by the Taliban in 2000. Her family then escaped using their savings. Expecting to be brought –by traffickers- to London, they ended up in rural Denmark; a country that became her home when she was granted citizenship in 2008. She has played professionally in Denmark, New Jersey, Portland, Manchester and now Paris. She is a role model for many as she became the first naturalised Dane of either gender, to win a cap and has called out racism publicly on Danish Television. Beside playing football, she speaks seven languages fluently and is a reconstructive surgeon.

«If you give refugees a chance, they can make society better.»

«I want to teach the next generation that it doesn't take that much to help someone.»[18]

17 - Ester Boserup, in Mathieu, Finding Out is My Life: Conversations with Ester Boserup in the 1990s, 2014
18 - See article in Vogue UK https://www.vogue.co.uk/arts-and-lifestyle/article/nadia-nadim

Sherin Khankan
Born in 1974 - Dared to take part in religious (male-dominated) institutions
Imam

Born in Denmark, to a Syrian father and a Finnish mother, Sherin's father was an inspiration to her, as he was a political refugee and a feminist. She devoted her life to reconciling the two cultures that she inherited, while also challenging the long-running patriarchy in religious institutions (in all three monotheist religions). As an imam, she gives the call to prayer and takes the service at the Mariam Mosque in Copenhagen. In 2007, she founded Critical Muslims, an organization that links religion and politics.

«I rarely use the imam title. It's the most notorious title in Denmark because of previous negative coverage and documentaries on mosques and imams in Denmark. (...) Everything starts with language, so we need to challenge the narrative around the title. You can take a notorious title and give it a totally different meaning by changing the narrative. To change the narrative, you have to create something which discredits the existing one. That is what we're trying to do in the Mariam Mosque.»[19]

Widad Akrawi
Born in 1969 - Dared to bridge the gap between cultures
NGO Founder

Specialized in international health and epidemiology, Widad Akrawi was forced to leave her country in 1991 when the Iraqi regime regained control of the Kurdistan. Growing up, she had founded a secret group against torture in Iraq, working on collecting evidence of torture and other human rights abuses. Her continued activism led her to become elected in the executive committee of Amnesty International in 2006. She is also the co-founder of Defend International, an NGO dedicated to address grave violations of human rights and implement preventive measures to promote peace and democracy.

FRANCE

Alice Millat
1884 - 1957 - Dared to fight for women's right to practice sport
A Pioneering Sportswoman

Alice Milliat studied to become a teacher and was an active sportswoman with a love for rowing. Passionate about sport and what it could bring to women and girls, she became a fierce advocate for the development of women's sport. In 1919, Alice Milliat's first big move was to request that the IOC include women in the track and field program. Her request was badly welcomed and she decided to create, together with her peers, an international federation, which gave birth to the first "Women's Games" in 1921. In 1922, 38 countries from 5 continents were affiliated with FSFI and the decision was made to hold the "Women's Olympic Games" every 4 years. Between 1922 and 1934 the FSFI organized four Women's Olympics exposing hundreds of athletes to thousands of spectators. In the Paris Games in 1924, 15,000 people came to watch. Alice Milliat and her peers did more to promote women sports than either the IOC or the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) in the 1920's and 1930's. Alice Milliat's activism was directly responsible for the development of women's basketball, football and athletics in France as well the international institutionalization of women's sport.[20]

19 - Sherin Khankhan, Interview for Girls Are Awesome, 23 of April 2020
20 - Source: Alice Millat Foundation

Isabelle Kocher
Born in 1966 - Dared to feminize her companies managerial bodies
French businesswoman, Managing Director (since 2016) and member of the Board (since 2014) of the Engie Group.

She is one of the first women to be the Executive Director of a CAC 40 group. She took power and continued the transformation already undertaken at Engie: innovation, use of digital tools, strategy and initiatives made clear to all. The company has now set the foundations for feminisation of its managerial teams as a strategic objective for 2020. Her eviction in early 2020 somewhat revived the discussion over the lack of female economic leaders in France.

Olympe de Gouges
1748-1793 - Dared to claim equal rights
Writer, women's rights advocate and abolitionist activist

As an observer of her times, she perceived that the arguments favoring slave trade and injustice towards women were false and ineffective. She published several theater plays and essays in order to fight racism, slavery and misogyny. Her 1791 "Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen" was a pamphlet against unequal political rights between men and women. She died beheaded for wanting to exercise a power held by men, for «forgetting the virtues that are appropriate to her sex».

«A woman has the right to mount the scaffold. She must possess equally the right to mount the speaker's platform.»[21]

Simone de Beauvoir
1908-1986 - Dared to pronounce feminism
Philosopher and novelist

She actively participated in the emancipation of women in the 1970s. With her novel *The Second Sex*, she challenged the morals and the notion of gender. She became an emblem of feminism by denouncing a society that forces men and women into domination and subordination roles.

«Representation of the world, like the world itself, is the work of men; they describe it from their own point of view, which they confuse with absolute truth.»[22]

21 - Olympe de Gouges, 1791, Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the Female Citizen
22 - Simone de Beauvoir, 1949, The Second Sex

Simone Veil
1927-1917 - Dared to promote motherhood as choice
Lawyer, politician and member of the French Academy

Appointed Minister of Health in 1974, she succeeded in passing the "Veil Law" in 1975 that allowed abortion. It thus put an end to centuries of prohibitions and deaths of women who had had illegal abortions. She later became the first president of the European Parliament.

«I would like first of all to share with you a belief held by all women – and I am sorry to do so before an Assembly almost exclusively made up of men: any woman seeking an abortion does so with a heavy heart. You just have to listen to the women...»[23]

HUNGARY

Florence Baker
1841 - 1916 - Dared to be a scientist, a discoverer
Explorer

Her life has been summarized as follows: an orphan who became a slave, explored the Nile and died a Lady. Born in Hungary, her family was murdered during the 1848 Hungarian revolution. As a teenager, she was sold as a slave to the explorer Samuel Baker, who took her to Africa to lead an expedition along the River Nile. Together they discovered Murchison Falls and Lake Albert in what is now Uganda. Back in Samuel Baker's country, England, they got married and Samuel got knighted by Queen Victoria. Lady Florence Baker fought against slavery, but her travels helped Western administration to implement ramifications all over Africa.

Blanka Teleki de Szek
1806 - 1862 - Dared to educate girls
Feminist activist

As a noble woman, she studied painting and sculpture in Munich, Paris and Budapest. She regarded women's education as a necessity and right, so she founded a school for girls in Hungary's capital city. Two years later, in 1848, she and her students signed a petition demanding equal rights for men and women, women suffrage and the right for women to attend university. Her partaking in the Hungarian revolution the same year caused her to be imprisoned, which never caused her to renounce her ideals.

23 - Simone Veil, 1974, Speech to the Parliament on Abortion Law

ITALY

Artemisia Gentileschi
1593-1653 - Dared to represent women in arts
Painter

At a time when being a female painter implied to find a niche and set oneself apart from other women, Artemisia Gentileschi was astonishingly bold. She was one of the first women to paint historical and religious scenes, and an amazing amount of female figures. While the male experience of the world had been widely depicted through majestic and raw mythifications, she offered a glimpse into the female experience. The current discussion over the 'female gaze' strongly echoes her pioneering works.

Maria Montessori
1870-1952 - Dared to think outside the box
Medical doctor and pedagogue

After she became one of the first medical doctors in Italy, Maria Montessori specialized in psychiatry. She designed a method to enable children with a mental deficiency to accomplish what was until then unattainable: to read and write. As her intuition and work paid off, she generalized her method to neurotypical children, founding a new kind pedagogy. Her observation and analysis of the joint development of the body and mind of children led her to change the way we perceive education.

Teresa Mattei
1921 - 2013 - Dared to resist fascism and patriarchy
Politician

During the war, Teresa Mattei actively resisted fascism with her communist partners. After the war, she became a member of the Constituent Assembly and participated in shaping her countries institutions, laws and values. Her disagreement with Stalinism later got her expelled from the Italian Communist Party. She afterwards channelled her political activism in feminism, through the Italian Women Union.

«No democratic development, no substantial progress happens in a people's life if it does not come with a complete emancipation of women.»[24]

Emma Marcegaglia
Born in 1965 - Dared to take part in the private sector
CEO

To this day, Emma Marcegaglia has headed 26 different companies. From 2008 to 2012 she was the chairman of Confindustria, Italy's main business lobby group, contributing to the economic development of her country. Since 2014 she leads Eni, a privatized hydrocarbon provider that counts no less than 32.000 employees.

«The advice I would give to women who would like to be entrepreneurs: speak up, be committed, be patient and you can do it!»[25]

24 - Teresa Mattei, Constituent Assembly, 18 of March 1947
25 - Emma Marcegaglia, at the "BNP Paribas Women Entrepreneur Program", 2019

LITHUANIA

Jurga Ivanauskaite
1961 - 2007 - Dared to travel and engage with the world
Writer

She was a resolutely exotic and unconventional writer. Very early in her career, she participated in popularizing non-Marxist ideas as well as Western culture, while at the same time reporting the delusion that can come with it. Her rebelliousness was probably under-evaluated by the Soviet authorities, that ignored the transformative power of female artists. She then turned to Eastern culture, writing about her travail experiences, her experiments with Buddhism and her disapproval of China's attitude towards them.

NETHERLANDS

Margaretha Klompé
1912 - 1986 - Dared to endorse social responsibility
Science teacher and politician

After years of teaching chemistry, and soon after Nazi Germany invaded the Netherlands, Margaretha Klompé joined the underground resistance against foreign occupation as a messenger. At the end of the war, she became involved in three main activities: national politics (she was elected to the House of Representatives and numerous times appointed minister of the government), European integration (she started as a member of the European Coal and Steel Community Parliament and kept working at the Council of Europe), and catholic activism (she was a member of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace). Her focus was always on the underprivileged, and she worked towards reducing poverty, ensuring a basic income to all, and improving women's rights.

Sonja Barend
Born in 1940 - Dared to be thought-provoking
Talk show founder and host

She launched her talk show Sonja during the 1970s to voice her political ideas and break taboos. She regularly brought up topics like feminism, homo- and other sexualities, as well as emancipation in general. She had made a commitment to give a platform to minorities and ordinary people. She is retired from the broadcasting industry but remains an important female figure in the cultural landscape.

Aimee van Wynsberghe
Dared to make ethics a catalyst for innovation
Robot ethicist

She is the president of the not-for-profit NGO she co-founded: Foundation for Responsible Robotics. Through this, she advocates for the ethical design and production of robots. Her 2016 book Healthcare Robots: Ethics, Design and Implementation addresses the role of robots in the healthcare sector and the need to impose guidelines on their use. She regularly urges the EU to take steps in this direction, especially in situations where robots replace jobs through automation.

Carine de Meyere
Dare to become a role model
Global fundraiser

As a student, she took classes in Women's Studies at Harvard University. For years she has been promoting female leadership, diversity and inclusion. Today, she specifically insists on encouraging women to pursue a career in technology and artificial intelligence. In 2015, she took part in TEDxAmsterdamWomen, directing Partnership and New Business Development. Besides, she was one of the first people in the Netherlands to promote impact investing and social entrepreneurship. She finds that, since women find purpose the most important motivation to work, those are sectors where they can really make it and make a difference.

SLOVENIA

Saša Einsiedler
Born in 1967 - Dared to claim equal worth between men and women
Communication Coach and author of several books, including 'My Self-esteem is My Decision'

She is a mother of five children who decided not to give up after life has given her tough times. Despite having had a successful radio and television career, she often spent her evenings in tears, until she decided look for the dreams she had lost. Today, she is a communication coach, a consultant and a mediator, who has a DreamBuilder coaching license.

«It seems to me that us women, who are a little over twenty (laughs), are just now starting to see things that would benefit us at the time. For example, we are finally starting to see that we are worth up to a millimetre the same as men. No better, no worse. If we knew this before, we might have been able to create a balance, which, unfortunately, still does not exist.»

Irena Mihelj
Dared to express herself
Translator (from Norwegian to Slovenian)

After studying history and theology, Irena was the first blind high school graduate in Slovenia. Her last victory is truly remarkable: she translated the crime novel Dødt Løp (Dead Heat) by Kurt Aust from Norwegian in only two months, for which even the author himself has congratulated her. She regrets that people are afraid of being different and feels that differences should be more valued. Unfortunately, blindness in still a big taboo in Slovenia.

«I think they're shutting me out because they're so scared. But if I was also deaf, I would still find a way to somehow communicate with the world. It all depends on how brave you are and how you deal with your own limitations. Some prefer to just stay in the corner and think things will go passed them. But that is such a waste of life, because we only get one. And my life has taught me that I simply won't have anything if I don't do something and try to do get what I want. I cannot rely on others. Nowadays nobody owes you anything. When you really try to do something, others will also open their eyes and try to help you. However, it is still true that there is a huge lack of awareness about blindness in our country.»

ILKA ŠTUHEC

Jurga Ivanauskaite
Born in 1990 - Dared to focus on what one can achieve
Ski champion

Currently the most successful Slovenian skier, Ilka Štuhec, stood on the skis for the first time when she was only two and a half years old, and has practically stayed on them ever since. After a difficult career path marked by numerous injuries, she proved that she can always keep going and return to the white slopes even stronger. She took over the hearts of her nation with her warmth and openness.

«Everything is a defeat if you don't win, even if you are second, third, or fourth. And yet, in sport, there are always so many factors that decide this. I learned not to care about that. I am very emotional, and we have all seen that a couple of times. But I get it out of me and then it's better.»

«I promise only to myself. I promise that I will always do my best, give my maximum. Then I have nothing to regret»

Nada Rotovnik Kozjek
Born in 1963 - Dare to embrace happiness where it is
Anaesthetist, Founder and head of Clinical Nutrition Clinic at the Oncology Institute

She is a doctor at the oncology institute and a clinical nutrition expert, as well as an athlete and a triathlon runner. It seems logical that a nutrition and an athlete like herself also works as a consultant to Slovenian top athletes and the Olympic Committee. She moreover takes over a public guidance role: food charlatans have a much more difficult job to do because of her.

«Happiness can already be the patient's good results and improvement of the disease state. The more horrible things I often see at work, the more I appreciate the moments when I feel comfortable in the company of friends. We don't get happiness from money or material goods. Happy feelings from me are laughter with my friends in the pool or when we get to the top of a hill after a lot of effort. Moments of happiness are also in the forest, walking or running, or going for a walk with our dog, when the light pours between the trees. Of course, happiness is also a hug, an embrace, when you feel accepted just the way you are.»

«It is important that doctors who carry on the professional and ethical responsibility for an individual's health, adopt the knowledge of a clinical nutrition as a medical discipline.»

SWEDEN

Simone Giertz
Born in 1990 - Dared to invent new ways of using technologies
Robotics youtuber

Simone Giertz is a professional youtuber, inventor and maker... of «shitty robots». Her imagination and knowledge is devoted to designing robots that make you smile for they look awfully serious but accomplish absurd tasks. She recently created a 'proud parent machine' whose articulated arm pats you on the shoulder and utters «I'm proud of you son» when you insert a coin; as well as a robot that serves soup and a drone that carries babies. The robots may be purposefully useless, but they bring attention to her love for technology and her ability to build those clever objects, which provides a great role-model for other female robotic nerds.

«I've shied away from the 'women in tech' question because it's always what people ask about. I think as soon as you're a woman, or any minority doing something, you automatically become a representative for it, and I think a lot of brilliant women's interviews are being wasted on talking about what it's like being a woman. But yeah, totally wish it was 50 / 50 between the genders on my channel.»[26]

Lovette Jallow
Born in 1984 - Dared to fight racism
Author, speaker, entrepreneur and social activist.

She is the voice of anti-racism in Sweden, pointing out structural and individual injustices. Her struggle started as she was a teenager and was bullied for the colour of her skin. Her first public take on the lacking inclusion of all skin tones was the creation of a facebook group: Black Vogue. The book she later published was the first European manual of beauty care and makeup for Black and Brown skin tones. Her advocacy kept escalating and expanded past the beauty industry. Lovette Jallow is now a lecturer on xenophobia, whiteness and white privilege, the dismantling of structural inequalities.

«We lose out valuable insight that could improve society. Because the same people that are being silenced are the same people that contribute day in and day out to the same society.»[27]

Saga Becker
Born in 1988 - Dared to promote inclusivity
Actress

In 2015, she became the first openly transgender woman to win a Guldbagge Award for her performance in Nånting måste gå sönder (Something Must Break). The same year, she also became an ambassador for the organisation Suicide Zero, that aims to prevent suicides, notably among LBGT people. Her social activism has only been increasing since then, working towards a more inclusive film industry. She urges film directors to hire more transgender actors and actresses and raises awareness about dysphoria and depression.

26 - Simone Giertz, Interview for The Verge, 24. of May 2016
27 - Lovette Jallow, TEDxUmea, 14. Of June 2018

Greta Thunberg
Born in 2003 - Dared to prioritize sustainability
Leader of the «Fridays for future» movement

Straightforward and fact-oriented, the young leader of the School Strike for Climate movement addresses climate change at all levels. She regularly speaks to political and economic leaders, urging them to take resolute and quick action against climate change. Most polarizing was her 2019 speech at the UN Climate Action Summit, where she bluntly posited that elected and nominated leaders should be the ones taking responsibility for the future, instead of young generations.

«This is all wrong. I shouldn't be up here. I should be back in school on the other side of the ocean. Yet you all come to us young people for hope? How dare you! You have stolen my dreams and my childhood with your empty words. And yet I'm one of the lucky ones. People are suffering. People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are in the beginning of a mass extinction. And all you can talk about is money and fairy tales of eternal economic growth. How dare you!»[28]

UNITED KINGDOM

Jane Austen
1775 - 1817 - Dared to explore the autonomy of women
Writer

Renowned novelist, Jane Austen commented the gentry of her contemporary 18th century. She precisely depicted women's condition, especially their dependence on marriage and their independence of thinking, using irony and realism. At a time when being a full-time writer as a woman was considered a degradation of one's feminity (since every woman's priority needed to be a full-time wife and mother), she had to work anonymously. It's only after her death that her nephew's Memoir of Jane Austen sparked enthusiasm and made her famous.

«I do not think I ever opened a book in my life which had not something to say upon woman's inconstancy. Songs and proverbs, all talk of woman's fickleness. But perhaps you will say, these were all written by men.

– Perhaps I shall. Yes, yes, if you please, no reference to examples in books. Men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story. Education has been theirs in so much higher a degree; the pen has been in their hands. I will not allow books to prove anything.»[29]

28 - Greta Thunberg, Speech at the UN Climate Action Summit, 23. Of September 2019
29 - Jane Austen, Persuasion, 1818

Emmeline Pankhurst
1858 - 1928 - Dared to fight for our rights
Suffragette

In 1999, the Time Magazine named her as one of the 100 most important people of the 20th century, considering she transformed the social conception of a woman. By her unconventional political activism, she indeed participated in achieving women's suffrage in the UK.

«We have to free half of the human race, the women, so that they can help to free the other half.»[30]

Noor Inayat Khan
1914 - 1944 - Dared to actively defend peace and justice
Secret Agent

After she was born in Russia, her family migrated to the UK and then to France. During World War II she was a British spy and became the first female wireless operator to be sent from the UK into occupied France. Her fluency at both languages made her a great cover agent. She was captured after being betrayed, refused her interrogators any piece of information, and died executed in Dachau's concentration camp.

Helen Sharman
Born in 1963 - Dared to embrace «male» carriers
Chemist and astronaut

She responded to a radio advertisement asking for applicants to be the first British space explorer, and was selected for the mission live on ITV. The mission was co-organised by the Soviet Union and the UK. Helen Sharman was 27 years old when she went into space, and has not returned ever since.

Tanni Grey Thompson
Born in 1969 - Dared to open the way and be vocal
Legendary Paralympic Athlete

Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson is Britain's greatest Paralympic athlete (16 Paralympic medals plus world championships) and is recognized as one of the most gifted and courageous sportswomen of her generation. The Baroness retired in 2007, but this action has not slowed her down. Instead, she played a prominent role in public life. In 2010, the Baroness was elevated to the House of Lords as a crossbench peer, and she participates actively in debates ever since, with a particular focus on sport, disability, health, welfare, and youth development. In London in 2012, she became the first Paralympian to commentate on Olympic sports.

Abundantly active in charity and non-profit work, Tanni Grey-Thompson is chair of ukactive, an organization that seeks to improve the health of British citizens by promoting a healthy and active lifestyle.[31]

30 - Emmeline Pankhurst, in Pankhurst, The Suffragette: The History of the Women's Militant Suffrage, 1911
31 - Source: https://www.a-speakers.com/

Emma Watson
Born in 1990 - Dared to internationally engage in women's rights
Comedian

In 2014, she was appointed as a UN Women Goodwill ambassador and helped launch the HeForShe campaign of the UN Women mouvement. She sensitizes men, through her speeches, to respect gender equality with women and to respect their rights. Nearly five hundred thousand men are now involved in this movement worldwide: «to act to end all forms of discrimination faced by women and girls». The slogan of the HeForShe movement is: «Gender equality is not an exclusively female issue, it is a human issue».

UNITED STATES

Mary McLeod Bethune
1875 - 1955 - Dared to advocate for women of colour
Stateswoman, activist, school founder

She founded the National Council for Negro Women in 1935, and afterward resided as president or leader for numerous African American women's organisations. She was appointed as a national adviser to president Franklin Roosevelt after she supported his campaign and had become close friends with him. Together they founded the Federal Council on Negro Affairs, also known as the Black Cabinet.

«I leave you love. I leave you hope. I leave you the challenge of developing confidence in one another. I leave you a thirst for education. I leave you a respect for the use of power. I leave you faith. I leave you racial dignity. I leave you a desire to live harmoniously with your fellow men. I leave you finally, a responsibility to our young people.»[32]

Bessie Coleman
1892 - 1926 - Dared to recognise how sociocultural inequality creates gender inequity, not one's identity
Pilot

As a civil aviator, she was the first woman in the US to hold a pilot license. When a child, she had been sent to work in cotton fields and studied at a small segregated school. In her twenties, she worked as a manicurist to save up money for flying classes. As there were no flight training opportunities in the US she learned French and left for Paris. She came back as a media sensation and made it into exhibition flying which consisted in performing impressive tricks in the air for audiences. Committed to promoting aviation and fighting racism, she planned to found a school for African-American fliers and refused to attend segregated events. She died in a plane crash while testing a new aircraft.

«The air is the only place free from prejudices. I knew we had no aviators, neither men nor women, and I knew the Race needed to be represented along this most important line, so I thought it was my duty to risk my life to learn aviation...»[33]

32 - Mary McLeod Bethune, Last Will and Testament, undated
33 - Bessie Coleman, reported in Black History Pages, undated

Alison Bechfdel
Born in 1960 - Dared to expose cultural artefacts that objectify women
Cartoonist

She is renowned for her comic strip Dykes to Watch Out For and her graphic memoir Fun Home. Her core message has been and is still that women, and not solely lesbians, are full on human beings. As part of her efforts to objectify the cultural processes through which women are objectified, she invented what is known as the Bechdel test. In her 1985 comic strip Dykes to Watch Out For, she listed the requirements a film should meet to be considered non-sexist: 1) the scenario present at least two female characters, 2) those two women talk to each other, 3) about something other than a man. About half of all evaluated films meet these criteria, indicates crowd-sourced data, which proves that women are still not correctly represented in the fiction industry.

Billie Jean King
Born in 1943 - Dared to step up for changes
Tennis player.

She used to be a top tennis player, excelling in both single and double. In 1973, she famously won the Battle of the Sexes tennis match against Bobby Riggs. Besides her victories on the tennis court, she indeed was keen to advocate for gender equality, winning sponsors like Virginia Slims (a cigarette brand) to women's tennis. In 1972, Title IX was passed, stating: «No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance» Billie Jean King was instrumental in the passing of this law. She is a role model for many reason and the main one being she always stoop up for what she deemed right. She was one of the first female athletes to openly embrace her homosexuality, and she became a champion for LGBTQ rights. She founded the Women Sports Foundation and later on, she started a non-profit, the Billie Jean King Leadership Initiative, which advocates for more diversity and inclusivity in the workplace.

«Ever since that day when I was 11 years old, and I wasn't allowed in a photo because I wasn't wearing a tennis skirt, I knew that I wanted to change the sport.»

«Reputation is what others think about you. What's far more important is character, because that is what you think about yourself.»



CONCLUSION

Key lessons and Recommendations

The above report has outlined the broad situation and state of the game in terms of evidence surrounding the prevalence and extent of gender equality within sports organisations. It has done so by analysing broad trends in the considerable body of research literature which exists on the topic through a scoping review, and via analysis of a survey. **The systematic narrative literature review highlighted the considerable complexity related to this issue, including discrimination, the reproduction of patriarchy and the prevalence of masculine ideologies and belief systems at multiple levels within the sports system,** including at the structural, organisational and personal levels. The review also highlighted **the tendency for sports organisations to be institutions within which traditionally masculine forms of behaviour and networking, 'qualities' and embodied ideals flourish and are reproduced.** When such ideals are challenged, they tend to be challenged by exceptional women, or by state-level or institutional laws such as quotas and targets. Yet even these actions have had minimal (or at best variable) impact; women in leadership positions tend to be exceptional, and quotas and targets are often implemented to minimal levels and are enacted at a glacial pace.

Data analysed in the scoping element of the report supports these conclusions. We have demonstrated that similarly low levels of equality exist at the international, national and local levels in our sample organisations. What's more, although many organisations have produced equality policies and strategies, these are often aimed at participation levels in their sport, and on some occasions with volunteering and coaching roles. Where they do relate to governance, **policies would appear to be severely hampered by election procedures which are only superficially democratic and tend to privilege candidates with an intimate knowledge of, and close personal connections within, the organisations they might seek to help govern.** Due to long standing practices such as 'old boys networks,' participation trends and boardroom etiquette, this often advantages men. What's more, even this conclusion runs the risk of overstating the levels of equality that are possible within sports organisations; several organisations have no equality policy, nor any observable election procedures whatsoever. At the same time, exceptions can and do exist, and it is to these organisations that we must look to find case-studies of best practice in electoral procedures, and where a more gender-neutral culture of inclusion might be found. Whilst the wider picture relating to gender equality in relation to sports leadership remains rather bleak, the existence of some positive examples of specific women and organisations remains a cause for optimism.

Notwithstanding these central points, there are areas in which existing research and evidence from the scoping review do not provide definitive answers. For example, the potential for change at other 'levels' of sports governance remains unclear (for example in smaller associations at local levels, or at subsidiary levels within larger organisations). What is also clear is that in many cases, existing experience of governance at these levels may be essential for future election to apex boards. If this is the case, it could take several mandate periods to see a demonstrable impact at the top level. Moreover, it must be noted that there is a considerable heterogeneity amongst the organisations and research examined in terms of organisational structures, electoral and nomination procedures, national and local cultures, and in terms of personal and group behaviours. It would seem that 'insider knowledge' and experience of the modus operandi of specific sports organisations would be significantly advantageous to any prospective board member, whilst intimate knowledge of local and sports-related contexts could be considered essential. These conclusions lead us to make several tentative recommendations related to the potential for change and relating to the SWinG project.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Recommendations arising from this report include:

- The SWinG project and its partners should carefully target organisations with both a stated aim to ensure gender diversity in apex boards, and are also likely to be able to promote such aims. This will be influenced by several factors, including:
    - 'Hurdles' to qualification for a position on a board (e.g. whether one should be an existing member of the organisation, a club owner, etc.).
    - The extent to which 'external' parties are able to take part in elections.
    - The level of democratic openness in election procedures.
    - Whether organizational, national or local laws are likely to facilitate gender equality, and whether these have been effective or not previously.
    - The maximum mandate of an organisation, and whether specific positions are likely to open up.
- There are a number of pragmatic considerations which will influence the likelihood of success, including:
    - Whether national or organizational laws have compelled boards to have a certain gender balance, and whether this has already been achieved. If so, it is unlikely additional women candidates will be actively sought and supported, and elections might rely on replacement positions for existing women board members.
    - Whether a candidate is a member of, and has previous experience of governance in a sports organisation. If not, roles further down the chain of sports governance might be more realistically obtainable.
    - Whether the candidate is in a position to take up a voluntary role. Most sports organisations would seem to favour wealthy candidates - or at least candidates who are in a position to donate significant amounts of time and resources to their work, without financial recompense.
- Assessment of the organisational culture of a prospective target organisation is key, and might be assessed according to:
    - Existence of diversity policies (particularly ones which explicitly focus upon gender).
    - Are transparent in terms of their statues and procedures.
    - Have gender-sensitive elements in publicly available material. For example, the way women are referred to and discussed is crucial, and could indicate common tendencies in organizational culture with regards to equality.
    - Whether diversity and inclusion extends beyond gender.
    - Which roles women currently fulfil, and whether these are diverse or not.





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About SWinG

SWinG is an ambitious 3 years project, co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme and led by the French Federation for Company Sport.

With the SWinG project, the FFSE, Athletes for Hope, the European Federation for Company Sport (EFCS), the European Hockey Federation (EHF), ENGSO Youth, the network of Les Femmes Chefs d'Entreprises Mondiales (FCEM), the Professional Women's Network (PWN), the Società Sportiva Lazio, the Sport Club Partizan Skofja Loka and the University of Copenhagen are joining forces to identify and nurture women emerging leaders and empower them to become real actors of change, CHANGE and DECISION MAKERS in the sport and physical activity sector.

It has been designed to DEVELOP & PILOT a new TRANSFERABLE APPROACH. It offers an opportunity for the 10 founding partners and the sector as a whole to position as a reference point.

The aim of the unique partnership gearing the project is to act as a CATALYST FOR CHANGE in gender mainstreaming while giving a tremendous boost to the access of women to change-making positions in sport governing bodies. The project will promote Executive Board as an option for women volunteers in sport while also focusing on motivation, training, and skills development for the participants.

In 2020, the SWinG project has joined the Sport for Generation Equality Initiative led by UN Women, a powerful multi-stakeholder coalition to make gender equality a lived reality in and through sport.

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN

The University of Copenhagen is one of the largest in Scandinavia, with over 40,000 students and more than 9,000 employees. The University of Copenhagen (KU) comprises six faculties and around 100 departments and centres, and emphasises gender awareness and gender equality as principles which is integrated in research and teaching.

ABOUT FFSE

The French Federation for Company Sport (FFSE) is the SWInG project leader. The FFSE was formed on March 29th 2003, transforming an already existing organisation that had been created in 1952. It groups together more than 2,000 structures which work on the development of sport for all within a community of work. The FFSE promotes the physical exercise and grassroots sport practice as a user-friendly way to improve health and well-being, as well as to strengthen social links and productivity within a company.



Developing the Art of Opening Doors for Women in Sport

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SWinG
Supporting Women IN achieving their Goals

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