
Persistent Resistance: Leadership Positions for Women in Olympic Sport Governing Bodies

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The 1996 Centennial Olympic Games in Atlanta were hailed in the United States press as the Olympics of the women. In many ways, they were. A record number of women, over 3700, competed in the Games.¹ New sports and events were added in which women competed. Several women broke “new ground” by winning their country’s first medals in women’s events--in some cases, they won their nation’s first Olympic medals.² A female athlete, Teresa Edwards, recited the Olympic oath on behalf of all athletes. An Iranian woman shooter carried her country’s flag during the Opening Ceremonies. As athletes, women at the Centennial Olympics reinforced their emerging presence in sporting competition. Even with their heightened visibility in the Atlanta Games, however, women participated in only a little over one third of the total events and they made up just slightly over one third of the total number of competing Olympians.³ Additionally, because of Islamic dress codes, twenty-seven countries sent no women to the Olympics.⁴

These ambivalent messages about women’s participation in the Olympic Games underscore the tension surrounding women’s involvement in sport generally. Messner⁵ has described sport as a “contested terrain.” Organized sports have historically been primarily a male domain, and, according to Messner, “have come to serve as a primary institutional means for bolstering a challenged and faltering ideology of male superiority in the 20th century.”⁶ Messner argues that “women’s movement into sport represents a genuine quest by women for equality, control of their own bodies, and self-definition, and as such it represents a challenge to the ideological basis of male domination.”⁷ Sport has become a “dynamic social space where dominant ideologies are perpetuated as well as challenged and contested.”⁸

With respect to women’s involvement, sport as contested terrain manifests itself

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in a number of ways. Women participate in some sports, but are prohibited by organizational rules from participating in other sports. The Olympic program in and of itself is one of the prime examples. Women participate in sport, but for many it is at a social cost as their femininity and sexuality is often called into question.⁹ The mass media may include limited coverage of women in sport, but that coverage may trivialize their athleticism by once again emphasizing femininity and sexuality.¹⁰ That being stated, however, and, as documented in U.S. intercollegiate sport, while women may participate as athletes, far fewer women participate in the leadership positions of sport, positions which exert control over women's sporting experiences.¹¹ Leadership by women is the focal point of contested terrain which this study examines.



President Samaranch (C) with Flor Isava-Fonseca of Venezuela (L) and Pijo Häggman of Finland (R), first women elected to the International Olympic Committee - 1981

In the Olympic movement, women may participate in leadership positions as coaches, officials, members of national traveling delegations and in governance positions. In focusing on governance, the highest level, of course, is the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Women were not eligible for selection for membership on the IOC until a rule change was instituted in 1973. Still, it was not until 8 years later that the first women were elected to the august body. In 1996 Gunilla Lindberg of Sweden and Shengrong Lu of The People's Republic of China became the latest women members of the IOC. Because of the mandatory retirement of Mary Alison Glen-Haig at age 75, there are currently 9 women on the 111 member IOC-- approximately 8% of the total membership.¹² This pattern of male dominance is also repeated when looking at the leadership of the National Olympic Committees and the International Sport Federations. In 1995, of the 34 International Federations with sports on the Olympic program, only 2 listed women as Presidents; 2 other Federations had women as Executive Directors. There were 5 National Olympic Committees out of 196 which could point to a woman as president, while women served as Secretary General in 12 more.¹³

Women were also involved in governance at the national level through involvement with sport National Governing Bodies (NGBs). In a study completed in 1994, Bischoff and Rintala¹⁴ surveyed sport governing bodies within the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) to assess women's involvement at the leadership posi-

tions of President and Executive Director from 1970-1994. The results indicated that women had occupied approximately 10% of both the Executive Director and President positions. There were differences, however, depending upon the type of NGB in the USOC. The majority of opportunities for women occurred in the multisport organizations¹⁵ and those affiliated with sport and disability. It appeared to be more difficult for women to rise to leadership positions in the sport federations of those sports on the Olympic or Pan-American Games programs. These sport organizations are the key organizations in terms of prestige and importance for U.S. involvement in the international Olympic Movement. The researchers also determined that women tended to have greater opportunity to realize Executive Director positions than that of President. It was also noted that opportunities for women had generally increased over time.



Honorary (retired) IOC member Dame Mary Alison Glen-Haig

John Lucas, in his chapter on “Women in the Olympic Movement”¹⁶ presents the United States as one of the countries that offers greater leadership opportunities for women. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to document at the international level the extent of women’s involvement in the National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and to compare those data with previously collected data which focused on women’s involvement in the NGBs in the United States Olympic Movement. This study examines that involvement by IOC regional groups, by sport, and over time.

Method

The survey method was used to collect data on the sex of the Executive Directors and Presidents of National Governing Bodies of women's Olympic medal sports. A purposive sample of countries was selected through surveying the countries which had women medalists in summer or winter Olympic competitions held from 1972-1992. Because of perceived difficulties with data collection or analysis, countries were eliminated if there had been major national reorganization (i.e., the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) or if the country no longer existed (i.e., Yugoslavia and East and West Germany). Thirty-two countries remained in the sample. Letters were sent to the United States national sport federations requesting the mailing addresses for the sport governing bodies in the 32 identified countries. As a follow-up, a request for the addresses for one of the sports was made to the international sport federation. After receipt of the addresses from the NGBs in the United States, surveys were then sent to the sport organizations of 16 sports in each of the 32 countries; surveys were not sent to countries that did not have a governing body for a particular sport.

The survey asked for the name and sex of each of the individuals who had served as President or Executive Director (or equivalent position) from 1970-1995. In several organizations, the equivalent position for Executive Director was General Secretary. Responses were received from 124 governing bodies representative of 28 of the 32 countries surveyed. During some of the years reported by sport organizations, there was no one occupying one or both of the positions, or the sex of the individual was unknown. The analyses were done utilizing only the years in which the sex of the President and/or Executive Director was known. Data were grouped by IOC Regional groups (see Table 1) and analyzed by time periods which corresponded with the data from the earlier study on the NGBs in the United States Olympic Committee (1970-74; 1975-79; 1980-84; 1985-1990; 1991-1995). Comparisons of the leadership positions were then made between the IOC Regional Groups and the United States data from the previous study. Analyses were also done by sport.

Results

As shown in Table 2, during the period from 1970-1995, there were 3213 Executive Directors in the sample represented in this study. Of these, 2790 (87.8%) were male, and 423 (13.2%) were female. The President positions that were reported total 3512; 3304 (94.1%) were male, and 208 (5.9%) were female. When these 2 leadership positions are combined, men occupied 6094 (90.62%) of the 6725 positions.

TABLE 1

INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE
REGIONAL GROUPS

Africa 0/2*	Americas 4/6	Asia 5/5	Europe 17/17	Oceania 2/2
Morocco Zimbabwe	Argentina Canada Costa Rica Cuba Jamaica Peru United States**	Indonesia Japan North Korea People's Republic of China South Korea	Austria Belgium Bulgaria Denmark Finland France Great Britain Holland (The Netherlands) Hungary Italy Liechtenstein Norway Poland Portugal Romania Sweden Switzerland	Australia New Zealand

*Indicated number returned/total

**Data from the United States are not included in the Americas; they will be used for comparison.

TABLE 2 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/PRESIDENT POSITIONS BY GENDER*
1970-1995

Position and Gender	1970-79			1980-90			1991-1995	Totals 1970-1995
	1970-74	1975-79		1980-84	1985-1990			
Executive Director								
Male	460 (91.5%)	505 (90.3%)	965 (90.9%)	567 (87.2%)	668 (83.5%)	1235 (85.2%)	590 (84.2%)	2790 (87.8%)
Female	43 (8.5%)	54 (9.7%)	97 (9.1%)	83 (12.8%)	132 (16.5%)	215 (14.8%)	111 (15.8%)	423 (13.2%)
Totals	503	559	1062	650	800	1450	701	3213
President								
Male	588 (96.4%)	620 (95.2%)	1208 (95.8%)	678 (93.9%)	764 (93.3%)	1442 (93.6%)	654 (92.1%)	3304 (94.1%)
Female	22 (3.6%)	31 (4.8%)	53 (4.2%)	44 (6.1%)	55 (6.7%)	99 (6.4%)	56 (7.9%)	208 (5.9%)
Totals	610	651	1261	722	819	1541	710	3512

* Represents total number of individuals, including the U.S. data from the previous study.

Over the five time periods, women experienced a steady, albeit slight increase in the percentage of positions occupied. In the Executive Director position, women rose from 8.5% of the positions from 1970-74 to 15.8% in 1991-95. A similar trend occurred in the President position, although the extent of the increase for women was smaller (3.6% to 7.9%).

TABLE 3 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/PRESIDENT POSITIONS BY GENDER TIME PERIOD (1970-1995) IOC Regional Groups* and the Olympic/Pan Am of the United States*

Position	Americas (N=13)	Asia (N=14)	Europe (N=85)	Oceania (N=12)	U.S. (N=31)
Executive Director					
Male	33 (100.0%)	55 (98.2%)	305 (89.2%)	15 (75.0%)	52 (100.0%)
Female	0	1 (1.8%)	37 (10.8%)	5 (25.0%)	0
President					
Male	58 (100.0%)	51 (100.0%)	356 (97.3%)	30 (85.7%)	93 (93.0%)
Female	0	0	10 (2.7%)	5 (14.3%)	7 (7.0%)

Position	Americas	Asia	Europe	Oceania	U.S.
Executive Director					
Male	44 (100.0%)	48 (90.6%)	325 (87.6%)	17 (85.0%)	71 (100.0%)
Female	0	5 (9.4%)	46 (12.4%)	3 (15.0%)	0
President					
Male	56 (93.3%)	63 (100.0%)	359 (96.5%)	32 (80.0%)	110 (94.8%)
Female	4 (6.7%)	0	13 (3.5%)	8 (20.0%)	6 (5.2%)

1980-1984

Position	Americas	Asia	Europe	Oceania	U.S.
Executive Director					
Male	44 (97.7%)	66 (97.1%)	334 (86.8%)	24 (58.5%)	99 (89.2%)
Female	1 (2.3%)	2 (2.9%)	51 (13.2%)	17 (41.5%)	12 (10.8%)
President					
Male	57 (95.0%)	85 (100.0%)	363 (94.8%)	47 (79.7%)	126 (93.3%)
Female	3 (5.0%)	0	20 (5.2%)	12 (20.3%)	9 (6.7%)

1985-1990

Position	Americas	Asia	Europe	Oceania	U.S.
Executive Director					
Male	48 (87.3%)	57 (90.5%)	407 (86.6%)	24 (47.1%)	132 (82.0%)
Female	7 (12.7%)	6 (9.5%)	63 (13.4%)	27 (52.9%)	29 (18.0%)
President					
Male	67 (91.8%)	74 (94.9%)	426 (96.6%)	48 (80.0%)	149 (89.2%)
Female	6 (8.2%)	4 (5.1%)	15 (3.4%)	12 (20.0%)	18 (10.8%)

1991-1995

Position	Americas	Asia	Europe	Oceania	U.S.**
Executive Director					
Male	48 (87.3%)	73 (97.3%)	334 (83.3%)	38 (69.1%)	97 (84.3%)
Female	7 (12.7%)	2 (2.7%)	67 (16.7%)	17 (30.9%)	18 (15.7%)
President					
Male	53 (81.5%)	85 (100.0%)	363 (94.8%)	47 (79.7%)	106 (89.8%)
Female	12 (18.5%)	0	20 (5.2%)	12 (20.3%)	12 (10.2%)

Total 1970-1995

Position	Americas	Asia	Europe	Oceania	U.S.
Executive Director					
Male	217 (93.5%)	299 (94.9%)	1705 (93.3%)	118 (63.1)	451 (88.4%)
Female	15 (6.5%)	16 (5.1%)	264 (6.7%)	69 (36.9%)	59 (11.6%)
President					
Male	291 (92.1%)	358 (98.9%)	1867 (98.7%)	204 (80.6%)	584 (91.8%)
Female	25 (7.9%)	4 (1.1%)	78 (1.3%)	49 (19.4%)	52 (8.2%)

*Total number of individuals

**1992-1994

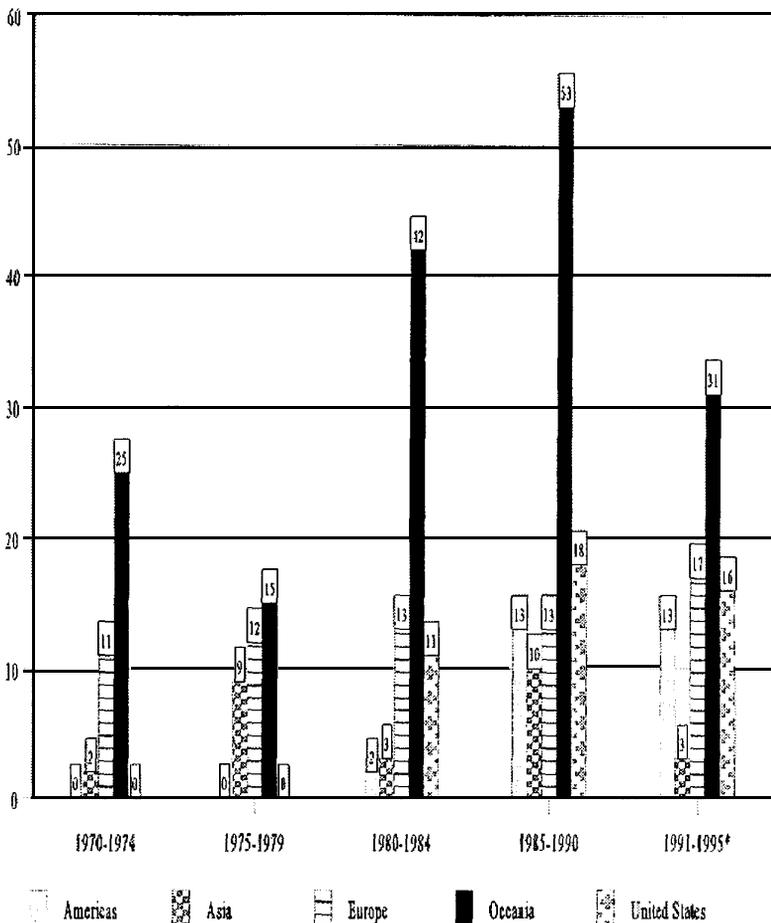
N= Total number of reporting NGBs

There were significant differences in the involvement of women in leadership positions when comparing the IOC Regional Groups (see Table 3). The overall percentage of women's involvement was consistently higher in the reporting governing bodies from Oceania. The lowest percentage of women Executive Directors was in Asia. The lowest percentages for women in President positions were in Asia (1.1%) and Europe (1.3%).

TABLE 4
INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE
REGIONAL GROUPS

Females in Executive Director Positions (Percentages)

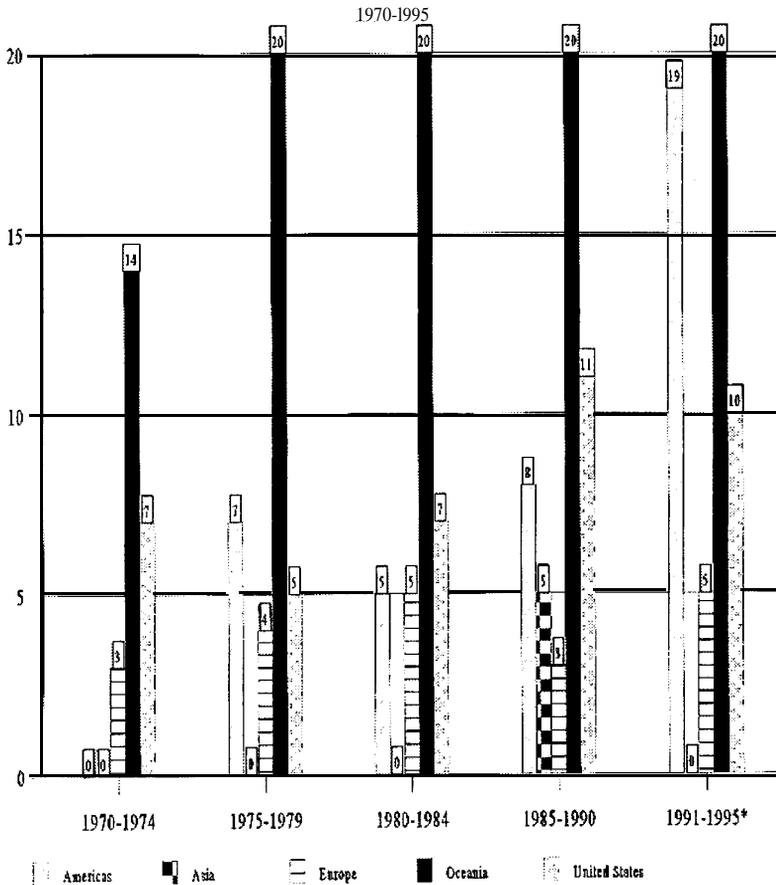
1970-1995



*United States Olympic/Pan Am NGBs, 1992-1994 only.

TABLE 5 INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE REGIONAL GROUPS

Females in President Positions (Percentages)



*United States Olympic/Pan Am NGBs, 1992-1994 only.

Tables 4 and 5 illustrate the changes over time in women's involvement in these two leadership positions. In the America's, including the United States, women in Executive Director positions were non-existent in this sample until the period 1980-84. Europe showed a slow, but steady increase (11% to 17%). Oceania consistently had the highest percentage, while Asia had the lowest or near lowest percentage in terms of women in Executive Director positions over time.



Sophia Raddock, President of the National Olympic Committee of Fiji

In the President positions, there is less fluctuation and change over time than in the Executive Director position. The only regional group in this sample in which there was a noticeable increase in percentage of women in president positions over time was in the America's, which showed an increase from 0% to 19% in women Presidents from 1970-1995. Again, the highest percentage was in Oceania, where the percentage stayed stable at 20% from 1975-1995. This relatively high percentage in Oceania may, however, be a result of the sample. Data presented in the Australian National Sport Commission database (which is more inclusive of the range of sports than this study) lists 10% of the Presidents and 18% of the Executive Directors as women in 1992. Data from New Zealand support a similar trend-21% of Executive Officers are female and 11% of elected National Directors are female.¹⁷ The New Zealand data, reported by Cameron, noted that the women Executive Directors and Presidents were in either women-only sport organizations or low-profile sports. The reporting organizations for Oceania in this study include an over-representation of traditionally female and low-profile sports, which may account for the relatively high percentage in this sample.

In some instances, individuals can assume positions and remain in those positions for many years, while in other cases, there is frequent turnover. One of the issues of this study, therefore, is to examine the frequency of turnover in the positions and the rate at which women move into these openings.

As can be seen in Table 6, there were 433 changes in the position of Executive Director during the period identified in this study. Women moved into leadership openings 16% of the time. The periods of highest changes for women were 1980-84, when 20% of the openings went to females and 1985-90, when 18% of the Executive

Director openings were filled by females. Women moved into President positions at half the rate as they moved into Executive Director positions. Of the 654 changes of Presidents, women moved into those roles 8% of the time. The greatest movement for women into President positions, however, was in the last two time periods. From 1985-90, women filled 8% of the President openings, and from 1991-95, they were selected 13% of the time. Once again, the highest rate of movement of women into leadership positions was in Oceania. Asia showed the least movement of women into both Executive Director (4%) and President (2%) positions. Europe was only slightly higher than Asia in the President positions; only 4% of the openings were filled by women.

The data in this study were also grouped by sport. As shown in Table 7, there is great variability in women's leadership depending upon the sport.¹⁸ The only sport in which women were in leadership positions more often than men was Synchronized Swimming. The next highest rate for women in both Executive Director and Presidents was in the sport of Field Hockey. Several of the sports in this sample had no women involved, especially in the President positions (Basketball, Handball, Skiing, Soccer, and Tennis).



Anita DeFranz, IOC Vice-President and Executive Board Member

TABLE 6

Changes in Leadership by Position,
by Sex (1970-1995)
(IOC Regional Groups & United States)

		Start*		70-74			75-79			80-84			85-90			91-95			Totals			
		M	F	%F	M	F	%F	M	F	%F	M	F	%F	M	F	%F	M	F	%F			
Americas	E.D.	5	0	0	10	2	17	12	2	14	8	3	27	11	6	35	13	4	24	54	17	24
	Pres.	13	0	0	23	0	0	22	3	12	26	0	0	23	3	12	23	7	23	117	13	10
Asia	E.D.	8	0	0	7	1	13	13	0	0	13	1	7	14	0	0	7	0	0	54	2	4
	Pres.	10	0	0	6	0	0	14	0	0	8	0	0	8	1	11	7	0	0	43	1	2
Europe	E.D.	53	5	9	29	3	9	38	4	10	22	5	19	46	6	12	44	5	10	179	23	11
	Pres.	64	2	3	41	1	2	60	2	3	45	1	2	79	4	5	63	3	5	288	11	4
Oceania	E.D.	2	1	33	1	0	0	4	2	33	2	3	60	7	5	42	3	1	25	17	11	39
	Pres.	6	1	14	4	0	0	7	2	22	5	2	29	5	3	38	5	3	38	26	10	28
U.S.A.	E.D.	20	1	5	3	1	25	8	0	0	16	3	16	19	4	17	15	7	32	61	15	20
	Pres.	28	2	7	19	2	10	31	2	6	26	4	13	33	2	6	21	5	19	130	15	10
Totals	E.D.	88	7	7	50	7	12	75	8	10	61	15	20	97	21	18	82	17	17	365	68	16
	Pres.	121	2	2	93	3	3	134	9	6	110	7	6	148	13	8	119	18	13	604	50	8

*Sex of person in position in 1970

** If a change was made, the sex of incoming individual is counted.

Table 7 Percent of Female Executive Directors and Presidents by Sport (1970-1995)

N*	Sport	Executive Director			President		
		Male	Female	%Female	Male	Female	%Female
11	Basketball	261	3	1.14	247	0	0.00
6	Diving	124	18	12.68	84	7	7.69
9	Equestrian	142	50	26.04	222	3	1.33
4	Field Hockey	47	38	44.71	61	37	37.76
7	Figure Skating	109	43	28.29	168	12	6.67
9	Gymnastics	157	66	29.60	222	9	3.90
10	Handball	212	10	4.50	229	0	0.00
6	Luge	43	0	0.00	60	6	9.09
9	Rowing	171	20	10.47	204	7	3.32
10	Skiing	180	4	2.17	205	0	0.00
9	Soccer	184	0	0.00	232	0	0.00
8	Speedskating	117	39	25.00	154	19	10.98
11	Swimming	222	25	10.12	264	11	4.00
4	Synchronized Swimming	16	73	82.02	0	50	100.00
12	Tennis	294	2	0.68	299	0	0.00
8	Track & Field	148	0	0.00	163	3	1.81
12	Volleyball	244	29	10.62	300	5	1.64
	Totals	2671	420	13.59	3114	169	5.15

* Number of reporting sport organizations

Discussion

Opportunities for women to be involved in Olympic governance have been slow in developing. This should come as no surprise when one considers that many of the governance structures (including the IOC itself) have been among the leaders in discouraging women's full involvement in sport. When the opportunities have arisen, these opportunities have come primarily in a few sports rather than across all sports. The sports in which women have been involved in leadership positions have been either sports traditionally associated with women's participation or they are among the less visible sports on the Olympic program. It is also important to remember that because of the sports that were selected (only those in which women compete at the Olympic level) and the countries that were sampled (countries with women medalists), this study may reflect an overly optimistic picture of women's involvement in sports federation leadership. Given the above parameters, the results of this study, therefore, support the entrenched notion that sport is a patriarchal institution.

In comparing data from the IOC regional groups with the data collected previously from the United States, Lucas' "off the cuff" assertion that leadership opportunities for women are greater in the United States than elsewhere is generally correct.

This is not necessarily something to be lauded, however. The United States' totals indicated that from 1970-1995, women have served as 11.6% of the Executive Directors and 8.2% of the Presidents. The picture has been a little more optimistic since 1985. In the United States the percentages of women as Executive Directors were 18.0% (1985-1990) and 15.7% (1991-1995), while their percentages as Presidents were 10.8% and 10.2%.

The results from this study are also consistent with the 1994 study by Bischoff and Rintala regarding which positions are more likely to be filled by women. With few exceptions, throughout the time periods and the Regional groupings, women's opportunities were greater as Executive Directors than as Presidents.



Her Royal Highness, The Infanta Doña Pilar de Borbon, President of the International Equestrian Federation

This study was undertaken with the assumption that women's involvement in sport governance is an important issue. There are some obvious implications of the results of this study. While it is certainly important to be concerned about the relative lack of opportunity for women today to move into leadership positions, the present lack of opportunity may decrease the willingness of women to pursue sport leadership roles. The visibility of female role models may be an important factor in changing the involvement of women in sport leadership positions. Hasbrook has stated that it is important for young people "to observe a significant number of women, not just an isolated few, in positions of power and status within the sporting world if society is to ever view sport, participation in sport, and sporting careers as unrelated to one's gender."¹⁹ Patricia Vertinsky echoed this sentiment when she stated, "[m]ore female role models would provide encouragement for girls in sport, and this means the role models in all domains-in the family and school, high-level coaching, Olympic committees, government officials concerned with sport, athletics, and so on."²⁰ If the terrain is to be contested, there needs to be a continued and visible presence of those who challenge institutional sexism.

Another impact which a lack of role models may have is the way in which a lack of opportunities for women to be involved in leadership reinforces the patriarchal gender ideology in sport. Linda Borish, in her article "Women at the Modern Olym-

pic Games: An Interdisciplinary Look at American Culture,” prepares a helpful cultural studies approach to understanding women’s sporting and leadership experiences in the Olympics. She calls upon the work of John MacAloon to explain that taking a gender perspective, “reveals that power relationships went hand in hand with the founding of the Games in 1896. In fact, to maintain male superiority in the sporting arena and the highly visible, public world of competition, Baron Pierre de Coubertin excluded women from participating in the Games based on his Victorian perceptions of appropriate men’s and women’s roles in society; he embraced ideals of masculine vigor and morality in his conception of the Games.”²¹ Borish, using the work of Mike Messner, discussed, in particular, how “sport represents an arena of conflict in which men’s and women’s different levels of sway surface. Gender relations in the sporting context of the Olympics underscore that men historically hold power in the public world and maintain positions of authority and decision-making.”²² As Borish completes her discussion of women in Olympic leadership, she refers to an article written by Nadia Lekarska, who argues that even though advances for women in the Olympic Movement have occurred, women still have been badly under-represented in leadership positions. According to Lekarska this is due to an “unfading, traditional mistrust towards women’s capacities.”²³

In addition to the potential impact on individual women and the reinforcement of a patriarchal gender ideology in sport, a lack of women’s involvement in governance can impact the governing bodies themselves. In a study of the roles of boards in amateur sport organizations in Canada (including presidents and executive directors), Inglis documented the differing perceptions men and women hold regarding board roles. Inglis asserts, “Part of the strength of making boards of directors inclusive of men and women is in the diversity, multiple perspectives, and varying experiences that a board inclusive of both genders brings. Including men and women on boards, which allows for different views to be expressed and considered, has the potential to strengthen the board and serve its public more effectively.”²⁴

Changing the status quo is rarely an uncomplicated task. In their study of the gender structure of Canadian national sport organizations, Hall, Cullen and Slack noted that members of sport organizations, especially those in leadership positions, did not see the problem as being within the organization but that the problem was with the women themselves. The lack of women in leadership was explained in terms of women’s personal deficiencies (women lack the proper training, motivation, or skills) or in terms of social factors such as family responsibilities.²⁵

This “blame the victim” strategy has also been evident in the explanations of lack of women’s participation in leadership positions in United States intercollegiate sport.²⁶ Blaming women, rather than calling into question the way in which the system maintains hegemonic practices, allows those currently in leadership positions to continue to benefit from a patriarchal system. From this stance, one need not question this system (and one’s own part in maintaining it) since the system is not perceived as being at fault.

An additional explanation was suggested by Inglis. In her study, she found that in terms of age and years of service in sport governing bodies, there were no significant differences between men and women in Executive Director and President positions. There were, however, two barriers to women’s advancement to the President position. First, there were not as many women as men who were serving as members of execu-

tive boards from which the Presidents would be elected or appointed. Second, women who were executive board members had fewer years of experience. This could mean that as women gain additional years of experience, they will move into President positions - although still at a lower rate than males since they are still a smaller portion of the pool. It is also possible, however, that women are not staying on executive boards for a long enough period of time to move into the President positions.²⁷ These factors could explain the lower rates of female Presidents in this study if other governing bodies operate in a manner similar to those studied by Inglis.

Given the embeddedness of gendered power relations in organizations in general and sport organizations in particular, the impetus for change needs to come from sources both internal and external and, as well, encompass multiple strategies. Encouragement for change (from outside of the Olympic Movement itself) was set forth in the Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport. According to this Declaration, “[t]he overriding aim is to develop a sporting culture that enables and values the full involvement of women in every aspect of sport.”²⁸ There are 10 areas of concern in the Brighton Declaration, two of which are directly related to involvement of women in leadership positions:

Leadership in Sport: Women are under-represented in the leadership and decision making of all sport and sport-related organisations. Those responsible for these areas should develop policies and programmes and design structures which increase the number of women coaches, advisers, decision makers, officials, administrators and sports personnel at all levels with special attention given to recruitment, development and retention.²⁹

and,

Domestic and International Cooperation: Government and non-government organisations should incorporate the promotion of issues of gender equity and the sharing of examples of good practice in women and sport policies and programmes in their associations with other organisations, within both domestic and international arenas.³⁰

The most influential role in increasing opportunities for women throughout the Olympic Movement, however, may reside with the IOC itself. The IOC did send representatives to the International Conference in Brighton in May of 1994, and the Executive Board of the IOC has endorsed the Brighton Declaration. According to information contained on the IOC’s official web site, the IOC is also involved with United Nations projects related to gender equity. And, the IOC sent a delegation to the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, in 1995. There are three groups of statements, however, that provide promise for the IOC’s commitment to equity in the Olympic Movement. The first is from the final report of the Centennial Olympic Congress, held in Paris in 1994:

Considering that within national and international sport life, and particularly in the management of sports organizations, women should play a more significant role than they do at the present. . . [and]. . . Bearing in mind the fact

that the Centennial Olympic Congress, Congress of Unity, stressed the necessity of including a significant proportion of women within the executive bodies of the sports movement on both a national and international level, [The IOC]:

1. Encourages women to participate in sport and to become integrated within sports organizations;
2. Invites the National Federations, the International Federations, the National Olympic Committees and other national organizations to ensure that women serve in the various executive sports bodies in order to allow them to make a significant contribution to the evolution of sport and the Olympic Movement;
3. Decides that the National Olympic Committees will establish as a goal to be achieved by 31st December 2000 that at least 10% (ten percent) of all positions in their decision making structures be reserved for women and that by the year 2005 this percentage be increased to 20% (twenty percent);
4. Recommends strongly to the International Federations and other bodies belonging to the Olympic Movement that they should establish as a goal to be achieved by 31st December 2000 that at least 10% (ten percent) of all positions in their decision making structures be reserved for women and that by the year 2005 this percentage be increased to 20% (twenty percent);
5. Recommends that the International Federations take measures to train women coaches and administrators;
6. Encourages the National Olympic Committees to undertake programmes to promote women in sport and in its technical and administrative structures;
7. Wishes that regular consultations about questions relating to the progress of women athletes in the various countries be organized.³¹

At the 105th IOC session in Atlanta in July 1996, the IOC reaffirmed the commitments to the 10% and 20% involvement of women in governance structures and affirmed that “subsequent stages to reach a strict enforcement of the principle of equality for men and women shall be determined from the year 2001.”³² They also adopted a proposal that the Olympic Charter be amended to “take into account the need to keep equality for men and women.”³³

While these two groups of statements provide some evidence that the leadership in the IOC recognizes the importance of involving women in all facets of the Olympic Movement in greater numbers, these are basically guiding principles. Some more specific strategies have been suggested by the Women and Sport Working Group, which was created in December 1995, to advise the IOC Executive Board and President on ways in which women’s participation could be enhanced. Anita DeFrantz chairs this committee. This group has outlined several major areas, some of which deal directly with increasing women’s involvement in leadership:

- There must be an increased number of women IOC members. In addition, IOC members must encourage the promotion of women in sport in their respective countries.
- Efforts must be made in the IOC commissions and working groups, as well as in the IFs and NOCs commissions to have women appointed.
- Seminars should be organized every year in administration and leadership training, coaching, and sport journalism for women, on the five continents.
- A special fund was created by Olympic Solidarity to promote women's sport at the elite level, and train women administrators, technical officials and coaches.
- It was agreed that women must be supported in sport even in those countries where it is now organized separately and with restrictive measures. The Group wishes to establish contacts with the NOCs concerned, collect information on this issue, and make recommendations on the best way to help those women practice sport in conformity with their tradition and culture.³⁴

It is important to note that these strategies include not simply increasing the opportunities for women to develop the skills necessary to be successful in leadership positions, but also changes to the structures themselves, as well as visibility and education about women in sport which may serve to alter cultural attitudes.

Of prime concern is the need to examine the practices of selection/election of members to serve in governance structures and further to lead those structures. Again, drawing on research conducted regarding women in leadership in United States intercollegiate sport, Stangl and Kane³⁵ utilize Kanter's concept of homologous reproduction as an explanatory structural factor that serves to constrain women's movement into the predominantly male domain of coaching. Homologous reproduction is the tendency for people in decision-making positions to select/elect persons for inclusion into their leadership domains who hold similar points of view. As a prime example, within the history of the IOC, homologous reproduction regarding the sex of its members was guaranteed through eligibility rules in place until 1973. An affirmative stance to counteract the tendency toward homologous reproduction would be to legislate a gender balance on governing boards and alternate terms by sex for positions such as president. The data from this study suggest that this may be happening, either formally or informally, in a few of the sport governing bodies.³⁶

The recommendations provided by the Brighton Declaration, the Centennial Olympic Congress and the IOC Women and Sport Working Group are positive indices of the recognition that the lack of women's full participation in the Olympic Movement is an issue of concern. The recommendations are, however, only recommendations. Change in practice does not necessarily follow. As has been seen with the women's movement in intercollegiate sport in the United States, even the force of Federal legislation and the threat of loss of Federal funds does not assure timely inclusion of women. On the contested terrain of sport, the mechanisms to maintain hegemony are many and complex, the change is slow, and the resistance persistent.

Endnotes

1. "Women Shine in 1996 Olympics: A Look Back at Atlanta," *Olympic News Wrap-Up*, <http://www.feminist.org/other/olympic/news1.html>, 1996 (accessed 6/19/97).
2. *Ibid.* In winning the heptathlon, Ghada Shouaa became the first Syrian to win a gold medal; Ethiopian Fatuma Roba won the marathon, becoming the first African woman to win a medal in the event.
3. Women comprised 36.5% of the athletes ("Women Shine in 1996 Olympics: A Look Back at Atlanta"). 165 of the events (including events within disciplines) were for men only; 95 were women-only events; 11 events (in badminton, yachting, and equestrian) were mixed ("Quick Facts: Looking Through the Female Olympic Lens," <http://www.feminist.org/other/olympic/fact.html>, 1996 (accessed 6/19/97).
4. "Women Shine in 1996 Olympics: A Look Back at Atlanta."
5. Mike Messner, "Sports and Male Domination: The Female Athlete as Contested Ideological Terrain," *Sociology of Sport Journal*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 1988, pp. 197-211.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 198.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 198.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 198.
9. See, for example, Liv-Jorunn Kones, "Heterosexuality as an Organizing Principle in Women's Sport," *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, Vol. 30, No. 1, 1995, pp. 61-79; and the work of Helen Lenskyj in articles such as "Sexuality and Femininity in Sport Contexts: Issues and Alternative," *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, Vol. 18, No. 4, 1994, pp. 356-376; "Power and Play: Gender and Sexuality Issues in Sport and Physical Activity," *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, Vol. 25, No. 3, 1990, pp. 235-245; and "Combating Homophobia in Sport and Physical Education," *Sociology of Sport Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1991, pp. 61-69.
10. While many studies have been done regarding sport mass media in general, studies have also been done to demonstrate the hegemonic practices in media coverage of the Olympics. See, for example: Margaret Carlisle Duncan, "Sports Photographs and Sexual Difference: Images of Women and Men in the 1984 and 1988 Olympic Games," *Sociology of Sport Journal*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1990, pp. 22-43; and Gina Daddario, "Chilly Scenes of the 1992 Winter Games: The Mass Media and the Marginalization of Female Athletes," *Sociology of Sport Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 3, 1994, pp. 275-288.
11. Vivian Acosta and Linda Carpenter have documented the level of involvement of

women in coaching and administrative positions in intercollegiate sport since Title IX was passed in 1972. While women coached approximately 90% of all women's intercollegiate teams in 1972, women are currently coaches of less than 50% of women's teams. The decline has been even more severe in the area of women's administration - 90% of women's programs had a woman as the primary administrator in 1972; less than 20% of women's programs had a woman in the primary administrative role in 1996.

12. The other women on the IOC and their years of election are as follows: Vera Cáslavská, Czech Republic (1995); Anita DeFrantz, United States of America (1986); Pirjo Häggman, Finland (1981); Flor Isava-Fonseca, Venezuela (1981); Carol Ann Letheren, Canada (1990); Princess Nora de Liechtenstein, Liechtenstein (1984); and the Princess Royal, Great Britain (1988), <http://www.olympic.org/emembers.html>, 1996 (accessed 6/19/97).
13. Wayne Wilson, "The IOC and the Status of Women in the Olympic Movement: 1972-1996," *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, Vol. 67, No. 2, 1996, p. 186.
14. Judith A. Bischoff and Jan Rintala, "Women in United States Olympic Governance," in *Critical Reflections on Olympic Ideology: Second International Symposium for Olympic Research* (R. Barney and K. Meier, eds.) 1994, pp. 84-100.
15. The multisport organizations included the following: Amateur Athletic Union; American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance; Boys Clubs of America; Catholic Youth Organization; Jewish Community Centers Association; National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics; National Collegiate Athletic Association; National Exploring Division, Boy Scouts of America; National Federation of State High School Associations; National Junior College Athletic Association; National League of Police Athletic Leagues; U.S. Armed Forces Sports; YMCA of the USA; and YWCA of the USA.
16. John A. Lucas, *Future of the Olympic Games*, Champaign, Illinois: Human Kinetics Books, 1992, p. 139-140.
17. "Active Info," Australian Sports Commission, <http://www.ausport.gov.au/wo3b.html> (accessed 6/19/97).
18. In some countries, a governing body may include multiple sports. Figure skating and speed skating were combined in some countries, as were various combinations of diving, swimming and synchronized swimming. For this analysis by sport, the data were recorded for all sports separately. The same Executive Director or President could, therefore, be counted twice if two sports were governed by the same NGB. When the analysis was done by country/regional group, the governing body was only included once. This accounts for the differences in total number of individuals in Tables 2 and 7.
19. Cynthia A. Hasbrook, "Female Coaches? Why the Declining Numbers and Per-

- centages?" *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance*, Vol. 59, No. 6, August 1988, p. 59.
20. Patricia Vertinsky, cited in Lucas, *Future of the Olympic Games*, p. 135.
21. Linda J. Borish, "Women at the Modern Olympic Games: An Interdisciplinary Look at American Culture," *Quest*, Vol. 48, No. 1, 1996, p. 44.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
24. Sue Inglis, "Roles of the Board in Amateur Sport Organizations," *Journal of Sport Management*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 1997, p. 170.
25. M. Ann Hall, Dallas Cullen and Trevor Slack, "Organizational Elites Recreating Themselves: The Gender Structure of National Sport Organizations," *Quest*, Vol. 41, No. 1, 1989, p. 30.
26. See, for example, A. Knoppers, "Coaching: An Equal Opportunity Occupation?" *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance*, Vol. 60, No. 3, 1989, pp. 38-43; and R.V. Acosta and L.J. Carpenter, "Perceived Causes of the Declining Representation of Women Leaders in Intercollegiate Sports - 1988 Update." Unpublished manuscript, Brooklyn College. Male athletic directors, who are most often in positions to hire coaches and other athletic administrators, attribute the decline in women in these positions to a lack of qualified women, women's failure to apply for the positions, and time constraints because of family obligations.
27. Inglis, p. 171.
28. "Brighton Declaration," <http://www.per.ualberta.lca/wsi/brighton/html> (accessed 6/19/97).
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*
31. USOC home page, <http://www.usoc.org/efwomen.html> (accessed 6/19/97).
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Ibid.*
35. Jane Marie Stangl and Mary Jo Kane, "Structural Variables That Offer Explanatory Power for the Underrepresentation of Women Coaches Since Title IX: The Case of Homologous Reproduction," *Sociology of Sport Journal*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1991, pp. 47-60.

36. In one of the European Track and Field (Athletics) governing bodies, the president position has alternated by sex since 1990.