

LEADERSHIP REPRESENTATION AND EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN IN  
NATIONAL SPORT GOVERNING BODIES

A Dissertation

by

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Submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies of  
Texas A&M University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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December 2020

Major Subject: Kinesiology

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## ABSTRACT

Leadership representation and experiences of the past, current, and future women leaders are important themes to sport researchers and policy makers today. Adopting a multilevel perspective, the dissertation expands a nuanced understanding of why women are lacking in leadership positions in national sport governing bodies. In particular, the purposes of this dissertation are to: (a) examine the relationship among sociocultural factors, institutional factors, and the representation of women in leadership positions within national sport governing bodies; and (b) highlight the lived experiences of the past and current women leaders in both national and international football governing bodies.

To achieve this, I conducted three independent studies and organized the dissertation into five chapters. In the first and last part of the dissertation, I provided the overarching introduction and discussion, respectively, to answer how each of the three studies associated with one another. In the first study, I examined how cultural values influence gender dynamics in national Olympic committees (NOCs). In the following study, I explored additional institutional influences, such as economic development, democracy, and religion in a country. In so doing, I provide more fruitful societal explanations and cross-national comparisons in terms of the gender imbalance in leadership representation on NOC boards. Finally, in the third study, I focused on the lived experiences of women in the past and current leadership roles in both national and international football governing bodies.

While each of the three studies provides distinct insights, the overarching message indicates that economic, sociocultural, and political factors as well as gender stereotypes play a role in shaping different representation and experiences of women in leadership positions within sport governing bodies across countries. In particular, findings suggest that researchers explore the potential impacts of other societal factors. For example, researchers can include more than one factor in each of economic, sociocultural, and political influences in connection with women's representation in sport leadership. Examining the recent cultural values framework, legal aspects, and geographical factors would be a great contribution. Moreover, researchers need to examine the glass cliff phenomenon across various levels of sport governing bodies and should extend investigations to other types of sport organizations.

Finally, the findings address practical implications as well. From the cross-national perspective, government expenditures and plans inform gender initiatives across institutions within a country. Sport policy makers and practitioners should note that democratic functioning, participatory environments, and ideological values from religious freedom could foster a vibrant and diverse leadership landscape within national sport governing bodies. Concerning the glass cliff and gender biases in sport, women professionals or leaders in decision-making should be aware of potential risks in new leadership assignments during times of crisis and downturn. This will eventually protect both themselves and sport governing bodies, but navigate high-risk situations to achieve their growth and ensure gender diversity goals and practices of their organizations.

## DEDICATION

To my parents, Ms. Kyoung Kim and Mr. Jaehong Ahn, and to my grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, relatives, as well as my friends; Thank you. I love you, always.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor and committee chair, Dr. George Cunningham. I deeply appreciate you for being available during our 109 regular meetings, countless pop-ins, informal talks, and texts during long days, early mornings, late nights, weekdays, weekends, and even holidays. Without your consistent guidance, unconditional patience, and unwavering support, I could not have accomplished my degree and the process of writing this dissertation. Thank you, and your influence will continue to shape my growth as an engaged scholar and citizen throughout my life. I am also grateful to have your former and current graduate students around me who have cared about my progress and helped me expand my knowledge of diversity, inclusion, and social justice.

I would also like to thank my committee members, in no specific order, Drs. Marlene Dixon, Hyun-Woo Lee, and Mindy Bergman, and former committee member Dr. Matthew Walker for their feedback and willingness to answer my questions throughout this long process. Without the lessons I learned while working with them, my dissertation would not have come to fruition. I would like to take the opportunity to express my thanks to the study participants, university writing center consultants, and undergraduate research assistants, too, for their contributions to this dissertation.

Thank you, Seungmin Kang, for being a great football (soccer) mate and graduate fellow. Sharing moments of my graduate adventure with you has been a great joy, and I am glad to call you a friend. I would like to take the time to thank Dr. Natasha

Brison with whom I collaborated and took bubble tea breaks during my doctoral studies. I would also like to thank my colleagues, as well as the department faculty, staff, and students for making my time at Texas A&M an awesome and humbling experience.

Finally and most importantly, I sincerely appreciate Drs. Young-Soo Lee, Joon-Ho Kang, Seungpil Lee, Yukeom Kim, Jeeyoon Kim, Seonghee Park, Chang Hwa Joo, Yongkoo Noh, Joonsang Ahn, Yeayoung Noh, and Hyunjoo Jin and Mr. Jaehong Lee, for their encouragement throughout my journey.

## CONTRIBUTORS AND FUNDING SOURCES

### **Contributors**

This work was supervised by a dissertation committee consisting of Drs. George Cunningham (chair), Marlene Dixon, and Hyun-woo Lee of the Department of Health and Kinesiology and Dr. Mindy Bergman of the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences.

All work for the dissertation was completed by the student independently under the advisement of Dr. George Cunningham of the Department of Health and Kinesiology. Chapter II and Chapter IV were published in scholarly journals, and Chapter III was submitted to an academic journal for peer review.

### **Funding Sources**

This work was partially supported by a research award from Texas A&M University, and the contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Department of Health and Kinesiology at Texas A&M University.

## NOMENCLATURE

ARDA	association of religion data archives
CEO	chief executive officer
CWDI	corporate women directors international
EIU	Economist Intelligence Unit
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
FLDP	female leadership development programme
GDP	gross domestic product
IF	international sports federation
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOC	International Olympic Committee
IPC	International Paralympic Committee
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
NOC	National Olympic Committee
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
SDG	sustainable development goal
UN	United Nations
UN Women	United Nations entity for gender equality and empowerment of women
WGI	worldwide governance indicator
WWC	women's World Cup



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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### **Background of the Study**

A dearth of women in leadership positions in business and government is an important issue facing the world today. On the one hand, women have made significant strides in increasing their representation and equality in the workplace (Ritchie & Roser, 2019). For example, women represented slightly over half (51.5%) of the global labor force, occupied 22.5% of corporate board positions at Fortune 500 companies, and comprised 24.9% of national parliament seats across the globe in 2019 (Catalyst, 2020; Inter-Parliamentary Union [IPU], 2020). On the other hand, as the latter two estimates indicate, men still dominate many realms of leadership. When looking at the global representation of heads in business and politics, the rates of women were even smaller. According to Catalyst (2020) and IPU (2020), there were only about 6% of women leading corporations and governments (29 out of 500 and 22 out of 345, respectively). As a whole, despite the progress towards gender equality at work globally, these figures suggest a lack of women at the upper levels of corporate and political leadership.

Likewise, women remain underrepresented in leadership ranks in the realms of sport and physical activity relative to their increased participation in sports. Over the two Olympic Games in 2016 and 2018, women accounted for nearly 45% of all athletes, but they held 35% of the board positions of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and 6.3% of the head positions of national sport governing bodies (IOC, 2020; Katsarova,

2019). Even though these estimates are amplified in sport as compared to business and politics (Fink, 2008), and vary by sport governing bodies and across countries (Adriaanse, 2016), researchers have pointed to the importance of gender balance in leadership ranks and have explained potential benefits of having more women in decision-making (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

Leaders and board members are key in defining governance, creating work environments, and setting plans, strategies, and budgets for their entity and sector in sport (Hums & MacLean, 2013). However, the low rate or absence of women in decision-making positions results in poor work outcomes for women in the sport workplace, such as unfair career advancement, budget allocation, leadership development, and retention (Shaw & Frisby, 2006). Hence, researchers have argued that a balanced gender composition on boards can generate better and innovative decisions while reducing impacts of biases and information asymmetry (Dezsö & Ross, 2012; van Knippenberg, De Dreu, & Homan, 2004). In addition, women in leadership roles create respectful and safe work environments, where women leaders can serve as models to other women and encourage followers' career advancements (Terjesen, Sealy, & Singh, 2009). Empirical evidence also demonstrates that gender diversity on boards is related to promoting a broad range of initiatives to increase women's representation in leadership (Vinnicombe, Singh, Burke, Bilimoria, & Huse, 2008). These include increasing women's participation in sports, adopting gender quotas, implementing leadership training programs for women, facilitating workshops and awareness campaigns, and

appointing more women to leadership roles to strengthen gender-related policies and make sport environments more inclusive (IOC, 2018).

More importantly, whilst presidents, secretary generals, treasurers, or any board members of sport governing bodies are either elected or nominated, each governing body has its own charter and specific criteria for eligibility of member candidates (Hums & MacLean, 2013). When there are few or no regulations concerning external appointments, as is the case for many sport governing bodies (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007), the potential for biases in the recruitment and selection process persists. In contrast, sport governing bodies that adopt more standardized board selection processes are likely to have more representative boards (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007). The presence of women on boards is linked with the presence of equitable board structures and processes, and consequently, yields more favorable stakeholder evaluations (Rao & Tilt, 2016). This in turn leads to a good reputation of the governing body for social and ethical values (Bear, Rahman, & Post, 2010). For these reasons, gender diversity in leadership has been a critical component of assessing performance, legitimacy, and values of a sport governing body (Parent & Hoye, 2018).

One path to understand the gender balance in leadership ranks of the sporting industry is through exploring the representation and experiences of women on boards of sport governing bodies. However, as previously noted, women are largely absent from the leadership roles. As a result, a number of researchers have examined the causes and consequences associated with the shortage of women leaders in sport governing bodies (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Adriaanse, 2016; Adriaanse & Schofield, 2014; Allen &

Shaw, 2013; Burton, 2015; Cunningham, 2008; Dixon & Bruening, 2005; LaVoi, 2016; Melton & Bryant, 2017; Pfister & Radtke, 2009; Sartore & Cunningham, 2007; Walker, Bopp, & Sagas, 2011).

Among multiple factors contributing to the scarcity of women on boards, the macro-level barriers include social norms, political climates, and institutionalized traditions. For example, promoting masculine behavior at work creates a gender ideology that promotes men as better leaders (Ely & Meyerson, 2000). Thus, researchers have focused on such (re)productions of gender through languages and socialization processes in sport (Cunningham & Sagas, 2008; Shaw & Frisby, 2006).

At the meso-level were organizational culture and ingroup bias (Norman, Rankin-Wright, & Allison, 2018; Ryan & Dickson, 2018). Considering that men dominate the top leadership positions in sport governing bodies, leaders' and peers' biases can impact the selection of board and executive members while confining the access of women employees to such upper-level positions (Lovett & Lowry, 1994). Further, women are faced with balance issues between work and home, which require support from peers, supervisors, or departments, whereas organizational climate is oftentimes unfriendly to women (Dixon & Bruening, 2005). Thus, many of these studies using an organizational-level of analysis point to the influences of structural processes and organizational policies to explain the shortage of women on board seats (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007, 2012).

Finally, the micro-level factors include human capital investment and self-limiting behavior (Cunningham, Bergman, & Miner, 2014; Sartore & Cunningham,



2007). According to Walker and Bopp (2011), the roles of assistant positions mirror lower job satisfaction and lower self-efficacy of women coaches. Cunningham and colleagues' (2019) meta-analytic work examining turnover in coaching shows that the individual-level factors are associated with a tendency for women to leave the sport profession. In this regard, the micro-level factors impact how individuals "make meaning of their experiences, expectations, understanding of power, policies, and procedures operating at the organizational level" (Burton, 2015, p. 161).

Whereas numerous empirical investigations exist, the lack of women in the positions of power in sport is not caused by a single factor. Instead, factors at different levels are interconnected and influence one another closely in creating gender imbalance in leadership within sport governing bodies (Cunningham, 2019). Supporting this perspective, researchers have applied the multilevel of analysis to advance the holistic understanding of the gender inequality in sport leadership (Burton, 2015; Cunningham, 2019; LaVoi, 2016). In particular, some focused on the multidimensional model that has three levels (e.g., macro, meso, and micro); whereas, others drew from Bronfenbrenner's (1977, 1979) ecological framework to touch on societal, organizational, interpersonal, and individual barriers for women leaders in coaching (LaVoi, 2016). Collectively, researchers have highlighted that all these factors are intertwined with one another. Thus, a multilevel theory can add value to this dissertation especially in examining gender diversity in leadership across various levels of sport governing bodies (e.g., local, regional, national, and international) and integrating data at different levels (e.g., individual, organizational, and societal).

Furthermore, although researchers scrutinized multi-layered reasons for the dearth of women in leadership positions in sport, a cross-cultural comparison in the sport setting is missing. Recently, researchers have attempted to provide evidence of the persistent gender imbalance in leadership within sport governing bodies in a single country (Demers, Thibault, Brière, & Culver, 2019; Parker, 2019), single continent (Wicker, 2019), or across the globe (Adriaanse, 2016). From a cross-national perspective, however, we know little about the relationship between a variety of organizational and institutional factors and the representation and experiences of women leaders across national sport governing bodies. In fact, there is much to suggest that country-level indicators, such as socioeconomic, cultural, and political landscapes, play a role in assessing various policies and interventions of governing bodies at a national-level (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). Cross-cultural researchers, for example, have used religion, region, or democracy as a proxy for cultural and ideological differences across countries (Paxton & Kunovich, 2003). Along these lines, examining organizational- and country-level factors allows researchers to explain the variation in the representation and experiences of women leaders in national sport governing bodies. Overall, by applying a comparative, cross-cultural, and multilevel approach, there are several potential extensions to this dissertation to elucidate the representation and roles of women leaders in national and international sport governing bodies.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purposes of the dissertation are to (a) examine the linkage between sociocultural, economic, and political factors and representation of women on boards

within national sport governing bodies and (b) illustrate experiences of women leaders in national and international football governing bodies. To do so, I delve into three studies. In Chapter II, I aim to examine how cultural factors impact the gender-related board dynamics in national Olympic committees (NOCs). Using Hofstede's five cultural dimensions (1980, 1991, 1994), I investigate the influences of cultural worldviews that shape variations in the rate of women leaders within national and institutional settings and undertake a cross-cultural comparison across countries. By including multiple cultural dimensions, Chapter II therefore provides benefits in addressing the shortcomings in the extant research about boardroom dynamics specifically associated with gender.

In Chapter III, I extend Chapter II by exploring additional societal influences, such as economy, democracy, and religion. As previously noted, researchers have focused on ideologies and cultural and political climates across countries and have shown that the sociocultural and political systems are relatively more important than the economic context to account for cross-national variations in the share of women leaders in politics and business (Kenworthy & Malami, 1999). Although economies may not necessarily reflect quality of life and human rights, economic performance of a country revolves around their values and ideals, which inform government expenditures and policies (Barro, 1999). Hence, I look at a degree of economic development, a level of democracy, and religion in a country to reveal more fruitful cross-national comparisons in terms of the gender inequality in leadership representation on NOC boards. For both Chapter II and Chapter III, I employed quantitative design and utilized large-scale data

and regression analysis techniques. By doing so, I offer societal explanations of the representation of women on NOC boards across countries.

Whilst focusing on the interplay of sociocultural, economic, and political factors with the representation of women in leadership position within national sport governing bodies in Chapter II and III, I paid attention to the lived experiences of women in the past and current leadership roles in both national and international football governing bodies in Chapter IV. I approached Chapter IV with a qualitative inquiry to provide the rich descriptions of the experiences and enhance the nuanced understanding of women leaders at each of national and international football confederations and associations.

### **Theoretical Model for the Study**

Taken together, the aim of this dissertation was to delineate leadership representation and the experiences of women in national sport governing bodies. Throughout the three studies, I adopt a multilevel approach to help guide this dissertation. Figure 1 illustrates a brief overview of the multilevel model of Cunningham (2019, p. 78) explaining three levels associated with gender balance in leadership representation and experiences of women leaders in sport governing bodies. As discussed earlier, this multilevel model contains macro-, meso-, and micro-level factors that influence the phenomenon of gender diversity and inclusion, and each of the levels are interrelated to one another.

### **Research Questions**

I used the following research questions to guide this dissertation:

**Research Question 1:** What is the relationship between macro-level factors and representation of women in leadership positions within national sport governing bodies?

**Research Question 2:** In what ways do gender initiatives and policies of national sport governing bodies influence the experiences of women leaders and coaches?

### **Significance of the Study**

Collectively, this dissertation is significant in a number of ways. First, through the three studies included in the dissertation, I identified the relationship between country-level factors, and leadership representation and experiences of women leaders in sport governing bodies at the national and international level. Sociocultural, economic, and political structures conducive to gender balance in leadership vary across countries and organizations. Hence, this dissertation discusses the underlying and conflicting ideologies and systems that are embedded in organizational and institutional contexts. In short, the key contribution to the current sport scholarship is examining how cultural values, economic performance, democratic regimes, and religions of a country manifest the different representation and experiences of women leaders in sport governing bodies. Second, based on this information, women professionals in sport will prepare themselves for their leadership development and identify the societal influences posed to their future leadership career paths. Considering increasing diversity in the sport workplace, the cross-national analyses can offer new insights into how the societal contexts are related to leadership representation and experiences of women professionals and leaders. For

instance, women professionals and leaders might be familiar with the concept of the glass ceiling and less familiar with a new gender stereotype called the glass cliff. Thus, this dissertation opens the discussion of the glass cliff and outlines strategies for women who were brought in to deal with high-risk situations, such that both individuals and entities can handle the challenges of the glass cliff in sport.

### **Structures of the Study**

Given the research designs, I organized this dissertation as follows:

1. Each chapter contains the relevant backgrounds of each study, methods including data collection and analysis, discussion of the findings, conclusions with implications and future directions, and a summary.
2. At the end of this dissertation, I also offer a general discussion of the three studies and shed light on future studies that can help advance the area of gender diversity and inclusion in sport.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

#### *Limitations*

This research includes the following limitations:

1. The three studies included in this dissertation are cross-sectional, meaning that I collected all data at a single point in time for each study. Particularly, in Chapter II and III, I examined both the societal factors and representation of women on NOC boards at the same time. Thus, it is difficult to establish any causal relationships from the analyses, but the data indicate the correlational associations among various factors.

2. In Chapter IV, I conducted one-on-one interviews to address the experiences of women leaders across national and international football governing bodies, whereas other interview methods (e.g., a focus group) might have allowed participants to further elaborate on their perceptions of gender bias in football. Although the findings of Chapter IV were helpful to discuss the notion of the glass cliff, the data from other interview methods may have been beneficial to explore consensus or debate regarding the relationship between the glass phenomenon and the Fédération Internationale de Football Association's (FIFA) gender-based initiatives.

#### *Delimitations*

This research also includes the following delimitations:

1. I delimited the population of this dissertation to sport stakeholders. While findings of this dissertation can be generalized to other contexts and areas, I only applied the representation and experiences of women in leadership positions to national and international sport governing bodies.
2. I delimited the findings of this dissertation to NOCs and some national, continental, and international football governing bodies. Although the conclusions and implications can be generalized in various levels and other types of sport organizations, I only applied the findings to the aforementioned sport governing bodies.

#### **Definition of Terms**

I operationalized the following terms for the present study:

*Cultural Values:* According to Hofstede (1991), culture refers to “the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from others” (p. 5). Based on this conceptualization, cultural values include five dimensions to illustrate cultural differences at the country-level: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, and long- versus short-term orientation (Hofstede, 1980, 2001).

*Democracy:* The meaning of democracy is not limited to a free, fair, and competitive voting system, but encompasses features of civic democracy, such as freedom, rule of law, accountability, equal rights and opportunities, participation, responsiveness, transparency, and effectiveness of representation (Diamond & Morlino, 2005).

*Gender:* According to the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF; 2017), gender means “a social and cultural construct that differentiates the attributes of women and men, as well as girls and boys based on the roles and responsibilities” associated with being male and female (p. 2). Gender does not simply reflect biological and physical characteristics of men and women, but also behaviors and expectations placed upon being a man and woman, which are socially constructed. Thus, the meaning of gender changes over time and varies among different sociocultural contexts (Halberstam, 2012).

*Gender Equality:* Gender equality entails the concept that all people, both women and men, are considered and valued equally in terms of personal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities (UNICEF, 2017). While gender equality does not require that women



and men be the same, the concept refers to the same standards of rights, resources, and opportunities between men and women, as well as boys and girls.

*Gender Equity:* Gender equity refers to the process of being fair to women and men according to their respective needs (UNICEF, 2017). As such, the concept of gender equity emphasizes fairness in both process and outcome, recognizing gender gaps and differences in policies, resources, services, and employment practices (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2018). By identifying and readdressing potential gender biases and disadvantages of gender norms, equity ensures equal chances between men and women at the starting and finishing point.

*Glass Ceiling:* This is a metaphor representing the invisible and artificial barriers that keep women from advancing to the top leadership positions in the workplace (Powell, 2018).

*Glass Cliff:* Extending the metaphor of glass ceiling, the concept of glass cliff refers to the phenomenon of groups or organizations placing women in leadership roles during times of crisis or downturn (Ryan & Haslam, 2005, 2007).

*Governance:* Governance refers to structures and processes by which a governing body is directed, controlled, and regulated (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007). Thus, sport governance is concerned with authority, regulation, and control in a sport governing body. In doing so, sport governance provides a direction that aligns with the mission and vision for the governing body and determines membership and eligibility of sport entities at various levels (Hums & MacLean, 2013, p. 5).

*Religion:* Religion is a multifaceted construct and is concerned with some forms of adherence to beliefs and practices that are formally organized by social entities and institutions. As such, religion refers to various religious traditions and denominations in which a group of people worship a god or multiple formally. The world's major religions include Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Confucianism, Islam, and Judaism, to name a few (Pew Research Center, 2017).

*Religiosity:* One's religious experiences and faith that are recognized by a formal religious institution (King & Crowther, 2004). Thus, religiosity indicates one's relationship with a particular faith tradition or doctrine belonging to an organized religious entity.

*Spirituality:* Spirituality is concerned with one's intrinsic worship and personal connections with sacred and transcendent forces (Villani, Sorgente, Iannello, & Antonietti, 2019). As such, spirituality means an individual's belief in religious teachings or internal commitment and expression of one's faith.

*Sport Governing Bodies:* Sport governing bodies refer to social entities within the sport industry that are responsible for setting rules of play and regulatory regimes of the entities (Hums & MacLean, 2013). As a collective unit, these entities exist in relation to single-sport or multi-sport programs, develop policies, and implement strategic plans to promote their respective sports (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007). For example, the International Olympic Committee (IOC), national Olympic committees (NOCs), and international sport federations (IFs) are sport governing bodies themselves at the national and international level, dedicated to achieving the Olympic movement and complying with

the Olympic charter. Whereas the term sport organization includes both private and public, as well as profit and non-profit institutions, as Gómez and colleagues (2008) described, sport governing bodies are officially recognized by the IOC, NOCs, IFs, and national sport federations to function as a governing body for a particular sport or multiple sports at various levels (i.e., local, regional, national, continental, and international). Therefore, sport governing bodies differ from sport organizations, especially private and profit-oriented professional sport clubs, leagues, and franchises.

*Stakeholder:* According to Freeman (1984), stakeholder refers to “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives” (p. 46). With varying degrees of influence and interest, examples of sport stakeholders include players, coaches, leagues, clubs, participants, staff and managers, volunteers, owners, supporters, agents, match officials, governments, funding agencies, commercial partners, sponsors (European Commission, 2013; Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007)

### **Chapter I Summary**

In Chapter I, I outlined the research background and identified the research problem to formulate the questions that can guide this dissertation. I also presented the relevant literature review by summarizing a number of the multidimensional factors and multilevel approaches examined in the sport management literature in relation to the dissertation topic. I described the significance of this dissertation, as well as the structure and contents of the three studies included in this dissertation. Finally, I touched on the limitation and delimitation of the dissertation and included important terms that were used in this dissertation.

CHAPTER II  
CULTURAL VALUES AND REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN NATIONAL  
SPORT GOVERNING BODIES\*

**Abstract**

Women are underrepresented in leadership positions throughout sport, and researchers have largely explored organizational, group, and individual antecedents of this phenomenon. The purpose of the current study was to expand on this understanding by investigating the influence of a country's cultural values on the representation of women on National Olympic Committees (NOCs). Drawing from Hofstede's (Hofstede, 1980, 1994, 2001) cultural dimensions theory, I included five cultural values: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity, and long-term orientation. Results indicate that women constituted only 19.7 percent of the positions on the boards. Regression analysis, controlling for size of the Olympics program in the country, indicates that cultural values accounted for 41.8 percent of the variance in board gender diversity. Countries with lower power distance, lower masculinity, and lower uncertainty avoidance all had a higher proportion of women on the board. I discuss practical and theoretical implications.

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## **Introduction**

Although there are increased opportunities for women across different occupational settings, a significant body of research shows that there is a scarcity of women in positions of power and authority (International Labour Organization or ILO, 2015; Pande & Ford, 2011). Consider Fortune 500 companies as a specific example: in 2017, women held 19.9 percent of the board seats and just 5.8 percent of chief executive officer (CEO) positions in American corporations. Similar trends are apparent in European organizations (European Commission, 2017), but drop to below 10 percent and 5 percent of female board members in workforces in Asian-Pacific and Latin American regions, respectively (Corporate Women Directors International or CWDI, 2015). Not surprisingly, these patterns are not limited to the corporate setting, as women are underrepresented in sport organizations, including as administrators and coaches in intercollegiate athletics (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014), commissions for the Australian Sports Commission (Australian Sports Commission, 2014), and board members of Sport England (Sport England, 2014), among other settings (see also Burton, 2015).

The underrepresentation of women in leadership positions is important for a number of reasons. From an ethical and social obligation perspective, sport organizations have a responsibility to be inclusive (Cunningham, 2015). Furthermore, differences in the gender diversity of top management boards affect business ethics (Cohen, Pant, & Sharp, 1998; Post & Byron, 2015) and reduce risk-aversion perspectives (Cumming, Leung, & Rui, 2015). Top management teams with gender balance signal inclusiveness to internal and external stakeholders, and they arrive at better decisions (Eagly & Carli,

2003; Robinson & Dechant, 1997). Not surprisingly given these effects, Burke (1997) and Terjesen, Sealy, and Singh (2009) found that corporations with gender diversity accomplish better organizational performance. Terjesen and colleagues (2009) and Post and Byron (2015) particularly called for further examination of the relationship between board gender diversity and corporate performance from a multi-national perspective.

Given these benefits, a large number of researchers have investigated the reasons for the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions across macro-, meso-, and micro-levels (see also Burton, 2015). First, the vast theoretical perspectives of societal factors include work-family conflicts (Dixon & Bruening, 2005) and gendered expectations for women and men at the macro-level (Cunningham, 2008). More specifically, Shaw and Frisby (2006) argued that sport organizations are predominantly male-led, and this dominance of masculinity consistently accounts for the reason for women's underrepresentation in management positions. Second, the meso-level factors embrace organizational demography (e.g., leadership positions in the International Olympic Committee or IOC), organizational cultures of similarity (Spoor & Hoye, 2014), biased decision-making (Borland & Bruening, 2010), and prejudice and discrimination (Regan & Cunningham, 2012) at the organizational level. Recognizing the importance of comprehending the practice of gender within organization, Hoerber (2007) reflected the post-structural feminism into organizational values to understand gender equity practices within sport organizations. Similarly, Adriaanse and Claringbould (2016) argued that women's leadership positions in sport involve production and power relations. Finally, the individual level of analysis encompasses

social capital differences (Sagas & Cunningham, 2004; Walker & Bopp, 2011) and self-limiting behaviors (Sartore & Cunningham, 2007), among others.

Though past scholars have demonstrated either individual or institutional perspectives on gender diversity in board composition, there is a general lack of attention to large-scale and multinational approaches. Recognizing a given culture in organizations is an important factor influencing board demography, in her recent review, Burton (2015) recommended uncovering the impact of culture on gender equity. Furthermore, by taking a multi-theoretical lens together, it is possible to shed light on the global gender diversity framework (Terjesen et al., 2009). The purpose of the current study was, therefore, to expand on this understanding in two ways. First, I investigated the representation of women in the NOCs. Given that much of the gender research is set in North America and Europe (Grosvold & Brammer, 2011), the cross-national level of study on the gender equity with a range of countries adds a unique and novel contribution to gender equity in sport research. Second, I drew from Hofstede's (1980, 1991, 2001) cultural dimensions theory to empirically consider the multilevel factors on the representation of women in leadership positions. I anticipated that the cultural dimensions prevalent at the national level would account for the representation of women in key leadership positions. In the following sections, I offer an overview of Hofstede's theory and present specific hypotheses.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### *Hofstede's Cultural Values*

The concept of culture is broad and has numerous meanings in social studies (Carrasco, Francoeur, Labelle, Laffarga, & Ruiz-Barbadillo, 2015). In organization studies, for instance, culture is widely used to explain a variety of values, principles, and belief systems in which individuals and societies are entrenched, thereby shaping behaviors of both individuals and groups within organizations (Maanen & Barley, 1985; Schein, 2010). In a cross-cultural research setting, scholars frequently draw from Hall (1976) and Hofstede (1980), among others, to describe culture. According to Hall (1976), communication is central to culture, such that cultures differ in the use of messages between high and low context continuum. For Hofstede (1991), culture is defined as “the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from others” (p. 5). Hofstede’s works have been the most prominently cited and empirically tested to identify different culture types in a multicultural context (Søndergaard, 1994). Though both conceptualizations explicate national cultural differences, I employ Hofstede’s (2001) work to elaborate on empirical aspects of cultural values, as Hall’s model lacks explanatory support (Cardon, 2008).

In his early work, Hofstede (1980) first developed his theory of culture by drawing from a survey of approximately 88,000 IBM employees from 40 different countries in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In doing so, Hofstede (1980) explained the similarities and differences among human cultures and concluded that organizations are culturally tied. Since then, Hofstede’s original four dimensions have been



overwhelmingly applied and confirmed in marketing (Steenkamp, Hofstede, & Wedel, 1999), international business (Elron, 1997), psychology (Smith, Peterson, & Schwartz, 2002), and strategic management literature (Brouthers & Brouthers, 2001), among other contexts. Thus, his works have shown to be efficacious in examining cultural differences and cross-cultural comparisons (Kirkman, Lowe, & Gibson, 2006). Finally, while Hofstede initially envisioned four cultural dimensions, he later revised his work to include two more dimensions (Hofstede, 1991, 2011). These include (a) power distance, (b) uncertainty avoidance, (c) individualism versus collectivism, (d) masculinity versus femininity, (e) long- versus short-term orientation, and (f) indulgence versus restraint. Although indulgence versus restraint is the most currently added dimension that has attracted substantial attention of scholars from cross-cultural research and many other contexts, Hofstede's five cultural dimensions are relatively underresearched in the field of sport management. Thus, I focus on the five cultural values and describe each in the following space.

First, power distance refers to the degree to which resources and influence are concentrated around a select few (Hofstede, 1980). Countries with a higher power distance (e.g., Malaysia and Guatemala) are more likely to accept hierarchical structures and inequality within a social system. In contrast, countries with a lower power distance (e.g., Austria and Denmark) may promote individuals' participation and equal rights (Hofstede, 1991). The next dimension is uncertainty avoidance, which is related to how people view uncertainty and subsequently seek to eschew ambiguous situations (Hofstede, 1980). Since such situations involve aggressive and compulsive personal

risks, countries with a stronger uncertainty avoidance (e.g., Greece, Guatemala, and Japan) tend to create formal rules, laws, and other securities to avoid unknown future around them. On the contrary, countries with a weaker uncertainty avoidance (e.g., the United Kingdom [UK] and Denmark) are more likely to be tolerant of threatening situations (Hofstede, 1991).

Third, individualism versus collectivism refers to the strength of bonding, concern for others, and collaboration among people (Hofstede, 1980). Specifically, countries with individualistic-orientation (e.g., the United States of America [US], the UK, and Canada) are more likely to value privacy (i.e., the self and immediate families only), whereas countries with collectivistic-orientation (e.g., Ecuador and Indonesia) tend to emphasize relationships among people and take more interests in others' well-being (Hofstede, 1991). Fourth, masculinity versus femininity refers to the traditional role for women and men (Hofstede, 1980). Countries with higher masculine traits (e.g., Japan, Austria, and Venezuela) are likely to represent a preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness, competitiveness, and material reward for success (Hofstede, 1991). Conversely, countries with lower masculine traits (e.g., Sweden, Norway, and Denmark) value cooperation, quality of life, modesty, and caring for others (Hofstede, 1991).

Finally, long- versus short-term orientation refers to the degree to which people in a society value tradition, fulfilling social obligations, and the past (Hofstede, 2011). This dimension is also called the Confucian dynamic, whose ideology influenced the majority of Eastern cultures (e.g., South Korea, China, Hong Kong, Japan, and Chinese

Taipei), and in turn, is often perceived as either Eastern or Western culture. Specifically, countries with higher long-term orientation (e.g., China and Hong Kong) are likely to exhibit a pragmatic future-orientation, dealing with society's search for virtue and perseverance, whereas countries with short-term orientation (e.g., Pakistan and Nigeria) are concerned with establishing the absolute truth, steadiness, and stability (Hofstede, 2011). Overall, Hofstede's five dimensional cultural values have widely been utilized at the individual, organization and country levels of analysis, which lead to be employed in empirical research (Kirkman et al., 2006).

### *Culture and Sport*

Consistent with the aforementioned replications in marketing and strategic management, Hofstede's cultural dimensions have been used in the context of recreation and international sport event tourism. For example, Funk and Bruun (2007) validated the use of Hofstede's cultural values, exploring cultural motives and attitudes of participants to attend an international sport event. In a similar vein, Li and his associates (2008) examined the usage of cultural values to understand perceptions and behaviors of culturally diverse visitors in parks and recreation. Finally, Forgas-Coll, Palau-Saumell, Sánchez-García, and Callarisa-Fiol (2012) studied the cross-national differences in tourists' behavior. These authors found that collectivistic-orientation and uncertainty avoidance explained differences between Europeans' and Americans' behaviors.

Hofstede's cultural dimensions are also aligned in the context of sport participation. For example, De Mooij and Hofstede (2011) noted that individuals in a lower uncertainty avoidance culture are likely to play more active sports or sport-related

activities. Because these people have more positive attitudes toward health and fitness, De Mooij (2004) indicated that involvement in sport is correlated with lower uncertainty avoidance. Further, results showed that the lifestyle is closer to sports in the cultures of lower power distance (De Mooij, 2004). Lastly, people who are in masculine and collectivistic cultures tend to spend less time on physical activities and active sports (see also De Mooij, 2004).

Finally, few researchers have examined the influence of Hofstede's cultural dimensions on sport organizations' policies. Smith and Shilbury (2004) investigated the unique culture of Australian national sport organizations by mapping sub-dimensions of local sport culture. Their study neither validated Hofstede's cultural framework directly nor addressed the issues of underrepresentation of women in sport organizations. In another research, Girginov (2010) suggested that the examination of cultural processes exerts a significant influence on individual and organizational behaviors in sport, and by doing so, changes the field of sport management.

As this review illustrates, few sport management scholars have explored cultural differences in sport—whether the marketing of sport, sport participation, or the structure of sport organizations. The scarcity of research in this area is surprising given the global nature of sport (Thibault, 2009), thereby representing a space ripe for cross-cultural exploration. Further, some issues within sport, such as the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions, have drawn worldwide attention (Burton, 2015). As I explore further in the subsequent section, Hofstede's framework could help explain how and under what conditions gender equity is observed.

### *Hofstede's Cultural Values and Gender Equity on the NOCs Boards*

Hofstede's cultural framework provides some explanatory value in understanding the underrepresentation of women on governing boards outside of sport. I develop hypotheses for each of the cultural dimensions, starting with power distance.

Countries where power distance is high are likely to have an unequal power distribution between women and men (Hofstede, 1991), while countries with a lower power distance have citizens who are more likely to engage in whistle-blowing (Ringov & Zollo, 2007), thereby signaling a commitment to fairness. In addition, Carrasco et al. (2015) found that women were underrepresented on boards in countries marked by power imbalances (i.e., high power distance) and a preference for traditional roles of men (i.e., high masculinity). In a related study, Ng and Burke (2004) observed that cultural values were indicators of attitudes toward diversity. The authors particularly found that individuals who scored high in masculine traits tended to have less favorable attitudes towards diversity. Finally, Ringov and Zollo (2007) observed that masculinity and power distance were associated with poorer social performance among firms in their study, and as social performance might be linked with inclusiveness, the findings inform the current research. Drawing from this work, I hypothesized:

**Hypothesis 1:** Power distance will be negatively related to gender balance on NOC boards.

Uncertainty avoidance refers to the degree to which people seek to eschew situations in which the outcome is unknown (Hofstede, 1991). One approach to doing this is to maintain hierarchies and systems that have traditionally been in place. Doing so

ensures that the taken-for-granted customs and assumptions remain entrenched, and new ideas—one that would introduce uncertainty—may remain marginalized. Consistent with this position, Hofstede (Hofstede, 1991) observed that people in countries high in uncertainty avoidance are more accepting of social inequities, such as gender imbalances, as a way of avoiding uncertain situation. The converse is also true, such that in countries with low uncertainty avoidance, people are more accepting of conditions and practices that are contrary to the norm (Hofstede, 1991), and gender equity on national boards represents one such practice. Therefore, I hypothesized:

**Hypothesis 2:** Uncertainty avoidance will be negatively associated with gender balance on NOC boards.

A country's individualistic or collectivistic culture reflects the strength of bonding, concern for others, and collaboration that takes place (Hofstede, 1980). For example, people living in most Western countries are likely to care about private issues and personal goals (Hofstede, 1991). This does not reflect a care for issues of fairness in society or within organizations. On the other hand, in countries where a collectivistic-orientation is more prevalent, people are more likely to care for the collective over the individual. It is possible this translates in sensitivity toward the underrepresentation of minorities in upper-level positions (Carrasco et al., 2015). Given this evidence, I hypothesized:

**Hypothesis 3:** Collectivism will be positively associated with gender equity on NOC boards.

A country's culture surrounding masculinity and femininity is also expected to influence the gender equity on NOCs. A number of authors have suggested that cultural norms surrounding gender influence women's rights in sport (Burton, 2015; Cunningham, 2008; Shaw & Frisby, 2006). Hofstede (1980, 2001) suggested the same, such that countries that emphasize masculinity are likely to be spaces where men and their activities are prized. On the other hand, when femininity is emphasized, then the roles and activities of women are also likely to be valued. These cultural values are likely to correspond with women's roles in organizations and in decision-making roles, such that, as femininity in a culture increases, it is also likely that women will have an increased presence on executive boards. I therefore hypothesized:

**Hypothesis 4:** Masculinity will be negatively associated with gender equity on NOC boards.

Lastly, Hofstede (2011) considered long- versus short-term orientation as the extent to which people in a society value tradition, fulfilling social obligations, and the past. Although he argued that this dimension is more concerned with economic growth and the time orientation of cultures rather than Confucianism, values of this dimension are based on teachings of Confucius (Hofstede, 2011). Along these lines, Huat (1989) observed that long-term oriented countries may advocate for ethical virtue, morality, social consciousness, and benevolence. All of these characteristics are likely associated with a more equitable view toward gender relations and women's role in the workplace. On the other hand, countries with a short-term orientation are likely to emphasize absolute truth, personal steadiness and stability, and respect for tradition (Hofstede,

2011). However, based on the key elements of Confucius' teaching, these characteristics are likely to reflect an endorsement of the status quo (i.e., power imbalance), and thereby reify men's dominant roles in society and in organizations (Hofstede & Bond, 1988). Though Hofstede and Bond (1988) suggested that long-term oriented countries might be in the midrange of masculinity versus femininity, long-term orientation is "still present in countries with a Confucian heritage" (Hofstede, 2011). Considering such Confucian values, the last hypothesis is:

**Hypothesis 5:** A long-term orientation will be negatively associated with gender equity on NOC boards.

## **Method**

### *Data Sources*

I collected data from two archival data sources. Data concerning the NOCs were gathered from <https://www.olympic.org/national-olympic-committees>. This site contains a link to every country's NOC, as well as a list and accompanying picture of the NOC membership. For this study, I collected the total number of NOC members, the number of women, and the number of men. The final list included information from 207 NOCs. Gender diversity on NOC was reflective of the percent of women on the board.

I then collected the countries' cultural values by drawing from Hofstede's publications (Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010) and his personal website: <http://geerthofstede.com/research-and-vsm/dimension-data-matrix>. Drawing from his considerable research across contexts, Hofstede provides data concerning the cultural values for a number of countries around the world, though not all. Scores for



each dimension range from 1 (lowest possible score) to 100 (highest possible score). Higher cultural value scores are reflective of greater power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, masculinity, and long-term orientation, respectively. Specifically, cultural value scores are based on mean scores per country or region measured by Hofstede's Values Survey Modules (VSMs), which include six versions since its first edition in 1980 (Hofstede & Minkov, 2013). Of these six versions, the VSM80, VSM81, and VSM82 were developed by Hofstede based on his original International Business Machines (IBM) survey from 40 countries, covering the initial four dimensions. Next, a VSM94, an extended version of the earlier versions, is with a 26-item questionnaire, including Bond's Chinese value survey from 23 countries (Hofstede & Bond, 1988), whereas a VSM08 is a revised version with a 34-item questionnaire from 81 countries based on Minkov's (2007) study (Hofstede et al., 2010). While the VSM94 covered five dimensions to compare values of people from two or more countries or regions (Hofstede, 1994), the VSM08 included seven dimensions to compare values and sentiments of similar respondents from two or more countries, or on occasion, regions within countries. Lastly, a VSM2013 is the most up-to-date version, which was developed by Hofstede and his colleagues, who officially added the sixth dimension in the present version. The VSM2013 consists of a 30-item questionnaire from 76 countries (Hofstede & Minkov, 2013). These VSMs and data are freely available for research purposes from Hofstede's website and publications to compare cultural values between nations, or sometimes regions. The VSM2013 contains the revised dimension of long- versus short-term orientation, extending the number of

countries from 23 to 93, and thus, the formulas that are used to calculate indices of national culture from the latest version are presented in the following (Hofstede & Minkov, 2013):

$$\text{Power distance} = 35(m07 - m02) + 25(m20 - m23) + C(pd)$$

$$\text{Uncertainty avoidance} = 40(m18 - m15) + 25(m21 - m24) + C(ua)$$

$$\text{Individualism versus collectivism} = 35(m04 - m01) + 35(m09 - m06) + C(ic)$$

$$\text{Masculinity versus femininity} = 35(m05 - m03) + 35(m08 - m10) + C(mf)$$

$$\text{Long- or short-term orientation} = 40(m13 - m14) + 25(m19 - m22) + C(ls)$$

Finally, given that organizational size can influence its operations and diversity outcomes (see Cunningham, 2009, 2011), I included two measures to reflect the size of the Olympic program in the country. These included the size of the NOC, using the aforementioned data related to the NOCs, and the number of Olympians at the 2016 Rio Olympics. The latter was determined through archival data obtained through the following website: <http://www.mapsofworld.com/sports/olympics/summer-olympics/participating-nations.html>.

### *Analyses*

I computed means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations for all variables. The hypotheses were tested through a hierarchical regression analysis, with the two measures of size entered in the first step. The second step included the five cultural values variables, and the percent of women on NOC boards served as the dependent variable. As complete data were available for 56 countries, I increased the alpha level to .10 (Kervin, 1992; Stevens, 1996). Even though all assumptions regarding

the multivariate analysis were statistically satisfied, due to a small sample size, I used robust standard errors. By doing so, the coefficients can be estimated, minimizing minor problems (Maas & Hox, 2005).

## **Results**

### *Descriptive statistics*

Means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations are available in Table 1, and the cultural values and the proportion of NOC gender equity for each country included in the analysis are presented in Table 2. Results show that the average NOC included 16 members, and approximately 20 percent of the members were women. A one-sample t-test showed that the proportion of women was significantly less than the 50 percent mark that would conceptually represent the greatest gender equity,  $t(55) = -19.34, p < .01$ . Further analyses showed that 5.4 percent ( $n = 3$ ) of all 56 NOC's included no women on the board, 17.9 percent ( $n = 10$ ) included less than 10 percent of women on the NOC boards. Finally, analysis of the bivariate correlations showed that gender equity on the NOC's is significantly associated with lower power distance ( $r = -.47$ ), lower uncertainty avoidance ( $r = -.45$ ), higher individualism ( $r = .37$ ), and lower masculinity ( $r = -.35$ ).

### *Hypothesis Tests*

I used hierarchical regression analysis to test the hypotheses, and results are presented in Table 3. The controls accounted for 2.2 percent of the variance, which was not significant ( $p = .50$ ). The block of cultural values accounted for 41.8 percent unique variance ( $p < .01$ ).

Results indicate that power distance was negatively associated with gender equity ( $\beta = -.22, p = .08$ ), thereby supporting Hypothesis 1. Hypotheses 2 and 4 were both supported, as uncertainty avoidance was negatively associated with gender equity ( $\beta = -.35, p = .01$ ), as was masculinity ( $\beta = -.30, p = .01$ ). However, Hypothesis 3 was not supported, as individualism was not associated with gender equity ( $\beta = .12, p = .38$ ). Finally, long-term orientation was not associated with gender equity ( $\beta = -.09, p = .41$ ), thereby rejecting Hypothesis 5.

I then computed additional analyses to examine equality of the regression coefficients. Results indicate the strength of the regression coefficients did not significantly differ, all  $F$ s  $< .14$ , all  $p$ s  $> .87$ .

### **Discussion**

Gender diversity in top management teams are associated with a bevy of positive outcomes, including ethical behavior, improved decision-making, and overall performance, among other benefits (Cohen et al., 1998; Eagley & Carli, 2003; Post & Byron, 2015; Terjesan et al., 2009). Despite the value associated with gender diversity, most sport organizations fail in this domain (Burton, 2015), leading some to suggest that gender inequalities are institutionalized and deeply engrained into the fabric of sport and sport organizations (Cunningham, 2008). Consequently, better understanding factors associated with gender equity in sport remains a priority for scholars and practitioners alike. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to contribute to address this need by examining gender equity on NOC boards, with a particular focus on a country's cultural values. In interpreting the results, the reader should remain mindful that, because of the

small sample, I relaxed to .10 in order to increase power of the tests (Kervin, 2006; Stevens, 1996).

Results indicate that gender inequality is the norm on NOC boards. Women represented just 19.7 percent of the board members across all countries. Further analyses showed that approximately one in six boards had less than 10 percent women membership, and 5.4 percent of all boards had no women. These findings mirror recent research focusing on national sport organizations around the world, where women held roughly 19.7 percent of board positions (Adriaanse, 2016). Recall that the NOCs are the primary Olympic governing bodies, and in most countries, they help to set the agenda for sport policy and delivery. While the NOC's focus on high performance sports, many will also set policies related to (a) sport delivered at the grassroots levels, (b) the development of coaches and athletes; and (c) sport research and development; among other activities (Hums & MacLean, 2013). Having few women involved in these important decisions necessarily means that women's voices are not being heard, decision-making capabilities are not being realized, and ultimately, the promotion of girls' and women's sport is likely thwarted.

Drawing from Hofstede's (1980, 1991, 2001) cultural dimensions theory, I was also interested in investigating how cultural values influenced this diversity. Consistent with the three hypotheses, I observed low scores in power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity norms were all associated with greater gender diversity on NOC boards. Recall that power distance refers to the degree to which resources and influence are concentrated around a select few (Hofstede, 1980). In a similar way,

countries that embrace norms of masculinity privilege men and traditional forms of masculinity. In both cases, these power holders are wealthy men who exert considerable influence (Hofstede, 1991). People who are privileged are unlikely to relinquish said benefits; thus, it is not surprising that in countries with high power distance and high in masculinity, key decision-making positions, such as NOC boards, are primarily held by men.

Uncertainty avoidance was also negatively related to gender equity on NOC boards. This cultural dimension refers to the degree to which people eschew situations in which the outcome is ambiguous (Hofstede, 1991). As men have traditionally held key leadership positions in sport (Burton, 2015), it is possible that diversifying boards could be associated with an unknown—that is, with uncertainty. Women, after all, have historically been excluded from these roles, so their influence on decision-making, governing processes, and board outcomes might be unclear. If this is the case, then people who seek to avoid uncertainty are likely to reject diversity, including gender equity on boards. On the other hand, for those who are more comfortable with ambiguity or take it as a given in life, gender diversity is likely to be normal and embraced.

Interestingly, two cultural values were not associated with the NOC board gender diversity: individual-collectivism and long- versus short-term orientation. I hypothesized that collectivistic countries would be positively associated with the gender equity on NOC boards because such countries represent a moral sensitivity towards the issues of fairness in society, while individualism is based on self-interest (Hofstede, 1980). Conversely, individualism held a significant, positive bivariate correlation with gender

equity on NOC boards, but was not significant in the multivariate analyses. The results of the study support Carrasco et al.'s (2015) work, such that individualism versus collectivism was not related to the proportion of women on boards. Also, the result of positive correlation is perhaps because promoting gender balance could be based on individual merit (Carrasco et al., 2015); in this case, people from individualistic countries along with low power distance cultures, such as the US, Australia, and the UK, might challenge against inequalities and gender norms. On the other hand, collectivistic countries associated with high power distance cultures might conform to hegemonic authority (Hofstede, 1980). However, according to Hofstede (2011), such relationships are more likely to be applicable to economically advanced countries, not differences in cultures. This corresponds to the findings of this study, showing that Australia, Canada, and the US, which have high individualism and lower power distance cultures, were ranked above average percentage of the NOC gender diversity, among other economically developed countries.

Nonetheless, it is more important to note that Northern European countries (e.g., Denmark, Latvia, Norway, and Sweden) that have feminine cultures exhibit the highest NOC gender diversity. In particular, Denmark and Sweden stand out with lower power distance, lower uncertainty avoidance, and feminine cultures in terms of the NOC gender diversity. It echoes the findings of this study that the standardized coefficients for masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and power distance have a greater impact on the NOC gender diversity.

Lastly, the long- versus short-term orientation focuses on fulfilling the social obligations of the past. While there is some evidence this orientation is associated with ethical virtues and benevolence (Huat, 1989), though Hofstede and Bond (1988) argued that long-term orientation is related to fast economic growth, these characteristics are based on principles of Confucius' teaching that influenced most East Asian countries (e.g., South Korea, China, Hong Kong, and Japan). Although the result was not significant, with regard to East Asian countries, the findings of the study indicated that the NOC gender equity in South Korea and China was above the average, but not in Hong Kong and Japan. This is consistent with Hofstede and Bond's (1988) argument that long-term orientation is in the midrange of masculinity. Consequently, as Hofstede suggested (2011), long-term orientation is also found in Eastern and Central Europe, this perspective is evidently not associated with gender diversity on NOC boards. These findings suggest that the other three cultural values are more important indicators of gender equity in this context.

### **Implications, Limitations, and Future Directions**

There are several implications of the study. First, results show that women continue to be underrepresented in key leadership positions in international sport. The IOC, as the primary governing body for the Olympic movement, has the opportunity—and I submit, obligation—to take steps to ensure accountability from NOCs in the area of diversity. As a step in this direction, in March 2017, the IOC formed the Gender Equality Working Group, which is an entity charged with creating action-oriented mandates for change (see IOC, 2017). This is an encouraging first step. Second, while



the results are instructive, some might question the managerial implications, especially when considering that cultural values are embedded at the national level. I counter this position by noting that all organizations can ensure gender equity, even in spaces where cultural values would potentially constrain women's opportunities. In fact, researchers have shown that pro-diversity efforts are most positively received when engendered by organizations located in locales not otherwise known for being diverse (Pugh, Dietz, Brief, & Wiley, 2008).

Despite the strengths of the study, there are potential limitations. First, because I relied on multiple archival sources that were ultimately merged together, I was not able to have complete data for all NOCs. The countries for which I do have complete data are geographically and culturally diverse, so I am less concerned with biases in those domains. Nevertheless, the smaller sample could be a limitation. Related to this point, the small sample size also meant that I relaxed the alpha to .10. Such an approach is statistically justified (Kervin, 1992; Stevens, 1996), and I provided the exact *p*-values in reporting the results. Nevertheless, this is a higher *p*-value than used in other statistical analyses with larger samples.

Finally, I see several avenues for future studies. First, more work is needed to understand that factors influencing gender equity on NOC boards. Given the benefit of the multilevel theorizing (Burton, 2015), researchers will likely find value in examining individual, organizational, and societal factors. In addition, managers are likely persuaded of diversity's benefits when linked with effective processes and outcomes (Fink & Pastore, 1999). Lastly, empirical testing of Hofstede's cultural values is lacking

in the sport management literature. For example, his sixth dimension (i.e., indulgence versus restraint) explains humans' desire for enjoyment and involvement in sport activities, which may offer a concrete foundation for examining the relationship between this single dimension and gender diversity activities in sport organizations. Thus, future researchers should consider exploring the potential links among gender diversity and each of sport development, innovation, entrepreneurial activities, and performance or sport-for-development and peace at national and international levels.

### **Chapter II Summary**

In Chapter II, I took a close look at how the cultural values of each country influence the presence of women on boards of the NOCs. The findings showed that women hold less than 20% of board positions on the NOCs in general. Using Hofstede's five dimensions of cultural values, I also demonstrated that three cultural values (e.g., low power distance, low uncertainty avoidance, and femininity) were associated with greater gender equity on the NOC boards across 56 countries. By considering the implications of the study that cultural values and gender equity on NOC boards vary among nations, sport managers and policy makers may adopt strategies to promote gender equity at the organizational and societal levels.

CHAPTER III  
ECONOMY, DEMOCRACY, RELIGION, AND REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN  
IN NATIONAL SPORT GOVERNING BODIES\*

**Abstract**

Researchers have explored societal explanations for the scarcity of women in leadership in the sport setting. Yet, an important question remains unanswered: are the degrees of economic development, levels of democracy, and religion in a country associated with higher proportions of women on the boards of National Olympic Committees (NOCs)? To answer this question, I focus on the analysis of country-level and institutional factors and examine the relationships among economy, democracy, religion, and women's representation on NOC boards. I utilized secondary datasets, including the gross domestic product (GDP) per capita from the World Bank, democracy index from the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), and world religion dataset from the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA) and gathered data from 89 countries. Results suggest that countries with a high-income per capita, a high level of democracy, and a large proportion of Protestants had greater proportions of women on NOC boards, respectively. I present a number of implications for sport academics and practitioners.

**Introduction**

Despite each constituting nearly half of the labor force worldwide, women and men are not equally represented in top leadership positions (International Labour

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\* In review.

Organization [ILO], 2019). According to Catalyst (2018), women occupied less than a quarter of corporate board positions across countries, and similar patterns emerged in national parliaments (Inter-Parliamentary Union [IPU], 2020). Gipson and colleagues (2017) also found that the share of women leaders is disproportionately lower than that of men in the corporate and political spheres across the world. These trends indicate that the scarcity of women in leadership positions is a global phenomenon, which requires multidimensional approaches and more structured discussions to understand (Terjesen & Singh, 2008). Consequently, researchers have attempted to explain the gap between women and men in top management positions across various industries (see Vinnicombe, Singh, Burke, Bilimoria, & Huse, 2008) and many countries (see Terjesen, Couto, & Francisco, 2016).

Whereas empirical evidence shows that men outnumber women in senior leadership in almost every setting globally, the degree of women's presence varies widely by country. As an example, Terjesen and Singh (2008) demonstrated that the rate of women on corporate boards ranged from 0.2 to 22% by country. This result is similar to the findings of Sheridan and colleagues (2014) and Ahn and Cunningham (2017), who reported sizable gender differences in corporate and governance boards around the world as well as in national sport governing bodies. The differences are also notable across geographical regions with the varying percentage of women legislators from 16.7% in the Pacific nations to 31.7% in Europe (IPU, 2020). This pattern leaves a question concerning what accounts for such variations in the prevalence of the gender inequality

in leadership across countries. Why do some countries have a higher percentage of women leaders in business and government than others?

Researchers have investigated the underlying barriers to women's representation in leadership at various levels. For example, human and social capital are the predominant factors operating at the individual level, whereas social identity, network, and in-group bias are among the key factors at the organizational or group level (Terjesen, Sealy, & Singh, 2009). Individual and organizational factors contribute to the underrepresentation of women in governments and on corporate boards (Burke & Nelson, 2002), but researchers have paid less attention to societal factors. These include gender roles, beliefs, history, and social norms, among others, all of which are impacted by economic, political, and environmental systems of a country and change slowly (Norris & Inglehart, 2001). In line with the 2030 Agenda<sup>1</sup>, the United Nations (UN) Women (2018) emphasized the importance of three macro—social, economic, environmental—forces for reducing the gender gap in decision-making positions in private and public spheres, and some researchers echoed this sentiment (Ceci, Williams, & Barnett, 2009; Christiansen, Lin, Pereira, Topalova, & Turk-Ariss, 2016; Norris & Inglehart, 2001; Paxton & Kunovich, 2003; Sheridan et al., 2014; Terjesen & Singh, 2008). Because numerous policy makers and organizations have prioritized narrowing

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<sup>1</sup> In 2015, the UN General Assembly launched the 2030 agenda, which encompasses a set of 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs). This new plan, agreed upon by 193 countries, aimed to guide global and national development, and among the global SDGs is gender quality (Goal 5). While acknowledging the role of gender in every society, the UN not only prioritized the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls (Goal 5), but also interconnected gender equality concerns with more than half of the SDGs (see <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5>).

the gender gap in leadership (European Commission, 2013; World Economic Forum, 2016), identifying characteristics of countries would have the potential to add value at a macro-level. Thus, examining a broader context is beneficial to resolve a skewed gender representation on boards in each country (Hughes, Paxton, & Krook, 2017).

In this study, I examine several contextual factors that might influence gender diversity on NOC boards: the degree of economic development, the level of democracy, and religion in a country. The first factor, economy, refers to a country's wealth and has been an academic focal interest in the sport context. Using various economic indicators, researchers have examined its impact to assess purchasing power at the individual-level (Borland & Macdonald, 2003) and government expenditures at the country-level (De Bosscher, De Knop, van Bottenburg, & Shibli, 2006). In more detail, some researchers have analyzed individual decisions to participate in sport and physical activity, attend sporting events, or watch professional games (Ruseski & Maresova, 2013) using a single country or cross-national perspective (Ding et al., 2013). Some other researchers have shown that economically developed countries are associated with the overall well-being and health of a country's citizens (Wicker & Downward, 2017), elite sport performance (Bernard & Busse, 2004), or hosting major sporting events, such as the Olympic Games and the World Cups (Peeters, Matheson, & Szymanski, 2014). Although there is some evidence that national economies are linked to promoting gender equality policies and encouraging leadership representation of women in other contexts (Bullough, Kroeck, Newburry, Kundu, & Lowe, 2012; Paxton, 1997), research pertaining to this link has remained unexplored. Thus, I address this relationship.

Another factor, democracy, indicates more than a free and fair voting system. Democratic regimes concern fair and equal distribution of resources and power across social groups, rights for opposition parties and minorities, and freedom of expression at its core (Diamond & Morlino, 2005). These principles imply that countries with democratic systems might foster gender equality in leadership and encourage participation of both women and men in the policy-making processes (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). However, extant empirical evidence shows inconclusive results. On the one hand, some researchers have demonstrated a positive link between democracy and women's greater parliamentary representation worldwide (Franceschet & Piscopo, 2008; Norris & Inglehart, 2001). On the other hand, this may not be the case for some countries, such as Cuba and Rwanda, which exhibit a high probability of women in parliaments under an authoritarian regime (Tremblay, 2007). Other examples include highly democratic countries, like Ireland and Uruguay, where women hold fewer than 25% of political leadership positions (IPU, 2020). It is therefore unclear to what extent the level of democracy is associated with the representation of women in leadership positions.

As previously noted, the third factor that influences gender diversity on NOC boards is religion, and in particular, the religious traditions followed. Whereas values and tenets within a religion provide an important meaning of life to people and a community, religion has not been seen as a strong determinant of economic development or policy-making in a country (Basedau, Gobien, & Prediger, 2018). On the contrary, researchers have argued that religions caused wars and conflicts throughout history, and

these tensions continue to persist (Haynes, 2009). For the ideological and political aspects of religions, researchers have contended that religious traditions influence the values of a country's citizens and institutional structures (Setzler, 2015). Likewise, scholarly discussions on a causal link between a particular religion in a country and women's representation in positions of power are ambiguous and highly controversial. For example, some found that the proportion of Protestants in a country is related to women's visibility in leadership, but other dominant religions (e.g., Catholicism, Confucianism, and Islam) go in the opposite direction due to their hierarchical gender ideologies (Kenworthy & Malami, 1999; Lam, 2006; Reynolds, 1999; Stockemer, 2011).

From a different lens, religiously unaffiliated demographic (agnostics and atheists) is growing internationally (Pew Research Center, 2017). Non-religious people lean towards a liberal point of view, whereas those with a religious affiliation are split almost evenly between conservative and liberal (Hout & Fisher, 2002). In this case, religiously unaffiliated people might support liberal political issues (e.g., birth control and abortion) and women's representation in top leadership positions compared to those belonging to a religion. Supporting this, Schnabel (2016) found that countries with larger proportions of the religiously unaffiliated demographic were related to greater gender balance in leadership. Nevertheless, empirical evidence has shown little consensus on whether a particular religion or non-religion in a country would promote or hinder gender diversity in leadership. Taken together, a question remains unresolved whether a degree of economic development, a level of democracy, and religion in a country would be associated with a higher proportion of women on NOC boards.



Along these lines, the body of sport-related research examining the persistent underrepresentation of women in leadership has focused on either individual or organizational factors (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2012; Sartore & Cunningham, 2007) and has been comprised of mostly single country studies (Demers, Thibault, Brière, & Culver, 2019; Hovden, 2006; Wicker, Feiler, & Breuer, 2020; for the exception, see Geeraert, Alm, & Groll, 2014). As Paxton and Kunovich (2003) noted, each country has their own ideologies and values that directly or indirectly translate into socioeconomic and political systems; thereby, shaping the landscape of women in leadership similarly or differently across countries (Tremblay, 2007). Thus, I focus on the macro-level factors in this study, as these influences help address diverse points of views on the representation of women on NOC boards. Particularly, I look at how each of economic development, democracy, and religion in a country is associated with the proportion of women on the NOC boards. To do so, I adopt a cross-national comparison to examine how these societal factors influence the different share of women on boards across countries.

### **Conceptual Framework**

#### *Economy and Women's Representation in Leadership*

Researchers have conceptualized economic aspects of a country as economic development, economic growth, or economic performance (Acemoglu, Johnson, Robinson, & Yared, 2009; Barro, 1999) and have used interchangeably to understand countries' economies. They also have examined macroeconomic impacts on human behaviors as well as sociocultural and political environments within and across countries

(Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Lam, 2006). By identifying related theoretical and conceptual frameworks (e.g., modernization, industrialization, employment, and standard of living), researchers have debated whether sociocultural, historical, and ideological values are the drivers of a country's economic development and vice versa (Inglehart et al., 2002). Because economic performance of a country does not necessarily represent quality of life, fairness in policy-making, equitable resource allocation, or regime types, researchers have argued that macroeconomic environments are partially connected with all aspects of social, cultural, and political landscapes within a country (Barucca, 2020).

Given this theorizing, researchers have empirically shown that economic factors are relatively less critical than other sociocultural and institutional mechanisms to explain the straightforward variations in gender diversity and women's empowerment issues across countries (Kenworthy & Malami, 1999). However, a country's economic development plays an important role in defining government expenditures and policy-making, which interconnects with women's representation in leadership in politics and business (Inglehart et al., 2002). Thus, it is useful to conduct a study to explore this possibility in sport governing bodies.

Researchers have also focused on economic aspects of sport to evaluate government spending on sport-related policies and facilities (Bernard & Busse, 2004; De Bosscher et al., 2006), demand for professional games and international sporting events (Borland & Macdonald, 2003), and sport and physical activity participation (Lera-López, Wicker, & Downward, 2016; Ruseski & Maresova, 2013), to name a few. Despite

these studies, there are only a few researchers who investigated the relationship between economic development and women's representation in the sport workplace from a macro-level perspective (Klein, 2004; Wicker, 2019). For example, Klein (2004) demonstrated a positive association between women's labor force participation and elite sport performance across 146 countries. Even though this empirical evidence discovered the linkage in the elite sport setting, I draw from the studies in other contexts (Barro, 1999; Bullough et al., 2012; Norris & Inglehart, 2001; Paxton, 1997) to determine whether a country's economic development is associated with women's leadership representation. As such, I hypothesized that:

**Hypothesis 1:** The high-income per capita of a country will be positively associated with the proportion of women on NOC boards.

#### *Democracy and Women's Representation in Leadership*

Schumpeter (1962) defined democracy as an "institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote" (p. 269). However, this notion is too narrow and applies to so-called liberal democracy, which focuses on the procedural consensus, thereby compromising the principles and practices of a full democracy<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The Economist Intelligence Unit (2019) has released a comprehensive democracy index annually since 2006 and classifies 167 independent countries as one of four types of political regimes: *full democracy* (scores greater than or equal to 8), *flawed democracy* (scores greater than or equal to 6 and less than 8), *hybrid regimes* (greater than or equal to 4 and less than 6), and *authoritarian regimes* (less than 4) based on the average score of 60 indicators in five components. The categories include electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, functioning of government, political participation, and political culture. The rating of each category ranges from 0 to 10, with higher values indicating high levels of democracy.

today. Recently, researchers have highlighted that the fundamental features of democracy are not limited to free, fair, and competitive elections, but instead, also include aspects of civic democracy, such as freedom, rule of law, accountability, equal rights and opportunities, participation, competition, responsiveness, transparency, and effectiveness of representation (Diamond & Morlino, 2005). From this perspective, a quality of democratic regimes concerns fair and equal distribution of resources and power across social groups, rights for opposition parties and minorities, and freedom of expression (Diamond & Morlino, 2005). Thus, the more democratic the country, the fairer the distribution of power and resources, and the closer social and political leadership positions are to the people. Therefore, countries with high-quality democratic regimes balance between the aforementioned features of civic democracy in an optimal way.

The presence of women in decision-making positions in social and political spheres is therefore a necessary condition for the quality of democracy in a nation, whereas the continuing dearth of women in such positions is a result of democratic deficit (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Matland & Montgomery, 2003; Parliamentary Assembly, 2006; Tremblay, 2007). However, this connection varies greatly across countries, revealing contradictory results (Reynolds, 1999). For example, Rwanda, Cuba, and Bolivia, the top three countries holding the highest percentage of women in national parliaments have either authoritarian regimes or a moderate level of democracy (IPU, 2020; Milazzo & Goldstein, 2019). Other examples include monarchic countries, such as Nepal and the United Arab Emirates, where more than 30% of women hold political

leadership positions. In contrast, the proportion of women in the board and executive positions does not even reach 25% in Uruguay, Ireland, Malta, and the Republic of Korea—countries classified as fully democratic (Stockemer, 2007). Given that nearly half of the 167 countries (45.5%) are considered democratic (EIU, 2019), this opens up the question of which governmental system would be more conducive to enhancing women's representation in leadership.

From this perspective, some researchers have argued that the quality of democracy in a country does not necessarily reflect greater representation of women in decision-making positions (Bego, 2014; Paxton, 1997). Unlike highly democratic regimes, Reynolds (1999) found that countries under authoritarian regimes had more women in governments. Similarly, McDonagh (2002) supported this relationship by demonstrating that monarchic countries held more women in national government positions. Nevertheless, although authoritarian regimes could push institutions to adopt gender equality policies and place more women in leadership roles to promote gender equity, these governmental systems fulfill their representative function while lacking democratic features, such as civil liberties, free and fair elections, and accountability in a country. Thus, even if women hold decision-making positions, as Tremblay (2007) noted, the relationship between the level of democracy and gender diversity in leadership might be weak or not involved.

Contrary to these findings, some researchers have supported the positive linkage between democracy and a high rate of women in leadership from a comparative, cross-national perspective (Franceschet & Piscopo, 2008; Norris & Inglehart, 2001). Inglehart,

Norris, and Welzel (2002) examined whether a high level of democracy is related to greater women's representation in political leadership. Using the World Values Surveys (WVS), the authors found that countries with democratic governance had a higher rate of women in parliaments and more egalitarian values towards gender diversity and self-expression. Likewise, Esarey and Schwindt-Bayer (2018) demonstrated that democracy significantly influenced both the presence of women in political leadership and lower levels of corruption in a country. Lastly, using the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI), Hao, Chang, and Sun (2018) concluded that having more women on the boards of directors reduced political corruption, while democracy promoted the value of gender equality on boards. Based on these cross-cultural reviews, the level of democracy can present an indicator of gender balance in positions of power in a nation (Beer, 2009). This leads to the formulation of the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 2:** The democratic regime of a country will be positively associated with the proportion of women on NOC boards.

#### *Religion and Women's Representation in Leadership*

Religion is a set of specific systems of beliefs and practices that a group of people adheres to in which they worship a god or multiple, whereas religiosity indicates an individual's religious experiences and faith, both of which are recognized by an organized religious institution (King & Crowther, 2004). Because religiosity focuses on a formal and common set of beliefs, it differs from spirituality—a broader and encompassing term for an individual's worship and personal connections with sacred and transcendent realities (Villani, Sorgente, Iannello, & Antonietti, 2019). Further,

religion and religiosity are considered an institutionalized form of expression, while spirituality is often seen as an inner expression (King & Crowther, 2004). Although these terms have overlapping elements, I focus on the notion of religion in this study instead of adopting dimensions of religiosity (e.g., attachment or frequency of religious service attendance and prayer), because religion here refers to various religious denominations and their size in a country. Worldwide, the major religious denominations are Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Confucianism, Islam, and Judaism, to name a few (Pew Research Center, 2017).

Huntington (1991) contended that religion plays a crucial role in constructing national legacies and ideologies upon religious traditions and cultural heritage of a country. Researchers have since reiterated that religious doctrines and practices provide a fundamental meaning of life to individuals and communities, and they influence political systems, social norms, civic behaviors, and gender roles in a nation (Anderson, 2004; Anckar, 2011; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). There is empirical work to support this as well. For instance, some researchers have responded to the question of whether and how religion influences economic growth (Barro & McCleary, 2003), social capital (Kaasa, 2013), or political landscape in a country (Fish, 2002; Gu & Bomhoff, 2012). Relevant to this study, others have explored the impact of religion on gender inequality issues at different levels (e.g., for individual and organizational levels of analysis, see Seguino, 2011; for an institutional level of analysis, see Norris & Inglehart, 2001). However, conceptualizing direct or indirect causal mechanisms between religion in a country and gender diversity in leadership is equivocal and complex due to the

multilateral nature of religion (Basedau et al., 2018). By establishing correlational relationships, a body of cross-national researchers has examined the interplay of religion with socioeconomic and political outcomes of society (Berggren & Bjørnskov, 2011; Lam, 2006).

Specifically, researchers have investigated the connection between long-standing religious institutions and women's representation in leadership globally. Empirical evidence illustrates the corresponding relationships in three ways. First, countries with a hierarchical religious denomination (e.g., Catholic, Muslim, or Confucian) leaned towards fewer shares of women in positions of power (Fish, 2002; Paxton, 1997). This suggests that patriarchal, elitist, and hierarchical characteristics of these religious institutions potentially are associated with the scarcity of women in political leadership. Conversely, countries with a large percentage of Protestants have more women in leadership positions (Fish, 2002; Inglehart et al., 2002). These findings might be due to differences in the focus on hierarchy: although both Catholicism and Protestantism are two major branches of Christianity, Protestantism places less emphasis on hierarchical order and holds different views on the presence of women political leaders (Setzler, 2015). Finally, other countries with high shares of the population belonging to Hindu, Buddhist, or Jewish denomination showed mixed trends. Reynolds (1999) found a weak negative association between each of the three religious denominations and a high share of women in legislatures, as did Kenworthy and Malami (1999). However, this contradicted the findings of Paxton (1997), who found that Hinduism and Judaism were not linked with the representation of women in leadership. Overall, a higher percentage



of the population belonging to Protestant denomination in a nation is more likely to support women in leadership than non-Protestant alike, such as Catholic, Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish, and Hindu denominations. Based on this rationale, I hypothesize that:

**Hypothesis 3:** The percent of the population following a Protestant religious tradition will be positively associated with the proportion of women on NOC boards.

**Hypothesis 4:** The percent of the population following Buddhist (Hypothesis 4a), Catholic (Hypothesis 4b), Hindu (Hypothesis 4c), Jewish (Hypothesis 4d), and Muslim (Hypothesis 4e) religious traditions respectively, will be negatively associated with the proportion of women on NOC boards.

Recently, researchers have gone beyond the existing literature to pay attention to the substantial increase in the religiously unaffiliated demographic across countries. According to Pew Research Center (2017), approximately 16% of the global population was unaffiliated with a religion, and this population (agnostics and atheists) is growing internationally. There is some evidence suggesting that these religiously unaffiliated people are likely to espouse divisive issues (e.g., abortion, contraception, divorce, same-sex marriage, etc.) because they consider themselves to be egalitarian and have more liberal political attitudes compared to those religious adherents (Hout & Fisher, 2002). Moreover, historically dominant religious institutions still embrace socially and politically conservative stances and views of gender roles, as a majority of religious leaders are men (Malka, Lelkes, Srivastava, Cohen, & Miller, 2012; Uzarevica, Saroglou, & Clobert, 2017). This might cause people turning away from their religion

and fewer women holding top leadership positions within such religious organizations (Setzler, 2015; Stuart, 2010).

There is further cross-cultural evidence supporting this conjecture. Using large-scale data from the ARDA, Schnable (2016) found that countries with a high percentage of the unaffiliated demographic were positively associated with greater representation of women on boards. Based on this, one might expect that the countries where the non-religious population is highly salient would have a greater gender diversity on boards. Thus, I formulated the following hypothesis:

**Hypothesis 5:** The percent of the population that is religiously unaffiliated will be positively associated with the proportion of women on NOC boards.

Thus far, I have reviewed each of the macro-level factors—the degree of economic development, the level of democracy, and religion in a country—in relation to gender diversity in leadership. Coupled with research evidence, I also address the compatibility among these influences with respect to the representation of women on NOC boards. Although several researchers suggested that religion might influence various aspects of political regimes in a nation (Anderson, 2004; Anckar, 2011; Huntington, 1991; Weber, 1930), others asserted that the corresponding causal link is not always present but ambiguous (Stepan, 2005). Instead, the latter authors either reversed the causality, suggesting that gender equality might be a driver of a high-quality democracy (Balaev, 2014) or proposed the incompatibility between religion and democracy (Stepan, 2005; Whitehead, 2002). Despite this debate, there is some empirical evidence supporting the association between religion and democracy that is

ambivalent and correlated mutually reinforcing upon each other (Basedau et al., 2018; Beer, 2009; Haynes, 2009).

In line with this, researchers have revealed the correlational link between religion and democracy on the representation of women in leadership. For example, Fish (2002) demonstrated that Muslim dominated countries were highly correlated with lower democracy, which often reflects a lower status and representation of women in leadership, whereas countries having Christian majorities were positively correlated with greater democracy. Similarly, Anderson (2004) found that countries having higher rates of Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, and Hindu denominations were strongly and positively correlated with greater democracy, whereas the opposite was held for countries with a greater participation in Muslim tradition. Corroborating this, several researchers documented the aforementioned correlational relationships (Anckar, 2011; Barro, 1999; Lidén, 2011; Meyer, Tope, & Price, 2008; Minkenberg, 2007; Rizzo, Abdel-Latif, & Meyer, 2007).

Similarly, researchers have asserted that countries represent social and political systems based on their economic growth (Barro, 1999; Inglehart et al., 2005) and vice versa (Berggren & Bjørnskov, 2011; Kenworthy & Malami, 1999; Lam, 2006). While some researchers supported that macroeconomic factors like GDP and government expenditures or employment are a result of social and political dynamics of a country, others noted that, democracy, for example, is a determinant of economic performance of a country. Indeed, there is some evidence suggesting that economically developed countries are more likely than developing countries to maintain well-established

democratic regimes (Dubrow, Slomczynski, & Tomescu-Dubrow, 2008; Rød, Knutsen, & Hegre, 2019). Given this research, I explore the possible linkage among economy, democracy, religion, and the proportion of women on the NOC boards of each country using a multivariable analysis.

## **Method**

### *Data and Measures*

In this comparative, cross-cultural study, I employed several secondary datasets. First, I collected the total number of athletes across 207<sup>3</sup> NOCs and the number of board members and their genders across 205 countries from the official websites of the 2016 Summer Olympics and IOC. These webpages provide a separate link to each NOC (<https://www.olympic.org/national-olympic-committees>). I then accessed a website and directory of each country's NOC and identified profiles of boards of directors. Second, I used GDP per capita from the World Bank to capture a country's economic development and collected the data from 252 countries (<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD>). Third, I compiled a comprehensive democracy index from 167 countries for the year 2010. This source is publicly available through the EIU database ([http://www.eiu.com/public/thankyou\\_download.aspx?activity=download&campaignid=](http://www.eiu.com/public/thankyou_download.aspx?activity=download&campaignid=)

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<sup>3</sup> There were 207 NOCs that participated in the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. Of the 207 NOCs, there were two instances in which groups of athletes competed in the Olympics but could not formally represent their countries. These cases included a team for the independent Olympic athletes (IOA) and another for the refugee Olympic athletes (ROA). Because the two teams were unable to form an official NOC, executive boards did not exist. Thus, only the number of athletes from these teams were included the total number of athletes for the analysis.

democracyindex2019) and widely used to measure democracy in academic research (Skaaning, 2018). I also utilized the world religion project dataset as an additional country-level indicator derived from the ARDA and gathered data from 188 countries for the year 2010 (Maoz & Henderson, 2013; see <http://www.thearda.com/Archive/Files/Descriptions/WRPGLOBL.asp>). The report is publicly available and contains the number and share of adherents from various religions and the religiously unaffiliated population for each country. Because the last available year for this religion index was 2010, I used both the GDP per capita and EIU's democracy index of the reference year 2010 to closely match the data point.

### **Dependent Variable**

The dependent variable is the proportion of women on NOC boards in 2016. The number of women on boards was divided by the total number of NOC board members in each country with a 0-100 scale. The dependent variable does not provide any insights in terms of growth rate over time or qualitative aspects of the board and executive positions.

### **Independent Variable**

For the first independent variable, I selected the GDP per capita as researchers have extensively employed this source to proxy for a country's overall economic development (Acemoglu et al., 2009; Barro, 1999; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Kenworthy & Malami, 1999). I derived from the GDP per capita estimates expressed in the US dollars; however, the data generated skewed distributions, which resulted in applying a logarithmic transformation.

For the second independent variable, although there are multiple open-sources available that can serve as a democracy barometer at the country-level (e.g., WGI by the World Bank, Freedom in the World by the Freedom House, and Polity Index by the Polity IV), I used the EIU's index for a number of reasons. Unlike other leading measures that incorporate a variety of existing datasets (e.g., over 30 different data sources to produce the WGI), the EIU's index combines information from mass surveys and experts' opinions (Skaaning, 2018). Moreover, the EIU's index is strongly correlated with other indices of democracy, such as the Freedom in the World (Dubrow et al., 2008; Högström, 2013). Finally, this index captures a broader concept of democracy, and thus places greater emphasis on the overall democracy score for each country (Dubrow et al., 2008). For example, it includes combined features of five dimensions: electoral process and pluralism, functioning of government, political culture, political participation (civic engagement), and civic liberties.

Specifically, the first dimension, *electoral process and pluralism*, is related to free and fair competitive elections and a government's ability to form political parties. The *functioning of government* considers whether a government can implement policies, adhere to principles of transparency, and tackle corruption, while *political culture* indicates public perceptions of and support for democratic principles of a government. *Political participation* represents the level of public engagements in politics, and finally, *civil liberties* involve political rights, freedom of speech and expression, and access to information. In public opinion surveys by the EIU, however, the political participation dimension includes questions about percentages of women and minorities in politics;

thereby, overlapping with the conception of the dependent variable in this study. For this reason, I excluded this dimension and recalculated a composite score to prevent a tautological relationship with gender equality on NOC boards. Likewise, another advantage of using the EIU's index includes the data disaggregation, which enables the development of a composite score for specific indicators (Walker, Anonson, & Szafron, 2015).

As previously noted in the footnote, the EIU annually evaluates an overall quality of democracy stemming from 167 independent countries and classifies them into the following political systems: *full democracy* (8-10), *flawed democracy* (6-7.9), *hybrid regimes* (4-5.9), and *authoritarian regimes* (0-3.9). Adapting from the EIU's democratic criteria, I recalculated the average of four dimensions to reflect the level of democracy in this study, with a 0-10 scale where higher values represent higher levels of democracy. The exclusion of the political participation dimension resulted in slight discrepancies in the overall index for some countries as compared to utilizing the five-component score of democracy (see the note in Table 6).

Turning to the third independent variable, I employed the dataset on world religion provided by the ARDA. Instead of using the World Values Surveys or the World Factbook by the Central Intelligence Agency, I drew from this source because of its wide coverage of different religions available for 233 countries. Particularly, I collected the cross-sectional data for the year 2010 from six major religious denominations: Buddhist, Catholic, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, and Protestant. I also gathered information about the percentage of religious adherents and religiously

unaffiliated population in a country to see how each composition is associated with the representation of women on NOC boards. To compute the percentage of each religious denomination (on a scale of 0-100), I divided the number of adherents of each religion in a country by the total population of the country included in the dataset; then, I multiplied the result by 100. For the percentage of the religiously unaffiliated population, I subtracted the number of the unaffiliated demographic from the total number of religious populations of each country, and then divided them by the total number of populations in a country.

### **Control Variables**

I included four control variables in the study: the total number of athletes who competed in the 2016 Summer Olympic Games, the size of NOC boards, the log-transformed total population used in the ARDA data source, and geographical region. While the total number of athletes and board members were normally distributed, the total population was not, which eventually led to the logarithmic transformation. For the geographical region<sup>4</sup>, six categories were labeled as the Americas (0; as the baseline category), Asia (1), Europe (2), Middle East and North Africa (3), the Pacific (4), and sub-Saharan Africa (5). As Maoz and Henderson (2013) elucidated, religion is closely related to regional cultures, shaping similar or different patterns of religious diversity across the regions. For example, Setzler (2015) found that Catholicism prevails in most countries in Latin America, while Hinduism, Confucianism, or Islam are representative religious denominations in Middle East, South, and East Asia (Rizzo et al., 2007). In a

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<sup>4</sup> For regional classifications, see <https://data.ipu.org/content/regional-groupings>



similar vein, Norris and Inglehart (2001) mentioned that there is substantial variation in the degrees of economic development, democracy, and presence of women in leadership across and within each region. Thus, I included a number of dummy variables for region to account for any spatial impact on the dependent variable. The coding was set to 1 if yes and 0 otherwise. Overall, I considered four control variables because of their potential influences on and associations with the proportion of women on NOC boards.

### *Empirical Analyses*

Prior to testing the hypotheses, I checked all the assumptions required for a regression analysis. For the assumption of multicollinearity, the results of the bivariate correlation indicated that the shares of the religious adherents and non-religious population were highly correlated ( $r = -.98$ ). As a result, I did not include the percentage of religious adherents in further analyses. After removing this independent variable, the multicollinearity did not occur because all variance inflation factors (VIFs) were below the threshold of 10 (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). The highest VIF was 4.65 for the total number of athletes of each country. The assumptions concerning normality, heteroscedasticity, and linearity were not violated; as such, I did not need to make further adjustments to the models and variables.

Using ordinary least squares (OLS) estimations, I then performed a set of regression analyses. First, I included all control variables in Model 1 (size of the Olympic movement in each country—number of athletes and board members, the log-transformed total population in each country, and dummies for region), and then estimated five models for each hypothesis testing. I entered the log-transformed GDP per

capita in Model 2, democracy index in Model 3, six religions in Model 4, and the religiously unaffiliated populations in Model 5, respectively, with the same set of control variables. To further explore the associations among economy, democracy, religion, and women's representation on NOC boards, I ran a separate multiple regression as a full model that includes all independent and control variables. I estimated robust standard errors for all regression models to control any compositional differences in the control and country-level variables (Rogers, 1994; White, 1980; Wooldridge, 2002).

## **Results**

### *Descriptive Statistics*

Table 4-5 shows descriptive statistics, including means ( $M$ ), standard deviations ( $SD$ ), minimums, and maximums, and the bivariate correlation matrix. The proportion of women on NOC boards was 19.65% ( $SD = 11.05$ ), on average, and the board consisted of 13.2 members across 121 countries. The average number of athletes who competed in the 2016 Summer Olympics was 55.7 ( $SD = 98.1$ ). The global average GDP per capita was 15,499.23 ( $SD = 23,209.61$ ), which went from a low of 234.23 to a high of 150,725.2 in the US dollars. In terms of democracy index, the average score was 5.68 ( $SD = 2.37$ ) indicating that most countries have a mixed form of political system. On average, there were 27.65% of Catholic, 25.32% of Muslim, 14.89% of Protestant, 3.68% of Buddhist, 2.31% of Hindu, and 0.45% of Jewish adherents across 188 countries. Of the total population listed in the ARDA dataset, 91.44% of those adhered to a particular religious denomination ( $SD = 12.40$ ) while 7.2% had no religious affiliation ( $SD = 11.73$ ). Table 6 presents a list of 89 countries used in the analysis with

the detailed information on region, democracy category and index, percentage of religious and nonreligious population, and GDP per capita for each country.

### *Hypothesis Testing*

Table 7 summarizes the results of a series of regression analyses for the proportion of women NOC members. In Model 1, the controls were statistically significant, accounting for 29.32% of the variance ( $p < .01$ ). To test Hypothesis 1, I entered the log-transformed GDP per capita in Model 2, which accounted for an additional 4.02% of unique variance ( $p < .01$ ). This indicates that the countries with a high-income were positively linked to greater proportion of women on NOC boards ( $b = .065, p < .05$ ), supporting Hypothesis 1. In Model 3, I entered the democracy variable, which contributed an additional 3.27% of unique variance ( $p < .01$ ). The democratic regime in a country was positively associated with higher proportion of women on NOC boards ( $b = .013, p < .05$ ), supporting Hypothesis 2.

Furthermore, I hypothesized that countries with a high percentage of Protestants will be positively related to the proportion of women on NOC boards, whereas the percentage of Buddhist, Catholic, Hindu, Jewish, and Muslim adherents will have a negative association with the proportion of women on NOC boards. After entering six religions to test Hypothesis 3 and Hypotheses 4a-e, Model 4 explained an additional 24.11% of unique variance ( $p < .01$ ). Specifically, the percentage of Protestants was positively related to higher proportion of women NOC members ( $b = .304, p < .01$ ), but other religions were not statistically significant. Thus, Hypothesis 3 was only supported.

I also hypothesized that the large percentage of the religiously unaffiliated population in a country will be positively related to gender diversity on NOC boards. Although Model 5 was statistically significant, the change in  $R^2$  and coefficient were not statistically significant to support Hypothesis 5. Finally, I estimated the full model through a separate hierarchical multiple regression to better understand the relationships among economic development, democracy, religion, and the presence of women NOC members. Including all independent variables in Model 6 accounted for an additional 25.16% of unique variance ( $p < .01$ ). Similar to the results of Model 4, countries with the large percentage of Protestants were positively related to gender diversity on NOC boards ( $b = .278, p < .01$ ), holding all others constant. In contrast, the regression coefficients for GDP per capita and democracy did not remain significant, implying that sociocultural factors are more important than economic and political climates to account for the variation in the gender balance in leadership within sport governing bodies across countries.

In Model 6, a number of dummy variables for region were statistically significant when all others were held constant. As compared to the Americas, the average share of women NOC board of directors was 22.08 percent points higher in the Pacific region ( $p < .01$ ). The average share of women NOC board of directors in Asia was 13.31 percent points higher than that in the Middle East and North Africa ( $p < .05$ ), but 15.81 points lower than that in the Pacific region ( $p < .01$ ). For the countries in Europe, the average share of women NOC board of directors was 18.72 percent points lower than those in the Pacific region ( $p < .01$ ), but 10.40 points higher than those in the Middle East and North

Africa ( $p < .05$ ). As compared to the countries of the Middle East and North Africa, the average share of women on NOC boards was 29.12 percent points higher in those of the Pacific region ( $p < .01$ ) and 13.85 points higher in those of sub-Saharan Africa ( $p < .05$ ). Finally, the average share of women NOC boards in the Pacific region was 15.27 percent points higher than that in sub-Saharan Africa ( $p < .01$ ).

### **Discussion**

In this chapter, I examined the relationship between macro-level factors—economy, democracy, and religion—and women’s representation on NOC boards. As previously outlined, it has not been clear from the extant literature whether countries with higher GDP per capita or democratic regimes are more likely than those with lower GDP per capita or authoritarian ones to have more women in leadership roles (Stockemer, 2011). Further, some researchers posited that dominant religions may be associated with the presence of women leaders in social and political spheres (Kenworthy & Malami, 1999). From a different perspective, others proposed a linkage between countries with a large religiously unaffiliated proportion of the population and a greater gender diversity in leadership (Lam, 2006). Finally, several researchers have suggested an equivocal relationship or incompatibility between religion and democracy, as well as economic development and democracy with respect to women’s representation in leadership. Given these mixed findings, I aimed to provide empirical evidence identifying any differences across economic performances, political regimes, and long-standing religious denominations in a country regarding gender diversity on NOC boards. To do so, I used country-level data containing information about economy,

democracy, and world religion. After removing cases with missing values, I presented the results from 89 countries.

### *Economy and the Proportion of Women on NOC Boards*

Consistent with Hypothesis 1, the findings showed that countries with higher GDP per capita were positively related to the large proportion of women on NOC boards. Not surprisingly, this pattern was apparent in the countries in Europe that had a positive correlation with GDP per capita as well. Along with a few countries from the Americas like Canada and the United States of America (US), Australia, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway, and Sweden were the countries with higher GDP per capita above the global average ( $M = 15,499.23$ ,  $SD = 23,209.61$ ) and over 30% of women on NOC boards. The findings also showed that Austria, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom (UK) were the countries that had high GDP per capita above the global average and more than 20% of women on NOC boards. Overall, these findings supported the contention of Inglehart and colleagues (2005) that a country's economic development is associated with greater government expenditures related to gender action plans and women's representation in political leadership.

By contrast, there were some exceptions to these general trends, particularly in Angola, Costa Rica, Estonia, Fiji, Latvia, Malawi, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Romania, and Turkey that had a low level of GDP per capita but over 30% of women on NOC boards. This finding was surprising because half of these countries were located in the regions that had a weak to moderate, positive correlation with GDP per capita. These

countries include Costa Rica, Latvia, Peru, Romania, and Turkey. Considering that the remaining countries had no association between the GDP per capita and regions and that large variations in the GDP per capita were observed across countries, these cases imply that there could be other forces contributing to explain this different pattern.

*Democracy and the Proportion of Women on NOC Boards*

In addition, the findings of this study demonstrated that countries with democratic regimes were positively associated with greater representation of women on NOC boards. Austria, Chile, Mauritius, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Switzerland, and the UK are among the highly democratic countries where the share of women NOC members fell between 20 to 29.9%, above the global average ( $M = 19.65$ ,  $SD = 11.05$ ). The rate remained above 30% in Australia, Canada, Costa Rica, Estonia, New Zealand, the US, and the Nordic countries (i.e., Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden), where the rate was as high as 44.4%. As is common in previous research, this pattern is salient in the Nordic countries that have a high sense of freedom, balance between individual and community rights, and well-functioning institution—all of which play a role in determining a high-quality democracy—and hold the world's highest rates of women in parliaments (IPU, 2020; Milazzo & Goldstein, 2019). Overall, these findings are consistent with previous work in other context (Esarey & Schwindt-Bayer, 2018; Franceschet & Piscopo, 2008; Hao et al., 2018; Inglehart et al., 2002), suggesting that higher levels of democracy were related to greater women's visibility on the NOC boards of each country.

There were however some exceptions to this general pattern. For example, Czech Republic, Greece, and Uruguay had no women NOC members at all. In Argentina, Bangladesh, Colombia, India, Slovakia, and Thailand, the share of women NOC members was below 10%, with the lowest rate of 3.5%. This indicates that there were at most 1 or 2 women board of directors. This was surprising to observe such a low share of women on NOC boards, considering that these countries are considered highly democratic and have over 20% of women serving in their national parliaments (IPU, 2020), with the exceptions of Colombia, India, and Thailand, where the rate of women legislators ranged from 10 to 15%.

By contrast, Angola, China, Fiji, Rwanda, and Swaziland are the countries scoring low on democracy, but women occupied 25.8 to 35.7% of the NOC board positions. Considering a few significant regional effects, one plausible explanation for these seemingly opposing trends may be that regional-specific characteristics would also influence different shares of women NOC members. Indeed, some regions where these countries reside included Asia that had a weak negative correlation with the share of women on NOC boards, as well as the Pacific region that had a weak positive correlation. Thus, caution is needed when taking information from such cases, and the assessment can be further refined by considering (sub)regional variability in each of these countries.

#### *Religion and the Proportion of Women on NOC Boards*

Consistent with Hypothesis 3 but inconsistent with Hypotheses 4a-e, the analysis of 89 countries illuminated that the effect of religion was negligible, except for



Protestant domination. While the proportion of women NOC members was positively correlated with countries with a high percentage of Protestants ( $r = .40$ ) and negatively correlated with countries with a high percentage of Muslims ( $r = -.24$ ), the regression coefficient was statistically significant only in countries with the high rate of Protestants. Among the countries having a higher share of Protestants, the top five—Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden—are in the Nordic region, where women made up significantly greater share at least 35% of the NOC board positions. Other countries where Protestant denomination is highly salient, with at least 30% of adherents, include Fiji, Germany, Guatemala, Jamaica, Latvia, Malawi, Papua New Guinea, and the US—all of these countries also had women holding above 20% of the NOC board positions.

Although Protestants were not the majority in some Catholic-oriented or religiously diverse countries, such as Angola, Canada, Germany, Guatemala, Lesotho, Rwanda, and Switzerland, a higher percentage of Protestants in these countries was still related to a greater proportion of women NOC members. This result supported the scholarship (Anderson, 2004; Anckar, 2011; Huntington, 1991; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005), showing that religion plays a role, to some extent, in shaping cultural and political landscapes in a country. Importantly, these findings resembled empirical research in other areas (Fish, 2002; Inglehart et al., 2002), only suggesting that countries with proportionally higher Protestants are related to greater representation of women on NOC boards.

Given that the data did not support the linkage between other religions and gender diversity in leadership in the sport setting, as Inglehart and colleagues (2002)

highlighted, the findings may imply that religious doctrines and values of Protestantism are less restrictive in terms of traditional gender roles and hierarchal structures and promote gender equity and inclusion in leadership. However, this may not be the case for Cameroon and Honduras, where the rate of Protestants was above 20%, but had less than 10% of women NOC members. Again, this implies that there could be 1 or at most 2 women board of directors when considering the average board size ( $M = 13.24$ ,  $SD = 6.81$ ).

Other contrasting instances included Australia, China, Moldova, Romania, Singapore, and Turkey, where there were less than 10% of Protestants, but the share of women NOC members exceeded 25% in these countries. In fact, Australia had a larger proportion of Catholics and non-religious population than that of Protestants. The proportion of Protestants was far smaller than that of Buddhists in Singapore and Muslim in Turkey, respectively. In China and Moldova, the percentage of the non-religious population was the largest and was higher than that of Protestants. Taken together, the same caution is called when assessing information from these countries, and researchers need to carry out further study to elaborate more on contextual influences.

Finally, I found no evidence to support that countries with the large proportion of non-religious citizens would be associated with gender diversity in leadership within national sport governing bodies. In the same vein, although I explored the association among economic development, democracy, religion, and the representation of women on NOC boards, I did not reveal any other connections than the influence of Protestantism,

which could have advanced the current understanding of institutional influences on gender diversity in sport leadership. Whilst the control variables were outside the scope of this study, I found that some geographical conditions were positively or negatively linked with the rate of women on NOC boards.

### **Implications, Limitations, and Suggestions for Future Studies**

#### *Practical and Theoretical Implications*

There are several implications to inform sport policy makers and researchers. From a practical standpoint, the findings highlight the importance of a higher level of economic development and a higher degree of democracy at the country-level, respectively, to achieve gender balance in leadership within sport governing bodies. First, I observed that the countries with higher levels of economic performance were located in Europe and included some English-speaking countries, such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the US. As these economically advanced countries demonstrated a large proportion of women on NOC boards, their economic conditions can serve as models that help various levels of sport governing bodies enhance gender balance in leadership. However, it should be recognized that having a higher GDP per capita does not directly lead to changes in the proportion of women in sport leadership. As seen in other exceptions, it can be claimed that legal mandates or other macroeconomic factors, such as government expenditures on sport and education or numbers and rates of women in the sport workplace, may characterize higher or lower representation of women in sport leadership within and across countries.

Also, it is important to note that democratic principles, such as accountability, transparency, free and fair elections, and decentralization of power (Diamond & Morlino, 2005), can be applied not only to sport governing bodies at continental and international levels, but the entire sport industry such as various levels of profit to non-profit organizations (e.g., local, regional, and national). Unlike institutions in other fields, sport governing bodies are subject to less stringent laws and supervision by national and international courts and governments, which has induced a number of instances of corruption and other misconduct (Parent & Hoye, 2018). This led various stakeholders to take a closer look at democratic values and develop relevant guidelines in sport (Parent, 2016). One of the requirements for such democratic procedures includes promoting gender equality and diversity on boards (European Commission, 2013; Tremblay, 2007).

As seen in the exceptional cases, one might argue that countries with authoritarian regimes also promote gender balance policies by having more women leaders than they did in the past. Yet, some critical democratic features are missing in these sport organizations (e.g., freedom of speech and expression), thereby leading to no or weak policy changes, but contributing to women leaders' symbolic visibility (Tremblay, 2007). Thus, sport practitioners and policy makers are encouraged to adopt democratic processes as an effective tool for gender balance on boards in their entities, which will ultimately improve organizational legitimacy (Parent & Hoye, 2018; Stenling, Fahlén, Strittmatter, & Skille, 2019).

Furthermore, the findings showed that countries with a high rate of Protestants are likely to appoint more women to the boards or elect them as board of directors within their national sport governing bodies. Plausible explanations behind this link could be that Protestants are likely to act against social injustice, intolerance, and inequality (Malka et al., 2012). Also, the trend presented here supports the contention of Setzler (2015) that countries with proportionally larger Protestants are less likely to emphasize traditional gender roles and hierarchical power structures.

However, I preclude definite conclusions that the tenets and practices of the Protestant faith are the only one contributing to greater women's representation in sport leadership. As shown in some instances, countries with either high rates of different religious adherents and non-religious citizens or low share of Protestants have engaged in efforts to incorporate more women in the board and executive positions within sport governing bodies. Also, I acknowledge that I did not include all other religions, such as Confucianism or Indigenous religions in general, and Orthodox, tied to the same Christianity category in particular. I did not tease apart Protestant denominations, such as Anglican, Baptist, Episcopal, Evangelical, Lutheran, Methodist, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, and the like. Thus, I cannot account for the variation in religious influences within Protestantism and across Protestant denominations. With these caveats in mind, I recommend that policy makers should not take Protestantism as a mark of superiority to other religions, but instead, highlight religious freedom, pluralism, and democratic functioning (Anderson, 2004). By doing so, policy makers can avoid missing out sport

stakeholders from certain religious or non-religious groups, but promote board diversity within national sport governing bodies.

The study carries policy messages at an organizational-level as well. When it comes to board dynamics, sport professionals and policy makers should consider both the share of boards and board size with caution. Particularly, I acknowledge that Papua New Guinea showed the highest rate (50%) of women NOC board of directors with their board size of 10. This indicates that there were 5 women on NOC boards, but in reality, this case is lamentably rare. For instance, the UK the same number of women NOC members as Papua New Guinea, but their board consisted of 20 members, yielding 25% of women on NOC boards. Among the countries with higher levels of democracy and higher rate of Protestants, though the share reached exactly 40%, Norway and Malawi had 6 and 2 women NOC board of directors, respectively. This indicates that the numbers and shares of women in the board positions vary widely across countries. Therefore, it is important to consider both the number and share of women in leadership positions in sport governing bodies.

From a theoretical point of view, the findings of this study shed light on grey literature on the linkage among economy, democracy, and religion regarding gender diversity in national sport governing bodies. First, researchers emphasized the importance of institutional and sociocultural factors relatively more than other individual and organizational factors in explaining the presence and absence of women in leadership positions across the globe (Adams & Kirchmaier, 2013; Norris & Inglehart, 2001; Terjesen & Singh, 2008). Given the scarcity of research on economy, democracy,

religion, and gender imbalance in sport governing bodies, this study provides the cross-national evidence from 89 countries and advances the understanding of general associations of women's representation on NOC boards with a degree of economic development, a level of democracy and various religions in a country, respectively.

Along these lines, I found correlations between the share of women on NOC boards with each of GDP per capita, democracy, and religion (see Table 5). I also observed correlational relationship between GDP per capita and democracy, GDP per capita and religion, as well as democracy and religion, though they are relatively small and moderate in magnitude. Among these, the GDP per capita had a positive correlation with democracy, Catholicism, and non-religious population, while it showed a negative correlation with Islam. Further, for the compatibility between democracy and religion, I found that democratic political systems in a country were positively correlated with Catholicism, Protestantism, and non-religion (atheists and agnostics) and negatively correlated with Islam. Taking this into account, I performed the OLS hierarchical multiple regressions to explore the interplays among economic development, democracy, religion, and the women's representation on NOC boards. Although I found some correlational relationships, I did not extend the full model to include one of these factors as a moderating variable due to the equivocal and correlational nature of these institutional factors.

In addition, regarding the controls, I observed several correlations between the proportion of women on NOC boards and particular regions (Table 5). As mentioned earlier, examining the varying percentage of women on NOC boards across regions was

not an interest of this study. However, the findings supported Norris and Inglehart's (2001) contention that regional characteristics account for the variation in gender inequality in leadership worldwide. In this respect, I showed that the GDP per capita was positively correlated with the countries in the Americas and Europe and negatively correlated with the countries in Asia. I also demonstrated that countries in the Americas and Europe were positively correlated with a high level of democracy while those in Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, and sub-Saharan Africa had a negative correlation. Similarly, there were correlational relationships between religion and region. Consistent with Minkenberg (2007), I found that countries with the large share of Protestants were positively correlated with the Americas and the Pacific regions, but negatively correlated with Asia and the Middle East and North Africa.

In line with this, it is important to consider the associations among economic development, democracy, religion, and regional characteristics to provide more nuanced explanations for the varying percentage of women on NOC boards. For example, countries with a large rate of Protestants are known as liberal democracies and are mostly located in Western and Northern Europe, but are rarely mirrored in the countries in Central and Eastern Europe and Asia (Minkenberg, 2007). Instead, countries in Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America, and some parts of South and Middle East Asia are influenced by postcommunist social and political systems or strong religious traditions (e.g., Catholic or Muslim), corresponding to social democratic, semidemocratic, or authoritarian regimes (Meyer et al., 2008; Minkenberg, 2007). This explained some instances of (sub)regional variation in political systems and religion in



the Americas, Asia, and Europe. Lastly, given the exceptional instances, such as Australia, China, Turkey, and the like that showed a high degree of religious diversity within a country, and a large share of religious adherents worldwide, it is also possible to explore religious diversity to delineate different shares of women in leadership within and across national sport governing bodies. To do so, one might consider applying a religious diversity index from the Pew Research Center (2014), which contains data from 232 countries and illustrates a degree to which population splits into religious denominations within a country. As a whole, researchers need to further explore these possibilities across all other (sub)regions.

Finally and most importantly, both economic and political influences were not associated with the proportion of women on NOC boards in Model 6. This indicates that sociocultural influences are more important than the economic and political systems of a country to characterize a higher or lower proportion of women in sport leadership. Consistent with previous studies (Huntington, 1991; Kenworthy & Malami, 1999; Paxton & Kunovich, 2003), the findings of this study show that religions in a country act as a proxy for cultural and ideological differences to explain gender balance in leadership within sport governing bodies across countries. As a whole, considering the (sub)regional variation and correlational relationships among institutional factors, integrating several moderators would help clarify the aforementioned associations in explaining gender balance in sport leadership.

### *Limitations and Suggestions for Future Studies*

There are also some limitations that can guide future studies. First, I used a single factor to capture economic development of a country. However, the GDP per capita included in this study has been widely applied in the context of sport to illustrate national income and economic performance. Thus, researchers may consider other economic indicators, such as government expenditures on sport and physical activity or women's employment in the sport workplace that can inform gender initiatives across institutions within a country, to describe different shares of women leaders in sport governing bodies.

Second, I employed the EIU's comprehensive democracy barometer, deriving from four components of *electoral process and pluralism, functioning of government, political culture, and civic liberties*. Given the competing concepts of democracy, researchers should be mindful that the composite score used in this study may not mirror particular aspects of democracy (e.g., liberal democracy, participatory democracy, social democracy, etc.; see Coppedge, Gerring, Lindberg, Skaaning, & Teorell, 2017). From a different lens, a number of sport researchers have applied the WGI or Polity index to indicate countries' level of democracy and reiterated that separating indices will require operationalization to represent theoretical foundations (Balish, 2017; European Commission, 2013; Wicker & Downward, 2017).

Additionally, although I conducted cross-national comparisons, I did not focus on other organizational- and country-level factors (e.g., number of political parties, electoral, presidential, and parliamentary systems, years of women's suffrage,

educational attainment, budgets related gender action plans, degree of urbanization, employment laws and legal mandates, etc.), which might help further address gender dynamics on NOC boards. For example, it is arguable that countries with a combination of higher government spending on sport and democratic regimes might be positively linked with a large proportion of women in leadership positions in the sport setting. Similarly, I cannot answer questions dealing with individual-level variance because I did not include micro-level factors. Technically the datasets employed in the study entail individual responses that were nested within countries. Hence, the findings should be generalized with some caution, and researchers should consider applying multilevel mixed models with these hierarchically structured data or using both micro- and macro-level factors to simultaneously examine gender diversity in sport leadership across countries.

Lastly, it should be noted that this study was cross-sectional. This means that I examined the interplay among economic development, democracy, religion, and the women's representation on NOC boards at a single point in time. Considering that cultural and political conditions in each country have evolved, the findings from this study do not capture long-term effects of those institutional factors. Thus, researchers should consider using longitudinal data containing multiple waves of GDP per capita, world religion, and democracy indices across time to further explore gender dynamics in sport leadership. Also, the number and share of women holding leadership positions in sport have changed over time. Although social structures, values, and beliefs change slowly (Norris & Inglehart, 2001), it would be beneficial to use panel data to explain the

cross-national variation in the share of women on NOC boards for longer time span. In doing so, researchers can address the following questions: how are changes in political regimes over time in a country associated with women's leadership representation in sport governing bodies? Are changes in women's leadership representation on the NOC boards of each country over time a result of combined socioeconomic, cultural, and political influences? Overall, such in-depth analysis of time-series data and inclusion of explanatory factors at all levels will generate more sophisticated implications for policy makers and sport academics.

### **Chapter III Summary**

Economy indicates a country's wealth, while democracy concerns competitive election, fair and equal distribution of resources and power across social groups, balance between individual and community rights, civic participation, and freedom of expression (Diamond & Morlino, 2005). Religion plays an important role in fostering cultural legacies, historical ideologies, and political landscapes in a country upon dominant religious tenets and practices (Huntington, 1991). These three concepts are the salient macro-level factors having a potential influence on gender diversity and inclusion (Beer, 2009; Stockemer, 2011). The purpose of this study was therefore to focus on the relationships among economy, democracy, religion, and women's representation on the NOC boards of each country. By employing several datasets that contain country-level indicators, such as GDP per capita from the World Bank, democracy from the EIU and world religion from the ARDA, findings of this chapter demonstrated that countries with a high-income, democratic regimes, and a high percentage of Protestants were positively

associated with greater representation of women on NOC boards, respectively. Findings have both theoretical and practical implications. From a theoretical perspective, I warrant a closer investigation of the interplays among economic development, different types of democracy, religions, and (sub)regions with regard to gender diversity in leadership positions within sport governing bodies. From a practical standpoint, policy makers should note that economically advanced environments, democratic principles, participatory environments, and ideological values from Protestantism could foster fair access to the board and leadership as well as equitable allocations of resources and action plans in sport governing bodies.

CHAPTER IV

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN IN NATIONAL SPORT GOVERNING  
BODIES: A GLASS CLIFF PHEOMENON IN (INTER)NATIONAL FOOTBALL  
GOVERNING BODIES\*

**Abstract**

**Rationale/Purpose:** The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) has taken gender equality initiatives by inaugurating a female leadership development programme (FLDP) as well as appointing women in leadership positions. As such, I draw from a new theoretical notion, glass cliff to explore why FIFA started FLDP and assigned women to leadership ranks.

**Methodology/Approach:** Semistructured interviews were conducted with 16 women who accomplished FLDP.

**Findings and Implications:** There was no direct evidence to support the glass cliff phenomenon in FIFA's gender-related actions. Although the results are inconclusive, some evidence showed that FIFA's gender initiatives emerged during their reforming processes in 2015. Our findings demonstrated that FIFA's historic appointments of women to leadership positions after the corruption and the continuance of FLDP are concerned with the glass cliff effect, as women have never been sought as

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\* This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in *Managing Sport and Leisure* on 19 February 2020, available online:  
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23750472.2020.1727357>

leaders in football governing bodies. I addressed practical and theoretical implications and suggestions for future research.

### **Introduction**

Despite representing nearly half of the global workforce (International Labour Organisation [ILO], 2018), women are underrepresented in leadership roles (Powell, 2018). Among Fortune 500 companies, women occupy 25% of senior-level positions and just 5% of the top executive roles (Catalyst, 2018). The figures do not improve appreciably in the sport setting. Adriaanse (2016) found that women occupy less than 20% of leadership positions in international sport governing bodies, and Ahn and Cunningham (2017) observed similar figures in their analysis of National Olympic Committees (NOCs). Considering the increasing number of women working in the sport setting, the lack of access is meaningful on a number of fronts. As LaVoi (2016) explained, the presence of women in key leadership roles is important for a number of reasons. Specifically, women: serve as role models; offer support and advocacy for other women; help grow the number of women in other leadership capacities; advocate for fairness and equality; and are less likely than men to engage in abusive behaviors. Furthermore, the presence of women is associated with a number of group and organizational benefits, including better decision-making (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008; Shaw & Hoerber, 2003), quality leadership (Eagly & Carli, 2003), creativity (Nielsen & Huse, 2010), and more ethical business practices (Post & Byron, 2015).

Alongside this research is evidence that an increasing number of sport organizations are offering leadership programs designed to increase the number of

women in such ranks. As an example of gender-based initiatives, most national and international sport governing bodies (e.g., the NOCs, International Olympic Committee [IOC], and International Paralympic Committee [IPC]) currently aim to increase the pool of women in decision-making positions by more than 20% (Women on Boards, 2016). Of those, some sport organizations, such as the IOC, Sport Australia, Sport New Zealand, and Women's Sport Leadership Academy, have designed and offered leadership developmental programs for women. As an example, the leadership program provided by Women's Sport Leaders Academy supports girls and women to further enhance their competencies—voice to express their opinions and decision-making—and contributes to the development of leadership of the next generation of outstanding sports leaders and sport-for-development organizations. Within football governance, the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) recognized that women occupy just 8% of executive members in local-level football associations (FIFA, 2015a). As a result, FIFA prioritized increasing the numbers of women in football and initiated tangible gender-related action plans (FIFA, 2015a).

One kind of these efforts is that sport organizations are responding to evidence of the value that women bring to the workplace. For example, FIFA executive board member, Moya Dodd, wrote in a New York Times op-ed that more women in football would result in a cultural shift for the sport, thereby allowing it to reap many benefits, “capturing new fans, new markets, and the imagination of millions of little girls” (Dodd, 2015). Another interpretation is that sport organizations are responding to various pressures, including social pressures for diversity (Cunningham, 2008; Doherty &



Chelladurai, 1999) and mandates from external stakeholders (Adriaanse, 2016). In this study, I draw from glass cliff theory (Ryan & Haslam, 2005, 2007) to offer a third possibility: some sport organizations are likely to seek women for leadership roles when the organization is imperiled. From this perspective, when sport organizations are in crisis, they will seek a dramatic shift, which, given the historical dominance of men in powerful roles, frequently means seeking women to lead. The positive of such an about-face is that women then might have opportunities not otherwise afforded them. The negative outcomes could include the placement of women in precarious leadership roles, in effect setting them up for failure (Ryan & Haslam, 2005, 2007) and allowing stronger gender-stereotypic beliefs of leadership (Ryan, Haslam, & Kulich, 2010).

The purpose of this study was to further explore this possibility. Specifically, I focus on FIFA's gender-related initiatives. As outlined in the following sections, the program began near the time of the international governing body's bribery scandals. Grounding this work in glass cliff theory (Ryan & Haslam, 2005, 2007) and resultant scholarship in that area, I interviewed program participants from all around the world. Many of the women with whom I spoke suggested recent gender-based actions in times of crisis were largely associated with their rebuilding image and reputation from the recent corruption in 2015. The study participants also pointed to an overall gender bias in football. In the following sections, I briefly overview the FIFA bribery crisis, articulate the manner in which glass cliff theory serves as an ideal lens to view FIFA's gender-based actions, and then present specific research questions that helped guide this study.

## **Theoretical Backgrounds**

### *FIFA, Bribery, and Women's Leadership Development*

In May 2015, the United States of America (US) Department of Justice indicted 9 FIFA officials and another 5 corporate executives on charges of racketeering, wire fraud, and money laundering, among other offenses (Department of Justice, 2015). The defendants were alleged “to have systematically paid and agreed to pay well over \$150 million in bribes and kickbacks to obtain lucrative media and marketing rights to international soccer tournaments.” Since the initial charges, the US authorities have charged over 40 officials and corporate executives, with many pleading guilty (Laughland, 2017). The corruption charges were alongside other allegations of wrongdoing related to refereeing, a World Cup host selection, and resource allocation, among others. As noted by the BBC, the allegations and imprisonments, “cast doubt over the transparency and honesty for the process of allocating the World Cup tournaments, electing its president, and the administration of funds, including those earmarked for improving football facilities in some of FIFA’s poorer members” (BBC, 2015).

Parallel to FIFA corruption charges were efforts by the governing body to engage in efforts and programming to increase women’s involvement in the sport. Prior to the 2015 Women’s World Cup, FIFA formed a task force to develop some key areas to be focused in relation to women’s football in 2014. In May 2015, as part of the efforts carried out by the task force, FIFA inaugurated a female leadership development programme (FLDP) to foster more women administrators at middle- and senior-level

managerial positions and as executive officers in member associations and confederations affiliated with FIFA (FIFA, 2014, 2015a). In addition, they appointed the first woman to serve as secretary-general and chief women's football officer in 2016 (i.e., Fatma Samoura and Sarai Bareman, respectively), shaping a historical trajectory of women involving in decision-making in football governing bodies. Finally, since 2014, FIFA continued to organize conferences and workshops for the development of women's football and promotion of gender equality in leadership in football governing bodies. In addition to what Joseph Blatter (a former FIFA president) used to claim, "The future of football is feminine" (FIFA, 2011), FIFA's endeavors showed how much they sought to enhance inclusive decision-making environments in football governing bodies. As such, the FIFA case serves as a noteworthy stride towards gender balance policy in the realm of the men-led sport governance.

Despite FIFA's progressive gender-related actions, such as the implementation of the women's leadership development program, annual conferences (e.g., #FIFA4Equality), and historic appointments of women to leadership ranks, researchers have called for careful scrutiny of their schemes for a number of reasons. Some researchers have argued that the linkage between FIFA's corruption and gender equality initiatives should be revisited (for more details of FIFA's scandal, see Boudreaux, Karahan, & Coats, 2016; Fortunato, 2017) because their gender-based actions occurred in times of crisis (Edwards, 2016; Glass, 2016). Furthermore, FIFA explicitly announced the launch of several gender-related actions by spreading its positive message of gender equality across numerous media platforms (Glass, 2016). According to Mason, Thibault,

and Misener (2016), when representative sport governing bodies (e.g., FIFA or IOC) are involved in corrupt activities (e.g., financial rebate), they are subject to garner a wide range of the public attention worldwide. In turn, corrupt organizations promptly and desperately seek ways to protect their image and recover from the loss of trust. From a crisis management perspective, Ibrahim (2017) similarly asserted that when their scandal was released through the media outlet, FIFA used a “denial strategy” for communication to rebuild their image and reputation (p. 11).

### *Gender Bias and Leadership*

Gender bias is rife across the workplace and remains significant barriers for women in attaining positions of leadership (Heilman, 2012). There are three aspects of bias that are important in addressing leadership gaps between men and women, and one of these is the gender stereotype. Stereotypes in general involve a cognitive aspect of bias—people assign gendered qualities to leadership roles—while both prejudice (e.g., attitudes, beliefs, and feelings) and discrimination (e.g., actions) represent attitudinal and behavioral components of bias, respectively. For example, mistaken attitudes and beliefs influence how women are treated by peers and followers at work and how they view themselves and their capabilities as a leader. Thus, gender stereotypic beliefs can lead to prejudice and discrimination towards an individual or groups of people (whether they are subjectively positive or negative) and be ultimately translated into organizational hiring and job placement decisions, as well as women’s career development and advancement (Eagly & Carli, 2003).

Researchers have observed the stereotypical gender beliefs about women and men in leadership across different settings, including law (Ashby, Ryan, & Haslam, 2007), politics (Powell & Butterfield, 2011), and business (Heilman, 2012), as have sport management researchers noted such gender stereotypes and leadership dynamics (Adriaanse, 2016; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008; Walker & Bopp, 2011). Schein (2010), for example, expounded on such gender stereotypes in organizational practices and leadership by presenting a “think manager-think male” association. According to her, the typical characteristics of a successful leader align with masculine or agentic qualities; on the other hand, feminine or communal characteristics hold a weak link with leadership stereotypes. In the context of sport, Burton and colleagues (2009) examined “think athletic director, think masculine” managerial stereotypes, indicating that masculine qualities are strongly tied with the role of athletic director.

Ryan and Haslam (2005, 2007) extended the notion of “think manager-think male” to include the prescriptive gender stereotype, such as “think crisis-think female.” Gartzia and colleagues (2012) supported this assertion that women are likely to be appointed to leadership positions when organizations perform poorly (e.g., financial downturn) or undergo a crisis. Women in such positions must face and negotiate negative consequences of organizations while standing on the glass cliff because they are being set up to fail and take risks. Given the precarious circumstances, the glass cliff is particularly problematic for women leaders, as they are less likely to refuse the promotions to high-level positions for a number of reasons. These include existing barriers to upward mobility, lack of alternative leadership offers, and their desire for

career success (see Bruckmüller, Ryan, Rink, & Haslam, 2014, for an excellent overview). Given that gender bias and sexist discrimination create the glass cliff effect altogether in the workplace (Ryan & Haslam, 2007), the primary causes and empirical evidence of the glass cliff are addressed as follows.

According to Ryan and Haslam (2005, 2007), the glass cliff derives from manifestations of sexism in leadership roles. In professional settings, they highlighted the two elements of sexism involved in the glass cliff: hostile and benevolent sexism. Hostile sexism refers to an explicit form of sexist prejudices that foster antipathy towards women, whereas benevolent sexism endorses descriptive and prescriptive gender beliefs and attitudes in implicit ways (Glick & Fiske, 2001). For example, drawing from a role congruity theory, people might have some gender role expectations towards women leaders to be friendly and selfless in the workplace due to their traditional gender roles as mothers, wives, and caretakers (Brown, Diekmann, & Schneider, 2011). However, if women in leadership exhibit opposing qualities (e.g., aggressive and assertive), they are evaluated more negatively than those women who display communal qualities in the workplace. Although each of the perspectives of sexism seems to emerge from separate bias and feelings toward women (Heilman, 2012), researchers do not attribute the glass cliff to overt sexism or subtle sexism alone (Acar & Sümer, 2018; Ryan & Haslam, 2007). Rather, empirical evidence suggests that both sexist mechanisms are highly positively correlated and concurrently lead to the glass cliff effect (Bruckmüller et al., 2014; Mulcahy & Linehan, 2014). For example, Ryan and colleagues (2011) argued that women in management are less likely to reach

leadership ranks because followers and peers question their legitimacy. More recently, Acar and Sümer (2018) observed similar results that hostile attitudes towards non-conforming women leaders were evident in poorly performing organizations. Therefore, even when women crack the glass ceiling, they are still confronted with less authority in decision-making if organizations place women in the glass cliff positions without providing necessary information, resources, and support (Ryan & Haslam, 2007).

In the glass cliff scenario, Bruckmüller and colleagues (2014) pointed to subtle sexism as a more relevant source of the glass cliff, claiming that dominant groups in failing organizations set a baseline preference for women as leaders to keep other fellow in-group members (e.g., men) from high-risk positions. In effect, women placed in precarious positions seem less likely to achieve outstanding performance and are left to encounter interpersonal conflicts and blame as a scapegoat rather than declining organizations' taking responsibility (Bruckmüller & Branscombe, 2010). This is highly relevant to the current study because the majority of decision-makers in sport workplaces are men (see Cunningham, 2019), and men oftentimes establish a nuanced sexism and in-group favoritism to maintain privileges over outgroup members (Ryan & Haslam, 2007). Similarly, researchers acknowledged that women who are deliberately appointed to the glass cliff fall short of supportive networks and opportunities for their growth in upper management (Ryan et al., 2011). Thus, both in-group favoritism and discriminatory organizational practices against women form the glass cliff effect altogether in professional settings.

Furthermore, situational and contextual factors provide the second explanation for the glass cliff (Bruckmüller & Branscombe, 2010; Bruckmüller et al., 2014; Ryan et al., 2016). Unlike the traditional view of leadership, Ryan and Haslam (2007) argued that organizations under downturn circumstances tend to assign women to the upper-level positions, seeking feminine leadership characteristics (e.g., transformational and ethical styles). In other words, the gender bias that associates women with relational quality and conflict-solving might yield a rationalization of leadership offers for women in times of crisis (Bruckmüller et al., 2014). According to Kulich and colleagues (2015), there is additional evidence showing that women are selected as leaders in an organization under uncontrollable circumstances instead of flourishing times. They further note that replacing masculine leadership qualities with feminine leadership qualities in struggling situations is viewed as a symbolic strategy, implying that women are not valued as a competent leader who can bring actual changes and actively handle with the crisis.

Given the increased risk of failure, however, this reasoning is discouraging since both communal and agentic leadership characteristics are essential for organizations in a crisis (Ryan et al., 2011). Moreover, although the differences in expectations towards a leader are small in the declining workplace, the separation of leadership contexts reproduces the institutional systems coupled with gendered policies, compositions, cultures, and ultimately, links to a “think crisis-think female” paradigm (Ryan & Haslam, 2007). These instances become evident in the coaching context. As successful head coaches are tied with masculine leadership qualities, head coaches are mostly men,



with a few exceptions. In explaining one of these, Wicker and colleagues (2019) found that, women are likely to be hired as head coaches in a team with seasons of a low winning percentage in women's collegiate football in the US, supporting the contextual factors surrounding the glass cliff. Therefore, just as gender biases exist across work settings, and much of gender politics occur in organizational and sociocultural systems, the justification of leadership offers for women based on situational factors is considered a critical catalyst of the glass cliff (Ryan et al., 2011).

### **Present Study**

Despite the considerable support for the glass cliff notion outside sport (e.g., law, Ryan et al., 2011; information technology, Wilson-Kovacs, Ryan, & Haslam, 2006; politics, Ryan et al., 2010; and higher education, Peterson, 2014), researchers have little evidence of whether women in sport organizations encounter the glass cliff. Indeed, a few researchers have speculated that the glass cliff is present in sport, and they have called for future examinations (see Burton, 2015; Cunningham, 2019; Wicker et al., 2019). One area to explore the glass cliff effect is administrative positions. For instance, poorly performing sport organizations might consider appointing women to leadership positions to monitor corruption and help reduce such activities (Dollar, Fisman, & Gatti, 2001; Swamy, Knack, Lee, & Azfar, 2001). According to Kihl, Skinner, and Engelberg (2017), sport corruption (e.g., bribery, fraud, and other illegal payments) results in significant decreases in reputations, financial status, and employee turnover of sport organizations. As such, organizations immediately implement reform strategies after the

disclosure of such corrupt activities to recover their image and performances (Mason et al., 2006).

Another area related to the present study is the coaching profession. Women might obtain a head coaching position only when teams have a history of losses or poor records in the previous years (see Cook & Glass, 2013, for a related analysis with a focus on race). This is because, although there is the growing number of women in the sport setting, men dominate decision-making positions in both women and men's teams (Cunningham, 2019). Therefore, in-group decision-makers (i.e., men) might leave a risky position for women coaches by providing unfavorable leadership offers in sports teams or units with unsuccessful performance. Together, if men and women do not exert equal influence in decision-making, women in sport administration and coaching continue to face a wide array of gender biases or different treatments by contexts. Since researchers have not investigated the robustness of the glass cliff in sport, the case of FIFA's recent gender diversity initiatives after the scandal adds a significant contribution to the theory in the discourses of football and gender politics. As such, the present study applied the glass cliff notion to examine the FIFA case.

In building from the aforementioned literature, the following research questions helped guide the present study:

**Research Question 1:** What made FIFA promote gender-based initiatives in the decision-making processes, including FLDP?

**Research Question 2:** What is the linkage between the glass cliff phenomenon and FIFA's recent gender diversity initiatives in times of crisis?

Given the research questions, I provide an overview of qualitative research design (e.g., participants, procedures of data collection, and data analysis) and discuss findings of the study in the following section.

### **Methods**

I conducted the current study under the interpretivist paradigm, as a poststructuralist point of view involves critical explorations of how empirical data is interpreted and accounts for power dynamics in socially constructed reality (Morgan, 2007). Adopting such a critical point of view helps examine social positions of women leaders and their perceived gender norms and barriers in the football domain. Along these lines, I embraced a qualitative research approach to investigate the glass cliff phenomenon in football governing bodies. Because the qualitative research setting is based on natural, unstandardized, and reflexive processes, researchers can gather rich data and analyze a variety of meanings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Further, the qualitative research approach is helpful when discovering a particular case and understanding individuals' personal and managerial experiences to attempt a detailed explanation of the specific phenomenon (Bluhm, Harman, Lee, & Mitchell, 2011).

To achieve the end of the study, I adopted a single case study because it allows for carrying an intrinsic and experiential consideration of a generic phenomenon (Stake, 2005). Patton (1990) and Yin (1989) contended that choosing a representative case enables the greatest understanding of a particular phenomenon. Similarly, Stake (2005) suggested that the intrinsic case study provides “thick description” (p. 450), when researchers select an opportunistic and educational case and manifest research contexts

well by interacting with the people inside and outside case. As a result, it becomes both process and product of a particular inquiry. Thus, I focused on the participants of FIFA's FLDP and co-created findings through an interaction between investigators and participants. In particular, the participants of FIFA's FLDP are either administrators or coaching staff who were referred from their confederation or member associations to partake the program. Since these pioneering women leaders are seen as potential leaders in the uppermost echelons in football governing bodies, I considered them as a representative case in the study. Finally, to conduct the study, I underwent the necessary processes for a human research protection program and obtained approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the affiliated university.

### *Participants*

In order to identify the potential participants in the study, I employed a purposive sampling. To gain access to them, I used several methods. First, I referred to FIFA's official source (e.g., <http://www.fifa.com/about-fifa/official-documents/index.html>), where I obtained the participant names of the first and second edition of FLDP. Then, I utilized professional contacts that are publicly available in each member association; and third, due to the limited contacts among the entire FLDP participant ( $N = 69$ ), I also communicated with relevant personnel in FIFA to request for full contacts. I obtained the full contacts from the gatekeepers after they reviewed the project summary. In doing so, I was able to reach out to other potential participants who missed the initial invitations, including the personnel in FIFA. In addition to the purposive sampling, I

embraced a snowball sampling, where earlier participants of the study introduced other possible participants.

Sixteen participants agreed to participate in the study and were asked to provide personal information if they were comfortable sharing (see Table 8 for demographics and participant identification). Their occupational roles were varied, including 9 (56%) in the middle- and senior-level management (i.e., chief manager, division director, and women's football development officer), 5 (31%) in upper-level management (i.e., board of director, chairperson, and executive committee), and 2 of them (13%) in coaching positions at national teams. Among participants, 6 work in continental or international confederations and 10 work in member associations. The average age of participants was 45.14 ( $SD = 9.43$ ), ranged from 28 to 63 years. The mean of the years of their current occupational role was 6.40 ( $SD = 5.10$ ), ranged from .70 to 18 years, while that of their profession in football governing bodies was 13.43 ( $SD = 7.06$ ), ranged from 4 to 30 years. With regard to the educational backgrounds, 3 obtained a bachelor's degree, 10 obtained masters' degree, 2 completed equivalent diplomas<sup>1</sup>, and the remaining participant did not disclose it. To protect participants' privacy, I report the aggregated data and do not link specific identifying information with the participant description in Table 8.

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<sup>1</sup> Two participants completed either a vocational training or a specialist program that corresponds to a bachelor's degree.

### *Data collection*

Participants of the study were recruited from the participants of the first and second edition of FLDP ( $N = 69$ ). When contacting and recruiting, I distributed an informed consent form and fully explained the research information and procedures prior to their decision to participate in the study. Of those FLDP participants, 17 participants (25%) were not reached out from the initial contacts due to their occupational status and primary contact change. Hence, among the 52 FLDP participants, 32 participants responded to the earlier contacts (62%), and 26 of them indicated their interest in the study. Finally, because of the difficulties in (re)scheduling the interview, I arranged 16 one-to-one semistructured interviews (Table 9). I conducted 11 interviews, including a follow-up interview, with live conversation via a phone call or Skype, and completed 6 interviews via a written format (i.e. email). The entire interview of the study was conducted from August 2017 to November 2017.

Before the IRB processes and initial interviews, a faculty member and three graduate students reviewed the interview questions, and I modified the questions for clarification. Upon giving consent, participants received and reviewed a set of the questions before the interview. For a phone or Skype interview, I fully explained the interview protocols when scheduling an appointment and digitally recorded the live conversation only when each participant agreed. The recorded interviews lasted up to 40 minutes, on average, ranged from 25 to 60 minutes, and were transcribed verbatim. In case of technical issues in recording, I took handwritten notes per each interview and included them in the documentation. Further, during the interview, I improvised a few

questions and slightly did not follow the sequential order of the interview guide. Considering a social interaction context (Fontana & Frey, 2005), this is not uncommon because a semistructured interview setting enables researchers to establish rapport with participants. Despite the fact that interview guides were adapted slightly, the aforementioned researchers reviewed all questions, which yields the quality of information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For a written interview, I applied the same interview procedures. Once participants requested, I attached a Word document into their email and asked them to complete and return it within 10 to 15 days. Return reminders per participant were sent 2 to 3 times every 2 weeks. Follow-ups and clarifying questions also took place via email. All interviews were documented using pseudonyms, and all participants received no financial compensation for their participation.

### *Data Analysis*

I used a voice recognition software to transcribe all interviews and thoroughly read the transcripts multiple times for accuracy. During and after the interviews, I used a series of member reflections, where participants were engaged in follow-up interviews, refining relevant themes, and reviewing the final report to create robust dialogues together (Mertens, 1998; Smith & McGannon, 2018). A scholar with research experience outside the study served as a peer debriefer to review aggregated data. This procedure allows for ensuring and discussing the accuracy of the identified themes in the data analysis (Schwandt, 2001). For the data analysis, I also developed a storyline and expanded it before, during, and after the data collection and coding by reading through

several sources of available textual data (i.e., FIFA's official documents, transcripts, and interview notes). This process of crosschecking and integrating the document sources into data analysis ensured the precision and consistency of the interpretations. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted, peer debriefing and triangulating enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of the collected data. According to Stake (2005), data can be organized and categorized drawing on the scope of the research questions and case approach. As such, I identified a priori codes and labeled at the beginning of data analysis processes. However, even though data collection and data analysis occur simultaneously (Stake, 2005), another set of codes and themes emerged as data analysis progressed. Consequently, I refined a priori and emergent codes altogether to generate a categorical aggregation and segments with the data (Stake, 2005). Lastly, although I coded all interviews, data saturation occurred when no new themes or threads emerged from the data (Creswell, 2014).

Furthermore, for a specific elaboration on coding processes, I employed an open, axial, and selective coding (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Cresswell, 2014). In the open coding process, the lead author initially jotted down marginal remarks on a hard copy of each interview transcript. Then, the remarks and entire statement from the verbatim transcripts were carried out on a new format of file for the future quotations. Next, when capturing emerging themes and adding reflective remarks, the lead author progressed the axial coding for further comparison of the initial codes. Some examples of the open codes included "women's network" and "quality of opportunity" in addition to a priori codes, such as "the glass cliff," which ended up as "divergent perceptions of the glass



cliff.” Other open codes, such as “an increase in women’s participation” and “underrepresentation of women in leadership,” grouped together to axial codes, such as “growing number of women in football.” Finally, in order to produce an integrated theoretical construct, I included the earlier combined codes with the selective codes, such as “the glass cliff and FIFA’s gender initiatives.” In the phase of selective coding, when necessary, the lead author asked the participants to edit typographical errors, punctuation, and choice of words for a readability. Throughout the data analysis and interpretations, the second author reviewed all themes and statements, as well as provided additional comments to accurately present findings. I adjusted themes until inconsistencies were resolved.

### **Findings and Discussion**

I present the findings based on the research questions. All themes, subthemes, and representative quotes are presented in Table 10.

#### *The Antecedents of FIFA’s Gender Initiatives*

In relation to the first research question, I focused on several reasons why FIFA started promoting gender-based initiatives, including the operation of FLDP and placements of women in the upper management. I identified three primary themes: (a) general job availability, (b) growing number of women in football, and (c) social pressure.

#### **General Job Availability**

“I think [FIFA’s FLDP] is a result that is reflective of the general business market,” Participant 14 stated. Consistent with this view, a number of participants

pointed the implementation of FLDP to the increase in the labor force participation rate of women in general. In support of their positions, data from around the world show that women constitute a sizeable portion of the labor force: 57 percent of the US ([https://www.dol.gov/wb/stats/stats\\_data.htm](https://www.dol.gov/wb/stats/stats_data.htm)), approximately 52 percent in Europe, about 52 percent in Latin America, and roughly 59 percent in Southeast and East Asia (ILO, 2018).

In addition, some researchers suggested that general labor force participation rate of women and gender equality issues are closely related to the growth of women's football and their success in the game (Bredtmann, Crede, & Otten, 2016; Hoffmann, Lee, Matheson, & Ramasamy, 2006). Considering the multiple legal mandates (e.g., Title IX of the US) and policy changes (e.g., gender quota in the Union of European Football Association [UEFA]) to increase the number of women in the sport realm, it is not surprising that women's participation in the overall workforce is associated with a steady rise of women in upper management positions in sport organizations. As participant 12 noted, "FIFA spurred the program because they were aware of that women move upward and they really wanted to get women more opportunities in administration and decision-making positions," showing that the implementation of FLDP, to some extent, initiated to develop women's leadership capacity.

### **Growing Number of Women in Football**

Findings of the second theme showed that the overall growth in women's football (i.e., elite sport) and the number of women working in football governing bodies have led FIFA to do something for women. All participants argued that the rate of

women in the upper-level roles is relatively lower than that of men, and thus, warranted greater attention and development. Two subthemes emerged: (a) an increase in women's participation and (b) underrepresentation of women in leadership in the football space, and discussed each subtheme as follows.

First, findings suggested that the growth in women's football and the number of women working in football governing bodies drove FIFA to do something for women. Specifically, Participant 10 noted,

Coming of the program, the timing of [the women's leadership development program] gives more pushes with the Women's World Cup that was hosted in 2015 in Canada. Thus, when [FIFA] saw the success of Women's World Cup, that is when [FIFA] has probably thought such as, '[FIFA] has to have more women inclusion,' and that is how [FIFA] ended up putting it on FIFA's agenda.

This finding concertedly supported that the awareness and popularity of women's football have heavily grown up since the successful women's World Cup (WWC) in 1999 and reached its peak during the recent one in 2015 (FIFA, 2015a). According to FIFA (2014), there are nearly 1.2 million women coaches (6.7% of the entire registered coach), 4.8 million women players registered at an elite-level, and 30 million women participants across member associations worldwide. However, all participants indicated that the growing number of women in the game of football does not guarantee women's occupation in football governing bodies. Indeed, FIFA (2015a) showed that women hold only 8 percent of executive positions in member associations, as compared to the overall growth in women working in football governing bodies. Most importantly, it took FIFA

more than two decades (since the first WWC in 1991) to elect women to their leadership ranks and implement diverse gender initiatives to enhance women's leadership in the context of football. Likewise, participants unanimously argued as much that there is a lack of women in leadership space in football. This finding represented that women are underrepresented in decision-making positions in football governing bodies and indicated that gender-related actions were designed to fill this gap (FIFA, 2014).

In addition, a number of participants in the study noted that the alternative goal of women's leadership development program was to balance a gender disparity in the leadership positions between men and women, to a certain degree. Participant 8 specifically articulated that, "[S]occer was culturally viewed as a profession only for men" and thus "[t]he sociocultural barrier does not see women in a profession traditionally dominated by men." She further noted, although she received support for her projects, "women's ideas and knowledge are not valued in the same way that are valued the ideas of men who are in the same position, but were placed second after men's projects" (Participant 8, personal communication, September 7, 2017). In the coaching context, several participants also mentioned that women undertake mostly women's teams, but they hold peripheral roles in women's teams if head coaches are men. Similar to this finding, Adriaanse (2016) argued that the increasing participation of women in sport does not guarantee that women have upward mobility in sport work environments. Further, researchers contended that despite the increase in women's representation in leadership roles, men's networking circles continue to play a large role

in keeping power and privilege within sport organizations (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008; Cunningham, 2008; Shaw & Frisby, 2006).

### **Social Pressure**

Finally, in recognizing the overarching reasons for the execution of gender initiatives, some participants acknowledged that the presence of the development program was feasible because of the efforts of a few individuals on the front line (e.g., Moya Dodd). According to Participant 16, “there were very few administrators and team members from inside and outside FIFA to support and deliver [FLDP] programs, especially when the task force team brought up the idea, but they worked together to develop women’s football and take initiatives of women’s leadership in football” (personal communication, October 6, 2017). The media often advocated for such assertions as well (Fagan, 2014; McGregor, 2015), creating social pressure through the combination of individual acts and social movements. To be specific, Participant 13 stated,

There is a worldwide movement to involve women and a social appeal around the role of women in terms of how women contribute more to the football system. FIFA is a big institution, a strong brand, which cannot be out of such kinds of change.

In turn, such progressive voices in and out of FIFA actually brought the women’s leadership development program to the surface. Given that such individual efforts and passion for women in football by internal and external stakeholders raised social pressure and public awareness through the media, findings demonstrated that social

pressure overwhelmingly resulted in the execution of the program. This supported the contention of Cunningham (2008) that social pressure challenges historically institutionalized norms and practices in sport organizations.

Considering that the implementation of the program and other gender-related actions occurred during FIFA's reforming processes; however, a follow-up question asked whether FIFA's recent corruption influenced their unprecedented gender equality actions, including appointments of women to leadership. When asked, Participant 11 commented:

I think that after [FIFA] crisis, it was necessary to look for interest groups like the women, fans, and another population. There was a social tension about the future of the institution [like] FIFA and [FLDP] was an opportunity to change the institutional goals.

This statement implied a possibility of a glass cliff phenomenon in the context of football, which I described in more detail in the next dimension.

Collectively, findings related to the first research question illustrated that FIFA started the women's leadership development program due to the growing number of women in a wide range of positions in the general workforce as well as the game of football worldwide. Despite the growing number of women in football, however, women in leadership positions in football governing bodies were relatively rarer than men. Hence, the findings of this study supported the claims from earlier studies that women are disproportionately marginalized in leadership positions within the context of sport

(Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Cunningham, 2008; Shaw & Frisby, 2006; Walker & Bopp, 2011).

### *The Glass Cliff and FIFA's Gender Initiatives*

The second research question focused on the linkage between the glass cliff phenomenon and FIFA's recent gender diversity initiatives in times of crisis. I identified the glass cliff and FIFA's gender initiatives as an overarching dimension, coupled with the two main themes: (a) divergent perceptions of the glass cliff and (b) the gender bias in football.

#### **Divergent Perceptions of the Glass Cliff**

To discuss the second research question, I sorted three subthemes of the glass cliff as: (a) perception of the glass cliff, (b) enduring crisis, and (c) leadership characteristics for precarious situations. I delineated each of the subthemes as follows.

First, findings showed the divergent perceptions of the glass cliff. While I found a relatively unclear connection between the inauguration of women's leadership development program and crisis, when asked, most participants noted that gender equality actions, such as appointments of women to the upper-level positions, helped FIFA manage their reputation and image. As explained by Participant 1,

You know what, you are right. It is a little bit difficult to really know what FIFA is trying to do. I do not have credit for, it is only with hoping that, FIFA has just recently gone through reform and clearly [FIFA] wants to make a difference in their hiring processes. I mean, that is the vision that [FIFA] wants.

Similarly, Participant 4 noted,

Yes, it really helps. Female leadership at FIFA might help to develop their image and reputation rebuilding, because you see, female leadership is growing in member associations, and [female leaders] are fighting against corruption. That is what I have in my assumption. Yes, this explains the question, because FIFA helped [FIFA Secretary General], it helps gender discrimination.

Consistent with earlier evidence (Boudreaux et al., 2016; Edward, 2016; Glass, 2016), findings demonstrated that people may believe in a symbolized metaphor for women and equality. This finding particularly supported the glass cliff notion (Ryan & Haslam, 2005, 2007) and showed that FIFA was associated with rebuilding their image after the latest financial scandal and restoring some integrity through the new administration and appointing women to leadership. Several researchers found that sport organizations with issues of corruption often manage external evaluation to protect their image and recover from the loss of trust (Ibrahim, 2017; Kihl et al., 2017; Mason et al., 2016). In support of earlier work on the glass cliff, this finding echoes Bruckmüller and Branscombe's (2010) study that women are more likely than men to be elected to lead poorly performing organizations largely for their gendered leadership qualities (e.g., conflict-solving). Further, Kulich and colleagues (2015) suggested that organizations in times of crisis tend to publicize an appointment of women with the feminine leadership qualities in order to signal their organizational change and reform. Also, Elsaid and Ursel (2017) showed that these organizations attempt to not only hire women as leaders but allow them to secure the position for long due to the fear of negative publicity. Finally, as Bruckmüller and colleagues (2014) noted, an organizational preference for



women leaders for contextual reasons remains an important issue because differential attitudes about gender and leadership can be harmful for an individual's career trajectory and create the glass cliff.

By contrast, few participants of the study disagreed with the linkage between the glass cliff with the operation of FIFA's women's leadership development program. For example, Participant 14 counterargued,

I believe that [FIFA], from what I know, actually started the development of [FLDP] a long before the corruption issues and scandal happened to FIFA. So, I do not think that there is a linkage since I think the timing, the timing of the program was incidental in that regard.

Consistent with this view, those who debunked the glass cliff assumption emphasized that FIFA's women's leadership development program was not completely associated with the crisis. Rather, these participants denied the juxtaposition of the operation of the program with appointments of women to FIFA's leadership ranks. They strongly argued that those initiatives were entirely two different contexts concerning FIFA's gender-related actions. To be specific, these participants pointed out that FLDP was one of the final products, including "Live Your Goals," among the long-run developmental programs for the growth in women's football worldwide that were ignited from Joseph Blatter's leadership and even before.

Considering when and how many corruptions Blatter and his circles have engaged in, however, participants who were unwilling to support the glass cliff assumption associated FIFA's gender initiatives with organizational and strategic

responses to their crisis. In other words, they claimed the glass cliff to some extent, consistent with Boudreaux and colleagues' (2016) contention, with regard to FIFA's historic appointments of women to leadership. The contradiction was made because these participants were involved in the decision to implement FLDP and were already aware of the underlying assumptions of the glass cliff with FIFA's crisis, as well as vantage points of gender diversity practices on boards. Thus, in terms of corruption, Participant 15 overturned the response:

Once FIFA's corruption came out, I am not saying once you hear, but [FIFA] is still scared that they need to correct them. It has been hard time for FIFA due to the corruption, so [FIFA] is still taking care of their reputation.

This argument similarly aligns with the contention of Bruckmüller and colleagues (2014) that women leaders are stereotypically expected to reduce damage of organizations and minimize conflicts in times of crisis. In consequence of FIFA's historical assignments of women leaders, Participant 13 mentioned that there is a high chance that other countries, units, and confederations or member associations will start to follow how FIFA has done—that is, having more women in leadership roles under declining situations. Thus, as Mulcahy and Linehan (2014) analyzed situational factors, examining when and why women are appointed to leadership is critical in understanding the glass cliff effect, as women leaders are exceptionally few in football governing bodies.

As a whole, findings of the glass cliff effect were perplexing, especially regarding FIFA's efforts around women's leadership development. As participants

displayed high levels of concerns for the sustainability of the women's leadership development program and long tenure of incumbent women leaders in FIFA, further investigation is certainly warranted to explore a possible connection between FIFA's gender initiatives and its consequences on an automatic gender stereotyping in leadership in sport organizations in a state of crisis (Bruckmüller & Branscombe, 2010; Ryan et al., 2016).

The second subtheme of the glass cliff phenomenon emerged as an enduring crisis. Findings demonstrated that when women were appointed to the decision-making roles during FIFA's reforming processes, people observed how these women leaders perform and react (Edwards, 2016). This argument warrants that women, who are currently working in the top-level positions or going to work for organizations under the downturn circumstances, need to realize the challenges and relation of power inside and outside of each organization. According to Bruckmüller and Branscombe (2010), leaders in declining organizations are likely to encounter individual blames and interpersonal conflicts instead of their organizations taking responsibility for the failure to achieve outstanding performance in the past. Moreover, Ryan and colleagues (2011) asserted that women in the glass cliff positions might receive less support and resources to sustain their leadership, as compared to men, due to the invisible sexism and in-group favoritism within organizations. Therefore, findings regarding enduring crisis described that women working for poorly performing organizations might face situations, where they make tough decisions and implement instant changes without supportive networks and

resources. Most importantly, these leaders might be criticized for the consequences or poor performance that occurred prior to their appointments (Ryan et al., 2016).

Finally, all participants were asked what types of leadership are essential for leaders in precarious situations, as contextual variations greatly attribute to the glass cliff effect. While participants did not reach a consensus on a specific leadership quality for risky situations, they suggested different leadership characteristics. In fact, almost all of them emphasized that those characteristics in risky positions do not matter in terms of gender. For example, Participant 15 stated that, “The leadership characteristics should be the same regardless of gender.” Some other participants similarly contended that, “[Leadership characteristics in the risky positions] is not a matter of gender.” Participant 14 even highlighted that, “I mean, I think that [women] should show the same characteristics that men in [precarious] positions have...I do not think that you need ‘women.’” These findings are noteworthy to show that desirable leadership characteristics for poorly performing organizations are gender-neutral, specifically echoing Ryan and colleagues’ (2011) assertion that both communal and agentic leadership characteristics play a vital role when organizations undergo a crisis.

In response to the aforementioned leadership characteristics in precarious positions, Participant 7 revealed that, “Knowledge of rules and regulations of football, statutes of FIFA, experience in football, honesty, transparency, and accountability” are required leadership characteristics for the risky positions in football governing bodies. These characteristics, regardless of gender of a leader, were the most frequently mentioned from participants and categorized as the followings: (a) authenticity grouped

with integrity and trustworthiness; (b) interpersonal skills, such as active communication, flexibility, and inclusiveness; (c) and managerial skills, such as emotional control, creativity, innovation, resourcefulness, visionary, discipline, and firmness. Overall, findings of the first theme expounded on participants' divergent perceptions on the glass cliff phenomenon in football, processes of an enduring crisis, and desirable leadership characteristics for poorly performing organizations.

### **Gender Bias in Football**

Moving onto the second theme, I found some emerging themes that were not directly related to the research question but possible indicators discussed in the glass cliff literature. Thus, I explored findings of women leaders' experiences and coalesced into two subthemes: (a) sociocultural context, such as women's network and quality of opportunity in the football space, and (b) individual context containing self-ability. I captured these subthemes as the interviews progressed and encouraged participants to bring up the gender-related issues in football governing bodies. Because a glass cliff effect is derived from various contexts within individual and structural mechanisms, I asked a couple of follow-up questions such as, "What are daily challenges or opportunities for women in football governing bodies, and how those impacted you?"

First, findings of the sociocultural context indicated that there are several gender biases in football. Aside from the earlier unanimous consent on the growth of women in football, all participants agreed that football is strongly rooted in the men-centered domain. For example, Participant 15 underlined, "Football is all politics and [politics] have been a huge barrier" for women leaders. This argument is congruent with Shaw and

Hoeber (2003), who reported that women leaders in sport often have insufficient resources and are excluded from necessary networks to conduct meaningful projects. In the glass cliff context, when such support is absent, women leaders are unlikely to make important decisions while struggling with peripheral roles in leadership (Ryan & Haslam, 2007). Considering most decision-makers in football are men, in-group favoritism would play a fundamental role in protecting their fellow members while opening up a risky position to outgroup members—women (Bruckmüller et al., 2014). Furthermore, women exhibiting feminine leadership characteristics, such as warmth and consideration, are typically not valued in sport organizations and thus women with such characteristics are often seen as incompetent as leaders (Burton et al., 2009). However, Kulich and colleagues (2015) asserted that organizations in a crisis might desirably seek for leaders with communal characteristics. As such, women who display masculine leadership characteristics may be evaluated unfavorably and not be promoted to the precarious positions in football. This glass cliff scenario, in turn, does not minimize but exacerbate the gender bias in leadership. Therefore, despite the increasing number of women in leadership in sport settings, researchers should investigate the quantity of men and women in upper management as well as the quality of those positions, including roles and experiences.

Moreover, I observed different gender biases and influences in football, specifically through cultural differences across organizations and nations. Findings demonstrated that the degree of gender equity and participants' job duties in member associations are not equivalent with the ones in FIFA or other continental

confederations. For instance, according to Participant 11, “FIFA is looking for a gender equality but [member associations] are looking for own interest and goals.” In light of this view, Participant 15 expanded that,

Generally saying, in the world’s football, is there a huge gender influence? Yes, [gender influence] really depends on which demographic situation you live in, then there is a huge difference in gender. Challenges are very different from countries to countries or member associations to member associations.

Because sociocultural boundaries vary across organizations and countries, findings suggested that gender-related initiatives in football might be achieved differently under their unique circumstance. Referring to FIFA’s gender-based initiatives, numerous member associations and confederations have intended to promote gender equality through specialized leadership trainings (e.g., UEFA’s women-focused program), mentoring, and gender quota for women in the upper-level positions. However, findings indicated that such gender policies are socially and culturally contextual even though participants have worked in the same football environment. As an example, some participants mentioned that football associations in Africa do not appoint women as leaders at all because of overt and subtle sexism. Thus, women working in member associations, where there are lower chances of upward trajectory and embedded gender stereotypes, might accept more glass cliff positions than those in FIFA or other confederations.

In a similar way, I found another structural gendered trend that women are usually designated to work with regard to women's football while men work for both. In particular, Participant 14 demonstrated this by saying,

I would say most [women], everyone came from member associations, most of them would focus on women's football specifically, while the people from the FIFA do not only work for women's football, but work for football in general.

Adding to this point, Participant 4 stated, "There could be different types of gender discrimination, which are visible and invisible...But, the biggest problem is that many men do not want women to lead the projects." This finding echoes with think manager-think male association that there is a societal expectation of "what women should do and men are supposed to do" in professional settings (Schein, 2001).

Arguably, such sociocultural pushbacks imply a situation in which women are expected to hold certain types of gendered leadership characteristics, thereby endorsing gender-role stereotyping in leadership and evaluation biases (Acar & Sümer, 2018; Powell, 2018).

Lastly, as Ryan and Haslam (2007) noted, the glass cliff emerges as a mixture of both individual and structural barriers and challenges. While researchers have accumulated evidence of structural mechanisms involved in the glass cliff, a glass cliff appointment is daunting and detrimental for women in terms of individuals' career advancements and success. In this regard, findings of individual context showed that participants have independently experienced diverse sociocultural, political, and economic discriminations in football. They concertedly argued that there is unfair



distributive power between men and women, leading to women's slower promotions and lower compensations, compared to men. A recent example of chants of equal pay after the 2019 Women's World Cup final and during the victory parade of the US national team highlights unequal treatments and rewards between men and women in football. By contrast, a certain number of participants who have considerable organizational support commented that they have not experienced relevant sexism while acknowledging that general gender bias exists in football governing bodies. This finding indicated that every woman leader might not necessarily receive a perilous leadership offer. For example, as Brown and colleagues noted (2011), women whose characteristics are aggressive and opportunistic might not be considered as a potential leader in struggling organizations, but the opposite is true: women who signal symbolical changes and exhibit passive leadership capabilities are preferred for leadership roles (Kulich et al., 2015). However, without organizational support, gender equitable policies, and coworkers and supervisors' encouragements, women cannot individually avoid situational constraints that lead to career failure (Bruckmüller et al., 2014). Most significantly, although handling with potential risks in new leadership roles is not confined to a glass cliff position, the findings of this study explained that implementing changes solely relying upon their individual ability and performances might be detrimental for individuals' careers.

### **Implications and Conclusions**

By anchoring the notion of the glass cliff (Ryan & Haslam, 2005, 2007), I explored the reasons why FIFA initiated gender-related actions and whether the

implementation of FLDP and historic appointments of women to leadership positions were linked to FIFA's recent corruption. Importantly, I found a discrepancy on the perceptions of the glass cliff. While FIFA planned to implement FLDP prior to their scandal in 2015, considering their assignments of women in leadership roles that occurred during their reforming processes (FIFA, 2015b, 2015c), FIFA's recent gender-based actions in times of crisis were viewed as their rebuilding image and reputation. Since such leadership offers for women are seen as exceptional in the football domain, and FIFA is no longer implementing FLDP after the second edition in 2018, FIFA's gender-based initiatives are closely related to the glass cliff phenomenon. Yet, this case study did not offer the robust evidence of the glass cliff in the context of sport due to the lack of direct interviews from decision-makers. Therefore, a further exploration of the evidence from the actual decision-makers using in-depth ethnographic studies would be useful to provide insights into the glass cliff literature in the sport context.

Coupled with the aforementioned conclusions, I highlight a number of theoretical and practical implications. For theoretical implications, I call for further investigations, especially on FIFA's gender-related actions and its impacts to other sport organizations in relation to their contextual factors, thereby greatly increasing the understanding of why and when the glass cliff occurs. Yet, sport is one of the men-centered fields, where gender bias and discriminatory organizational practices continue to emerge for men's power dynamics (Cunningham, 2008). Thus, there is still much work to illustrate not only why and when the glass cliff emerges, but also how dominant groups address the think crisis-think female framework. Further, researchers should consider nontraditional

leaders in research focusing on their lack of networks and quality of leadership offers in times of organizational crisis. As Cook and Glass (2013) suggested, researchers have little evidence of whether nontraditional leaders, including women and racial/ethnic minorities, face the glass cliff in sport, with a few exceptions (e.g., Wicker et al., 2019). These studies showed that teams with a history of losses placed minorities as head coaches to lead their declining performances. Thus, researchers can consider adopting the glass cliff with minority coaches or personnel in various sport teams or units.

In addition, leadership styles are not binary between men and women or masculine and feminine, nor confined to any certain groups of people and particular levels in organizational settings. As a result, the negative outcomes of gender binary may paradoxically strengthen gendered expectations of leadership at work if organizations place women to the leadership roles when organizations are in times of crisis only, compared to the times of prosperous (Ryan et al., 2010). In a similar vein, researchers would anticipate that decision-makers will prefer candidates who are stereotypical male, White, and straight rather than other candidates from minority groups. Lastly, longitudinal study of career trajectories of the program participants would be helpful to determine whether the program participants receive leadership opportunities and achieve their career success within 3-5 years after the completion of the program.

From a practical angle, the findings from this study warrant gender-role stereotyping in leadership and evaluation biases in the relationship between FIFA's crisis and their gender-based initiatives, especially through unprecedented appointments of women to FIFA's leadership ranks. Given that most sport governing bodies, such as IOC

or UEFA, have carried out similar gender equality initiatives, decision-makers should be cognizant of potential consequences of gendered policies that they would offer for women in times of downturn. Doing so will likely influence the appropriate development and implementation of gender-related actions while identifying ways to reduce gender bias during the times of crisis. Otherwise, decision-makers might run the risk of reinforcing the notion of think crisis-think female when simply referring to FIFA's gender action with feminine aspects of leadership. Particularly, further research should identify willingness of key decision-makers of other sport organizations besides FIFA and their member associations to proactively promote inclusiveness and gender diversity initiatives (e.g., establishment of diversity program and recruitment of diverse board members) within their organizations.

Finally, while FIFA's gender-based initiatives might play an important role in not only deepening nontraditional leaders' competencies and knowledge in football governing bodies, board seats in a sport governing body are limited. In this case, women and other minority administrators or coaches are likely under pressure to accept a glass cliff offer due to a low rate of upward mobility (Bruckmüller & Branscombe, 2010). Thus, though it seems promising for both individuals and organizations, nontraditional leaders must be aware of the glass cliff appointments and power dynamics to minimize the think crisis-think female associations.

#### *Limitations and Future Recommendations*

With the support of the literature on the glass cliff (Ryan & Haslam, 2005, 2007), I present some limitations that might influence the generalization of the findings of this

study, and researchers may consider improvements for future inquiry. I warrant three areas in the context of sport. First, I drew conclusions based on a cross-sectional study. Although the depth and richness of the qualitative data in the study provided fruitful discussions of participants, who are actively working in either administrative and coaching positions in football governing bodies, findings from a certain number of the program participants might not have fully addressed perspectives from other women leaders or marginalized groups in the football domain. For example, the findings of this study presented inconclusive views of glass cliff and gendered experiences, which was suggested in the previous studies that inconsistent results remain unanswered (Ryan et al., 2016). Bechtoldt and colleagues (2019) also did not support the glass cliff assumptions in their analysis of corporate performance data. However, these inconclusive findings do not indicate that the glass cliff does not exist in sport settings, as I examined the perceptions of the program participants instead of those who were actually engaged in the decision-making of hiring women leaders in FIFA. Thus, while responses of women leaders could be similar across the football domain, researchers might observe different patterns in their empirical work, largely depending on participants' occupational roles and affiliated organizations (i.e., national-, continental-, and international-levels). As I noted earlier, longitudinal studies can also help discover the glass cliff effect in football governing bodies and the effectiveness of the leadership developmental program.

Similarly, the findings of this study showed a trend, where women leaders mainly work for women's football or undertake a peripheral role in football governing

bodies, in particular in member associations, while men hold key decision-making positions in both women's and men's football. However, I did not discuss how this sex segregation in sport would come into play to establish the glass cliff effect. Instead, I explained a variety of gender-role stereotyping and biases (e.g., dominant leadership of men) that might influence the creation of the glass cliff in football governing bodies. For instance, although promotions to head coaches are higher in men's football than those are in women's football, women leaders might not receive such offers in a men's team with a history of poor records. On the contrary, men might be more frequently than women to be appointed in the glass cliff positions in both teams. Therefore, another level of analysis based on sex segregation in sport might influence the contribution to the current study.

Finally, although Crowe and colleagues (2011) argued that a case study approach is helpful for researchers to answer "why" and "how" questions, the interpretations and discussions are subject to researchers' standpoints or methodological and theoretical considerations. Thus, I combined various sources of documents and interview data altogether to triangulate and crosscheck the findings presented here. Given the little evidence of whether women in sport work environments would encounter the glass cliff, researchers should undertake further investigations to expand this study to explore the same phenomenon in various sport settings.

#### **Chapter IV Summary**

In summary, I illuminated the second dimension with respect to the relationship between FIFA's gender-based actions and their crisis. Findings revealed that although

the linkage of the commencement of FLDP and FIFA's scandal was relatively unclear and less connected than the initial assumption of this study, I observed that FIFA's appointments of women to leadership ranks during their reforming processes might have led to a stronger gender-role stereotyping in leadership and evaluation bias in the football context. As Ryan and Haslam (2007) noted, the glass cliff phenomenon is a consequence of various gender-relevant stereotypes and biases from individual and sociocultural mechanisms. With the increasing number of women working in football governing bodies, I therefore urge women leaders to understand when, why, and how the glass cliff appointments are likely to occur.

## CHAPTER V

### GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I briefly describe the overall purpose of the dissertation and research aim and design pertaining to each chapter. Then, I recount the findings of each study and discuss the theoretical and practical implications. I also address recommendations for future studies, followed by conclusions.

#### **Research Aim and Design**

Despite the growing emphasis on gender diversity, the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in business and politics remains an issue facing today's professionals and academics. This is no exception for sport stakeholders, and as a result, sport researchers and policy makers have documented why it is important to achieve gender balance in sport leadership (Adriaanse, 2016; Australian Sports Commission, 2014; Cunningham, 2008; European Commissions, 2017; FIFA, 2015a; Hoeber, 2007; Parker, 2019; Sport England, 2014). Generally, the advantages of having women in leadership include optimizing decision-making and creating respectful work environments (Terjesen et al., 2009). From a broader standpoint, having fair and equal representation of women in such positions is a vital element of national growth, which ultimately enhances global competitiveness and narrows the gender gap in a society (World Economic Forum, 2016). A greater gender balance on boards in a national governing body is thus reflected in contextual factors, such as culture, history, and social norms (Norris & Inglehart, 2008; Schuler & Rogovsky, 1998).



Although researchers and policy makers have examined various reasons for the lack of women in leadership positions within sport governing bodies, the link between macro-level influences and gender diversity has received little attention. Moreover, considering the multidimensional concept of gender, embracing a comprehensive, multilevel approach is beneficial to understand the marginal rate of women's upward mobility in sport. Finally, given the large variations by countries and regions (Catalyst, 2019), a cross-cultural comparison is imperative for a better understanding of the complexity associated with the global representation and experiences of women in leadership within national sport governing bodies.

Therefore, the aims of this dissertation were to (a) examine the relationships among sociocultural, economic, and political factors, and the representation of women in leadership positions within national sport governing bodies; and (b) advance the understanding of the lived experiences of women leaders across various levels of football governing bodies. I did this by conducting three independent studies. In Chapter II, I examined the relationship between cultural factors and the women's representation on NOC boards. Using the quantitative method, I presented the findings from 56 countries. In Chapter III, I extended Chapter II by further exploring country-level factors, such as economy, democracy, and religion, with respect to the women's representation on NOC boards. Utilizing the quantitative method, I analyzed the data from 89 countries. Lastly, drawing from the glass cliff theory, I investigated the link between FIFA's gender-related initiatives and the perceptions of women leaders in national and international football governing bodies. By employing the qualitative

method, I interviewed 16 women leaders to illuminate their experiences related to gender biases in football.

### **Review of the Findings**

#### *Sociocultural, Economic, and Political Factors and the Representation of Women on NOC Boards*

In Chapter II and III, I investigated the interplay of macro-level factors with the women's representation on NOC boards. Drawing from Hofstede's (1980, 1991, 2001) five cultural dimensions, the initial investigation was to understand how the cultural values were related to the gender diversity on NOC boards. Findings presented in Chapter II demonstrated that countries with lower scores in power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity norms were positively related to greater representation of women on NOC boards.

Power distance represents the degree to which power and resources are fairly and equally distributed across social groups in a country, while masculinity norms are closely related to high levels of power distance for values like competitiveness and acquisition of power (Hofstede, 1980). Lastly, uncertainty avoidance refers to how people perceive ambiguous situations and the unknown future. Thus, it was not surprising to find that these positive effects were statistically significant and highly salient in the Nordic countries. In other words, the countries with citizens, who treat people fairly and equally, feel comfortable with questions and uncertainty, and value cooperation and empathy, are likely to have more women NOC board of directors than those without such cultures.

Additionally, I looked at the associations among a degree of economy, a level of democracy, religion, and the gender diversity on NOC boards in Chapter III. The findings showed that the countries with higher income per person were positively related to the large proportion of women on NOC boards. The findings also suggested that higher levels of democracy were positively linked with a greater representation of women on NOC boards. Interestingly, the trends were apparent again in the Nordic countries that are economically advanced, and the democratic regimes are well-established over the long term.

Moreover, I found that the countries with a large percentage of Protestants were positively related to greater representation of women on NOC boards. Interestingly, although there were some countries in which Protestant denomination was not the majority, the findings still supported previous studies (Fish, 2002; Inglehart et al., 2002) suggesting that countries with proportionally higher Protestants were associated with greater gender diversity in leadership. Considering the growth in the number of non-religious population across the world, I hypothesized that countries with a large percentage of religiously unaffiliated citizens would be positively related to a greater representation of women on NOC boards. However, I did not find such a link nor any connections of other religions with the gender diversity on NOC boards.

Taken together, although I cannot explain cultural values with other aspects of socioeconomic and political climates of a country simultaneously, the findings demonstrated that sociocultural and ideological values of a country play a more significant role than economic and political factors. Particularly, the coefficients for the

GDP per capita and democracy were not statistically significant, while the influences of religions (e.g., Protestantism) and regions were evident in the full model. Nevertheless, Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden were among the countries that strongly showed lower scores in power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and masculinity norms, higher GDP per capita, higher levels of democracy, and higher percentage of Protestant adherents. These countries are geographically located in Europe, especially in the Nordic region that tend to have greater representation of women in leadership within sport governing bodies and across other settings.

There were however some contrasting countries to this general pattern, even though they are from Europe or the Nordic areas. Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania were such cases that had either lower levels of democracy or a lower income per person. Concerning greater representation of women on NOC boards, there were also other countries that do not depend on lower scores in the three cultural values, higher levels of GDP per capita, higher degrees of democracy, or larger rate of Protestant adherents. Despite this, as previously mentioned, the coefficients for religion and region were statistically significant in the full model. Based on this collective viewpoint, the findings suggest that normative factors (cultural values and ideologies from religions) are comparably significant influences on gender diversity within national sport governing bodies instead of economic and political influences.

#### *Gender Initiatives and Policies Influencing Experiences of Women Leaders and Coaches*

In Chapter IV, I examined why FIFA promoted gender initiatives and whether implementing such gender-related actions was associated with their recent bribery

scandal. Findings were inconclusive in terms of the perceptions of the glass cliff. In particular, FIFA's implementation of a leadership training program for women was viewed as irrelevant to the recent corruption. However, the appointments of women in leadership positions during their reforming processes were evaluated negatively (e.g., Fatma Samoura and Sarai Bareman), partially suggesting the glass cliff assumption. Because those leadership offers are relatively rare and have not been given to women previously, the leadership assignments that occurred right after FIFA's corruption were understood as a strategic decision to recover their reputation and image.

I also found that there were a number of gender biases in football governing bodies. From the sociocultural perspective, women leaders pointed to the lack of women's network and quality of leadership opportunities in football governing bodies. Although women have increased their presence in leadership roles, men still dominate many areas of sport leadership. Thus, the findings indicated that, though the role was peripheral, women accepted the leadership positions to overcome ingroup favoritism and enhance the supportive network for other women fellows. Finally, the findings of individual-level of analysis related to the glass cliff addressed that women leaders' experiences relied upon their own sociocultural and political situations. This means that, although it was common to observe gender biases in football at the structural level, individual experiences, such as career advancement and support from the peers and supervisors, varied widely across different levels of football governing bodies and countries.

## **Contributions to Research and Practice**

Given the low rate of women in leadership ranks in the realms of sport and physical activity, researchers have contributed to knowledge of the causes and outcomes of gender imbalance in local and global contexts (Adriaanse, 2016; Burton, 2015; Demers et al., 2019; Geeraert et al., 2014; Parker, 2019; Wicker, 2019). Some examples of the antecedents include self-limiting behaviors at the individual-level analysis (Sartore & Cunningham, 2007), biases and discrimination from decision-makers at the organizational-level of analysis (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2012), and power and gendered expectations at the institutional-level of analysis (Shaw & Frisby, 2006). For the first purpose of the dissertation, I paid considerable attention to the associations between sociocultural, economic, and political influences and the representation of women on NOC boards of each country. The second research question of the dissertation focused on the relationship between the glass cliff phenomenon and FIFA's gender-based actions, as well as the experiences of women leaders in football governing bodies.

Taken collectively, the dissertation makes several contributions to the literature. First, it expands the societal influences in relation to the gender diversity in leadership within sport governing bodies at the national and international level. This study is arguably among the first to examine the relationships between cultural values, economy, democracy, and religion in a country with respect to women's representation in sport leadership. This study is also noteworthy in conducting the first investigation on the glass cliff phenomenon in national and international football governing bodies.

Although there was no direct empirical evidence to support the glass cliff phenomenon concerning FIFA's gender initiatives, this study shows how these barriers operate at the levels of groups and organizations to create gender inequities in leadership (e.g., men-oriented organizational culture and gendered associations). From a multilevel perspective, the findings from all three studies suggest that many of the factors explaining the gender imbalance in sport leadership occur at the meso- and macro-level. Importantly, researchers need to recognize that these macro-level barriers would intersect with the micro-level factors because societal influences are a pervasive force in personal interaction (Cunningham, 2019).

Second, this dissertation provides a cross-cultural perspective. For decades, researchers have highlighted that the gender gap in leadership reflects that women are still faced with the multifaced challenges across various parts of the world (Norries & Inglehart, 2001). Indeed, numerous governments and organizations at the national and international level have initiated political changes related to the gender gap in leadership under international pressure, whereas others have not (Hughes et al., 2017). The worldwide adoption of gender quotas can serve as an example of fostering gender diversity in leadership (Christiansen et al., 2016).

In this respect, examining sociocultural, economic, and political aspects of a country helped address different gender dynamics on NOC boards. In Chapter II and III, I utilized large-scale data and quantitative analyses for the cross-national comparisons and presented the relevant data in Table 2 and 6, including summaries of cultural values, GDP per capita, democracy index, religions, and the gender diversity on NOC boards for

each country. In Chapter IV, I documented the perceptions of the glass cliff and experiences of the past and current women leaders across various levels of football governing bodies. Overall, this information opens the door for cross-national research on the gender diversity in leadership across sport governing bodies.

The dissertation also offers a number of practical implications that can benefit sport practitioners and policy makers. To begin with, it is important to note that every sport organization can embody values that encourage civic participation, embrace changes and challenges, and emphasize caring and quality of life to ensure gender balance and equality in sport leadership. By doing so, sport stakeholders can incorporate more women in decision-making positions across sport organizations.

Furthermore, it should be noted that economic performance of a country is interconnected with women's representation in sport leadership. Though a level of individual income within a country varies widely and may not be directly linked to gender balance in sport leadership, a country's economic development revolves around values and norms. These ideologies and values will ultimately lead to developing strategies and implementing policies, such as the passage and adoption of gender-related actions at the organizational and national level. Based on government budget plans, national sport governing bodies face issues related to resource allocations and prioritizations in terms of recruiting and internal promotions. However, economically less developed countries may take these issues more seriously than those economically advanced countries may do. In this case, as seen from the cases of Angola, Costa Rica, Latvia, and many others that have achieved greater gender balance in sport leadership



under financial difficulty, sport policy makers and leaders should focus on social and cultural climates of these cases how to incorporate the values of gender diversity in the boardrooms.

Concerning the glass cliff effect, leaders in decision-making should be aware of potential outcomes of gendered organizational practices. For example, during times of crisis and downturn, decision-makers should be careful when appointing a leader from a pool of women professionals or nontraditional groups of people—racial, ethnic, and sexual minorities, and those with disabilities, who often lack access to the upper-level positions in sport. Basically, eliminating such gendered organizational practices must be prioritized to enhance gender diversity and accountability of organizations during times of crisis or downturn. However, organizations cannot avoid such high-risk situations, and it is a difficult task and challenge to anyone brought in to the position to lead declining teams or organizations. Therefore, in a glass cliff scenario, both parties should be responsible for discussing the potential risks from the strategic decision (e.g., career trauma, criticism, risk of failure, etc.), career trajectories, and availability of support and resources (e.g., timelines for tenure, salary negotiations, etc.) to convey organizational change. In doing so, it should minimize the risks of personal and organizational failures, but lead to a success of reversing declining performance of a sport organization.

### **Recommendations for Future Studies**

I have repeatedly addressed a number of limitations throughout the dissertation, which can serve as avenues for future study. In the aggregate, the findings of this dissertation call for a further investigation on the associations between other societal-

level factors and women's representation in leadership positions across national sport governing bodies. For example, I found several significant correlations between geographical regions and the proportion of women on NOC boards, which warrant further exploration of the regional effects. In addition, Hofstede and colleagues (2010) identified the sixth and new cultural dimension (i.e., indulgence versus restraint). Thus, an empirical application of this additional cultural value or all six cultural dimensions may provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between cultural climates and gender balance in leadership ranks within sport governing bodies.

Second, while the findings of Chapter II and III were based on quantitative evidence from the cross-national analyses, the findings of Chapter IV were based on one-on-one qualitative interviews. Thus, the dissertation calls for future studies to investigate the societal influences through qualitative inquiry to triangulate the findings of Chapter II and III and identify further gaps in the links between cultural values, economic development, democracy, and religion with women's representation in leadership in sport. Much of the extant sport literature related to institutional influences has been qualitative (Hovden, 2006; Geeraert et al., 2014). In this sense, the interplay between each of cultural values, economic development, democracy, and religion in a country and women's representation on NOC boards can be approached rigorously by adopting qualitative methods. Another potential examination for the gender biases in leadership and the glass cliff phenomenon can also be done through various levels of analysis based on quantitative methods. For instance, Wicker and colleagues' (2019) study opened this possibility in the sport setting.

Third, I focused on the representation and experiences of women leaders in sport governing bodies at the national and international level. This indicates that the findings of this dissertation may not apply comparatively to sport governing bodies at the local and provincial level or other sport settings, such as professional sport clubs or leagues. Thus, researchers should consider examining gender diversity in leadership across local and regional sport governing bodies or extending to other kinds of sport organizations (e.g., private and profit-oriented) across all levels.

Finally and importantly, although I examined the representation and experiences of women leaders across national and international sport governing bodies, this dissertation does not fully address the qualitative aspects of their positions. In fact, various institutional forces may generate women's differential and unique aspirations, opportunities, visibilities, and experiences in sport leadership (Melton & Bryant, 2017). This indicates the importance of other micro-level factors because the inconsistent numbers and rates of women in sport leadership across the regions and countries may tell different stories. These include not only geographical considerations (e.g., regions and countries), but also social positions and identities—race, ethnicity, class, religion, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and the like. One way to provide insights into complexities associated with gender balance in sport leadership is through an intersectional approach (Crenshaw, 1991). Doing so may reveal the additional unfair and unequal representation and experiences of women in leadership positions within sport governing bodies.

## **Conclusions**

In conclusion, gender imbalance in the many areas of leadership emerges from a complex system of interconnecting factors such as those identified in the multilevel model (Figure 1). Among the factors contributing to the marginal share of women leaders in sport, I delineated the associations between sociocultural, economic, and political factors, such as cultural values, GDP per capita, democracy, and religion, and the women's representation in leadership roles within national sport governing bodies. I also focused on the lived experiences of women leaders across national and international football governing bodies to explain the gender biases and glass cliff phenomenon. The overarching findings of this dissertation therefore provide support for the role of societal influences, which shape different representation and experiences of women in leadership positions within national and international sport governing bodies.

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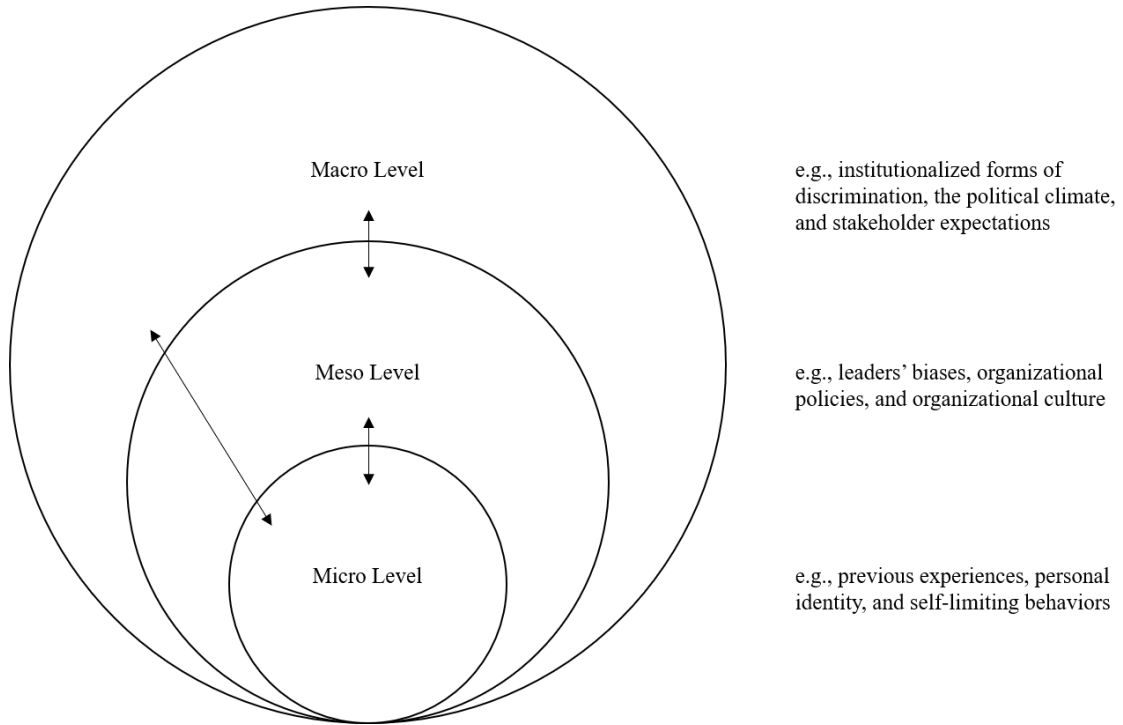
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APPENDIX A  
FIGURES AND TABLES

**Figure 1 A Multilevel Model for the Dissertation**



**Note.** Adopted from Cunningham (2019, p. 78).

**Table 1 Means, Standard Deviations, and Bivariate Correlation Coefficients**

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Number of NOC members	15.77	7.02	---							
2. Number 2016 Olympians	149.89	145.17	.19	---						
3. Power distance	57.82	20.20	.17	-.16	---					
4. Uncertainty avoidance	69.18	22.80	-.08	-.10	.28*	---				
5. Individualism-collectivism	47.30	23.58	-.16	.44**	-.63**	-.27*	---			
6. Masculinity-femininity	49.16	21.15	.15	.22	.22	.03	-.00	---		
7. Long-term orientation	49.89	22.48	.20	.12	.01	-.07	.17	.05	---	
8. Women NOC members (%)	.20	.12	-.10	.09	-.47**	-.45**	.37**	-.35**	-.05	---

**Note.**  $|r| \geq .20$ ,  $*p < .05$ .  $**p < .01$ . NOC = National Olympic Committee. % = percent. Higher cultural value scores are reflective of greater power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, masculinity, and long-term orientation, respectively.

**Table 2 Summary of Cultural Values and NOC Gender Equity, by Country**

Country	Power distance	Uncertainty avoidance	Individualism -Collectivism	Masculinity-Femininity	Long-term orientation	NOC gender diversity
Argentina	49	46	56	86	20	9.09
Australia	38	90	61	51	21	38.46
Austria	11	55	79	70	60	23.08
Bangladesh	80	20	55	60	47	5.88
Belgium	65	75	54	94	82	18.75
Brazil	69	38	49	76	44	16.67
Bulgaria	70	30	40	85	69	12.5
Canada	39	80	52	48	36	36.84
Chile	63	23	28	86	31	25
China	80	20	66	30	87	25.81
Colombia	67	13	64	80	13	8.33
Croatia	73	33	40	80	58	21.05

**Table 2 (Continued)**

Country	Power distance	Uncertainty avoidance	Individualism -Collectivism	Masculinity-Femininity	Long-term orientation	NOC gender diversity
Czech Republic	57	58	57	74	70	0
Denmark	18	74	16	23	35	44.44
El Salvador	66	19	40	94	20	12.5
Estonia	40	60	30	60	82	30
Finland	33	63	26	59	38	36.36
France	68	71	43	86	63	14.29
Germany	35	67	66	65	83	20
Great Britain	35	89	66	35	51	25
Greece	60	35	57	112	45	0
Hong Kong, China	68	25	57	29	61	14.29
Hungary	46	80	88	82	58	14.29
India	77	48	56	40	51	3.57

**Table 2 (Continued)**

Country	Power distance	Uncertainty avoidance	Individualism -Collectivism	Masculinity- Femininity	Long-term orientation	NOC gender diversity
Italy	50	76	70	75	61	15
Japan	54	46	95	92	88	6.25
Latvia	44	70	9	63	69	43.75
Lithuania	42	60	19	65	82	25
Luxembourg	40	60	50	70	64	18.18
Malta	56	59	47	96	47	15.38
Mexico	81	30	69	82	24	25
Morocco	70	46	53	68	14	10
Netherlands	38	80	14	53	67	11.11
New Zealand	22	79	58	49	33	40
Norway	31	69	8	50	35	40
Pakistan	55	14	50	70	50	19.23



**Table 2 (Continued)**

Country	Power distance	Uncertainty avoidance	Individualism -Collectivism	Masculinity-Femininity	Long-term orientation	NOC gender diversity
Peru	64	16	42	87	25	30.77
Philippines	94	32	64	44	27	23.08
Poland	68	60	64	93	38	13.33
Portugal	63	27	31	104	28	21.43
Republic of Korea	60	18	39	85	100	22.73
Romania	90	30	42	90	52	31.58
Russia	93	39	36	95	81	12
Serbia	86	25	43	92	52	11.76
Singapore	74	20	48	8	72	27.78
Slovakia	104	52	110	51	77	9.09
Slovenia	71	27	19	88	49	13.64
Spain	57	51	42	86	48	16.67

**Table 2 (Continued)**

Country	Power distance	Uncertainty avoidance	Individualism -Collectivism	Masculinity-Femininity	Long-term orientation	NOC gender diversity
Swaziland	34	68	70	58	74	27.27
Sweden	31	71	5	29	53	38.46
Thailand	64	20	34	64	32	4.17
Trinidad and Tobago	47	16	58	55	13	18.18
Turkey	66	37	45	85	46	33.33
United States of America	40	91	62	46	26	32.14
Uruguay	61	36	38	100	26	0
Venezuela	81	12	73	76	16	18.18

**Note.** NOC = National Olympic Committee. NOC gender diversity = percent.

**Table 3 Results of Hierarchical Regression Analysis Estimating Gender Equity on NOC Boards**

Variables	Model 1		Model 2	
Number of NOC members	-.12	(.002)	-.02	(.002)
Number 2016 Olympians	.12	(.001)	.05	(.001)
Power distance			-.22+	(.001)
Uncertainty avoidance			-.35**	(.001)
Individualism-Collectivism			.12	(.001)
Masculinity-Femininity			-.29**	(.001)
Long-term orientation			-.09	(.001)
$R^2$	.02		.42	
$\Delta R^2$	-.01		.33	
$F$	.7		9.05***	

**Note.** + $p < .10$ . \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ . NOC = National Olympic Committee.

Robust standard errors in parentheses.  $N = 56$ .

**Table 4 An Overview of Variables and Descriptive Statistics**

Variables	Description	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min.	Max.
Women NOC members	Percent of women NOC members	121	19.65	11.05	0	50
NOC members	Total number of NOC members	121	13.24	6.81	4	38
2016 Olympians	Total number of 2016 Olympians	207	55.79	98.15	1	567
Logged population size	Total population in each country	188	6.71	.96	3.99	9.12
Americas	Dummy for continent (1 = yes, 0 = otherwise)	233	21.88	---	0	1
Asia	Dummy for continent (1 = yes, 0 = otherwise)	233	15.02	---	0	1

**Table 4 (Continued)**

Variables	Description	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min.	Max.
Europe	Dummy for continent (1 = yes, 0 = otherwise)	233	21.88	---	0	1
Middle East/North Africa	Dummy for continent (1 = yes, 0 = otherwise)	233	9.01	---	0	1
Pacific	Dummy for continent (1 = yes, 0 = otherwise)	233	9.44	---	0	1
sub-Saharan Africa	Dummy for continent (1 = yes, 0 = otherwise)	233	21.45	---	0	1
GDP per capita	Overall economic development, constant US\$	204	15,499.23	23,209.61	234.23	150,725.2
Democracy	Overall democracy index, scores on a 0-10 scale	167	5.68	2.37	.93	9.83

**Table 4 (Continued)**

Variables	Description	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min.	Max.
Buddhism	Percent of Buddhist adherents	188	3.68	15.03	0	96.69
Catholicism	Percent of Catholic adherents	188	27.65	30.66	0	95.99
Hinduism	Percent of Hinduism adherents	188	2.31	10.03	0	81.34
Islam	Percent of Muslim adherents	188	25.32	36.38	0	99.55
Judaism	Percent of Jewish adherents	188	.45	5.53	0	73.09
Protestantism	Percent of Protestant adherents	188	14.89	20.40	0	95.99

**Table 4 (Continued)**

Variables	Description	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min.	Max.
Religious adherents	Percent of all religious adherents	188	91.44	12.40	21.46	99.99
Unaffiliated population	Percentage of religiously unaffiliated population	188	7.20	11.73	0	75.74

**Note.** NOC = National Olympic Committee. GDP = gross domestic product. *N* = Number of countries. *M* = mean. *SD* = standard deviation. Min = minimum. Max = maximum.

**Table 5 Bivariate Correlation Coefficients for the Proportion of Women on NOC Boards and Other Variables**

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. % women NOC members	---								
2. NOC members	-.143	---							
3. 2016 Olympians	.051	.344**	---						
4. Log_Population	-.108	.484**	.474**	---					
5. Americas	.011	-.193*	.040	-.084	---				
6. Asia	-.235**	.272**	-.012	.234**	-.222**	---			
7. Europe	.087	.119	.285**	-.030	-.280**	-.222**	---		
8. Middle East/North Africa	-.274**	.126	-.091	.097	-.166*	-.132*	-.166*	---	
9. Pacific	.234**	-.240**	-.024	-.365**	-.170**	-.135*	-.170**	-.101	---
10. sub-Saharan Africa	.068	-.062	-.224**	.053	-.276**	-.219**	-.276**	-.164*	-.168**
11. Log_GDP per capita	.226*	-.003	.384**	-.199**	.168*	-.148*	.468**	.003	-.007
12. Democracy	.324**	-.067	.387**	-.054	.229**	-.154*	.484**	-.334**	.115
13. Buddhism	-.161	.122	-.048	.100	-.109	.541**	-.139	-.076	-.057



**Table 5 (Continued)**

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
14. Catholicism	.071	-.185	.076	-.171*	.391**	-.332**	.135	-.271**	-.014
15. Hinduism	-.139	.219*	-.038	.079	.004	.201**	-.131	.021	.002
16. Islam	-.244**	.139	-.210**	.204**	-.307**	.171*	-.211**	.536**	-.183*
17. Judaism	.167	.095	.012	.017	-.026	-.036	-.035	.214**	-.021
18. Protestantism	.409**	-.295**	-.010	-.312**	.202**	-.221**	-.068	-.240**	.416**
19. Religious adherents	-.099	-.029	-.405**	-.050	-.080	.009	-.368**	.170*	.017
20. Unaffiliated population	.096	.060	.438**	.103	.044	.013	.361**	-.180*	-.017

**Table 5 (Continued)**

Variables	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
10. sub-Saharan Africa	---								
11. Log_GDP per capita	-.525	---							
12. Democracy	-.329**	.609**	---						
13. Buddhism	-.136	-.105	-.034	---					
14. Catholicism	-.001	.252**	.362**	-.199**	---				
15. Hinduism	-.059	-.054	.037	.047	-.138	---			
16. Islam	.073	-.261**	-.554**	-.121	-.516**	-.036	---		
17. Judaism	-.046	.102	.062	-.020	-.057	-.019	-.017	---	
18. Protestantism	.001	.069	.332**	-.148*	-.012	-.067	-.418**	-.052	---
19. Religious adherents	.309**	-.443**	-.370**	.032	-.034	.102	.344**	.012	-.029
20. Unaffiliated population	-.282**	.418**	.353**	-.013	.019	-.101	-.334**	-.007	-.003

**Table 5 (Continued)**

Variables	19	20
19. Religious adherents	---	
20. Unaffiliated population	-.984**	---

**Note.** NOC = National Olympic Committee. % = percent. GDP = gross domestic product. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

**Table 6 Summary of Regions, Democracy Category and Index, Religions, GDP per capita, and the Proportion of Women on NOC Boards, by Country**

Country	Region	Women on NOC boards (%)	Democracy category	Democracy index
Afghanistan	Asia	20.00	Authoritarian regime	2.40
Algeria	Middle East/North Africa	12.50	Authoritarian regime	3.61
Angola	sub-Saharan Africa	35.71	Authoritarian regime	3.04
Argentina	Americas	9.09	Flawed democracy	7.16
Armenia	Asia	7.14	Hybrid regime	4.14
Australia	Pacific	38.46	Full democracy	9.58
Austria	Europe	23.08	Full democracy	8.67
Azerbaijan	Europe	20.00	Authoritarian regime	3.11
Bahrain	Middle East/North Africa	14.29	Authoritarian regime	3.67
Bangladesh*	Asia	5.88	Flawed democracy	6.23
Belarus	Europe	18.75	Authoritarian regime	3.34

**Table 6 (Continued)**

Country	Region	Women on NOC boards (%)	Democracy category	Democracy index
Belgium	Europe	18.75	Full democracy	8.68
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Europe	15.38	Hybrid regime	5.82
Brazil	Americas	16.67	Flawed democracy	7.65
Bulgaria	Europe	12.50	Flawed democracy	7.02
Cameroon	sub-Saharan Africa	6.67	Authoritarian regime	3.57
Canada	Americas	36.84	Full democracy	9.41
Chile*	Americas	25.00	Full democracy	8.61
China	Asia	25.81	Authoritarian regime	2.95
Colombia	Americas	8.33	Flawed democracy	7.22
Costa Rica	Americas	30.00	Full democracy	8.52
Croatia	Europe	21.05	Flawed democracy	7.12
Czech Republic	Europe	0	Full democracy	8.57

**Table 6 (Continued)**

Country	Region	Women on NOC boards (%)	Democracy category	Democracy index
Denmark	Europe	44.44	Full democracy	9.68
Ecuador	Americas	21.43	Hybrid regime	5.97
Egypt	Middle East/North Africa	0	Authoritarian regime	3.14
El Salvador	Americas	12.50	Flawed democracy	7.12
Estonia*	Europe	30.00	Full democracy	8.35
Fiji	Pacific	37.50	Authoritarian regime	3.69
Finland	Europe	36.36	Full democracy	9.68
France*	Europe	14.29	Full democracy	8.19
Germany	Europe	20.00	Full democracy	8.67
Greece*	Europe	0	Full democracy	8.23
Guatemala	Americas	20.00	Flawed democracy	6.73
Honduras*	Americas	10.00	Flawed democracy	6.09

**Table 6 (Continued)**

Country	Region	Women on NOC boards (%)	Democracy category	Democracy index
Hungary	Europe	14.29	Flawed democracy	7.77
Iceland	Europe	35.71	Full democracy	9.84
India	Asia	3.57	Flawed democracy	7.99
Iraq	Middle East/North Africa	10.00	Authoritarian regime	3.47
Italy*	Europe	15.00	Full democracy	8.26
Jamaica	Americas	20.00	Flawed democracy	7.76
Jordan	Middle East/North Africa	5.56	Authoritarian regime	3.85
Laos	Asia	0	Authoritarian regime	2.35
Latvia	Europe	43.75	Flawed democracy	7.42
Lesotho†	sub-Saharan Africa	23.08	Hybrid regime	6.00
Lithuania	Europe	25.00	Flawed democracy	7.67
Luxembourg	Europe	18.18	Full democracy	9.44

**Table 6 (Continued)**

Country	Region	Women on NOC boards (%)	Democracy category	Democracy index
Malawi*	sub-Saharan Africa	40.00	Flawed democracy	6.06
Malta	Europe	15.38	Full democracy	8.96
Mauritius	sub-Saharan Africa	25.00	Full democracy	8.81
Mexico	Americas	25.00	Flawed democracy	7.14
Moldova	Europe	27.27	Flawed democracy	6.38
Montenegro	Europe	18.75	Flawed democracy	6.45
Morocco*	Middle East/North Africa	10.00	Hybrid regime	4.32
Nepal	Asia	5.88	Hybrid regime	4.34
Netherlands	Europe	11.11	Full democracy	9.01
New Zealand	Pacific	40.00	Full democracy	9.36
Nigeria	sub-Saharan Africa	0	Authoritarian regime	3.50
Norway	Europe	40.00	Full democracy	9.76



**Table 6 (Continued)**

Country	Region	Women on NOC boards (%)	Democracy category	Democracy index
Pakistan	Asia	19.23	Hybrid regime	5.14
Papua New Guinea	Pacific	50.00	Flawed democracy	7.06
Peru	Americas	30.77	Flawed democracy	6.75
Philippines	Asia	23.08	Flawed democracy	6.40
Poland	Europe	13.33	Flawed democracy	7.29
Portugal	Europe	21.43	Full democracy	8.50
Republic of Korea	Asia	22.73	Full democracy	8.34
Romania	Europe	31.58	Flawed democracy	7.00
Russia	Europe	12.00	Hybrid regime	4.08
Rwanda	sub-Saharan Africa	28.57	Authoritarian regime	3.65
Senegal	sub-Saharan Africa	23.08	Hybrid regime	5.62
Serbia	Europe	11.76	Flawed democracy	6.39

**Table 6 (Continued)**

Country	Region	Women on NOC boards (%)	Democracy category	Democracy index
Singapore*	Asia	27.78	Flawed democracy	6.67
Slovakia	Europe	9.09	Flawed democracy	7.80
Slovenia	Europe	13.64	Flawed democracy	7.95
South Africa	sub-Saharan Africa	23.08	Flawed democracy	7.94
Spain	Europe	16.67	Full democracy	8.68
Swaziland	sub-Saharan Africa	27.27	Authoritarian regime	3.07
Sweden	Europe	38.46	Full democracy	9.65
Switzerland	Europe	28.57	Full democracy	9.42
Thailand	Asia	4.17	Flawed democracy	6.80
Trinidad and Tobago	Americas	18.18	Flawed democracy	7.42
Turkey*	Europe	33.33	Flawed democracy	6.19
Ukraine	Europe	10.34	Flawed democracy	6.62

**Table 6 (Continued)**

Country	Region	Women on NOC boards (%)	Democracy category	Democracy index
United Arab Emirates	Middle East/North Africa	0	Authoritarian regime	2.88
United Kingdom	Europe	25.00	Full democracy	8.67
United States of America	Americas	32.14	Full democracy	8.42
Uruguay	Americas	0	Full democracy	9.02
Venezuela	Americas	18.18	Hybrid regime	5.09
Zimbabwe	sub-Saharan Africa	10.00	Authoritarian regime	2.47

**Table 6 (Continued)**

Country	BUD	CAT	HIN	ISL	JEW	PRO
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Afghanistan	0.01	0	0.02	99.55	0	0.02
Algeria	0	0	0	98.99	0	0
Angola	0.01	61.99	0	1.03	0	22.99
Argentina	0.01	75.00	0.01	1.51	0.68	9.99
Armenia	0	0	0	0.03	0.01	0
Australia	2.47	20.28	0.84	2.22	0.45	9.42
Austria	0	63.99	0	4.75	0.09	5.99
Azerbaijan	0	0	0	94.99	0.08	0.03
Bahrain	0	2.65	0	89.59	0	1.11
Bangladesh*	0.59	0.05	8.99	89.69	0	0.09
Belarus	0	7.06	0	0.20	0.12	1.17
Belgium	0.29	62.49	0.06	4.99	0.27	0.99
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0	14.99	0	44.99	0.02	0.99
Brazil	0.12	59.59	0.01	0.01	0.05	26.79
Bulgaria	0	0.84	0	12.88	0.02	0.55
Cameroon	0.01	26.01	0	21.40	0	23.50
Canada	1.94	42.02	0.79	1.94	0.98	22.98
Chile*	0.01	75.85	0	0.02	0.12	10.60
China	12.59	0.79	0.01	2.49	0	3.79

**Table 6 (Continued)**

Country	BUD	CAT	HIN	ISL	JEW	PRO
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Colombia	0.03	82.00	0.01	0.05	0.01	15.00
Costa Rica	0.02	78.00	0.01	0	0.08	10.18
Croatia	0	86.28	0	1.46	0.01	0.34
Czech Republic	0	19.72	0	0.01	0.06	1.65
Denmark	0.08	0.68	0.01	4.00	0.03	80.90
Ecuador	0.05	86.99	0	0.01	0.01	1.99
Egypt	0	0.12	0	86.43	0	1.49
El Salvador	0	58.49	0	0.02	0.01	27.59
Estonia*	0.10	0.41	0.02	0.14	0.12	11.14
Fiji	0	12.21	27.99	5.99	0	48.87
Finland	0.09	0	0	0.45	0.02	78.29
France*	1.03	64.49	0.08	7.89	0.76	1.99
Germany	0.29	31.45	0.11	4.89	0.14	30.96
Greece*	0	0.45	0	2.40	0.04	0.72
Guatemala	0	54.99	0	0.01	0.01	39.99
Honduras*	0	56.99	0	0.01	0.01	31.99
Hungary	0	47.24	0	0.04	0.11	18.17
Iceland	0.34	3.04	0	0.50	0	86.79
India	0.77	0.74	80.45	13.40	0	0.72

**Table 6 (Continued)**

Country	BUD	CAT	HIN	ISL	JEW	PRO
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Iraq	0	0.83	0	95.00	0	0
Italy*	0.01	79.12	0.01	1.15	0.06	0
Jamaica	0.01	2.02	0.55	0.05	0.01	60.51
Jordan	0	0.49	0	96.99	0	0
Laos	67.73	0.44	0	0.99	0	1.03
Latvia	0.01	24.15	0.00	0.01	0.26	35.08
Lesotho†	0	58.26	0.05	0.07	0	23.69
Lithuania	0	77.23	0	0.08	0.18	0.82
Luxembourg	0	87.99	0	2.00	0.11	1.68
Malawi*	0	25.02	0.22	14.59	0.01	31.00
Malta	0	95.99	0	0.99	0.01	0.99
Mauritius	0.17	26.29	48.59	17.31	0	2.10
Mexico	0	82.71	0	0.01	0.06	14.14
Moldova	0	2.68	0	3.60	0.10	2.80
Montenegro	0.01	3.43	0	19.10	0	0.19
Morocco*	0	0	0	98.91	0.01	0
Nepal	9.04	0.01	81.34	4.38	0	0.15
Netherlands	1.21	26.99	0.64	5.79	0.15	16.99
New Zealand	2.10	15.43	1.98	1.12	0.10	15.86

**Table 6 (Continued)**

Country	BUD	CAT	HIN	ISL	JEW	PRO
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Nigeria	0.01	10.97	0	50.79	0	11.97
Norway	0.27	1.37	0.10	2.03	0.01	80.63
Pakistan	0.05	0.45	2.19	95.69	0	0.74
Papua New Guinea	0.04	26.99	0	0.02	0.01	59.99
Peru	0.03	81.29	0	0.02	0.01	12.49
Philippines	0.11	83.03	0	5.55	0	8.12
Poland	0.01	87.75	0	0.01	0.01	0.38
Portugal	0.55	82.49	0.06	0.85	0.02	0.79
Republic of Korea	22.55	10.69	0	0.14	0	17.89
Romania	0	4.56	0	0.39	0.04	6.15
Russia	0	0.77	0	11.57	0.13	1.47
Rwanda	0	56.49	0.01	4.59	0	25.99
Senegal	0.01	3.31	0	93.89	0	0.17
Serbia	0	4.96	0	3.10	0.01	0.99
Singapore*	33.03	7.00	5.04	14.22	0.01	5.21
Slovakia	0	62.02	0	0.01	0.04	8.71
Slovenia	0	63.99	0	2.99	0.01	0.99
South Africa	0.31	7.09	1.49	1.68	0.16	24.00
Spain	0.02	75.96	0	3.03	0.02	2.60

**Table 6 (Continued)**

Country	BUD	CAT	HIN	ISL	JEW	PRO
	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Swaziland	0	25.00	0.15	0.65	0	28.90
Sweden	0	1.99	0	5.99	0.21	67.99
Switzerland	0.32	47.41	0.31	4.11	0.22	28.03
Thailand	86.99	0.25	0.08	9.99	0	0.28
Trinidad and Tobago	0	21.89	18.39	5.03	0	27.97
Turkey*	0	0.04	0	98.58	0.01	0.08
Ukraine	0.09	0.39	0	0.99	0.14	1.89
United Arab Emirates	0.35	2.96	22.24	67.47	0	0
United Kingdom	0.39	7.08	1.31	4.34	0.42	7.27
United States of America	1.09	25.06	0.57	0.90	1.89	38.29
Uruguay	0	47.09	0	0.03	0.29	10.99
Venezuela	0.04	80.00	0	0.10	0.05	15.00
Zimbabwe	0.01	18.94	0.14	1.07	0.09	19.69



**Table 6 (Continued)**

Country	Religious adherents (%)	Unaffiliated population (%)	Total population (k)	GDP per capita (\$)
Afghanistan	99.65	0.20	27,000	543.3
Algeria	99.79	0	35,666	4,480.8
Angola	97.76	1.78	19,114	3,587.8
Argentina	87.45	11.99	40,400	10,386.0
Armenia	96.44	3.45	3,246	3,218.3
Australia	68.52	31.01	21,400	52,022.1
Austria	77.84	15.42	8,390	46,858.0
Azerbaijan	97.50	1.93	9,048	5,842.8
Bahrain	99.39	0	1,235	20,722.1
Bangladesh*	99.87	0.07	147,291	781.1
Belarus	57.16	41.09	9,491	6,029.4
Belgium	74.87	19.19	10,876	44,141.9
Bosnia and Herzegovina	97.02	2.92	3,824	4,635.5
Brazil	90.86	8.50	190,756	11,286.2
Bulgaria	95.18	4.72	7,544	6,809.9
Cameroon	99.09	0.72	19,930	1,286.5
Canada	83.46	16.43	34,500	47,448.0
Chile*	92.33	5.99	17,077	12,808.0

**Table 6 (Continued)**

Country	Religious adherents (%)	Unaffiliated population (%)	Total population (k)	GDP per capita (\$)
China	67.23	32.49	1,345,174	4,550.4
Colombia	98.08	1.50	46,295	6,336.7
Costa Rica	89.15	10.00	4,450	8,141.9
Croatia	92.84	5.65	4,424	13,923.6
Czech Republic	21.46	75.74	10,535	19,808.1
Denmark	85.87	10.10	5,540	58,041.4
Ecuador	90.62	8.49	14,209	4,633.5
Egypt	98.55	1.00	81,278	2,644.8
El Salvador	86.51	11.09	7,212	2,983.2
Estonia*	29.16	69.03	1,340	14,790.8
Fiji	98.90	1.05	859	3,652.5
Finland	80.07	16.60	5,364	46,460.0
France*	80.50	19.14	62,723	40,638.3
Germany	76.28	22.99	81,699	41,531.9
Greece*	96.83	2.60	11,319	26,917.8
Guatemala	95.04	4.59	13,824	2,898.9
Honduras*	89.00	9.99	8,002	1,904.3
Hungary	67.52	27.15	9,900	13,113.5

**Table 6 (Continued)**

Country	Religious adherents (%)	Unaffiliated population (%)	Total population (k)	GDP per capita (\$)
Iceland	92.96	3.25	317	43,024.9
India	99.64	0.31	1,195,000	1,357.5
Iraq	96.88	1.10	31,800	4,657.2
Italy*	80.77	18.68	60,483	36,000.5
Jamaica	69.45	19.93	2,869	4,704.0
Jordan	99.99	0	6,112	3,690.1
Laos	98.82	1.10	6,141	1,140.6
Latvia	79.32	20.06	2,243	11,348.4
Lesotho†	99.38	0.27	2,095	1,137.2
Lithuania	83.22	15.20	3,321	11,957.1
Luxembourg	93.50	4.96	506	104,965.0
Malawi*	99.34	0.60	14,461	478.6
Malta	98.33	1.50	413	21,107.4
Mauritius	99.25	0.71	1,281	8,000.3
Mexico	96.98	2.71	112,337	9,271.4
Moldova	85.93	14.03	3,562	2,437.5
Montenegro	95.05	4.51	630	6,682.2
Morocco*	99.92	0	31,776	2,839.9

**Table 6 (Continued)**

Country	Religious adherents (%)	Unaffiliated population (%)	Total population (k)	GDP per capita (\$)
Nepal	99.76	0.18	26,495	592.4
Netherlands	65.92	33.99	16,613	50,950.0
New Zealand	60.76	39.19	4,367	33,700.1
Nigeria	99.51	0.31	154,110	2,292.4
Norway	86.48	11.05	4,885	87,693.8
Pakistan	99.83	0.09	168,447	987.4
Papua New Guinea	99.12	0.52	6,887	1,949.3
Peru	94.06	3.99	29,403	5,082.3
Philippines	98.82	0.93	92,098	2,217.4
Poland	90.47	7.99	38,183	12,599.5
Portugal	87.25	6.91	10,643	22,498.7
Republic of Korea	53.22	45.42	48,875	23,087.2
Romania	97.95	1.63	21,433	8,209.9
Russia	85.93	14.04	142,400	10,675.0
Rwanda	98.31	0.34	10,344	612.3
Senegal	99.58	0.16	12,084	1,280.2
Serbia	94.32	5.27	7,293	5,735.4
Singapore*	88.07	11.78	5,112	47,237.0

**Table 6 (Continued)**

Country	Religious adherents (%)	Unaffiliated population (%)	Total population (k)	GDP per capita (\$)
Slovakia	75.55	13.44	5,434	16,727.3
Slovenia	70.00	23.99	2,054	23,509.5
South Africa	92.74	6.39	50,022	7,328.6
Spain	83.65	15.99	46,076	30,502.7
Swaziland	98.49	1.18	1,221	7,514.6
Sweden	82.27	15.99	9,379	52,869.0
Switzerland	85.58	13.41	7,825	74,605.7
Thailand	98.63	0.99	67,333	5,076.3
Trinidad and Tobago	79.31	13.45	1,305	16,683.4
Turkey*	99.01	0.49	76,788	10,672.4
Ukraine	86.43	13.47	46,005	2,965.1
United Arab Emirates	98.22	1.36	6,237	33,893.3
United Kingdom	70.33	26.16	62,207	39,435.8
United States of America	80.74	19.00	312,750	48,467.5
Uruguay	82.28	17.19	3,357	11,992.0
Venezuela	95.44	4.39	28,834	13,825.4
Zimbabwe	96.94	2.56	12,165	948.3

**Note.** Data sources are presented in alphabetical order by country. NOC = National Olympic Committee. BUD = Buddhist adherents. CAT = Catholic adherents. HIN = Hindu adherents. ISL = Muslim adherents. JEW = Jewish adherents. PRO = Protestant adherents. GDP = gross domestic product. % = percent. k = a thousand. \$ = constant US dollars. Higher values correspond to a greater proportion of women on NOC boards, a higher income, a higher level of democracy, and a greater percentage of adherents and non-religious adherents. Democracy index was recalculated using four dimensions without the political participation dimension, on a 0-10 scale, and classified political systems of a country in accordance with the same criteria as the EIU. However, the reclassification yielded the following discrepancies. After aggregating four dimensions into a new composite democracy score: \*Morocco was the only country ungraded from “authoritarian regime” to “hybrid regime”; Bangladesh, Honduras, Malawi, Singapore, and Turkey were upgraded from “hybrid regime” to “flawed democracy”; and Chile, Estonia, France, Greece, and Italy shifted “flawed democracy” to “full democracy.” In contrast, †Lesotho was the only country downgraded from “flawed democracy” to “hybrid regime.” These changes may illustrate that excluding the dimension of political participation weakens maintaining the overall balance across different sub-dimensions of democracy for these countries except for Lesotho.

**Table 7 Results of OLS Regression Models Estimating the Proportion of Women on NOC Boards (Listwise  $n = 89$ )**

Variables	Proportion of Women on NOC boards					
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	<i>B</i>	SE	<i>B</i>	SE	<i>B</i>	SE
Constant	.370	.162	-.052	.258	.210	.172
NOC members	.001	.001	-.001	.002	.001	.001
2016 Olympians	.001	.001	-.001	.001	.001	.001
Logged population size	-.025	.024	.001	.028	-.016	.024
Americas†	REF		REF		REF	
Asia†	-.042	.046	-.029	.041	-.023	.043
Europe†	.006	.034	-.001	.033	.004	.034
Middle East/North Africa†	-.117**	.034	-.121	.034	-.071	.036
Pacific†	.199**	.046	.217	.049	.208**	.045
sub-Saharan Africa†	.026	.042	.055	.044	.055	.040
Logged GDP per capita			.065*	.028		
Democracy					.013*	.006
$R^2$	.293		.333		.325	
$\Delta R^2$			.040*		.032*	
$F$	12.04**		10.48**		11.17**	

**Table 7 (Continued)**

Variables	Proportion of Women on NOC boards					
	Model 4		Model 5		Model 6	
	<i>B</i>	SE	<i>B</i>	SE	<i>B</i>	SE
Constant	.168	.144	.385*	.171	-.014	.230
NOC members	.001	.001	.001	.001	.001	.001
2016 Olympians	-.001	.001	.001	.001	-.001	.001
Logged population size	-.014	.021	-.027	.025	-.003	.025
Americas†	REF		REF		REF	
Asia†	.060	.048	-.040	.047	.062	.047
Europe†	.047	.030	.008	.035	.033	.034
Middle East/North Africa†	-.063	.053	-.119**	.034	-.070	.056
Pacific†	.217**	.034	.200**	.046	.220**	.030
sub-Saharan Africa†	.055	.045	.024	.043	.068	.044
Logged GDP per capita					.028	.037
Democracy					.002	.007
Buddhism	-.095	.075			-.115	.075
Catholicism	.059	.038			.043	.051
Hinduism	-.096	.067			-.106	.070
Islam	.061	.055			.060	.060
Judaism	7.549	4.026			6.804	3.939
Protestantism	.304**	.047			.278**	.065



**Table 7 (Continued)**

Variables	Proportion of Women on NOC boards					
	Model 4		Model 5		Model 6	
	<i>B</i>	SE	<i>B</i>	SE	<i>B</i>	SE
Non-religion			-.036	.122	-.004	.130
$R^2$	.534		.294		.544	
$\Delta R^2$	.241**		.001		.251**	
$F$	16.01**		10.69**		25.62**	

**Note.** OLS = ordinary least squares. NOC = National Olympic Committee. GDP = gross domestic product. SE = robust standard errors. REF = reference category. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . †For continent, the dummy variable is based on six categories (0 = Americas as the baseline category; 1 = Asia; 2 = Europe; 3 = Middle East and North Africa; 4 = the Pacific region; and 5 = sub-Saharan Africa).

**Table 8 Participant Demographics**

Participant ID	Age	Affiliated organization	Occupational role	Tenure (approx.)
Participant 1	50s	MA	Upper-level	15
Participant 2	30s	MA	Middle- and senior-level	15
Participant 3	N/A	CI	Middle- and senior-level	20
Participant 4	60s	CI	Upper-level	10
Participant 5	40s	MA	Middle- and senior-level	20
Participant 6	50s	MA	Coaching position	30
Participant 7	60s	MA	Middle- and senior-level	20
Participant 8	40s	MA	Middle- and senior-level	15
Participant 9	50s	MA	Middle- and senior-level	20
Participant 10	20s	CI	Middle- and senior-level	5
Participant 11	40s	MA	Upper-level	20
Participant 12	30s	MA	Upper-level	5
Participant 13	40s	MA	Coaching position	10
Participant 14	30s	CI	Upper-level	10
Participant 15	40s	CI	Middle- and senior-level	10
Participant 16	40s	CI	Middle- and senior-level	10

**Note.** ID = identification. MA = member association. CI = continental or international confederation. N/A = not available. Approx. = approximate. Tenure = tenure in football governing bodies.

**Table 9 Interview Questions**

Number	Interview questions
1	Why do participants think FIFA started the leadership development
2	program?
3	Why do participants think FIFA targeted women in this process?
4	Why do participants think FIFA did not previously prioritize women in leadership development?
5	What did the training consist of?
6	Did gender play a role in the content of the training?
7	What did participants learn from the training?
	What have been the career outcomes of participants?

**Table 10 Dimensions, Themes, Subthemes, and Illustrative Quotation**

Dimension	Theme	Subtheme	Illustrative quotation
Antecedents of FIFA's gender initiatives	General job availability		I think it [FIFA's FLDP] is a result that is reflective of the general business market.
	Growing number of women in football	Increase in women's participation	Coming of the program, the timing of it [FLDP] gives more pushes with the women's World Cup (WWC) that was hosted in 2015 in Canada...when they [FIFA] have probably thought...'we [FIFA] have to have more women inclusion.' and that is how they [FIFA] ended up putting it on FIFA's agenda.  To have more women leaders [emphasis added] develop the game of football...more girls and women participate in football.

**Table 10 (Continued)**

Dimension	Theme	Subtheme	Illustrative quotation
		Underrepresentation of women in leadership	Women are statistically and qualitatively underrepresented not only in coaching positions but in any positions in football. There is a lack of women in leadership role in football, not a role, just a lack of <i>women leaders</i> [emphasis added] in football.
	Social pressure		There is a worldwide movement to involve women and a social appeal around the role of women in terms of how women contribute more to the football system. FIFA is a big institution, a strong brand, which cannot be out of such kinds of change.

**Table 10 (Continued)**

Dimension	Theme	Subtheme	Illustrative quotation
Glass cliff and FIFA's gender initiatives	Divergent perceptions of glass cliff	Perception of the glass cliff	<p>I believe that they [FIFA]...started the development of this program [FLDP] a long before the corruption issues and scandal happened to FIFA. So, I do not think that there is a linkage since...the timing of the program was incidental in that regard.</p> <p>Yes, it really helps. Female leadership at FIFA might help to develop their image and reputation rebuilding, because...female leadership is growing member associations [MAs], and they [female leaders] are fighting against corruption. That is what I have in my assumption. Yes, this explains the question, because FIFA helped Fatma [FIFA Secretary General], it helps gender discrimination.</p>
		Enduring crisis	<p>There would be cultural differences, most women experience same problems and challenges to work in the upper-level positions and try to outperform in order to bring changes.</p>

**Table 10 (Continued)**

Dimension	Theme	Subtheme	Illustrative quotation
		Leadership characteristics for precarious situations	<p>The leadership characteristics should be the same regardless of gender.</p> <p>Knowledge of rules and regulations of Football, Statutes of FIFA, experience in football, honesty, transparency, and accountability.</p>
	Gender bias	Sociocultural context	<p>Football is all politics and that [politics] has been a huge barrier.</p> <p>In terms of women in decision-making, there are differences in not only culture and education, but also football knowledge across different countries as well as continental context.</p> <p>There could be different types of gender discrimination, which are visible and invisible...But the biggest problem is that many men do not want that women lead the projects</p>

**Table 10 (Continued)**

Dimension	Theme	Subtheme	Illustrative quotation
		Individual context	<p data-bbox="957 391 1850 415">It is so difficult for African women to become a leader.</p> <p data-bbox="957 464 1850 854">Women in MAs [member associations] as well as other confederations need to struggle themselves to do physically and mentally arduous tasks as do men. For example, you would go as many business trips as male administrators go and try to drive long distance. This is because, I believe that there is no a specific ‘male or female’ task in a business and social life.</p>