

Gender dynamics on boards of National Sport Organisations in Australia

Johanna A. Adriaanse

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degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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To my mother, Tineke Adriaanse-Schotman

DECLARATION

I, Johanna Adriaanse, declare that the work contained in this thesis has not been submitted for a degree at any other institution and that the thesis is the original work of the candidate except where sources are acknowledged.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Adriaanse', is written on a light blue rectangular background.

Date: 27 August 2012

SYNOPSIS

Despite stunning progress on the sport field in the past 100 years, women's representation *off* the field remains a serious challenge. While sport participation rates for women have grown exponentially, data on the Sydney Scoreboard indicate that women remain markedly under-represented on sport boards globally including in Australia. A significant body of research has emerged to explain women's under-representation in sport governance. The majority of studies have investigated the gender distribution of the board's composition and related issues such as factors that inhibit women's participation in sport governance. Few studies have examined the underlying gender dynamics on sport boards once women have gained a seat at the boardroom table, yet this line of investigation may disclose important reasons for the lack of gender equality on sport boards. The aim of the present study was to examine how gender works on boards of National Sport Organisations (NSOs) in Australia with the following research questions:

1. What are the gender relations that characterise the composition and operation of sport boards in NSOs in Australia in terms of a 'gender regimes' approach, that is, one that draws on categories associated with the gendered organisation of production, power/authority, emotional attachment and symbolic relations?
2. In view of the above, what are the implications or prospects for gender equality on these boards in terms of the barriers and opportunities created by the specific configurations of gender relations and dynamics?

The theoretical framework was based on the notions that organisations are intrinsically gendered (Acker, 1990) and that gender is actively created through social practice (Connell,

1987; West & Zimmerman, 1987). According to Connell, systematically determining where and how people ‘do gender’ in an organisational context depends on being able to identify a pattern of practices or ‘gender regime’ (2009, p. 72) associated with four main areas of social life. The four dimensions of a gender regime are: a) *gender division of labour*, that is, the way in which production or work are arranged on gender lines; b) *gender relations of power*, that is, the way in which control, authority, and force are exercised on gender lines, including organisational hierarchy, legal power and violence, both individual and collective; c) *emotion and human relations*, that is, the way attachment and antagonism among people and groups are organised along gender lines, including feelings of solidarity, prejudice, sexual attraction and repulsion and d) *gender culture and symbolism*, that is, ways in which gender identities are defined and gender is represented and understood, including prevailing beliefs and attitudes about gender. Such an approach permits the possibility of identifying how organisational processes, such as sport board governance, are gendered and whether the configurations identified reproduce gender inequalities or promote gender change.

The research design for the study comprised two stages. Stage one involved an audit of gender representation on 56 NSO boards. Stage two contained in-depth interviews with board directors and chief executive officers (n=26; 9 women and 17 men) from five NSOs, and collection of documents in relation to gender equality on boards of these organisations. In terms of data analysis I used both a deductive, theory-inspired, approach and an inductive, data- inspired, approach (Amis, 2005). To ensure credibility and legitimacy of the study, I produced a detailed audit trail which contains an explicit account of the research methodology used.

In relation to the research questions informing this study, I found that gender dynamics, understood from a ‘gender regimes’ perspective, were not uniform. The following three gender regimes were identified: *masculine hegemony*, *masculine hegemony in transition*, and *gender mainstreaming in progress*. The gender regime of *masculine hegemony*, found on boards in sports A, B and D, offered the least prospects for gender equality. These boards were deeply hierarchical in terms of gender: men were numerically dominant and held the most influential positions. Yet such a situation was not challenged by any of the directors, men or women. The male dominance that characterised board membership and executive positions was normalised and accepted. It was not identified and understood as a problem for which the board had any responsibility. Most members of these boards believed that the problem of gender inequality on sport boards lay well beyond the control of their organisations. Women were simply not putting themselves forward for board membership or did not have the appropriate qualifications and experience to participate.

By contrast, the gender regime of *masculine hegemony in transition*, found on sport board C, demonstrated a more dynamic pattern of gender relations with prospects for gender equality more positive than the previous regime. Here, a highly qualified and experienced woman occupied the chair and she was supported by an alliance of the male CEO and two board members, one of whom was a woman. Together they comprised a formidable foursome – two men and two women – who explicitly assumed responsibility to address gender equality in their sport, including in relation to board membership and practice. Nevertheless, this regime displayed some barriers to the advancement of gender equality, primarily through the presence of a masculine ethic in leadership, some marked hostility towards the woman chair, and generalised support for meritocracy over gender equality. To the extent that this regime was characterised by structures of practice that both maintained and contested masculine

dominance in sport governance, it expressed tensions in gender dynamics that rendered the board's regime status one of transition between acceptance of masculine dominance and opposition to it.

The gender regime of *gender mainstreaming in progress*, found on the board of sport E, was the most conducive for the advancement of gender equality. Here women occupied significant board positions, senior and influential male board members were supportive of the women on the board, the constitution included a gender quota clause that required a minimum of three directors of either gender, and friendly, collegial emotions characterised the working relationships of the directors. The regime was one in progress because, although the prospects were most positive compared to the two other regimes, gender equality had not yet been achieved. Men still occupied the most influential positions of president and CEO, and women's representation on the board (33%) had not reached gender parity yet.

The present study has contributed to knowledge and understanding of sport governance by disclosing how gender works on boards of NSOs. It has done so by applying a particular analytical tool – the 'gender regimes' approach – that enables the identification of the gendered structures of practice in operation in the organisation and management of sport boards. In yielding such configurations, the study has generated evidence-based findings for determining organisational practices on boards that advance or obstruct gender equality. It is in the light of these findings that the study proposes a number of recommendations for policy and practice related to sport governance and gender equality.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full description
AFL	Australian Football League
AOC	Australian Olympic Committee
ARU	Australian Rugby League
ASC	Australian Sports Commission
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CEDAW	UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
IF	International Sport Federation
IOC	International Olympic Committee
IWG	International Working Group on Women and Sport
NOC	National Olympic Committee
NRL	National Rugby League
NSO	National Sport Organisation
UNDAW	United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women
WSI	Womensport International

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Further, I wish to acknowledge members of the International Working Group on Women and Sport (IWG) and directors of WomenSport International (WSI) for their encouragement, advice and support. The topic of my thesis derived from working together with these colleagues and is highly relevant to the mission of the bodies they represent.

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Most PhD candidates encounter moments during their study when significant challenges occur and the continuation of the thesis is under threat. I wish to express my gratitude to Libby Darlison for providing a brilliant solution during the most challenging moment. I have very much appreciated her genuine interest in my thesis.

I believe in genes. My father completed a PhD in Mathematics and Science in 1960 and my mother did a degree in Science at the same university in Amsterdam where my father studied. In that era, my mother was one of only three women in the entire cohort at the Faculty of Mathematics and Science. My parents have given me the confidence that I could do this, almost anything, and I thank them for their confidence and unconditional love. I regret that my father will not be able to see the thesis but am delighted that my mother will share in the celebrations of completing this project.

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Prologue: The best time of my life

Defining moments...

The best time of my life as a ten-year old girl was between four and five in the afternoon at the school playground in Wormerveer, a small village near Amsterdam. School was out. At that time on most weekday afternoons I joined a group of boys to play football. We played until dusk when the headmaster, Mr. Bouman, was ready to go home and locked the gate of the playground. This was still the era when girls could not register and play as a member of a football club. My mother noticed that my shoes were worn out sooner than those of my five siblings including my two brothers but never expressed any real concern or surprise. One afternoon it happened. It was one of the older, bigger boys, Evert, tall and blond, who told me to go home. ‘What are you doing here? Why don’t you go home and play with your dolls?’ In response to my answer that I wanted to play football, he exclaimed: ‘Football is for boys and not for girls, go home!’ I replied: ‘I’m staying and I’m going to play.’ The other boys listened in silence and soon the two team captains started to pick the teams. It was the same ritual every afternoon. First, the best players were chosen, then their best friends. When there were about five players left, one captain would say: “You can have these three while I take those two.” I was so pleased that, on that afternoon, I was chosen in the first stage and well before the boy who told me to go home.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and purpose of the study

In the past century women and girls have embraced and enjoyed playing sport. Participation rates of females in sport have grown exponentially both at grass roots and international levels. Since women and girls have gained access to football clubs, football has emerged as the fastest growing participation sport for females in Australia. There were 84,171 registered female football players in Australia in 2007 (Football Federation Australia, 2007). The popularity of women's football at a global level is also evident. In 1991, the first Women's World Cup in football was held in China (FIFA, 2007). While there was not even one female athlete at the first modern Olympic Games in Greece in 1896, at the summer Olympic Games in Beijing in 2008, 4,746 of the 11,196 athletes were women representing 42% of all athletes (International Olympic Committee, 2011b). In the Australian context, the location for the present study, at the Beijing Olympics, 46% of the Australian Olympic Team were women representing 58% of Australian medallists (de Jong, 2011). The figures are even more impressive for the winter Olympics held in Vancouver in 2010. At these games women represented 50% of the Australian athletes and 66% of Australian medallists. They won all gold medals for Australia. However, women's performance in sport governance has not progressed in the same dramatic way as women continue to be markedly under-represented on boards of sport organisations.

There is a striking similarity with women's participation in corporate governance. According to an influential researcher in business law and corporate governance, Branson (2007), expectations for increased number of women in governance have been high due to the women's liberation movement in the 1970s. He contends that as a result of this movement,

many more women have graduated from leading law and business schools taking up positions in their field. For the past twenty years, women have constituted a near majority of receiving doctorates in Law and MBA degrees. Nevertheless, Branson argues, ‘the last male bastions, the ones that really matter, have been, and continue to be, corporate boardrooms...They remain male dominated – not impregnable, to be sure, but bastions nonetheless’ (2007, p. 1). Boards of directors are in a sense the DNA of corporate governance, if there is not some degree of balance of diversity in the composition of directors relative to the wider population (in terms of background, age, gender, ethnicity etc.), then it is possible that serious under-representation could be reflected in the values and practices of the organisation the board is responsible for. The consequences of this become more serious for boards that represent the interests of mass organisations such as sport bodies.

Over the past twenty years, numerous declarations and policies have been developed to address the issue of women’s representation in sport governance. For example, at an international level, based on UN Charters, the Brighton Declaration provided a set of principles in relation to gender equality in sport. One of the principles involves leadership in sport stating that the number of women in decision-making positions in sport organisations should increase (International Working Group on Women and Sport, 2012a). At a national level, the Australian Sports Commission has developed a series of policies to enhance women’s sport since 1987 (Australian Sports Commission, 2006). A recurrent theme in these policies is increased representation of women in sport governance. Despite these declarations and policies, changes towards gender equality on sport boards have been slow. Data on the Sydney Scoreboard indicate that women are still clearly under-represented on the boards of many sport organisations in Australia and globally (International Working Group on Women and Sport, 2012b).

A growing number of studies have emerged that attempt to explain the issue of women's under-representation in sport governance. Researchers have examined this issue in a range of countries, for example, in Canada (Hall, Cullen, & Slack, 1989; Inglis, 1997; Shaw & Slack, 2002), in Germany (Doll-Tepner, Pfister, & Radtke, 2006; Hartmann-Tews & Pfister, 2003; Pfister & Radtke, 2009), in the Netherlands (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007, 2008), in New Zealand (Cameron, 1996; Shaw, 2006), in Norway (Fasting, 2000; Hovden, 2000, 2006; Skirstad, 2002, 2009) and in the UK (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Shaw & Penney, 2003; White & Brackenridge, 1985). At an international level, studies have been conducted about women's representation in the Olympic Movement (Henry et al., 2004; Henry & Robinson, 2010). In Australia, more than two decades ago, the National Sports Research Centre published a report by Jim McKay (1992) entitled: *Why so few? Women executives in Australian sport*. This report identifies several main barriers to women in sport management and recommends some strategies for change. This was followed by an extended study by McKay (1997) in which he compared the status of and challenges for women in sport management positions in Australia, Canada and New Zealand. In 2010, Sibson (2010) examined the governing board of an Australian local, grass roots sport organisation. There are no recent studies in Australia that have investigated women in sport governance at a national level building on or updating McKay's studies.

Most of the research into women's under-representation in sport governance has focussed on questions of distribution, such as the ratio of women directors, barriers for women to obtain director positions and strategies of how to address them (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007; Doll-Tepner, et al., 2006; Hartmann-Tews & Pfister, 2003; Henry & Robinson, 2010; McKay, 1992, 1997; Pfister & Radtke, 2009; Skirstad, 2002; White & Brackenridge, 1985). Few studies have investigated the underlying gender dynamics on sport boards (Claringbould

& Knoppers, 2008; Hovden, 2006; Shaw, 2006; Sibson, 2010), but this line of investigation may disclose important reasons for women's under-representation on sport boards. McKay's Australian study, although valuable, is now 20 years old. The current study aims to examine the gender dynamics on Australian boards of National Sport Organisations (NSOs).

1.2 My background

As demonstrated in the prologue, I have always had a strong passion for sport. Even at an early age, I felt that girls and women should have access to and be valued in every aspect of sport. In my role as physical education teacher and sports coach for more than a decade, I provided choice of and equal opportunity to sports and physical activities to my students regardless of their gender. As a mother of three children, I nurture their interest in sport and equally encourage my eldest daughter who played basketball at a national level and my youngest son in his endeavours to have a professional career in dance. When entering university as an academic in human movement studies at middle age, my involvement in women's sport advocacy became more formal. One of my colleagues in the former School of Leisure, Sport and Tourism at the University of Technology Sydney, invited me to the launch of Womensport New South Wales (NSW) at Parliament House in Sydney in 1996. This event heralded the start of my association with this organisation and the global women's sport movement.

Womensport NSW is the state peak non-government body to advance the status of women and girls in sport and physical activity and was founded by a group of women, including academics, graduates and students of the former School of Leisure, Sport and Tourism at the University of Technology, Sydney. From 2000-2004 I served as President and it was under my leadership when the Women on Boards (WOB) project was launched on International

Women's Day in Sydney in 2001 (WomenOnBoards, 2012a). This project aimed to address gender equality on boards including sport boards. It was conceptualised in collaboration with the National Foundation of Australian Women and the Sydney Clubs of Zonta International. Through networking and mentoring functions as well as workshops, WOB mediates in the placement of women on boards. In 2003 WOB was successful in receiving a grant of \$50,000 from the Federal Office for Women to roll out the program nationally and in regional areas. In 2006 WOB was founded as a company. One of its key outcomes, to date, has been provision of assistance to nearly 1000 women in gaining board positions, including those on sport boards (WomenOnBoards, 2012a). Currently, WOB operates in all capital cities of Australia and has a register of more than 14,000 women from all sectors and industries available for board membership.

The issue of increasing the percentage of women on sport boards is also pursued at an international level by WomenSport International (WSI), a non-government organisation (NGO) of which I have been an elected board member since 2005. WSI represents a global voice for research-based advocacy for women and sport. The issue is also on the agenda of another global body, the International Working Group on Women and Sport (IWG). In my role as IWG Co-chair since 2006, I am strongly committed to drive change for women in sport including in the area of sport governance. During the Fifth IWG World Conference on Women and Sport which I directed in Sydney in 2010, among other topics, the issue of women's representation in leadership was vigorously debated and the legacy of this conference was the Sydney Scoreboard, a web-based tool that monitors gender distribution of women on sport boards globally. In chapter two I elaborate on the initiatives of the IWG in relation to gender equality in sport governance. In summary, the choice of my research topic

has evolved from my personal and professional background, valuing gender equality in sport at all levels from participation to decision-making.

1.3 Contribution to knowledge

The thesis seeks to contribute to prevailing knowledge and understanding of gender and sport governance. In sport management, the area of governance has emerged as a critical issue due to the changing nature of sport organisations from predominantly volunteer-administered organisations to professionally managed entities (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007; Hoye, Smith, Westerbeek, Stewart, & Nicholson, 2006; Shilbury, 2001). Acknowledging the changed environment and emerging need for good governance, Shilbury states, ‘governance and structure are impeding the progress national sporting organisations are able to make in completing the professionalisation of their industry and the implementation of management practice’ (2001, p. 259). The role of the board is critical in good governance. Ferkins, Shilbury and McDonald (2005) provide a thematic schema of the role of the board in building strategic capability, and have identified critical gaps in the knowledge and understanding of sport governance. An especially significant limitation in the field is the dearth of research related to board structure and composition particularly with respect to diversity on boards, including gender diversity.

Research in the corporate domain has suggested that balanced and diverse boards can lead to more competent boards contributing to good governance (Branson, 2007; Erhardt, Werbel, & Shrader, 2003; Huse & Solberg, 2006; Nielsen & Huse, 2010; Singh & Vinnicombe, 2004; Terjesen, Sealy, & Singh, 2009; van der Walt & Ingley, 2003). A comprehensive review of research on women directors on corporate boards, conducted by Terjesen, Sealy and Singh (2009) and including more than 400 publications in the past 30 years, found that corporate

governance was improved when women were appointed to boards because they brought 'value-adding' talents and represented stakeholders who had previously been excluded. Further, a recent study (Nielsen & Huse, 2010) concluded, the ratio of women directors (i.e. number of women directors in relation to total number) is positively related to board effectiveness and strategic control. The case for gender diversity on boards in the corporate sector is now solidly established.

The current study aims to advance knowledge and understanding of what I refer to as gender equality on boards of Australian sport organisations. Gender equality is the term used in international public policy in reference to advancing equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men at all levels across a wide range of arenas (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, 2007). I have consistently used the term 'gender equality' rather than 'gender equity' throughout the study. This is consistent with UN convention and Connell's theoretical framework on which the thesis is based. Although the two terms originally differed - as gender equality typically referred to men and women having equal opportunity while gender equity emphasised fairness and justice for men and women - in current usage the terms are interchangeable. The usage of either term generally does not characterise corporate governance policy. As indicated above, the preferred term within the corporate sector is gender diversity. Gender equal representation at board level is expected to benefit sport organisations as the interest of all stakeholders, men and women, can be better considered and enhanced as further discussed below.

Central to the topic of gender equality is the notion of power. This core concept has been widely discussed in the social sciences by, among others, acclaimed contemporary international scholars such as French philosopher Michel Foucault (1982) and sociologist

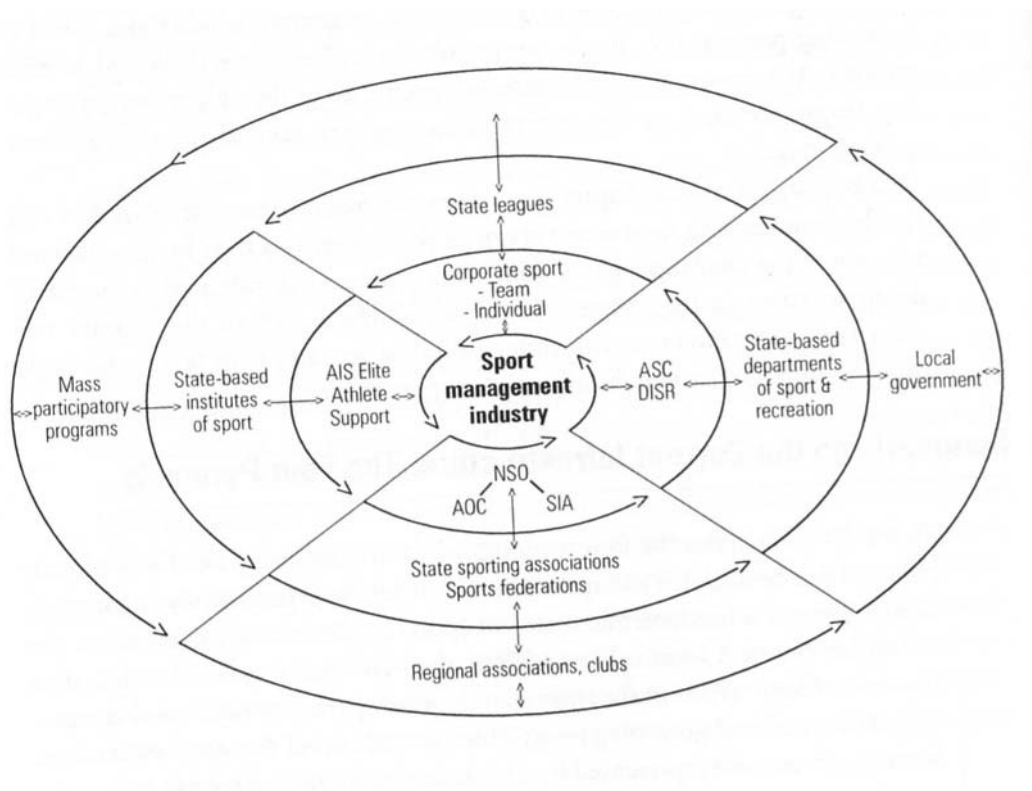
Pierre Bourdieu (1977), German sociologist Jurgen Habermas (1976) and the British political theorist Stephen Lukes (1974). The most common interpretation of power is that it is the exercise by an actor or actors of their own will in social practice, even against the resistance of others (Clegg, Kornberger, & Pitsis, 2011). The actor can be an individual or collective entity such as a group, organisation or institution. The founding voice of power in organisation studies is Max Weber who distinguishes power as *authority* from power as *domination*. The former refers to the exercise of power with the consent of those who are being managed, and power as domination without the consent of subordinates. The distinction between domination and authority is widely observed and applied in sociological research, including the work of one of the most eminent theorists on power and gender, Raewyn Connell (1987; 2009). Yet, following the approach of Italian political theorist, Antonio Gramsci (1971), and adopting his concept of hegemony, her work challenges the idea that domination occurs without the consent of subordinates. Domination can also be achieved consensually through the operation of complex cultural processes. Connell has provided a contemporary framework for gender studies based on the multidimensional and dynamic character of gender relations, and operationalising a range of concepts in which power is critical including patriarchy, gender order, gender regime and masculine hegemony.

Accordingly, the present study will first identify and analyse gender dynamics on national sport boards drawing on Connell's (2009) model of gender relations. Second, and based on the preceding, it will examine the implications or prospects for gender equality on these boards. In addition, since findings of the research may have significant practical implications for sport governance, it is anticipated that the study will contribute to evidence-based policy development in relation to gender equality on boards of NSOs and improved sport governance.

1.4 Target group and limitations

According to Australian researchers (Shilbury, Deane, & Kellett, 2006), the sport industry can be conceptualised as a four pyramid model with each side representing a sector of the industry (see Figure 1). Sector one comprises the traditional structure of Australian sport with the regional associations and clubs as the building blocks of organised sport. On the next level in this sector are the state sporting associations and sport federations. At the pinnacle of this level are the NSOs, the Confederation of Australian Sport (CAS) and the Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) located. This sector of the industry has also been traditionally identified as the voluntary sector, as originally mainly volunteers governed these sport organisations (Hoye, et al., 2006).

Figure 1: Four pyramid model of Australian sport (Shilbury, et al., 2006)



Sector two represents the corporate sector which evolved out of technological innovation and commercial interests. Examples include the Australian Football League (AFL), Australian Rugby Union (ARU) and National Rugby League (NRL) who deliver their sport at the top level as a commercial product. Sector three represents the government system from local to state to federal level. The Australian Sports Commission (ASC) is located at the top level of this sector, providing service to sport through funding, policy and program development. Sector four is primarily concerned with the promotion and evolution of sport, the development of emerging and elite athletes. Sport organisations that are involved within this structure are the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) and the state-based institutes of sport.

The present study focuses on board directors of organisations in sector one. In particular, it examines board directors of NSOs. These board executives are part of the leadership of their sport contributing to its strategic direction, monitoring management and ensuring accountability. They belong to the pinnacle group of their sport. NSOs govern their specific sport and it is at this level that important decisions are made for hundreds of thousands of physically active Australians and those that want to be active. NSOs that receive public funding through the ASC were part of this investigation because, in providing a service for the general population, they are expected to subscribe and adhere to basic principles of liberal democratic governance such as gender equality. In doing so, such organisations are more likely to represent the interests of both men and women, and to ensure that the services they provide are inclusive of both.

The focus on publicly funded sport boards, however, imposes a corresponding limitation on the research insofar as executives on corporate sport boards are not included and investigated. A further exclusion involves sport organisations and boards for people with a disability.

However, it is possible that a follow-up research project will examine directors on these types of sport boards.

1.5 Summary and outline of thesis

The impetus for this study derives from the slow pace of change towards gender equality in sport governance both nationally and internationally. Over the past three decades a body of research has emerged to explain the under-representation of women on sport boards but few studies have investigated the underlying gender relations that exist on boards and the ways in which they may contribute to a better understanding of this phenomenon. The purpose of this study is therefore to investigate gender dynamics on boards of Australian NSOs with a view to examining the implications or prospects for advancing gender equality in their future policy development and operation.

The following chapter reviews declarations and policies on gender and sport within the context of human rights. Its point of departure is the UN Millennium Development Goals. In response to UN instruments, I discuss the development of various declarations and policies in relation to gender equality, women and sport leadership both at an international level and in Australia. Subsequent chapters: provide a literature review on women in sport governance and the conceptual framework for the study; describe and justify the research design and methodology; present and discuss the findings of the study; and finally draw conclusions that inform discussion of the implications for the advancement of gender equality in sport governance.

CHAPTER 2: HUMAN RIGHTS, DECLARATIONS AND POLICIES ON GENDER AND SPORT

2.1 Introduction

In the year 2000, leaders from around the globe gathered to develop a vision for a better world with less poverty, better-educated children and a sustainable environment. Their vision was captured in the United Nations' eight Millennium Development Goals, a framework for development with a target date of 2015 (United Nations, 2011). One of these goals, the third Millennium Development Goal, is 'to promote gender equality and empower women' (United Nations, 2011, p. 1). The notion of gender equality has been on the global development agenda since the inception of the United Nations in 1945. Calls for gender equality are documented in the *Charter of the United Nations* (United Nations, 1945), the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (United Nations, 1948) and the *UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) (United Nations, 1979). Other international instruments related to improving the lives of women and girls include the *Ottawa Charter* (World Health Organisation, 1986) and the *Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action Fourth World Conference on Women* (United Nations, 1995).

This chapter examines declarations, calls for action, policies and other tools on gender equality and sport leadership informed by the various UN instruments. The first section focuses on the international level starting with the *Brighton Declaration* developed almost two decades ago. It was the beginning of numerous political initiatives conceived through debate by participants at the World Conferences on Women and Sport held every four years since 1994 in different parts of the world. The second section of this chapter examines the national level and considers policy development in Australia. It discusses the initial adoption

of a policy and plan for women in sport in 1987 and subsequent policies developed by the ASC. It also covers an important bipartisan Senate inquiry into women in sport and recreation in Australia in 2006 resulting in a set of recommendations including in the area of women in sport leadership roles.

2.2 International human rights, gender equality and sport

In response to the UN instruments, in the realm of sport, the first international declaration in regard to gender equality was developed in 1994, called the *Brighton Declaration* (Hargreaves, 2000). It was the legacy of the First World Conference on Women and Sport held in Brighton, United Kingdom, in 1994. This conference, entitled ‘Women, Sport and the Challenge of Change’, reflected a shift in the women’s sport movement to be part of a wider feminist and political agenda (Hargreaves, 2000). The conference, targeted at sport policy and decision-makers at national and international levels, aimed to accelerate the process of change. A conscious effort was made to reach out to and include women from developing countries and all regions of the world. Substantial support and funding were secured from the (then) UK Sports Council, British Council and the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Representing a global voice, 280 delegates from 82 countries attended the conference and endorsed the *Brighton Declaration*. Informed by the *Charter of the United Nations* (United Nations, 1945), the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (United Nations, 1948) and the *UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) (United Nations, 1979), the *Brighton Declaration* consists of guiding principles to increase the involvement of women in sport at all levels. The principles relate to equity and equality in society and sport, facilities, school and junior sport, developing participation, high performance sport, leadership in sport, education, training and development, sports

information and research, resources, and domestic and international cooperation. In reference to sport leadership the background to the *Brighton Declaration* states:

Despite growing participation of women in sport in recent years and increased opportunities for women to participate in domestic and international arenas, increased representation of women in decision making and leadership roles within sport has not followed. Women are significantly under-represented in management, coaching and officiating, particularly at the higher levels. Without women leaders, decision makers and role models within sport, equal opportunities for women and girls will not be achieved (International Working Group on Women and Sport, 2012a).

The principle in regard to leadership in sport says:

Women are under-represented in the leadership and decision making of all sport and sport-related organisations. Those responsible for these areas should develop policies and programs and design structures which increase the number of women coaches, advisers, decision makers, officials, administrators and sports personnel at all levels with special attention given to recruitment, development and retention (International Working Group on Women and Sport, 2012a).

Thus, it recommended that men and women in powerful positions create opportunities for women to obtain leadership positions in sport organisations.

2.3 From the Brighton Declaration to the Sydney Scoreboard

Another outcome of the First World Conference on Women and Sport was the establishment of the International Working Group on Women and Sport (IWG), a coordinating global network with close links both to national governments and key non-government organisations (Hargreaves, 2000). The main purpose of the IWG was to monitor the implementation of the *Brighton Declaration* and to plan future World Conferences on Women and Sport. The *Windhoek Call for Action*, legacy of the Second World Conference on Women and Sport held in Namibia in 1998, reaffirmed the principles of the *Brighton Declaration* (International Working Group on Women and Sport, 2012a). In addition, delegates at this conference called for action in several areas, amongst them in the area of leadership:

Build the capacity of women as leaders and decision makers and ensure that women play meaningful and visible roles in sport at all levels. Create mechanisms that ensure

that young women have a voice in the development of policies and programmes that affect them (International Working Group on Women and Sport, 2012a)

The issue of women in leadership positions remained at the forefront during the Third World Conference on Women and Sport held in Montreal, Canada, in 2002. The legacy of this conference was the *Montreal Tool Kit*, which contained materials and ideas for increasing women and girls' opportunities in sport to be implemented in conference participants' own country and situation. Amongst other materials, it provided several strategies and practical ideas to increase the number of women in decision-making positions (International Working Group on Women and Sport, 2012a) .

Four years later, the Fourth World Conference on Women and Sport was held for the first time in Asia, in Kumamoto, Japan. The legacy of this conference was the *Kumamoto Commitment to Collaboration*, a graphic display unveiled on the final day of the conference.

A description that attempts to capture its meaning says:

In order to realize gender equality in and through sport, we commit to building a network for close collaboration with relevant agencies and individuals. Over the next four years (2006-2010), we will further develop the vision of active participation in change born at the Kumamoto Conference (International Working Group on Women and Sport, 2012a).

The notion of collaboration evolved from the fact that, since the *Brighton Declaration*, a plethora of women's sport organisations at local, national and regional level had emerged. In order to effectively progress the women's sport movement there was a need to collaborate, share and learn from each other and build on each others' efforts.

Participants at this World Conference engaged, amongst other events, in a series of workshops including a workshop on 'Changing the Culture of Leadership in Sport'. This workshop resulted in several recommendations for action including:

- Conduct more research and case studies reflecting women's positions and leadership
- Replicate research in each country about women's leadership and position on National Sport Organisations
- Work within UN structures to promote access to women's sport leadership opportunities

(International Working Group on Women and Sport, 2012a)

In reference to the final recommendation, in the following years, Dr. Carole Oglesby and researchers from the IWG and WomenSport International collaborated with the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW) on a major publication on women and sport, and sports effectiveness, in promoting equality and social development. Director of UNDAW, Carolyn Hannan (2006), argued that sport and physical activity are powerful tools for women's and girls' development. The resulting publication, *Women 2000 and beyond: Women, gender equality and sport*, was launched during the 52nd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women at the UN Headquarters in New York in 2008. This monograph was part of the *Women 2000 and Beyond* series which promotes the goals of the *Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action*. It was the first time in the history of the United Nations that a full publication was dedicated to women and sport. Amongst other issues, it identified the under-representation of women in decision-making bodies of sport organisations at local, national, regional and international levels, as a critical area of concern (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, 2007). In order to accelerate the process of change in sport governance it recommended:

to go beyond increasing numbers to enhancing the effectiveness and impact of women's participation, through increasing women's voice in shaping policies, resource allocations, and program development and management...Monitoring and evaluation of the impact of initiatives, such as the use of targets and quotas, need to be significantly strengthened. Reliable and comparable data are required, both as an advocacy and awareness tool (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, 2007, pp. 29-30).

The issue of women in sport governance was revisited at the Fifth World Conference on Women and Sport held in Sydney in 2010. The theme of the conference was 'Play Think

Change’ which reflected a clear shift in its approach. Previous World Conferences were mainly targeted at policy and decision-makers in sport but this time, both practitioners (Play) and researchers (Think) were brought together to discuss progress made in the global women’s sport movement and ways to address the challenges ahead. The program included a significant scientific stream (50% of the 192 presentations) in which researchers presented their latest work to stimulate debate and explore positive change for women and sport. It was agreed that the official legacy of this conference would be the *Sydney Scoreboard* with the purpose of increasing:

(w)ithin the context of the achievement of the UN Millennium Development Goals...the number of women on the boards/management committees of all sport organisations at international, regional, national and local level (International Working Group on Women and Sport, 2012b)

The *Sydney Scoreboard*, a web-based database, operates as an online tool through which women in leadership roles within sport organisations can be tracked both nationally and internationally. It collects and displays data on the gender distribution on boards of sport organisations. Its aim is to achieve gender equality in sport governance.

In sum, at an international level, based on a human rights perspective, starting with the *Brighton Declaration* in 1994, there has been a consistent and sustained call for action and other initiatives to advance the notion of gender equality in sport, including in the area of sport governance. In the next section I explore the Australian response to the UN instruments and international declarations on women and sport through an analysis of relevant national policy and strategy documents.

2.4 Australian policy on women in sport leadership

In Australia, the location for the present study, the first *National Policy and Plan for Women in Sport* was adopted by the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) in 1987 (Australian Sports Commission, 2006). This was the outcome of a working group that had been established by

the prime minister at that time, recognising that women and sport had become a critical issue in Australian society. Ten years later, the ASC reviewed the policy and decided to release a revised framework. This new policy was informed by the above mentioned UN instruments as well as the *Brighton Declaration* and the *Windhoek Call for Action*. It was documented in two parts:

1. *Active Women: National Policy on Women and Girls in Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity 1999-2002*
2. *How to Include Women and Girls in Sport, Recreation and Physical Activity: Strategies and Good Practice.*

In reference to women in sport leadership this policy stated that, despite some improvements, the under-representation of women in all areas of leadership, management and decision-making in sport remained an indicator of inequitable status. One of the guiding principles in regard to participation and well-being was ‘increasing the number of female...decision makers, officials and administrators at all levels’ (Australian Sports Commission, 1999a, p. 10). It is noteworthy that by comparison to the 1987 policy, the notion of sport was broadened to include recreation and physical activity. Further, it was recognised that women and girls are not a homogenous group. In particular, the revised policy aimed to meet the needs of women and girls from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. A good practice example listed in the second document on strategies was a leadership workshop for Oceania Women in Sport (Australian Sports Commission, 1999b). This workshop aimed to provide women with skills to take up leadership positions in sport organisations. It was an initiative of the ASC in partnership with WomenSport International and the IOC.

In 2001, the ASC made a clear shift in its approach towards women and sport. The new policy, *Backing Australia’s Sporting Ability* (Australian Sports Commission, 2006), heralded

the start of an inclusive approach based on the concept of gender mainstreaming. Rees defines this new concept as follows: 'Gender mainstreaming is the systematic integration of gender equality into all systems and structures; policies, programs, processes and projects; into cultures and their organisations; into ways of seeing and doing' (Rees, 2002, p. 3). This approach means wearing a 'gender lens' when developing policies and processes to assess if they benefit women and men equally. It represents a paradigm shift in thinking from a focus on equality for women to one on equality for both genders. For example, in the new way of thinking, a target of a minimum of 40% of female representation would change to a target of a minimum of 40% representation of either gender.

One of the consequences of adopting a gender mainstreaming approach was that key women's sport themes such as access to participation, leadership development and media coverage were now part of the broader sports policy. This change of focus is also evident in the subsequent ASC policy *Building Australian Communities Through Sport* (Australian Sports Commission, 2006). The emphasis in this policy is on the ASC working collaboratively with NSOs in their quest to become sustainable, inclusive organisations based on being transparent and accountable with good governance and sound business practices. Nevertheless, there is only one brief reference to women and sport in this ASC policy: 'continue to encourage female participation in all aspects of sport in Australia' (Australian Sports Commission, 2006, p. 4).

With the increased focus of the ASC to encourage NSOs to develop sound business practices, in 1999, the Commission published a guide for directors and chief executive officers entitled *Good governance in sporting organisations – the role of the board and chief executive officer*. It updated this resource in 2005, retitling it *Governing Sport – the role of the board*

(Australian Sports Commission, 2005). This publication was drafted by Terry Kilmister, Director of Boardworks International, and it draws substantially on John Carver's ideas about designing effective boards. Carver is a US scholar and creator of the Policy Governance® model. The ASC document outlined the roles of the board, in particular the roles and responsibilities of the chairperson, the various board and management committees. It only briefly discussed the structure and size of the board, noting that according to Carter and Lorsch (2004) one size does not fit all. The guidelines explained that this means there is no single best structure for boards. The report continued by saying, however, that 'current governance thinking indicates that smaller boards of around seven members are likely to be most effective' (Australian Sports Commission, 2005, p. 28). In regard to board composition the guidelines listed a range of skills and competencies for board membership. It is paradoxical that aspects of diversity and/or gender were not mentioned at all in the guidelines, for principles of equality on the basis of gender and social background are visible parts of ASC policy with respect to sports participation (Australian Sports Commission, 1999a, 2003, 2006). Recently, this resource was again updated. The current guidelines are structured on six major governance principles (Australian Sports Commission, 2012b). The first principle relates to board composition, roles and powers which is relevant in the context of this study. The term gender is not mentioned at all but the ASC (2012b, p. 6) states that it is envisaged that a board will 'have a sufficient blend of expertise, skills and diversity to effectively carry out its role' and that the board 'be broadly reflective of the organisation's key stakeholders, but not at the expense of the board's skills mix and the organisation's objectives'. From this statement it is clear that current Australian policy identifies a tension between a skills-based board and a gender-balanced board, and that it favours the former to the latter.

An important initiative, in 2006, was the Senate inquiry into women in sport and recreation in Australia. This Senate inquiry was bipartisan, which suggests that the issue was perceived as an area of concern by all parties. Amongst the terms of reference was inquiry about women in leadership roles in sport. The Senate Committee made the following three recommendations relating to this issue:

1. The committee recommends that appropriate organisations with an interest in sport and recreation be funded by the Australian Sports Commission to provide skills training in the areas of leadership, communication skills and successful team building; and that the Commonwealth fund the Commission to implement this.
2. The committee recommends that the Australian Sports Commission continue to provide opportunities for women sport leaders to attend workshops and forums to develop techniques for successful networking.
3. The committee recommends that the Sport Leadership Grants for Women be continued and that the Commonwealth increase funding for this scheme.
(Environment Communications Information Technology and the Arts References Committee, 2006, p. 90)

It is evident that these recommendations focused on providing education and training for women implying that they lack qualifications or experience to fulfill leadership roles. From such a perspective, 'the problem' of gender inequality is understood as one among women themselves rather than that of the organisations in which they participate.

By contrast, several years later, to promote more inclusive cultures in sport, the ASC established the Women in Sport Leadership Register in 2010 (Australian Sports Commission, 2011). The initiative for the register was partly in response to sport organisations reporting that they would like to appoint more women but experienced difficulties in sourcing suitable women candidates. The aim of the register is to connect national sport organisations with potential women board candidates. At the same time, the ASC made a commitment to monitor women's representation on boards of NSOs which received public funding by requiring them to report annually on the board's gender distribution. These data are currently

published on the *Sydney Scoreboard*, a web-based tool and legacy of the Fifth IWG World Conference on Women and Sport which tracks gender composition of NSOs worldwide as discussed in the previous section.

2.5 Summary

This chapter has examined international and Australian declarations, policies and other initiatives on gender equality, women and sport leadership in response to international human rights instruments. Inspired by the World Conferences on Women and Sport held between 1994 and 2010, it found a plethora of initiatives to advance women in sport governance which are documented in the *Brighton Declaration*, the *Windhoek Call for Action*, the *Montreal Toolkit*, the *Kumamoto Commitment to Collaboration* and the *Sydney Scoreboard*. At a national level, since 1987, the ASC has developed several policies on women's leadership in sport but changed its approach to gender mainstreaming in 2001. This resulted in women's sport becoming part of a broader sports policy and an emphasis by the ASC on good governance in sport organisations. The issue of women's under-representation in sport governance has continued to receive attention but as part of a focus on diversity in sport boards in general. In addition, recommendations based on a Senate inquiry in 2006, reflect a perspective by the Australian government that 'the problem' of gender inequality is mainly understood as one among women themselves rather than that of the organisational culture in which they participate. I return to this issue of location of 'the problem' in subsequent chapters.

Overall, despite the plethora of declarations, calls for action and policies at national and international level, the impact of these instruments on gender equality in sport in general has been limited. In particular, little progress has been made in relation to increasing women's

representation in sport leadership positions. In the last three decades a body of research has emerged to gain a better understanding of gender inequality in sport leadership and the persistence of this phenomenon. In the next chapter I review a range of empirical studies on gender and sport governance. In view of the sustained call for action for an increase of women's representation in decision-making positions at international and national levels, I ask, what does the research literature tell us about the status of women in sport governance? Before I review the empirical studies, however, I consider the theoretical concepts of governance and sport governance situated within the study of organisational management.

CHAPTER 3: WOMEN IN SPORT GOVERNANCE: EMPIRICAL STUDIES

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to critically review empirical studies on the topic of women in sport governance. First, I consider and define the concept of governance distinguishing it from management, and subsequently locate the concept of sport governance within this broader area of study. Second, with reference to a key research theme of governance, board structure and composition, I examine gender distribution on a range of sport boards at national and international levels including on boards of Olympic organisations. In the Australian context, gender ratios are analysed on boards of the AOC, ASC and NSOs and compared with women's representation in the corporate sector. Third, I review the findings of studies that investigated barriers faced by women to obtain board membership in both the corporate and sport sectors. Despite these barriers, there are a number of women who have managed to gain a seat at the table of sport boardrooms and I analyse the characteristics, roles and experiences of these women on sport boards. Fourth, several studies are discussed that go beyond examining the role and experiences of women only by investigating those of both men and women directors. The focus of this research is on understanding the gender relations on boards of sport organisations. This line of investigation may disclose important reasons for the lack of gender diversity and gender inequality on sport boards providing a justification for the aim of the current study.

3.2 Governance

Governance has only recently emerged as an explicit field of study, primarily in response to management failures of corporate entities around the globe since the 1980s. Failures of large corporations, such as Enron in the USA and OneTel in Australia, emphasised the need for

adequate corporate governance to protect the rights and interests of the stakeholders.

According to one of the pioneering researchers in the field, Bob Tricker (1993), the impetus for research into governance sprang from questions about the poor performance of corporate leadership. The role and structure of boards were investigated with a view to improving their performance and thus enhancing the sustainability of the corporate entity.

The concept of governance involves the exercise of power relations in organisations, and the frameworks that prevail within the duties of directing, monitoring and regulating that comprise their core business. Governance needs to be distinguished from management.

Tricker (1984) explained that the role of management is to ensure that the business operations run efficiently and effectively. This involves the coordination of processes of product planning, design, marketing, production and distribution. On the other hand, governance is not concerned about the day-to-day operations of an organisation as its focus is of a higher order.

There is an emerging literature that discloses a number of approaches that explain what corporate governance is. One of the most significant is that of the 'function' or 'purpose' of governance. For example, Thomas Clarke, in his introduction to *Theories of corporate governance: The philosophical foundations of corporate governance* (2004) writes that the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) provides a useful definition of the function or role of governance. He cites the following extract from an OECD report on governance and management:

Corporate governance is the system by which business corporations are directed and controlled. The corporate governance structure specifies the distribution of rights and responsibilities among different participants in the corporation, such as the board, managers, shareholders and other stakeholders, and spells out the rules and procedures for making decisions on corporate affairs. By doing this, it also provides

the structure through which the company objectives are set, and the means of attaining those objectives and monitoring performance (OECD cited in Clarke, 2004, p. 1).

Others have a different approach or view about the function or purpose of governance:

Corporate governance is concerned with holding the balance between economic and social goals and between individual and communal goals. The governance framework is there to encourage the efficient use of resources and equally to require accountability for the stewardship of those resources. The aim is to align as nearly as possible the interest of individuals, corporations and society (Cadbury cited in Clarke, 2004, p. 2).

This means that boards are not only accountable for the financial resources of the company but also have a responsibility to consider the needs of all stakeholders associated with the entity.

Yet another approach emphasises the dynamics of corporate governance: ‘A continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and co-operative action may be taken’ (Commission on Global Governance cited in Clarke, 2004, p. 2).

Regardless of the variations in approaches to understand corporate governance, it is evident that board members or directors play a critical role. The board of directors is active at all stages of the life of a company. As Clarke has commented, the board of directors is ‘the fulcrum of corporate governance, the critical nexus in which the fortunes of the company are decided’ (2007, p. 33) and in the early stages of a company, it represents the DNA or blueprint for a company’s life. As the company grows the board of directors represents the source of values and objectives that will further develop and sustain the company.

According to a number of leading researchers in the field of corporate governance, in fulfilling their duties, all boards have to balance the strategy and accountability elements of

their contribution in ways that encourage performance while maintaining effective control (Daily, Dalton, & Cannella, 2003; Johnson, Daily, & Ellestrand, 1996; Zahra & Pearce, 1989). Based on this literature, the key roles of boards may be conceived as:

- *Control*
Monitoring management and ensuring accountability
- *Strategy*
Approving the strategic direction of the organisation
- *Counsel*
Providing advice and counsel to management
- *Institutional*
Building institutional relationships with investors, stakeholders and the community.

The metaphor, ‘pilot versus watchdog’ captures and summarises the tension in the function of governance between directing - such as setting strategic goals and objectives - and monitoring - as in protecting the interests of all stakeholders (Carter & Lorsch, 2004; Clarke, 2004; Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007).

3.3 Situating sport governance within governance

Governance is relevant for any group of people who organise themselves for a common purpose. However, governance of corporate entities needs to be distinguished from governance of non-profit organisations. The recent orthodoxy of the focus in corporate governance is on protecting and enhancing shareholder value (though this is contested by approaches based on a wider concern for stakeholder interests). The focus in non-profit governance is more clearly on providing a community service or facilitating the engagement of members in a social activity. Having examined several perspectives on the differences in

the governance characteristics of non-profit and corporate organisations, Hoyer (2002) concluded that there are five main differences. By contrast to profit-oriented organisations, non-profit organisations have:

- multiple measures of organisational performance
- shared leadership between an executive and board chair
- more diversity in board membership
- a diversity of constituents to serve
- pressures to maintain volunteer decision-making structures and processes.

(Hoyer, 2002, pp. 21-22).

Although there are many types of sport organisations, the majority of those that provide participation opportunities in sport and physical activity can be classified as non-profit organisations as their main purpose is to provide a service to members rather than make a profit and increase shareholders value. NSOs, the focus of the present study, can best be characterised as non-profit entities.

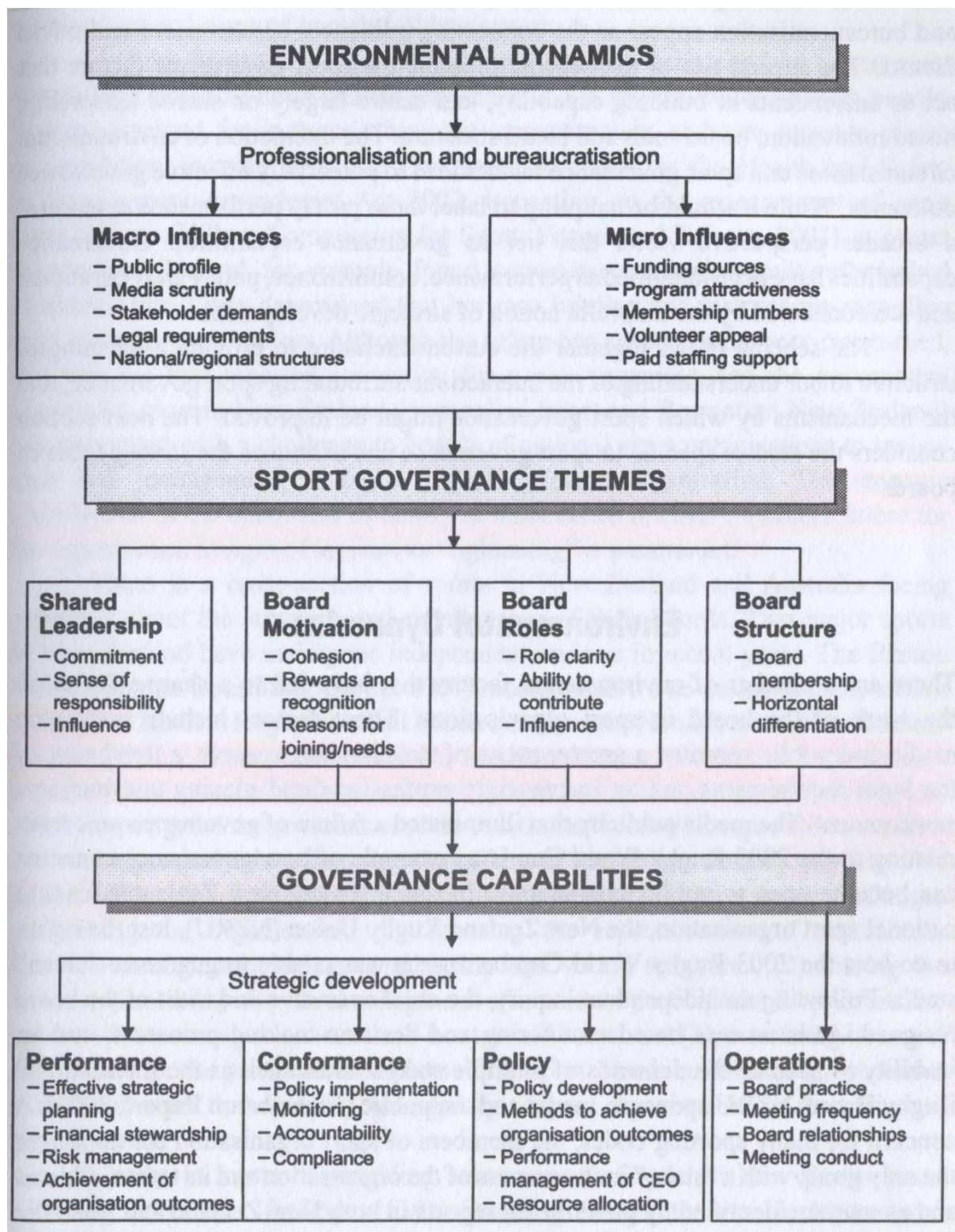
Sport governance is a relatively new concept and relates to the governance of sport organisations. As a field of study it emerged approximately a decade after the commencement of research into corporate governance. Hoyer and Cuskelly (2007) in their influential work *Sport Governance* have documented the scholarly literature since its inception in the late 1980s. They define sport governance as ‘the structures and processes used by an organisation to develop its strategic goals and direction, monitor its performance against these goals and ensure that the board acts in the best interest of its members’ (Hoyer & Cuskelly, 2007, p. 9). It is apparent that the metaphor, ‘pilot versus watchdog’, as previously described, is also applicable in the realm of sport.

Hoye and Cuskelly (2007) have identified the main research themes related to sport governance as generated by the following questions:

- What are the core roles and responsibilities of the board?
- What board structures and processes are most effective for sport organisations?
- What relationships exist between the board and management? Who exerts authority and power?
- What are the key influences on governing boards and its members?

A somewhat different perspective is suggested by Ferkins, Shilbury and McDonald (2005). Although they recognise research themes that are similar to those proposed by Hoye and Cuskelly (2007), they present an integrated model of sport governance research which consists of three components: environmental dynamics, sport governance factors and governance capabilities (see Figure 2). The purpose of the model is to provide an overview of the current literature on sport governance and its interrelationships. The first component, environmental dynamics, includes both macro influences which are external to the organisation and micro influences which are internally related and specific to sport. For example, compliance with legal requirements is a macro influence while funding sources or membership numbers, which are specific to a particular sport organisation, are considered micro influences. The second component covers sport governance themes such as board leadership, board roles and board structure which are comparable to the research themes suggested by Hoye and Cuskelly (2007). The third component of the integrated model refers to governance capabilities which consider the development of strategic capabilities on the board.

Figure 2: Thematic schema of sport governance (Ferkins, et al., 2005)



Ferkins and her colleagues (2005) argue that the strategic role of the board has been identified as a major factor in the governance of sport organisations due to the transition of many national sport bodies from predominantly volunteer-based to professional management.

The introduction of paid professionals in sport organisations has led to the change from a council of representatives to a modern board of directors to govern the sport. Since the day-to-day operations are now managed by paid professionals, the role of the board has changed to providing strategic direction and counsel to management. Therefore development of strategic capabilities has emerged as a major research theme.

Regardless of the variations in perspectives on providing an overview of the research literature in sport governance, one of the main themes is board structure and composition. In reviewing the sport governance literature to date, Ferkins and her colleagues (2005) found that this theme has been scarcely addressed by sport management scholars. They recommend more research in this critical area of knowledge development.

Hoye and Cuskelly (2007) agree that there has been a dearth of studies that have explored the issue of board composition in sport organisations. Yet, they argue, it is an essential issue proposing that ‘the questions of who should comprise the board and how they get elected, appointed, selected or invited to a position as a board member are central to the governance of non-profit sport organisations’ (p. 74). They suggest that one of the key aspects of board composition is the diversity of its members reflecting the organisation’s membership and other stakeholders whom they are representing.

The types of diversity that may be usefully represented in the boardroom include age, gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, profession, and life experience. Although all these aspects of diversity are important, the main focus in the academic literature has been on gender diversity. In the next section I review the empirical evidence that has been gathered on the subject of the gender distribution on sport boards as a starting point as a critical appraisal of

prevailing knowledge and understanding of gender and its relationship to governance in sport boards.

3.4 Gender distribution on sport boards

In view of the sustained call for action for more women in leadership positions through the various charters, declarations and policies over the past two decades, it is reasonable to expect an incremental upward trend. The percentages of women on sport boards, both internationally and in Australia, however, reveal a different picture.

In 2003, an international comparative study by Hartmann-Tews and Pfister (2003) examined the numerical representation of girls and women in sport, including those in decision-making positions. They analysed data from 16 countries of all regions of the world: North and South America, the Middle East, Asia, Oceania, Africa and Europe. Australia was, however, *not* part of the investigation. Factors such as different socio-economic, political and cultural contexts were considered when selecting the range of countries. They found a low level of representation of women in sport management leadership positions across all countries.

Women were clearly under-represented in the management of sport in the public and voluntary sector as CEOs, board members and elected chairs. The authors summarise their findings in the following way:

With a few notable exceptions, most senior positions in the national governing bodies across all the countries analysed in this book are held by men and there is no general tendency towards any increase, rather in some countries, female representation is even on the decrease...In addition to the gender gap, all levels of inclusion in sport leadership are strongly mediated by socioeconomic status and ethnicity (Hartmann-Tews & Pfister, 2003, p. 275).

The IOC , arguably the most prestigious international sport organisation, also demonstrates a markedly low representation of women in leadership positions (International Olympic Committee, 2005). In 1981, IOC President Samaranch, for the first time in history, co-opted

a woman as an IOC member. In 2005, there were twelve women amongst the 117 IOC members (10.3%) and only one woman was part of the fifteen members of their Executive Board (6.6%). It is noteworthy that in 1996, the IOC, as part of its Women and Sport Policy, set targets for women's membership of National Olympic Committees (NOCs), International and National Federations. The targets were at least 10% female representation by December 2000, increasing to at least 20% female representation by December 2005 (International Olympic Committee, 2005). It is evident that the IOC itself failed to achieve these targets.

During the period 2005-10, twelve of 30 newly appointed IOC members were women (International Olympic Committee, 2011a). Currently, there are 20 women of 106 active IOC members (18.9%), an increase of 8.6% by comparison with 2005, but the percentage is still below 20% (International Olympic Committee, 2012). Although the number of women on the IOC Executive Board has increased, their representation remains also low with only two women at present having a seat at the executive table of fifteen members (13.3%) (International Olympic Committee, 2011a). Further, the most influential position in the IOC, namely the president, has always been occupied by a man since the establishment of the organisation in 1894.

Although many NOCs and International Federations (IFs) have responded positively to the proposed targets set by the IOC, the percentage of women in leadership positions in these organisations remained low (Henry, et al., 2004; International Olympic Committee, 2005). In early 2005, a total of 54 out of 184 NOCs (29.3%) had reached the target of at least 20% of female representation on their board. A staggering 125 out of 184 NOCs (67.9%) had only made the previous target of at least 10% female representation. Similarly, in the IFs only ten out of 34 (29%) had achieved the target of at least 20% while a further nineteen (54%) had

reached a minimum of 10% female representation. A follow-up study in 2010 by Henry and Robinson (2010) report that the percentage of women on the executive committee of NOCs was 17.6 while the percentage of those on IFs was 18 so overall, the target of 20% was still not reached.

In Australia, unfortunately, there is a lack of comprehensive data on the number of women on sport boards. The ASC collected and published some data between 1988 and 2002 (Australian Sports Commission, 2003). They ceased doing so in 2003 reflecting the shift in government policy to ‘gender mainstreaming’ (see previous section). Table one presents some data on female representation in key decision-making positions in Australian sport organisations for the period 1988-2002.

Table 1: Female representation in key decision-making positions (Adapted from Australian Sports Commission, 2003)

Organisation	1988	1990	1996	1998	2000	2002	Increase/ decrease
NSO – Executive Director or General Manager	N/A	16%	25%	23%	N/A	17%	+ -
NSO – President	N/A	11%	13%	15%	N/A	19%	+
AOC – Executive Board	0%	N/A	13%	11%	N/A	17%	+
ASC - Board	17%	25%	42%	33%	33%	41%	+

N/A: not available

Analysing the figures in the table, it seems that there have been both upward and downward trends. The percentage of women occupying positions of Executive Director or General Manager of NSOs peaked in 1996 to 25% after which there was a decrease. On the other hand, the number of female presidents of NSOs continually increased to 19% in 2002. The AOC experienced an overall increase after 1988. It is very likely that the introduction of the targets by the IOC were instrumental in this development but the increase was not sustained

as the number of women on their board has decreased and currently stands at two of fifteen (13.3%) members in 2012 (Australian Olympic Committee, 2012). The highest percentage of female representation is found on the ASC board, which is in line with government policy to increase female representation on public boards. In 2012, the ASC board consisted of six men and six women (Australian Sports Commission, 2012a). The most influential positions of Chair and CEO, however, were occupied by men.

Finally, it is noteworthy that there has been no systematic approach to collecting benchmark data relating to women on sport boards, as Table 1 shows. This means that baseline data about the total number of women on sport boards has not been recorded. This issue has been addressed since the Senate inquiry into women in sport and recreation. The ASC submission to this Senate inquiry stated that, in 2005, on boards of national sport organisations there was a ratio of one woman to seven men (13%)

(Environment Communications Information Technology and the Arts References Committee, 2006). Further, as a consequence of a new ASC policy released in 2010, as previously mentioned, in which publicly funded NSOs are required to annually report on the gender distribution on their boards, current data have been made available. In 2012, women's representation on NSO boards was 23.4% which represents an *increase* of more than 10% in the past 7 years (WomenOnBoards, 2012b). Women held 11% of president positions on NSOs, a *decrease* of 8% since 2002, and were 19% of CEOs, a 2% *increase* since 2002.

How do these data compare with those in the non-profit and the corporate sector?

Unfortunately, there are no comparative data available for the non-profit sector in Australia.

Regarding the corporate sector, in 2010, women held 8.4% of board directorships in the

ASX200 Australian companies (Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency, 2010). This was a slight increase in comparison with the reported 8.2% in 2002, the first year that the EOWA Census was conducted. Several other countries, namely Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, UK and USA have used a similar methodology developed by Catalyst, a research and advocacy group to provide meaningful comparison data (Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency, 2010). In 2010, the percentage of women on Australian corporate boards was the *lowest* in comparison with data from similar developed countries.

Two conclusions can be drawn from these statistics. First, while expectations for an increased presence of women in the boardroom of sport organisations have been high, the reality is sobering. The reviewed data indicate that, over the past two decades, there has been an upward trend in women's representation on boards of international and national sport organisations, yet women are still markedly under-represented. The evidence suggests that vertical and horizontal gender segregation in sport governance continue to be the dominant gender pattern. A gender arrangement in which men occupy the majority of seats, as well as hold the leadership positions, is still firmly in place.

Second, in Australia the percentage of women on sport boards is higher than the percentage of women on corporate boards (23.4 % versus 8.4 %). Women's representation on corporate boards in Australia is at the low end of the scale in comparison with women's representation on corporate boards in similar countries. So what is it that keeps women out of the boardroom in organisations, both corporate and sport bodies? In the next section I examine some of the factors that inhibit women gaining a seat at the table.

3.5 Barriers for women to corporate board appointment

The evidence provided in relation to the distribution of women on boards in the corporate and sport sectors is widely interpreted in terms of the maintenance of an organisational ‘glass ceiling’. Women can often see but not obtain the top or most senior positions within organisations. Findings of a range of studies have identified numerous barriers that keep women out of the corporate boardroom. These obstacles have been found, for example, in Australia (Burgess & Tharenou, 2002), Canada (Burke, 2000), New Zealand (van der Walt & Ingley, 2003), Norway (Kvande & Rasmussen, 1991), Portugal (Carvalho & Cabral-Cordoso, 2002), the UK (Singh & Vinnicombe, 2004) and the USA (Branson, 2007; Kanter, 1977; Oakley, 2000b). Renowned for their pioneering work on the female FTSE Index in the UK, Singh and Vinnicombe (2004) of the Cranfield Centre for Developing Women Business Leaders, found several major barriers that inhibit women’s rise to board positions. They included stereotyping of women’s roles and abilities, women’s lack of management experience, organisational politics in recruitment and promotion, women’s exclusion from informal networks, personal style differences and sexual harassment. They further reported that the views of the senior women who participated in their survey differed from those of the CEOs insofar as a larger percentage of the senior women than the CEOs agreed with the identified obstacles. The only exception was women’s lack of management experience as more CEOs than senior women perceived this a major constraint. The authors explained that many of these barriers may be unintentional but nevertheless they are forms of discrimination.

Further to organisational politics in recruitment, Burke (2000) identified the director selection process as a significant barrier because of a tendency by the board to rely to a great extent on the ‘old boys network’. When searching for candidates, the existing directors looked first and

foremost in their personal and professional networks which usually comprised many more men than women. Burgess and Tharenou (2002) expanded on this point by highlighting interpersonal factors such as lack of interpersonal support and gender dissimilarity as barriers that women may face in the selection process. They found that social similarity in terms of education and demography including gender, can facilitate a board appointment. Directors often preferred those similar to them because of ease of communication, self-validation and trusting relationships. It is argued that particularly in uncertain or unfamiliar situations, directors demonstrate a preference for those candidates that are perceived as similar to themselves which privileges men (Burgess & Tharenou, 2002; Burke, 2000). More than three decades ago, in the USA, Kanter (1977) identified this pattern as homosocial reproduction, where men consciously and subconsciously choose other men in their own image.

Another USA study (Branson, 2007) explored how corporate governance and law keep women out of the board room. From analysing over seven hundred court of appeals Title VII gender discrimination cases in US corporate organisations, Branson (2007) identified gender discrimination in employment as a significant obstacle maintaining a 'glass ceiling'. He argued that lack of development opportunities and promotion forestall women's progress into senior management. Employment discrimination was a subtle way of keeping women out of the boardroom as experience in a senior management position is often a prerequisite for a seat at the boardroom table. Further, he found work/life issues a second major barrier. Although there has been some change in sharing child rearing and domestic duties over the past decades, women still carried the main responsibility in this area. This may cause leaves of absence and part-time work which jeopardise career advancement to senior management and a board role. The third barrier according to Branson is the requirement for directors to make

hard decisions, be assertive, powerful and logical. This is not compatible with how women are stereotypically perceived as Branson commented:

Studies in linguistics show that many women speak and act in ways different from those of men. Thus, because they speak 'in a different register', and even though it may not be the case, male board and committee members may perceive women as lacking the confidence and assertiveness necessary for board service and senior management positions (2007, p. 55).

It is evident from analysing the findings of these studies that many significant barriers limit women obtaining a position in the corporate boardroom.

3.6 Barriers faced by women in sport governance

In the realm of sport a growing number of studies have emerged that attempt to explain the issue of women's under-representation in sport governance. Researchers have examined this issue in a range of countries, in Australia (McKay, 1992, 1997; Sibson, 2010), in Canada (Hall, et al., 1989; Inglis, 1997; Shaw & Slack, 2002), in Germany (Doll-Tepper, et al., 2006; Hartmann-Tews & Pfister, 2003; Pfister & Radtke, 2009), in the Netherlands (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007, 2008), in New Zealand (Cameron, 1996; Shaw, 2006), in Norway (Fasting, 2000; Hovden, 2000, 2006; Skirstad, 2002, 2009) and in the UK (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Shaw & Penney, 2003; White & Brackenridge, 1985). Two of these studies and an international project on women in the Olympic Movement (Henry, et al., 2004; Henry & Robinson, 2010) are worthwhile discussing in detail because they are based on extensive data collections.

The first of these, produced two decades ago by the National Sports Research Centre in Australia, is a report by Jim McKay (1992) entitled: *Why so few? Women executives in Australian sport*. This publication identified several main barriers to women in sport management and recommended some strategies for intervention and change. This was

followed by an extended study by McKay (1997) in which he compared the status of and challenges for women in sport management positions in Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

The second study involves the project *Women taking the lead – an action alliance toward increasing the percentage of women taking up leadership positions in German sport* conducted at the Free University, Berlin since 2001 (Doll-Tepper, et al., 2006; Pfister & Radtke, 2009). The aim of this project was threefold: to analyse gender distributions of sport leadership positions, to investigate the causes of women's marginalisation, and to implement a series of measures designed to increase the number of women leaders in German sport organisations.

The third study is the project on women's leadership in Olympic bodies jointly undertaken by Loughborough University and the IOC. It consists of two reports, *Women, leadership and the Olympic movement* (Henry, et al., 2004) and *Gender equity and leadership in Olympic bodies* (Henry & Robinson, 2010). The researchers from this project evaluated the impact of IOC policy in respect of the roles of women on the executive committees of Olympic organisations and investigated the electoral experience of women as candidates for these bodies. The following section identifies the main findings and analyses from these studies in addressing the question of why women are under-represented in sport governance.

In his investigation of the under-representation of women in executive management of sport organisations in Australia, Jim McKay (1992) conducted in-depth interviews with 46 men and 45 women executives occupying such positions at that time. In addition, 63 interviewees completed a questionnaire. For the purpose of data analysis the researcher distinguished between two types of barriers to leadership positions in sport management. 'Internal barriers'

(p. 9) were those that McKay identified as being associated within individuals such as perceived lack of experience, skills and self-confidence, while 'external barriers' (p. 9) referred to formal and informal structures of discrimination in the culture of sport organisations.

Nearly all interviewees perceived lack of experience as an internal barrier for advancement in their career. However, there was a marked gender difference in respect to self-confidence as an internal barrier. McKay (1992) found that not one man perceived his self-confidence to be a constraint; on the other hand, the majority of women mentioned it was a limitation that they had to overcome, as expressed by the following participant in McKay's study:

Being a teacher helped my confidence but I also saw fairly early in the piece that men could bluff their way through things. Without being aggressive I started to subtly pick them up on points. I know confidence is a big hurdle for women but I always say to them, 'Men overestimate their confidence and women underestimate theirs'. Men get away a lot by what I call 'B & B' – bluffing and bullying. I guess you could say that men are confident, but I think a lot of that's because they're never challenged by women. Women are always challenged by men, so as a woman, your confidence is constantly undermined (McKay, 1992, p. 10).

McKay explained that self-confidence can be viewed as part of a cycle of encouragement and opportunity which can be weakened when one's position is frequently questioned and challenged.

In relation to perceptions of external barriers, both men and women agreed with the premise that there were a limited number of executive positions available in sport management. By contrast, there was a noticeable gender difference in perception in how fair the competition was to obtain such a position. Most men and a few women saw virtually no external barriers. According to McKay, 'they followed the Nike philosophy – Just do it' (1992, p. 11). On the other hand, *most* women and a *few* men believed that there were significant external barriers

that disheartened even the most determined and talented women executives. The main constraints were:

- Masculine biases in recruitment, selection, development and promotion procedures
- The masculine ambience and culture of sport
- Sexual harassment and physical intimidation
- Balancing work and family responsibilities
- Executive inaction on gender equality issues (McKay, 1992).

Findings of the second study, the German project (Doll-Tepner, et al., 2006; Pfister & Radtke, 2009), were based on an analysis of a survey of 697 male and female sport executives, and in-depth interviews with 23 women board members. In addition, quite uniquely, the researchers interviewed sixteen directors (seven male and nine females) who left office prematurely (i.e. dropped-out as a board member) of German sport organisations. Radtke (2006) distinguished four key dimensions that, when combined, provided a framework to explain the under-representation of women on these boards. First, she identified the everyday life of female executives, particularly the balancing of family and professional responsibilities. She found that due to the gendered division of labour in households, support from partners in assuming their share of domestic responsibilities was essential for women to succeed.

Second, Radtke (2006) found that historically established practices that suited male directors in engaging in sport governance were often not attractive to women, thus, preventing them from getting satisfaction from serving on a board. One of the German women interviewees explained: 'It's as plain as day that many women, especially young women, will take a look

at the working atmosphere, the climate and the way people behave towards each other and they'll say: "I don't want that" (Radtke, 2006, p. 129). Another interviewee commented:

These old boys just keep talking until they've all had one too many. It's somehow terrible, the impression they make on others. It really is sometimes unprofessional, almost a comedy group. They are like debating clubs that convene without a program or objective and give the outward impression as if they didn't have anything better to do with their time (Radtke, 2006, p. 129).

Thirdly, according to Radtke (2006), women were less assertive and less inclined to promote themselves. Before standing for office they carefully assessed whether they could meet the obligations of the position in a dutiful manner, conveying the impression that they were hesitant, lacking self-confidence, and therefore less suitable to take up leadership roles.

McKay (1992) labelled this approach as an internal barrier.

Finally, active exclusion of women by male board members in governance was a major barrier, according to Radtke (2006). This occurred when women were given less opportunity than men to contribute and develop, were excluded from male networks, or were intimidated or and/or sexually harassed. This type of conscious and sub-conscious discrimination was also recognised by McKay (1992) as previously discussed. In regards to this issue, recruitment and selection procedures deserve special attention. Several researchers have found that men can control boards by framing the process of recruitment and selection in a manner so that the male-dominated culture on the sport board is maintained (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007; Hall, et al., 1989; Hovden, 2000). This happens when male board members select women that 'fit' to re-create themselves. On the other hand, women negotiate their entry to the board by proving their 'fit'. These women accept and adapt to the management style and culture of the board. Jorid Hovden, examining leadership selection in Norwegian sport organisations, found that the selection discourses strongly reflected male-centred images of corporate leadership skills. The term 'heavyweight' was used by one interview

participant as a metaphor of preferred leadership skills. Hovden explained how these skills were associated with heroic, powerful, masculine characteristics but perceived as gender neutral:

In my material, the connotation of 'heavyweight' seemed to be given implicit meanings, such as long and varied experience with elected posts, independence, competence in economic management and strategic planning and extensive contacts in business and politics. These meanings imply that men's rather than women's accounts of reality dominate. In most cases so-called "heavyweight" qualifications mirrored an image of appropriateness closely associated with a middle-aged male manager most likely interested in high-performance sport (Hovden, 2000, pp. 26-27).

The common strategy of searching in networks of friends and colleagues for potential board members re-creates the existing gender structure. This pattern remains current on boards of sport organisations, even in a country like Norway that is regarded as one of the most advanced in gender equality.

The results of the first part of the Olympic study, *Women, leadership and the Olympic movement*, (Henry, et al., 2004) was also obtained from survey and interview responses. A total of 146 female members on boards of National Olympic Committees (NOCs) and 89 Secretaries-General of these committees completed a survey questionnaire, while 30 women executives and 25 Secretaries-General participated in interviews. The researchers found barriers that were similar to the previous studies, such as family commitments of potential women candidates. This was of particular concern for women in full time employment where traditional gender roles of domestic labour were maintained. Another limitation was a lack of confidence of some women to stand for a position on a board which was largely male. The researchers commented with some surprise on this lack of confidence given that demographic data revealed high levels of educational qualifications (almost 80% had a university degree) and professional competence of many women.

One barrier that was most frequently cited in the first part of the Olympic project and which has not been explicitly mentioned in the previous studies, was the structural issue of 'getting women nominated and elected from a constituency of the National Federations whose representatives are predominantly and traditionally male' (Henry, et al., 2004, p. 5). This issue became the focus of the second part of the study in which the recruitment process and experiences of women candidates for executive committees of NOCs and IFs were investigated (Henry & Robinson, 2010). The methods used for this part of the project included two questionnaire surveys to NOCs (n=110) and IFs (n=50), and interviews with 36 women members of Olympic organisations. In addition to some of the barriers already identified in the first part of the project, the authors reported that many women felt uncomfortable with the electoral experience. This was mainly due to the fact that the electorate was dominantly male and therefore women were hugely outnumbered by their male counterparts as candidates and those with voting rights. Many women experienced this context as intimidating and uncomfortable. The authors (Henry & Robinson, 2010, p. 93) identified seven main barriers in the electoral system:

1. Lack of women identified to bring forward as candidates
2. Reluctance of female candidates to put themselves forward as candidates
3. Electorate dominated by male presidents and secretaries-general
4. Lack of turnover; long standing incumbents means few spaces for new (female) candidates
5. Negative aspects of organisational culture
6. Women elected but not to senior roles
7. Women marginalised by being limited to Women in Sport Commission/gender policy area.

It is evident, then, that in light of the findings of these three studies, similar to those in the corporate sector, women face significant constraints in obtaining board membership in sport organisations. Although as I argue in this thesis, the identification of barriers and constraints is useful to gain a better understanding of women's under-representation on boards, previous studies have not focused on investigating the underlying processes that produce these barriers

and frustrate gender equality on sport boards. Accordingly, the key question that arises from this orientation is: how does gender work in board governance? or, what are the underlying gender dynamics on these boards? When McKay distinguished between internal and external barriers he mainly referred to these as “factors”; more emphasis needs to be given to the dynamics of gender relations because factors are static categories or indicators which themselves require explanation and that, as I argue in this thesis, can only be understood by identifying and analysing the dynamic social practices. Therefore there is a need to examine what happens on the board when women have actually gained a seat at the table of sport boardrooms and work together with male directors. I start this part of the review by considering the characteristics of women who have overcome the barriers and managed to gain a seat on sport boards.

3.7 Characteristics of women on sport boards

Generated by their research in Germany, Pfister and Radtke (2009; Radtke, 2006) developed a profile of the typical woman executive on a sport board based on the combination of various individual characteristics that in reality need not always manifest themselves together. Their construct is thus more an ‘ideal type’ and should be used as an interpretive guide for actual and unique contexts. The typical female executive on a sport board, according to Pfister and Radtke (2009; Radtke, 2006) was approximately 50 years old. She was well educated with a university degree and worked as a professional, often in the areas of teaching, management or law. She had relatively flexible working hours, was ambitious and enjoyed new challenges. Regarding her marital status, she was either single without children or, if married with children, her children were young adults. In the latter case, she received strong support from her partner. Her sporting background demonstrated her enthusiastic involvement in sport from childhood onwards, participation in competition at regional or

higher level and an emotional affiliation with her sport. She did not wish to be perceived as the 'token' woman but wanted to be respected for her expertise and performance. She generally rejected affirmative action such as gender quotas and felt that other women could make it to the top on their own accord just like her. She did not wish to contribute to women's issues only, but wanted to be involved in decision making across a range of issues in her sport organisation. She did not feel uncomfortable in the male-dominated sport system and had learnt to adapt to the existing culture (Pfister & Radtke, 2009; Radtke, 2006).

How does this profile compare with demographic data on women in the IOC study (Henry, et al., 2004)? The age of women members of Executive Boards of NOCs ranged from 25 to 85, with a mean of 49.4. Only twelve out of 133 respondents were aged 35 and under. In regard to level of education, 78% had degrees and/or teaching qualifications. Ten women (8%) had a PhD, which suggests a highly educated cohort of women on NOC Executive Boards. The majority of women (63%) were in employment, with 49% of them working full time and 15% part time. There was no data available about their occupation or industry location. More than 70% of the respondents were married or living with a partner, and a similarly high percentage had one or more children. Several women in full-time employment and family responsibilities relied heavily on support from partners, with some women mentioning sacrifices being made in terms of personal relationships. Not surprisingly, 81.8% had been competitive sportswomen, including 65 women (45.5%) who had competed at international level such as Olympic Games and World Championships. Although it is not possible to derive from the data that these women were better qualified or had a more elite sporting background than their male counterparts, some respondents made such comments during the interviews. Further, NOC Secretaries-General's responses suggested that these women were highly committed and very active board members (78% were rated in the top half in terms of

most active members). By and large, these statistics confirmed the predicted ideal type of a female executive on a sports board as described by Pfister and Radtke (2009; Radtke, 2006).

In their conclusion, Pfister and Radke (2009) stated that although male and female board members are similarly highly educated, occupying influential positions in their professional lives and demonstrating a strong dedication to sport, women do not have the same positions and influence as men on sport boards. The main barriers for women can be found in the subtext of the organisational culture of sport boards as Pfister and Radtke (2009, p. 241) have commented:

These (barriers) are ‘embodied’ in the ‘ideal leader, who is characterized by high socio-economic status, a long commitment to sport and sport clubs, freedom from family duties, a high degree of self-confidence, and a ‘thick skin’ in disputes and conflicts. On average, women comply less with this ‘ideal’ than men.

Further, they proposed that the amount of time spent on the job often serves to discriminate between the performance of men and women in the governance of sport organisations. Being available 24/7 symbolises commitment and loyalty. This creates a conflict between the idea of being an ‘ideal leader’ and ‘ideal mother’ with the implication that an ideal leader cannot be an ideal mother and vice-versa. Thus, the under-representation of women in sport governance is not the result of women themselves, their decisions and capacities, but largely the result of an organisational culture that appears gender neutral but in reality supports a gender order that favours men.

In reviewing the empirical evidence so far, it is clear that women are a minority within sport governing bodies for which various reasons have been identified, most importantly organisational culture. The focus of most studies has been on the first stage which involves women’s achievement of a position on a sport board. In the next section I review several

studies that have investigated the next stage - after women have obtained a board position.

What are their roles and how do they experience their role?

3.8 The role and experiences of women on sport boards

The IOC research project investigated women executives' experiences on sport boards and their role in regard to strategic direction of the organisation and board processes (Henry, et al., 2004; Henry & Robinson, 2010). By contrast to the German profile, the NOC women regarded affirmative action (in the form of the IOC setting targets for women's representation in leadership positions) as a positive force for change. Nevertheless, the women did not see themselves as 'tokens' and did not like to be identified as having gained a board position because of targets and quotas rather than on their own merits. Despite their high level of education and professional background, many women expressed their frustration with male directors receiving preference for positions of responsibility (Henry, et al., 2004). Another salient finding was that the majority of interview participants mentioned that having women on boards kept policy concerns of women and sport on the agenda. Some respondents agreed that women's presence influenced ongoing focus and debate on women's issues. In terms of leadership process or style, some women respondents perceived that women assumed a feminine approach described as one which was more democratic, consultative and inclusive. However, some interviewed participants also reported on a tendency of women, once 'inside' the organisation, to adopt a more masculine leadership style (Henry & Robinson, 2010) .

3.9 Gender relations on sport boards

So far, the focus has been on the investigation of women directors only. However, to gain a better understanding about the gender relations on the board it is imperative to include examination of the role of men on the board. Further to the IOC study, there are several

studies that go beyond examining the role and experiences of women only by investigating those of both men and women directors. The focus of this research is on understanding the gender relations on boards of sport organisations (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008; Hovden, 2006; Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Slack, 2002; Sibson, 2010). Using a historical analysis Shaw and Slack (2002) showed how gender relations are created in sport organisations. They argued that language, practices and policy within the context of the sport organisation construct gender relations that favour masculinities over femininities which explain women's under-representation and men's dominance in sport governance. In her study of New Zealand sport bodies (regional sport trusts), Sally Shaw characterised the gender relations on these bodies as 'gender suppression' (2006, p. 554). She proposed that the gender relations were contested but remained unresolved. One way of maintaining the status quo was through the organisational practice of employing the 'best person for the job' regardless of gender. CEOs claimed that they considered appropriate qualifications and skills more important than gender and viewed their organisation as homogeneous and gender neutral but Shaw identified this practice as preserving gender suppression.

Another way of preserving gender suppression was found in an Australian study of a local, grass roots sport organisation (Sibson, 2010). The author reported that male directors in this organisation exercised exclusionary power by limiting the participation and input of women board members. The continued practice of exclusion led to the decision by one of the women to resign from the board. In a similar vein, in a study of Norwegian sport organisations, Jorid Hovden described the gender distribution of women's under-representation and men's dominance on boards as a 'gender order' (2006, p. 41) that operated in paradoxical ways. On the one hand, the existing gender order was understood by board members as a woman's problem, a result of women's individual choices, priorities and competences or a time-lag

problem, which meant that in the future it would disappear ‘on its own accord’. Accordingly, the current gender order was diagnosed as a problem beyond the responsibility of the organisation. On the other hand, a competing understanding was that the existing gender order was a socially constructed power relation that could be challenged and changed. From this perspective, the gender order was not conceptualised as a natural or individual problem but an institutional construction.

It is evident that the New-Zealand, Australian and Norwegian studies focused on gendered power relations, the way in which authority, control and influence are exercised along gender lines in sport organisations. A recent Dutch study (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008) also confirmed the existence of gendered power relations on boards of sport organisations but adopted a somewhat different approach in reaching such a conclusion. The researchers examined how board members of national sport organisations in the Netherlands made sense of gendered arrangements in terms of ‘doing and undoing gender in sport governance’ (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008, p. 81). They found that directors gave different meanings of the gender arrangements depending if their board was gender skewed (women under-represented) or gender balanced. Those who were members of a gender-skewed board did not question the under-representation of women because they defined their board as normal and a gender-balanced board as unique. They showed a tendency to reproduce gender ‘liminally’ (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008, p. 90) which meant that they were not aware of gendered ‘sense-making’ and did not consider gender to be an issue. By contrast, directors on gender-balanced boards demonstrated more awareness of gender composition and were more reflective of stereotypical behaviour. They *did* gender when they described male and female qualities but *undid* gender when they allocated stereotypical behaviours in atypical ways. A key finding was that men can play a significant role in the undoing of gender

meanings of behaviours or tasks. They can be effective in bringing about change in the way sport organisations make sense of gender. The authors concluded by stating that since their study was only exploratory in nature, more research in this area is needed.

3.10 Summary

This chapter has provided a critical appraisal of prevailing knowledge and understanding of gender and its relationship to governance in sport. First, the concept of sport governance was located and defined within the broader context of governance. One of the main research themes identified in sport governance was board structure and composition including gender diversity which has been scarcely addressed by sport management scholars to date.

Subsequently, I examined literature on gender distribution on sport boards at national and international levels, and found that despite an upward trend in women's representation on boards, women continue to be markedly under-represented.

Although a considerable amount of research has explored the under-representation of women in sport governance, limited research has focused on examining the gender relations of boards of directors. Most research on women directors has been descriptive in nature by counting the number of women on boards, analysing barriers for women to gain a board position and then recommending strategies to address these constraints (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007; Doll-Tepner, et al., 2006; Hartmann-Tews & Pfister, 2003; Henry, et al., 2004; Henry & Robinson, 2010; McKay, 1992, 1997; Skirstad, 2002; White & Brackenridge, 1985). Several studies, based on both quantitative and qualitative research, have focused on the predictors or the profile of women directors and their role on sport boards (Henry, et al., 2004; Henry & Robinson, 2010; Pfister & Radtke, 2009; Radtke, 2006). Few studies have gone beyond the surface by investigating the underlying gender dynamics on sport boards (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008; Hovden, 2006; Shaw, 2006; Sibson, 2010). Yet this line of investigation

may disclose reasons for the lack of gender diversity and gender inequality on sport boards. The previously described studies have often focused on the nexus of power and gender by identifying a gender hierarchy or gender order, and how these unequal power relations are maintained. Some studies have considered how language (symbolic) within the context of sport organisations constructs gender relations that privilege men. It is evident, however, that none of these studies has used a comprehensive framework to analyse gender relations on sport boards. There is a gap in the literature that investigates how gender works in sport governance using a framework that integrates a variety of gender relations such as power relations, task division and symbolic representation. McKay's Australian study, with valuable quantitative and qualitative data, is 20 years old. In 2010, Sibson (2010) examined the governing board of an Australian local, grass roots sport organisation. There are no recent studies in Australia that have investigated women in sport governance at a national level building on or updating McKay's studies. The current study aims to examine how gender works on Australian boards of National Sport Organisations. The following chapter outlines the theoretical framework for the study.

CHAPTER 4: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I outline the theoretical framework for the study. My point of departure is Kanter's classical study (1977) in which she examined the role of men and women in organisational management in the 1970s. Her thoughts on opportunity and power in organisational management were further developed by two streams of theorists, namely, feminist scholars and sociologists on work and organisations. Both streams converged on the concept of gendered organisation. I discuss the findings of a range of Australian and international studies on gender relations in organisations such as public sector agencies, corporations and other institutions. These studies have elaborated on and refined the key notion that organisations are intrinsically gendered, as proposed by Acker's theory (1990) and, as a consequence, they reproduce gender inequality.

I then explore the question of how we can distinguish between social practice that advances gender equality and one that obstructs it by introducing the notion of *doing gender in organisations*. In this context I particularly focus on the work of Raewyn Connell (2009), the internationally acclaimed scholar who understands the concept of gender 'as a verb', a theoretical perspective comprised of several approaches. Such a perspective makes it possible to identify patterns of gendered practices in organisations. Connell (2009) has called these patterns 'gender regimes'. I describe her four dimensional model of gender relations in detail because, by using it, one can analyse the gender dynamics that prevail in organisations including sport bodies. Similar to Schofield and Goodwin's research (2005), this model provides the theoretical framework for the present study.

4.2 Masculine ethic in organisational management

The pioneering work of Rosabeth Kanter, entitled *Men and Women of the Corporation* (1977), heralded the beginning of a range of studies investigating gender dynamics in organisations. Based on ethnographic research of a large corporation in the USA, Kanter argued that the role of managers is profoundly masculinised since rationality and efficiency were the *raison d'être* for their position. Paraphrasing Max Weber, she wrote: 'The spirit of managerialism was infused with a masculine ethic' (Kanter, 1977, p. 20). Yet, what exactly is a masculine ethic? According to Kanter it can be identified as a collection of characteristics including a tough minded approach, strong analytical abilities, a capacity to set aside emotional considerations, a focus on task accomplishments and cognitive superiority in problem solving. These qualities supposedly belonged to men, therefore governance and managerial control in organisations were considered to be an exclusive domain for men. Only women who could 'think like a man' were able to gain entry.

Another related and salient finding of Kanter's work was that men who managed maintained the masculine ethic of management by recruiting people who fitted in, who were 'their kind'. In this context Kanter introduced the concept of 'homosocial reproduction' (1977, p. 54), meaning managers reproduce themselves in their own image through selecting prospective managers on the basis of social similarities. It was much easier to communicate with a homogenous group than a heterogeneous one; women belonged to a category of the incomprehensible and unpredictable. Kanter added that the higher the level of uncertainty of the job, the more one relies on homosocial reproduction. When an organisation has developed a high degree of consensus about the tasks and role of management, the need for homogeneity is reduced and different kind of people can be accepted for management positions including women.

Although some women had been able to obtain a management role in the corporation studied by Kanter, they remained a rarity. Kanter contended that these women, often working as the only woman among an all-male management group, became ‘tokens: symbols of how-women-can-do, stand-ins for all women’ (1977, p. 207). These women had a challenging role because they were highly visible in terms of their performance as a ‘female manager’. They became public figures with their performance and behaviour under continuous scrutiny. These women were representing not just themselves but women as a group. Kanter further found that relative numbers are significant for affecting behaviour in organisations. One or two women tend to have limited influence but when a minority group obtains a presence of one third or more it is thought to become a ‘critical mass’ and therefore able to influence the culture of the organisation. Such groups can form alliances with other minority members and contribute to the organisation’s governance in ways that can bring about change.

Kanter concluded that the prevailing gender hierarchy in organisations is not the result of differences between men and women, and gender inequalities at work are not based on factors associated with individuals. Kanter rejected the individual model to explain women’s under-representation in organisational governance proposing an alternative: ‘Responses to work are a function of basic structural issues, such as the constraints imposed by the roles and effects of opportunity, power and numbers. Attention to *these* issues would require organisations – not people - to change’ (1977, p. 261). In her view, systems of work needed to be modified to achieve gender equality in corporations and other organisations.

4.3 The gendered organisation

Kanter’s way of thinking was ground-breaking and in the following decade, two streams of researchers further developed the concept of gender dynamics in organisational governance.

By the early 1990s, feminist theorists had achieved a broad consensus on gender relations and governance in major social institutions, especially the state and its administrative apparatus. Basically they agreed that such institutions do not simply reflect gender relations and inequalities that originate elsewhere. Rather, they are actively created within their own organisations albeit usually in relation to those that prevail outside them (Franzway, Court, & Connell, 1989; Fraser, 1989; Hernes, 1987; MacKinnon, 1989; Pateman, 1988; Pringle & Watson, 1992; Walby, 1990; Yeatman, 1990). Further, such processes do not simply advance a monolithic patriarchal interest and affect all women in the same way; they are gendered in uneven and nuanced ways. This work developed alongside sociological study of work and organisations that produced similar conclusions: workplaces and organisations were themselves gendered as Dana Britton (2000) found in relation to the North-American context.

In Australia this sociological investigation of work and organisation had already produced similar findings in a range of large organisations including many within the state (Burton, 1987; Game & Pringle, 1983; Pringle, 1989). Clare Burton (1987), a feminist researcher and strong advocate for social change, introduced the concept of the mobilisation of masculine bias. She argued that ‘ideas of masculinity and femininity are embedded in organisational arrangements. The opportunity to accumulate merit and the attribution of merit appear to be structured along gender lines’ (p. 424). As a consequence, she concluded that male domination in institutions is sustained due to selection and promotion processes which favour men through the criteria and processes that are being used.

Subsequent sociological literature on the gendered character of corporations and public sector agencies as organisations appeared in an increasing number of international contexts, that is in the ‘global North’. Some of the more notable findings involved men’s overwhelming

predominance in senior management and at policy-making levels, the strongly gendered division of labour in public employment, and the marginalisation of women's interests in relation to men's through organisational processes (Gierycz, 1999; Grant & Tancred, 1992). Further studies have shown the gendered nature of promotion opportunities within public sector agencies in the US (Newman, 1995), the variety of gendered patterns of management in the UK public sector (Whitehead & Moodley, 1999), and how Scandinavian public sector organisations' adjustment to change is inherently gendered (Jensen, 1998).

In relation to the transnational context, based on a study of managers, men and women, in high-technology, multinational companies in the UK, Wajcman (1999) concluded that despite women's entry into senior management, the male model of management still prevails. Men's behaviour remains the norm or standard against which women are measured. She significantly departed from Kanter's perspective (1977) that saw the job or position as operating according organisational power. If that were the case, Wajcman reasoned, when women obtained management positions, gender inequality would end. She found, however, that women coming into senior management did not bring a more consultative, co-operative and caring style to the position; they were pressured to 'manage like a man'. In fact, Wajcman discovered that 'many women managers adapt and survive by being more male than the men' (1999, p. 76). Women managers not only conformed to the male model to succeed in the workplace but they often adopted masculine patterns of (non) participation in households by hiring domestic services for cleaning, gardening and child care. According to Wajcman, women managers face a significant challenge, since they need to redefine and negotiate their gender identity. On the one hand they are required to manage like a man, adopting a 'rational approach' and working long hours, but on the other hand, they are expected to present and preserve their femininity in terms of appearance, sexuality and

emotional behaviour. However, as Wajcman (1999) explained, it is not only women who face the challenge of negotiating a gender identity; some men do not endorse the dominant male model of management either. Managerial masculinities originate from hegemonic masculinity and some men feel alienated from the macho corporate culture, thus adopting the prevailing style of management can be confronting for individuals of either sex.

4.4 Acker's theory

Central to the coherence of this research trajectory has been the concept of the 'gendered organisation' developed by Joan Acker (1990) in the United States. Kanter (1977), as previously mentioned, proposed that it was the structure of the corporation and not individual characteristics that caused gender inequalities. Women's problems occurred because they were placed in dead-end jobs at the bottom of the organisation and exposed as tokens at the top. Acker (1990) departed from this perspective by stating that organisations are *not* gender-neutral and should be viewed as sites that are patterned in their very constitution by a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine, in relation to their basic components, that is, structure, ideology, policy and practice, interaction and identity. This constitutive patterning, according to Acker, simultaneously reproduces gender inequalities since the distinction that characterises it necessarily involves hierarchical differentiation of values along gendered lines. She asserted, '(i)mages of men's bodies and masculinity pervade organisational processes, marginalising women and contributing to the maintenance of gender segregation in organisations' (Acker, 1990, p. 139). The 'organisation-as-intrinsically-gendered' perspective, however, has serious limitations insofar as the advancement of gender equality and women's interests is rendered theoretically impossible within large organisations. Such limitations derive primarily from what Acker understands by gender in relation to organisations. As explained above, for Acker gender is a *process* of

distinguishing between male and female, men and women, in such a way that they are valued and evaluated in hierarchically differentiated ways that distribute resources, both material and symbolic, unequally between the two.

Since the publication of Acker's paper there has been extensive and vigorous theoretical discussion of the concept of gender. One of the dominant threads in this development has been the idea that gender is indeed a social process but one that brings the bodily reproductive distinction between men and women, male and female, into being in such a way that the differential relationship involved is not necessarily hierarchical and unequal (Connell, 2009; Ferree, Lorber, & Hess, 1999; Kvande, 2007; McNay, 2000; Moore, 1994). This allows for the possibility of gendered social practice that does not reproduce gender inequality and that, in fact, may advance gender equality. The question that arises here is how can we distinguish between social practice that advances gender equality and one that frustrates or obstructs it?

4.5 Doing gender in organisations

Much of the recent theoretical work on gender builds on the concept of gender as a verb - we 'do gender' on a routine, daily basis (Connell, 1987; West & Zimmerman, 1987). This approach has also attracted European engagement most notably developed in the work of Elin Kvande (2007). In her theoretical work *Doing Gender in Flexible Organisations* Kvande (2007) combined the approaches of Connell (1987), West and Zimmerman (1987), West and Fenstermaker (1995), and Acker (1990). Like the contemporary gender and organisation theorists from whom she draws, she has proposed that gender is dynamic and flexible as we constantly create and accomplish it in response to the social environment. By contrast to understanding gender as inherited and/or comprised of learned individual qualities, Kvande

emphasised its dynamic interactive pattern. She proposed, ‘I see gender for men, as well as for women, as a social construction created within specific social and historical locations that both constrain and also contain the potential for radical change. This implies that we can “do” gender in ways that maintain existing gender relations, or we can challenge them’ (Kvande, 2007, p. 61). Further, Kvande suggested that the ‘doing gender’ perspective allows for identifying *patterns of gendered practices* which are created not only by individuals but also, importantly, by institutions and organisations.

4.6 Gender regimes

In the process and over time, these social patterns of gendered practice are sedimented and shape possibilities for further practice (Connell, 2009). It is in this sense that gendered practice is understood as structured. Feminist theoretical discussion since the late 1980s has suggested various ways of categorising structures of gendered practice that are significant in understanding gender and possibilities for social change. The most common involves a distinction between the material and the symbolic (Fraser, 1989, 1997; McNay, 2000). More elaborate frameworks have been developed by sociologists, Sylvia Walby (1990) and Raewyn Connell (Connell, 1987; 2009). Both have discussed gendered structures of practice in terms of the concept of *gender regime* but with a different analytical and political purpose. For Walby, it is to understand how patriarchy, or institutionalised inequality in gender relations, works. Her approach, like Joan Acker’s (1990), precludes the possibility of gendered relations that are not inherently unequal. Her main theoretical and political objective is to describe the system of power and oppression that feminism confronts. Connell’s, by comparison, is to describe the dynamics and conditions of gender change.

Connell (2009) has explained that the key to understanding gender is to move away from a focus on sex differences to a focus on relationships between and among men and women. Representing gender as a category-based dichotomy, or a binary, of male and female, does not capture the complexity and dynamism involved. Intrinsic to this approach is the proposition that gendered structures of practice can both facilitate and frustrate gender equality, and that possibilities for change can be identified by examining what kinds of gendered structures are operating in any specific organisational location, from households and playgrounds to board rooms and international political assemblies (Schofield & Goodwin, 2005).

4.7 Connell's four dimensional model of gender relations

According to Connell (2009), systematically determining where and how people 'do gender' in an organisational context depends on being able to identify a pattern of practices associated with four main areas of social life. The combination of these and the pattern of gender relations produced by it, is what Connell has called a 'gender regime' (Connell, 2009, p. 72). The four dimensions of a gender regime are the:

a) *gender division of labour*, that is the way in which production or work is arranged on gender lines. Previously called the sexual division of labour, this arrangement is observed across history and across cultures. To illustrate the concept, Connell (2009) described how in Aboriginal communities of the Australian central desert, men were responsible for hunting wallabies and kangaroos while collecting root vegetables and seeds was considered women's work. The gender division can also be observed on committees of organisations when the position of president is often occupied by a man in contrast to the role of secretary being fulfilled by a woman. From an even broader perspective, the division of labour is evident in 'work' and 'home'. Work in terms of the economic sphere of paid labour and market

production is still defined, according to Connell, as a men's world and domestic life as a women's world despite the presence of men and women in both spheres.

b) *gender relations of power*, that is the way in which control, authority, and force are exercised on gender lines, including organisational hierarchy, legal power and violence, both individual and collective. Power in this context relates to the concept of patriarchy, a gender order in which men dominate women. The control of men over women does not only occur at an individual level but is also impersonally realised through institutions or the state. The work of Kanter (1977), Burton (1987), and Wacjman (1999), as previously described, provide important examples of institutionalised power. This structure of gender relations also includes power relations within the group of men, in particular, in the oppression of gay men. In their analysis of men and masculinities, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) distinguished between hegemonic and subordinated masculinities.

c) *emotion and human relations*, that is the way attachment and antagonism among people and groups are organised along gender lines, including feelings of solidarity, prejudice, sexual attraction and repulsion. These feelings of emotional attachments and commitments are often interwoven with the structures of power and division of labour. Emotional attachments can be favourable (in the form of love and affection) or hostile towards the object. It can even be favourable and hostile at the same time (ambivalence), as Freud proposed in his analysis of the Oedipus complex. A major part of emotional relations is sexuality. Connell has suggested that in contemporary Western society the main axis of sexuality is gender: the division between heterosexual (cross-gender) and homosexual (same-gender) relations. The implications of this distinction are profound. It characterises different kinds of people, heterosexuals and homosexuals, and defines most households as they are based and organised around this concept.

d) *gender culture and symbolism*, that is the way in which gender identities are defined and gender is represented and understood, including prevailing beliefs and attitudes about gender. All social interactions imply an interpretation of the world. We give meaning to our observations, feelings and actions. This also applies to gender. ‘Whenever we speak of a “woman” or a “man”, we call into play a tremendous system of understandings, implications, overtones and allusions that have accumulated through our cultural history’, stated Connell (2009, p. 83). Our language shows many symbolic gender meanings such as in expressions ‘a seminal work’ or ‘throwing like a girl’. Jacques Lacan (cited in Connell, 2009), a French psychoanalyst, argued that language can be understood as phallogentric, which means that the place of authority and privileged subjectivity are always masculine. Symbolic gender relations are not only expressed in language, but also in dress and make-up, photography and film, and impersonal forms of culture such as the built environment. Although four structures of gender relations can be distinguished it does not mean that they operate in separate ways. They are interwoven and constantly interact with each other.

From this perspective, the social practices involved in producing gender in organisations at any one time occur within already existing patterns of practice that have been established over time. These shape the parameters for possible action. Action, in turn, can cause such limits to change. Such an approach permits the possibility of identifying how organisational processes, such as sport board governance, are gendered and whether the configurations identified reproduce gender inequalities or promote gender change. Accordingly, it was chosen as the preferred approach for conducting a study of how gender works in the governance of sport organisations.

Schofield and Goodwin (2005) have demonstrated how this model can be used effectively to analyse the gender dynamics in organisations. Their study identified the various gender regimes that prevailed in several public sector institutions in New South Wales, Australia. In their conclusion they proposed that their approach and method can be adopted by researchers to analyse and identify gender dynamics in other organisations. This fourfold gender model provides the theoretical framework for the present study. The research questions are:

1. What are the gender relations that characterise the composition and operation of sport boards in NSOs in Australia in terms of a ‘gender regimes’ approach, that is, one that draws on categories associated with the gendered organisation of production, power/authority, emotional attachment and symbolic relations?
2. In view of the above, what are the implications or prospects for gender equality on these boards in terms of the barriers and opportunities created by the specific configurations of gender relations and dynamics?

4.8 Summary

In this chapter I have explained the theoretical framework for the study. I first discussed the findings of a range of Australian and international studies on gender relations in organisations. The notions that organisations are intrinsically gendered (Acker, 1990) and that gender is actively created through social practice (Connell, 1987; West & Zimmerman, 1987) were central to the discussion. I then focused on Connell’s theory (2009) in which she proposes a four dimensional model of gender relations which can be used to analyse how gender works in organisations. Identification of the gender regime, the pattern of gender relations associated with the four dimensions of social life, allows for a better understanding of the gender dynamics that prevail in organisations. Further, it permits analysis of social practices that either advance or constrain gender equality in organisations. Adopting this

theoretical perspective for the present study, the central research question of examining the gender relations in sport boards was refined by referring to the ‘gender regimes’ approach and distinguishing the four dimensions of gender relations. The following chapter outlines the research design and methodology of the study.

CHAPTER 5: METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I describe and discuss the methodology used for the study. The aim of the study, as previously described, is to investigate how gender works on boards of NSOs in Australia. The research questions are:

1. What are the gender relations that characterise the composition and operation of sport boards in NSOs in Australia in terms of a ‘gender regimes’ approach, that is, one that draws on categories associated with the gendered organisation of production, power/authority, emotional attachment and symbolic relations?
2. In view of the above, what are the implications or prospects for gender equality on these boards in terms of the barriers and opportunities created by the specific configurations of gender relations and dynamics?

First, I outline the research design and provide a justification for the chosen methods.

Subsequently I describe the sampling method, the data collection instruments and procedure, and analysis of data. Finally, I discuss aspects of validity and reliability, and ethical considerations.

5.2 Research design

The research design for the study comprised two stages:

- Stage one: audit of gender representation on NSO boards
- Stage two: in-depth interviews with board directors and chief executive officers of five NSOs and collection of documents in relation to gender diversity on boards of these NSOs

In stage one an audit was conducted involving all NSOs that had received funding from the ASC in 2007/08. NSOs were selected to participate in this study because they are the national governing body for their specific sport and it is at this level that important decisions are made for hundreds of thousands physically active Australians and those that want to be active. The rationale for selecting NSOs that receive public funding was that women should be adequately represented in organisations that provide a service for the general population. In 2007/08 there were 81 NSOs recognised by the ASC of which 56 had been allocated a grant (Australian Sports Commission, 2008). The audit measured the gender distribution (ratio of men and women directors) on the boards of these 56 NSOs. In addition, it identified the gender of the chair/president and CEO of each organisation. For the purpose of the study I defined the CEO as the (paid) top executive responsible for the organisation's overall operations and performance, and who operates in accordance with the delegations and directions given by the board. She/he may also be referred to as General Manager, Executive Director or Secretary-General.

Sources for data on gender distribution were annual reports of NSOs and their official websites. At times, telephone contact was made with the office of the sport organisation to check the information for accuracy. The purpose of this stage was twofold: to get important benchmark data on the gender distribution on boards of Australian NSOs and to use this data to sample participants for the next stage. A copy of the results of the gender distribution on NSO boards can be viewed in appendix one.

The focus of the study was on stage two as data collected during this period aligned with the key research question of the gender relations on boards of sport organisations. In addition to conducting in-depth interviews, this stage also involved the collection of documents of those NSOs whose board members were interviewed. Documents such as constitutions, strategic

plans and policies were examined to identify any statements they contained about gender representation on the organisation's board. The documents were gathered through searching the organisation's web site and also through a request to the CEO and/or relevant board members of the sport organisation. The purpose of collecting these documents was to ascertain if and how they influence gender structure and dynamics on boards. As the majority of data were gathered through in-depth interviews, the next section explains this method in more detail.

5.3 Qualitative research

The majority of research into gender equality on sport boards, as previously mentioned, has investigated the issue of gender distribution (Australian Sports Commission, 2003; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007; Doll-Tepper, et al., 2006; Hall, et al., 1989; Hartmann-Tews & Pfister, 2003; Hovden, 2000; International Olympic Committee, 2005; McKay, 1992; Skirstad, 2002; White & Brackenridge, 1985). Percentages of women board members, selection processes, constraints to gaining a seat on the board and strategies to address these constraints have been the main foci. By contrast, this study explored the dynamics of governance that prevail when women have actually gained a seat at the boardroom table. A qualitative rather than a quantitative method was required in this case. Ferkins, Shilbury and McDonald (2005) have argued that there have been very few qualitative studies of governance in sporting organisations and that in-depth qualitative data may enhance the understanding of the structure, composition and role of the board.

Qualitative research locates the observer in the world. It involves an interpretive, 'naturalistic' approach to the world (Amis, 2005; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Veal, 2005). Researchers study phenomena in their natural setting, collecting a variety of empirical

materials such as case study, personal experience, life story, interviews, photographs, artefacts, cultural texts and productions. The term qualitative implies a focus on the qualities of entities, processes and meanings. This is in contrast to quantitative research which involves measurement of social behaviour and experience in terms of amount, intensity or frequency. Qualitative researchers emphasise the socially constructed nature of society and the intimate relationship between the researcher and the phenomenon that is being studied. They examine how social experience is created and given meaning. They often collect a great deal of rich information about relatively few people or organisations rather than collecting a limited amount of information about a large number of people and organisations.

Veal (2005) has identified five main methods by which qualitative researchers seek to understand the social world: in-depth interviews, focus groups, participant observation, ethnography and biographical research. An in-depth interview is an individual interview guided by a checklist of topics or issues rather than a formal questionnaire. A focus group is similar to an in-depth interview but conducted with a group of around five to twelve participants. In this situation interaction not only takes place between interviewer and interviewee but also among the focus group members. Participant observation involves the researcher as a participant along with the participants that are being studied. The researcher may be incognito or known by the participants as the researcher. Ethnography has its origin in anthropology, using multiple rather than a single one of the above techniques. The fifth and final method, biographical research, focuses on an individual's full or partial life history. Besides conducting an in-depth interview, in this case, a researcher may also gather documentary evidence and individual's own written records.

5.4 In-depth interviews

The method to be used in stage two of the present study was the in-depth interview because this was thought to be the most appropriate method to collect meaningful data in relation to the research questions. Participant observation would also have been a very useful method of data collection but confidential business of boards precluded its adoption. The most productive way to find out about gender relation on boards was by interviewing the directors and their CEOs using a checklist of topics or a semi-structured schedule. As the name suggests, the in-depth interview aims to probe more deeply than a questionnaire. It was expected that the participants in the study had different and unique experiences to share - their 'own story' to tell – so the in-depth interview was more suitable than a standard questionnaire. During the interview I had the opportunity to elaborate on the answers of the participant by asking further questions, thus gaining a deeper understanding of the issues raised (Amis, 2005).

The in-depth interview was preferred over a focus group interview as the former would yield richer information about each individual. By adopting such a method, it was anticipated that the participant would be willing to share more information in an individual setting when sensitive or confidential issues about their sport organisation were involved. In-depth interviews were also thought to be more appropriate than participant observation. Although participant observation may have had some advantages in collecting information in a more natural setting, namely the boardroom, it was unlikely that a great deal of thoughts, feelings and perceptions of the directors would have been observable in this case. Further, it may have been difficult to obtain access to board meetings because it usually is a place where contentious and confidential matters are discussed.

Traditionally, in-depth interviewing is conceptualised as taking a neutral stance, a position of scientific objectivity. An important skill in interviewing, according to Veal (2005), is to encourage the interviewee to talk. The researcher should avoid making comments or ask 'leading' questions. She or he should not influence the interviewee to answer in any particular way or enter into debate. This perspective contrasts with the notion of empathetic interviewing, a more contemporary view, which sees interviewing more as a partnership between the interviewee and the researcher (Oakley, 2000a; Scheurich, 1995). From this perspective the researcher is a human being, historically and contextually located, with motives, desires, feelings and biases. How can a researcher be entirely neutral? 'The conventional, positivist view of interviewing', comments Scheurich, 'vastly underestimates the complexity, uniqueness and indeterminateness of each one-to-one human interaction' (1995, p. 241). The traditional neutral stance has been replaced by a contemporary ethical stance. The researcher and interviewee form a partnership in which they collaborate in a study. The results of the study may be used for advocacy purposes to change social policies and improve conditions for the group that is being studied. This new trend in interviewing characterises the interview as negotiated text. Fontana and Frey (2005, p. 716) summarised their view on the interview as a form of discourse:

There is a growing realisation that interviewers are not the mythical neutral tools envisioned by survey research. Interviewers are increasingly seen as active participants in an interaction with respondents, and interviews are seen as negotiated accomplishments of both interviewers and respondents that are shaped by the contexts and situations in which they take place.

Given my background in the international women's sport movement and commitment to advancing gender equality in sport, as previously mentioned, I adopted the contemporary approach to interviewing recognising that the data gathering process was a collaborative effort between the researcher and interviewee. In addition, my gender may have had some impact on the nature of the interviews. On the one hand, this may have influenced

participants to talk about women on sport boards in a positive way, for example, emphasising their contributions to the organisation. On the other hand, it could have provoked some aversion by certain respondents who view the issue of women on boards as a feminist agenda item and do not support research into these issues. The latter could have resulted in responses with a tendency to deny or play down inequalities between men and women. When conducting the interviews I felt that both cases were present at times. As a consequence it is possible that the results of my study are somewhat understated, that is, gender inequality on the boards in my study may be more pronounced than my results indicate. The next section addresses the selection of the participants and their context.

5.5 Sampling participants for in-depth interviews

Qualitative research, as mentioned previously, is oriented to gather rich information about relatively few people or organisations. By definition, it eschews statistical calculations (Veal, 2005). In this study, the focus of investigation was the pattern of gender dynamics and how they operate. Such a problem does not lend itself to quantitative research. Indeed, it could only be examined using a qualitative method. Generalisation to a population group is not the purpose of qualitative research. Accordingly, sampling does not demand certain prescribed levels of precision. In qualitative research, participants are purposively selected according to one or more variables or conditions (Amis, 2005; Veal, 2005).

In the present study, directors and CEOs (n=26; nine women and seventeen men) from five NSOs that governed a 'gender neutral' sport were selected for participation in in-depth interviews. 'Gender neutral' sport is a sport that is considered to be appropriate for men and women. In selecting the NSOs, the governing bodies of sports that traditionally favour participation of one gender such as the football codes, cricket, netball, softball and

synchronised swimming were excluded. In addition, based on the information gathered in stage one of the study, only sport organisations that included members of both genders on their board were considered for participation because the aim of the study was to examine gender relations. Since some sport organisations have only one or two women on their board, the names of the selected sport organisations were not mentioned to ensure confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. NSO boards typically have six to twelve members. I interviewed four or five directors of each of the five participating organisations in addition to the CEO. Another condition for participation was that the interviewees had served on their respective boards for a minimum of six months. I decided on setting a minimum of board participation duration because it would be difficult to gauge the perspective of board members with limited board exposure.

Sample size was determined by data saturation which is the point when additional data are being collected that do not produce any new themes or recurrent topics (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Based on an experiment with data saturation, Guest and his associates (2006) concluded that saturation occurred within the first twelve interviews and that the elements for major themes were already present after six interviews. For most research that aims to understand experiences and perceptions, they argued that twelve interviews should suffice. However, they indicated that this size would not be enough if the selected group of participants is relatively heterogeneous, the data quality poor and the inquiry domain diffuse (Guest, et al., 2006). Taking this view into consideration, I felt that in the course of the last few of the 26 interviews conducted, additional data would not produce any new themes or insights. Table two provides an overview of the participants per sport organisation, their position and gender. The president of sport organisation H was not available for an interview and this organisation did not have a vice-president on their board.

Table 2: Number of interview participants (n=26) per sport organisation by position and gender

	Board members	President/Chair	CEO	Total
Sport A	1W, 2M	1M	1M	1W, 4M
Sport C	1W, 3M	1W	1M	2W, 4M
Sport D	1W, 2M	1W (Vice-Pres)	1M	2W, 3M
Sport E	2W, 1M	1M	1M	2W, 3M
Sport H	2W, 2M	-	1M	2W, 3M
Total	7W, 10M	2W, 2M	5M	9W, 17M

* W: woman, M: man

5.6 The data collection instrument: interview schedule

A semi-structured interview schedule was used to guide the in-depth interview. A copy of the interview schedules (one for directors and one for presidents and CEOs) are included in appendices two and three. The gender regimes model of gender relations, as previously described, provided the framework for the interview schedule. The schedule was developed after examining the topic list used in Schofield and Goodwin's study (Connell, 2005; 2005) with public sector institutions. Further, I considered the questionnaires and checklists used in the three studies on women on sport boards reviewed previously (Doll-Tepper, et al., 2006; Henry, et al., 2004; McKay, 1992). Apart from having access to the full versions of the questionnaires and checklists of these studies, I also had the opportunity to reflect on the interview schedules with some of the chief investigators of these studies. Interview topics included role and tasks of the directors, status of the role, influence and authority on the board, contributions and qualities of directors, conflicts or challenging situations along gender lines, understanding of gender, gender equality and commitment to gender equality. In addition, socio-demographic data, professional and sporting biographical information were

collected. The interview schedule consisted of an initial topic question with several additional questions or probes. Depending on the progress of the interview, these probes were used to stimulate the participants to talk. A pilot study was conducted with four directors (three women and one man) of a sport organisation which was a different organisation from the ones that participated in the main study. After the pilot interviews the interview schedule was slightly adjusted. Some questions were added in relation to comparisons between board members along gender lines and meanings of gender and gender equality in order to get more explicit data on these topics. Examples of these additional questions and probes are:

- In comparison to your contributions and qualities, do other board members demonstrate similar ones?
- To what extent are women's contributions or positive qualities shared by male directors?
- To what extent is gender equality one of the objectives of this organisation?
- What do you understand by gender equality?
- Has your organisation adopted any strategies to achieve gender diversity on the board; can you provide any documented evidence of this?

These examples demonstrate that I have consistently used the term gender equality rather than gender equity for reasons stated in the introduction chapter. It is possible but not likely that some of the participants in the interviews would have made a distinction between the two terms which would have influenced their responses. This can be viewed as a limitation on the study.

5.7 Interview procedure

Participants were invited to take part in the interview through a letter by email to the CEO of the sport organisation. A copy of the letter can be viewed in appendix four. The interviews, conducted between August 2009 and December 2010, took place either in the office of the sport organisation or another location mutually convenient to the interviewee and interviewer. Other locations were the interviewee's office or home, a public place such as a hotel lobby or a meeting room at a university. Prior to the interview, participants had the opportunity to read an information statement which included details about the study such as its purpose, interview procedures, issues about confidentiality and withdrawal. After reading this information, participants were requested to sign a consent form to which they all agreed. A copy of the information statement and the consent form can be viewed in appendix five. All interviews were conducted face-to-face. The duration of the interviews was between 20 and 90 minutes. The average duration of the interview was 52 minutes.

5.8 Data analysis

All interviews were digitally audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Each individual transcript was kept in a separate computer file. The relevant individual transcript was sent to the participants for checking. Although the participants might not have remembered exactly what was said, they could still assist in confirming that the transcript was an accurate reflection of their thoughts and feelings about the topic at that time (Amis, 2005). A couple of participants made some minor changes to the transcript while the majority of participants confirmed the original transcript as an accurate record. The total number of A4 single-spaced pages of interview transcripts was 491; the total number of words approximately 200,000.

The interview data were analysed in the following way. The fourfold model of gender relations not only provided the framework for data collection but also for data analysis. Similar to Schofield and Goodwin's research (2005), the model was adapted to work as a data analysis tool by formulating the four gender dimensions as questions to be applied to the interview data. The first category, production relations, was operationalised by becoming the question, what are the roles and tasks on the board of men and women? The second category, power/authority relations, became the question, who exerts influence in the organisation's governance and whose authority prevails in the process? The third category, emotional relations, was applied to the data analysis as, who do board members like to work with, who do they dislike? The final category, symbolic relations, was addressed through the question, how did respondents understand the meaning of gender and gender equality?

Each transcript was then read to identify and code any comments or responses that were relevant to one of the four categories or questions. The purpose of categorising and coding is to make sense of a large amount of data, to provide some structure and coherence which helps with the interpretation of the data (Amis, 2005). The type of coding that I used has been referred to as 'concept-driven' coding, which uses codes that have been developed by the researcher based on the literature - in this study Connell's framework of gender relations - prior to data analysis (Amis, 2005; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). It has been characterised as a deductive approach because the coding has been deducted from theory. It is different from an inductive approach, namely data-driven coding, which means that the researcher starts without codes and develops them through examining the data, for example in Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Separate files were compiled for each category per sport organisation, thus all data relating to production relations for sport A in one file, all data relating to power relations for sport A in another one etc. I then re-read the data gathered under one category per sport and identified any sub-themes. For example, I coded the following sub-themes of production relations for sport A: positions on the board, involvement in board subcommittees, link of work on board to professional or sporting background and comparison along gender lines. This type of coding represents an inductive approach. Amis (2005) has argued that using both a deductive approach (theory inspired) as well as an inductive approach (data inspired) can be fruitful because it allows for gaining a creative insight from the data without reinventing concepts that have been proven useful previously.

Subsequently I drafted preliminary case studies for each NSO summarising the data grouped under headings of the main categories, i.e. production, power, emotional and symbolic relations. These case studies were mostly descriptive but I added some notes with linkages to other concepts derived from the literature review. After reflection on the initial case studies and re-interrogation of the data, I further developed the case studies by re-writing them moving beyond description to interpretation (Amis, 2005). One of the key features of the interpretation process was to identify the gender regime that prevailed in the various NSOs. This resulted in five case studies in total of approximately 3500 words each, which were circulated to the research team for discussion and review.

The interpretation of the data in the case studies went from a structuring of the meaning of what was said in the interview to a deeper and more critical interpretation of the interview data. This poses the quest for the 'real' or 'true' meaning. Although different interpretations may not necessarily contradict each other as they can be viewed as enriching the meaning of

the social behaviour studied (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) the question remains: when analysing and interpreting interview data, how do we know that our interpretation is ‘correct’? The next section addresses this issue by examining the notions of validity and reliability.

5.9 Validity and reliability

Validity has been defined as the extent to which an instrument actually measures what the researcher intends to measure (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005; Veal, 2005). On the other hand, reliability refers to the extent to which data are the same or consistent if they are collected again (repeat) with the same instrument under the same circumstances. In other words, does the research method yield data that capture ‘reality’ and ‘truth’? Liamputtong and Ezzi (2005) have argued that although the concepts of validity and reliability originate from quantitative and experimental research methodologies, they also need to be considered by those who engage in qualitative research.

The key issue with the concepts of validity and reliability in qualitative research is the relationship between the observer and observed reality. On one side of the scale, in a positivist paradigm, a real world exists external to the observer. The real world and its phenomena - including social behaviour and experience - are independent and not influenced by the observer. On the other side of the scale, from a social constructionist perspective, the real world is always one interpreted by an observer influenced by his/her historical and social location (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005).

Guba and Lincoln (2005) have distinguished five main ‘inquiry paradigms’ in social science research: positivist, post-positivism, critical theoretical, constructivist and participatory.

They have observed that in the past decade, the number of qualitative texts and research papers using non-positivist approaches has exploded. Further, they found that the legitimacy of using a non-positivist, an interpretive approach, has been well established. Although they have identified five main paradigms they acknowledge that there are other emerging paradigms and that the various paradigms are beginning to ‘interbreed’ (Guba & Lincoln, 2005, p. 192). The boundaries between the paradigms are shifting in line with Geertz’s prediction (1993), almost 20 years ago, about the blurring of genres. Nevertheless, the present study, similar to most feminist studies, can best be characterised as using a constructivist paradigm. Meaning-making or sense-making practices are of central interest to social constructivists because they are an intrinsic feature of social organisation and human action.

Regardless of which paradigm is adopted, validity and reliability need to be addressed. These concepts should not be linked to the notion of objectivity; even within a positivist paradigm this connection is viewed as conceptually flawed (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). A more appropriate concept is ‘authenticity’ which refers to trustworthy or rigorous inquiry. The present study has adopted several approaches to ensure authenticity and rigour. In regard to methodological rigour, I have produced a detailed audit trail, an explicit account of how the research was conducted, including how access was obtained to participants, description of the pilot study, how data were collected, recorded and analysed, etc. This provides a base for other researchers to decide on the credibility and legitimacy of the study. Further, I have ensured interpretive rigour by making available the full transcripts of all interviews to other researchers on request as well as providing ample interview quotes in the results chapter as evidence on which the interpretation or sense-making is based.

Rigour has also been enhanced through triangulation (Liamputtong & Ezzy, 2005; Veal, 2005). I have used a combination of methods for data collection, namely, an audit of gender representation, in-depth interviews with board members and a collection of relevant written documents. Further, in respect to the interviews, rather than interviewing one director only, I have sought multiple data sources by interviewing four or five board members and the CEO of the organisation to gain multiple perspectives on the studied topic. In this context, Guba and Lincoln (2005) have used the term 'fairness' indicating a quality of balance which means that all stakeholders' voices, perspectives and concerns should be collected, considered and appear in the text. This adds to the authenticity of the study. In addition to multiple participants, I have also included multiple organisations to participate in data gathering.

Richardson & St. Pierre (2005) have provided an interesting perspective on the concept of triangulation, in which different methods and multiple data sources are used to validate findings. They have argued that there are far more than three sides (triangle: a rigid, fixed two-dimensional object) to a phenomenon and suggest that a more appropriate imaginary for validity is the crystal that changes and alters depending on our angle of repose. It also implies that there is no single truth. As Richardson and St. Pierre (2005, p. 963) have proposed, 'crystallisation provides us with a deepened, complex and thoroughly partial understanding of the topic. Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know. Ingeniously, we know that there is always more to know.'

I concur with Richardson and St. Pierre's approach (2005) and view the current study as one that does not produce results as the single truth. In fact, as I described at the beginning of this section, truth does not exist independent of the observer or the researcher. Yet, the present

study, based on authenticity and rigour in its methodology, provides a deepened understanding of the complexities of gender dynamics on boards of NSOs in Australia.

Further, the question arises as to what extent the results can be generalised beyond the immediate context of the five case studies (sport boards A, B, C, D and E) – an issue of external validity. Case study research does not rely on statistical generalisation to a wider population but instead is concerned with analytical generalisation. This means that the researcher is ‘striving to generalise a particular set of results to some broader theory’ (Yin, 2009, p. 43), which in the present study is the area of gender and sport governance. Using multiple case studies rather than one single case strengthens the external validity because of repetition logic which indicates that the theory is ‘tested’ several times (Yin, 2009).

5.10 Ethical considerations

An application for ethics approval was submitted to the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Sydney in May 2009 prior to data collection. The application was informed by and in compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans. After some amendments the research project was approved in July 2009 (Ref. No. 11853). The study did not deviate from the granted ethics approval.

5.11 Summary

This chapter has explained and justified the research design and method that were used to address the research questions. Following a brief overview of qualitative research and in-depth interviews it has outlined the sampling method and selection of participants, the interview schedule and pilot study, and data collection and analysis procedures. I have also

addressed the issues of reliability and validity as well as ethical considerations. In the following chapter I present the results of the study.

CHAPTER 6: RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of the analysis of gender relations for five case studies, sport boards A, B, C, D and E. Each case study starts with a brief overview of the sport organisation and its governing board. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the fourfold model of gender relations formed the basis for data analysis, therefore I then present the results for each case study structured on the four categories of gendered production, power/authority, emotional attachment and symbolic relations. I have included ample quotes from interview participants as evidence of interpretive rigour. At the conclusion of each case study I have provided a summary of the prevailing gender relations between directors and, considering the combination of these relations, identified the specific gender regime on the board.

6.2 Case study sport board A

Sport board A is the governing body of a national organisation representing an Olympic, individual and team sport. In 2010, this organisation had almost 20,000 affiliated members with women representing 15% of the membership (Annual Report). At the time of the study, the board of this sport organisation had ten directors, one was a woman and nine were men. The male CEO was not part of the board but usually attended board meetings as a non-voting member. The following is based on interviews with the CEO, president, two vice-presidents and one director. One of the interviewees was a woman and four were men.

Production relations

Men performed the major roles and tasks on the board since the president and five vice-presidents, including the finance director, were all men. All members of the board had a strong background in the sport either as an elite athlete or in the administration of the sport. They were able to draw on knowledge specific to this sport in performing their roles as board members. Some members were also able to use their professional knowledge. For example, the male president was a lawyer and the male finance director was an accountant so they were also able to provide expertise in legal and financial matters respectively.

In comparison to her male counterparts, the only woman director was an exception in terms of sporting background which is evident from her comment:

In terms of my involvement in (the sport) I had been a member of a...club in London but not a racing club. (This sport organisation) is the governing body for racing in Australia so I am an anomaly on the board because I do not have a racing background...predominantly a touring background and event organising.

She mentioned that women often enjoyed the non-competitive side of the sport and were attracted to the social aspect of participation. Her background in the recreational, non-competitive side of the sport was the main reason for her appointment on the board and her role and tasks were centred on this area of expertise. The male CEO explained the role of the woman director as follows:

In fact, one of the reasons we chose her is because of her connection with the non-racing side of (the sport), the recreational and advocacy side where she has a significant background, so we particularly appointed her for that but what we found is that she is very good in board processes, in keeping the discussions strategic and not letting it drift into operational matters. She is very strong on that and that is unlike people on the board who come from the history and passion of the sport and love to dive in and talk about the sport without remembering what they are on the board for so she is proving outstanding that way, a very valuable member.

It was apparent that, besides her expertise in the recreational side of the sport and advocacy matters, she was also strong on governance. She mentioned that, at times, she took a contrary

view to the rest of the board. She challenged what had usually been taken for granted and raised questions about 'best interests' of the organisation.

In addition to attending to general board matters, all five vice-president chaired a number of board committees covering different aspects of the sport. These were the coaching committee, technical committee, masters committee and committees relating to specific disciplines of the sport. The woman director headed up the marketing committee because she had some experience in this area through her previous job.

It is evident that the division of tasks in this organisation was male dominated due to the large number of male directors obviously performing most of the tasks with only one woman board member. There was also a gendered division in roles in respect of the woman director being the only one who represented the recreational, non-competitive side of the sport. This part of the sport is often regarded as less important than the racing (competitive) side of the sport. To some extent there was also a gendered division in relation to having good governance skills as the woman director distinguished herself in this area.

Power relations

At the time of the study, as mentioned previously, the board was comprised of one woman and nine men, so women's representation was 10%. Prior to the time of data collection, the organisation had two women on their board but their number never exceeded two. It is noteworthy that the formal constitution of this sport organisation did not include a clause on a required number of board members of either gender. The male CEO attributed the under-representation of women on the board to the male-dominated history of the sport. He said:

The sport has been a 120 odd years or something in Australia and 100 of those 120 years it was really male only, it's only in recent decades that women are

participating...and they are now a little more than 10% of the membership. But there is the hang-over of the people who have that background in the sport and now we are getting through to just seeing that. I think there is a generational change, not attitudinal just that the people who have that history and involvement and who are interested enough to put up their hands. The women, it was not that they are not being appointed or elected they just are not even nominating in the first place but I think that is going to be a generational thing as the sport becomes more and more multi gender.

The most influential group of board members were those on the executive, namely the president and three vice-presidents, including the finance director, all men. One of the male vice-presidents explained their work in the following way:

So on the board we have an executive...(of) four: the three vice-presidents and president. They do a lot of the work between meetings, you know, the hands on stuff...that needs immediate responses.

The other directors were, in terms of their position within the board, equal. Yet, some directors were more influential than others through their additional responsibilities as chairpersons of the various board committees. Although there was no explicit status attached to the different committees, according to the president, the marketing committee was awarded little recognition and authority by the board because its work involved the management of small amount of resources. It is interesting to note that in the 2010 Annual Report, the marketing committee was not even listed as one of the board's committees which is an indication of its marginalised status.

In addition to the woman director's role on the marketing committee, one male vice-president commented on her role in general as follows:

I think there is an issue, especially with people coming from outside and this is exacerbated when it is a woman that it takes some time to have the confidence for someone like Margaret to really be forceful in pushing her point of view so, I think, not through any blocking of her opinions but just naturally through coming into a board in an area that is a little bit outside her area of expertise, I think, she probably hasn't had the confidence that she could have had in being more forceful in pushing her opinions. I think now she is getting to the point where...she probably feels a lot more able and I have certainly told her she should really go hard when she really thinks when something is important and needs to be said. I hope she will be able to go

hard but, I think, in the first year or two...she hasn't felt perhaps confident enough to really push.

The female director was aware of being a quiet board member initially, which is evident from her own comment:

To begin with though, I was very quiet and I'm not usually quiet. I'm a quite good committee person, you know, whether it's all male or all female it doesn't matter to me particularly, but to begin with, it took me a while to find my feet and to actually feel confident enough which I think was a slight surprise.

Thus, the board was male-dominated with women being under-represented both in terms of numbers and influence.

Emotional relations

Based on the respondents' comments, it was evident that the board was fairly cohesive with the various directors working well together and respecting each other's contributions. The male finance director, described the board relations as follows:

To be honest I have been doing this for quite a long time and...the current board... (has) a good rapport and there doesn't seem to be any major issues.

The female director acknowledged the good rapport between the board members and mentioned that although her views were not always being acted on, they were heard and considered; she definitely felt accepted in her role as a director. However, she also mentioned her sole position in the group meant that she felt she was a member of a traditional 'old boys club'. She said:

The people around the table...would not have been used to a vocal, confident woman. It was...definitely run as an old boys club before I got there and when I got there, it was still very much in that mode.

All male respondents mentioned that the woman board member was well respected and highly regarded. The male CEO explained that this was due to the specific contributions she made to the board while the male president commented she added value to the board through her positive relations with the male directors:

She is not...confrontational. She is feisty...and direct, but...I have observed...she actually gets on well with all of them there. Even on occasions when I don't agree with (her)...I think, that people are actually...very respectful. They are no more or less respectful...Perhaps they are even more respectful because she is a female, but (while) the sport...has had a very male dominated chauvinistic background, it is a fairly gentle and considerate board.

One male vice-president mentioned that he wished 'we had more of her!'

In sum, the emotional relations on the board were conventionally solidaristic among the men – like an 'old boys club' – and, therefore, exclusionary towards the sole woman member. Nevertheless, this emotional division was not hostile. Rather it was enacted through the expression of polite respect by the men towards the woman board member.

Symbolic relations

Directors demonstrated a good understanding of gender equality in respect to representation on the board. For example, the male president said that gender equality on the board was about a fair representation of both genders but not necessarily equal numbers of men and women. He expressed it as follows:

I don't think it is necessarily just equal numbers. I think it is providing a vehicle for...both genders' views to be equally represented at the board, and often the only way that you can make that happen is by having a greater number (of women) there.

He added that his sport 'has issues' in relation to gender equality but this is not just confined to board members. He proposed that the real issue was the membership with only 15% of women members. He explained that the sport was 'brutally tough' and did not appeal to many women:

It is very hard for a bloke to understand what might attract women to the sport...My chauvinist perspective is that most of (it)...really is a brutally tough sport, it is not like jumping in a pool and going for a swim...there is no reason why women and men can't equally enjoy swimming, or table tennis, or even in gymnastics...But to go out on a winter's day...in the rain...in conditions that are pretty brutal. To have to get changed at the side of the road, there are no bloody toilets, people are wet, I mean it is tough, it

is hard, and it is not, and I am not pretending that the women are the gentle sex, that is bullshit, but it doesn't have that sense of romance about it that other sports have.

He suggested that one way of addressing this was by looking to offer other products and facilities.

All respondents demonstrated a sound awareness of the current gender inequality in the sport and the need for more women on the board. They justified it by referring to the democratic principle of better representation of the membership and other stakeholders but also to the value of different perspectives that women bring to the board. One male vice-president stated:

It's diversity and outside expertise as much as having women on the board hum, I feel quite strongly about really getting new blood onto the board, I think, all sports like (our sport)...seem to suffer from the long termers, kind of always having been in the sport continuing right through and sticking on these governance bodies for many, many years, so we are doing our best to bringing in new people. I have a number of women specifically in mind who I would love to be (on the board), you know, I have tried over the years to recruit some women I know with a very good past in the sport but it's hard to get people.

The male CEO agreed with the male vice-president by stating that talented women were difficult to recruit and women were not even nominating for a board position but that it was just a matter of time when this would happen once the participation levels of girls and women in the sport increased. Despite the identified need for more women on their board, there were no specific objectives in their strategic plan or constitution to address this issue. Apart from some individual efforts such as the male vice-president's to recruit more women there were no explicit statements in any documents to achieve gender equality. Further, it is noteworthy that most of the directors believed that board candidates had to have a strong background in the sport either as an athlete or administrator. This way of thinking excluded professional women who do not have a strong background in the sport but who could bring governance skills to the board.

Another matter raised by many of the respondents in relation to gender inequality was the difference in prize money for men and women in their sport's competitions. The male president explained:

It is a gender issue...look internationally, I mean, if you...(race in the top event) and you win,...the promoters and sponsors and the people handing out the money will pay you millions. If you win the top women's...race in the world you might make a living, you might earn fifty or sixty or eighty thousand dollars a year.

The finance director vigorously advocated for equal prize money but added somewhat apologetically that he was probably biased because he had two daughters competing in the sport at an international level. Overall, board members in this organisation revealed mixed understandings of gender and gender equality with demonstrable ambivalence about promoting and achieving gender equality on their board.

A summary of the gender relations on sport board A, based on Connell's four structure model, can be viewed in Table three.

Table 3: Gender relations on sport board A

Gender relations	Characterised by
Production	Male dominance
Power	Male dominance
Emotional	Masculine solidarity and respectful exclusion of one woman director
Symbolic	Various understandings of gender equality in terms of participation and representation; no strong commitment to achieving gender equality

Conclusions

Several conclusions can be drawn from analysing the gender dynamics in this sport organisation's board. First, the board was male dominated with women being under-represented both in terms of numbers and influence. One of the reasons for this phenomenon is related to the male-dominated history of the sport, and although change has occurred, even current participation numbers showed only 15% of the members were women. The president expressed a gender stereotypical perspective ('brutally tough' sport) on women's participation in the sport. Second, directors demonstrated a good understanding of gender equality in respect to representation on the board and remuneration for professional athletes, and though they expressed a desire for more gender balance in board membership, they did not show a strong practical commitment to it. This was evident in the fact that no gender objectives were identified as part of a strategic plan, policy or framework, nor as a specific clause in the constitution. Third, the only woman director, while highly respected by her male counterparts, did not have the power or influence to make significant changes. Overall, at this point in time, the gender regime of this sport organisation can best be described as one of *masculine hegemony*, a characterisation explained more fully in the next chapter.

6.3 Case study sport board B

Sport board B is the governing body of a national organisation representing a popular, Olympic, mainly individual sport in Australia. The sport also includes a few team events. In 2010 this organisation had almost 80,000 affiliated members with a ratio of men to women of 43 to 57%. These sex disaggregated data indicate that, in terms of participation, the majority of the participants was women. At the time of the study the board of this sport organisation had nine directors, seven men and two women. The CEO was not part of the board but usually attended board meetings as a non-voting member. The following is based on

interviews with the male CEO and four directors, two of whom were women and two were men.

Production relations

Apart from the position of president there were no specific positions or portfolios on the board, but there were several board sub-committees. At the time of the interviews, the sub-committees were under review resulting in a restructure from four to three. The three new sub-committees included Finance and Audit, Business Development Strategy and Remuneration. The organisation was in the process of allocating directors to these sub-committees.

The role of the two women on the board was as follows. One female director, with a strong background in the administration of the sport as a former state president and national selector, mainly contributed to technical sport related issues and building relationships with the various stakeholders. The male CEO explained her expertise by saying:

The main experience that (Elizabeth) brings to the board is probably her knowledge of the state based...programs and sport development.

In addition, one of the male directors commented on her role as follows:

(Elizabeth) is probably more a people's person...(she) has volunteered a lot of time to the sport over a lot of years that way, and...there are two or three board members that are probably more at that level rather than the real skill set...(focusing on) communication, networking and building relationships.

In contrast, the second woman director, who had a Master's Degree in Applied Finance and used to be an elite athlete in the sport, had been appointed to the board because of her professional background in finance. She said:

I have a background in...investing and work for one of the top investment banks in the world, I think that made me an attractive addition to fill a skills gap on the board.

The male CEO mentioned her specific role in providing advice on financial matters:

(Pauline), with her financial skills, (she)...looks after our investments and she is heavily involved in that and she provides key strategic advice...on investment policy.

He continued by highlighting another area of her expertise:

Her main expertise is in areas of finance and she is very strong on gender equality.

Similar to the women directors, the men on the board were either elected or appointed for their expertise in the sport itself or their professional skills in business or finance. It was acknowledged that both types of directors were valuable for the effective governance of the sport as stated by one of the male directors:

There would be no point having a board full of business skills if we couldn't communicate those and develop relationships.

According to the participants, the division of roles and tasks in this organisation was based on the experience and professional background of the directors and not on gender. However, since there were seven men and two women on the board, the majority of the roles were taken by men; therefore the division of labour was male dominated. Further, it is also apparent that a significant gendered division prevailed in the work of the organisation in relation to gender issues with a woman director being the only strong advocate for gender equality in the sport.

Power relations

As previously mentioned, the board was comprised of two women and seven men, so women's representation was 22%. The level of women's representation had been stable for the past five years. It is noteworthy that the constitution of this sport organisation did not include a clause on a required number of board members of either gender.

The president of the board was a man. The interviewees agreed that he had an influential role mainly through his position, as a spokesperson for the organisation, setting the agenda and close contact with the male CEO. The other directors were, in terms of position, equal with

no difference between the male and female directors which is evident from the following comment by the male CEO:

At the board level they are not male or female, they are board members.

Despite their equal position, some directors were more influential than the others through their experience, being longer on the board, their more active involvement and professional background. One male director described it as follows:

...This is my personal view, I would say the president, myself and John and probably Levi, the four of us are probably in the top half that drive the majority of the work, that do a lot of the stuff behind the scenes... a lot of the research, putting papers together and driving decisions, that sort of thing.

Neither of the women was in that group of four. One male director explained that this was due to the fact that both women were quite new to the board having served less than two years as directors.

The least influential director was the older woman, 74 years old, with a long background in the administration of the sport. One male director said about her position:

I would say Elizabeth would be the quietest of all the board members, but I don't believe that is because she is female. I just think that she speaks up when they are talking about areas of her expertise...so she will speak up then. But they only come across, you know, twice a year for five minutes in a meeting if that makes sense, they are really important but.

Another male director added that he felt that she lacked some governance skills. He commented:

I think Elizabeth, at times, finds herself out of depth on a board, and that is not a criticism. I mean she has come from a board structure of a sport as an amateur sport moving into a more professional area, very good antenna and likes the idea of being at the national board, but I do think, occasionally, she does find herself right out of depth. But as I said, a good person to have in there in terms of picking up the signals of where the stakeholders or where others are thinking, that we might not necessarily have an input, so she throws that in. You know it is a view, I think, from a collective board sense that is a valuable resource that we take on board, for a business or a corporate level board she wouldn't survive...and I think that is the proper mix of where people understand where the sport is at, or our board is at.

Elizabeth was aware of being a quiet board member as her comment here indicates:

Yes well I am still a bit wary about what I say on the board because there are lots of personalities there that you just don't know how they are thinking, and I am much older than the other board members and I just don't want them to feel that, you know, I am superior with all the knowledge. So I tend to sit back and listen before I express a view.

However, she continued by saying that she felt that the younger directors, some of them ex-elite athletes, did not have a good understanding of the administrative side of the sport, did not listen well and were quite forceful in putting their views forward. Further she mentioned that the important tasks on the board were often delegated to the men. Overall, considering gender representation both in numbers and influence, the exercise of power in this sport organisation was clearly male-dominated.

Emotional relations

Based on the respondents' comments, it was evident that there were emotionally diverse tensions on the board between men and women and among men. According to one male director, these tensions exerted a limited impact on the board's efficacy:

I would say it has been a pretty open and transparent board...we have had to make decisions and there has been, you know, extreme high levels of debate within the board, but once the board has decided on the steps and the action...it has been totally unified outside the boardroom which I think is a credit to all the board members. So working together...has been good.

Nevertheless, it was also apparent that the male president played an active role in keeping the board as cohesive as possible. He was particularly competent in relating to people, talking to the board members on an individual basis, keeping them informed and trying to encourage them to co-operate.

According to the male CEO, there were no significant emotional tensions on the board and that, indeed, he enjoyed working with the two women directors which is evident from his following comment:

I think they are excellent to deal with, excellent to work with, yeah.

Similarly, the women directors reported they found their position on the board satisfying.

One said:

I presented at the stakeholder forum after the AGM four weeks ago, and I presented on this idea of setting up a charity, which was you know people thought that the stakeholders would not be happy with that because basically it's their money...And really there was no pushback in the room so everyone was surprised...After that presentation, you know, one of the other board members...acknowledged the work that I did... Well I am enjoying it you know, I think it is great.

However, one of the women directors who was older mentioned some significant tension with several younger male directors:

A lot of the board members are young and they are...(active participants in the sport) or they...(used to be) and... they think they know a lot about the sport, but they don't really know a lot about the administration of the sport. They know about how...(to perform the sporting activity) and how you become a champion, but a lot of them have a lot to say but a lot of it hasn't got much substance in it yet they become very forceful. They try to force their views onto (others).

One of the older, more experienced male board members acknowledged this tension and elaborated that the younger directors, at times, came across as arrogant by not considering the interest of the sport and the importance of effective relationships with its stakeholders but he targeted his comments towards the younger female director, in particular:

Pauline...is very aggressive and (although she has) a very good business sense...tends to get a little emotional about it at times, which makes it a bit hard...extremely undiplomatic... yeah, tends to rub people the wrong way...people just...look at her and say...I don't think I will have handled it in that way... If her term was up this February I wouldn't be supporting her reappointment.

The male board member made this comment in relation to a discussion among the directors on how to address several contentious issues in the sport including inappropriate comments made by an elite athlete in regards to gay men and inappropriate behaviour by a head coach

in relation to women. He clearly did not agree with the stance of the woman director, an openly lesbian, and regarded her reaction as emotional and undiplomatic. In sum, men and women directors worked reasonably effectively together to some extent in this sport organisation but there was significant hostility between an older, more experienced male director and a younger, new female director. In addition, there was some tension between the older woman director and younger male directors.

Symbolic relations

One male director described gender equality as follows:

I would say equal opportunity for both males and females to do whatever it is that it is referring to.

The respondents agreed that at a participation level, the sport clearly demonstrated gender equality because the programs were balanced with equal number of events for men and women in competitions; hence there was equal opportunity to participate in the sport.

Further, national teams consisted of approximately equal numbers of men and women, providing further evidence of gender balance. However, at other levels in the sport, directors and the male CEO identified some gender inequalities. The male CEO said:

I think the sport generally is an equal gender participation sport, but if you look at the coaches and the boards of not just (the national body) but of all our sports bodies around Australia, it is certainly male dominated.

All respondents expressed concern about the lack of women coaches at the elite level.

Several reasons were provided for this phenomenon such as the difficulty of combining the role of an elite coach which involves long hours and frequent overseas travel, with family commitments. Yet the reason mostly mentioned was the culture of the sport, in particular, the attitude of senior coaching staff in respect to women. The male CEO explained it as follows:

The main thing where women don't get a fair go...is the coach level. It is like a boy's club...It is a male dominated culture...yes it is a cultural thing, it has been that way probably, I know it is not right but it has been that way for a long time and I think it

will start to change but it might be the next generation, the current generation that sort of dominate it are going to be around for a while.

He added that the head coaches actually discouraged women from becoming coaches:

They (the head coaches) just don't give them the opportunity and don't develop them. They take other (male) coaches under their wing.

The male CEO further mentioned that he was committed to changing this culture.

In addition, the area of sport governance was identified as male dominated. Several directors indicated that they would like to see more women on their board, but quotas in relation to gender representation were not supported. An appropriate skill set was considered more important than a director's gender. One male director added that it was difficult to attract women to the board which was evident in this comment:

I am really comfortable with it, you know it would be great to have more women on the board, I have no problems with female presidents or anything like that, Western Australia has a female president at the moment, Queensland did have a female president, Northern Territory has a female. So there is plenty of opportunities in (our sport) for females who want to step up into leadership roles, or put their hand up first and that is probably the first step, actually, I was going to say believing enough in themselves...I would love to see more women put their hands up for positions and that, I am not sure whether they do I don't have the research or anything, my experience with this board is that they don't.

This belief that women lacked self-confidence and were not willing to assume leadership roles was understood as a problem among women themselves rather than one of the organisation. One female director, however, was aware of organisational factors, particularly transparency. She stated:

So you know putting a little bit of process in place and some transparency, you know, for me that is a pet peeve because I just see when there is not transparency and there is no proper process generally women get screwed, so ...I like to make sure that that is done you know.

In this context she referred in particular to the allocation of tasks to board members, and their appointment on international committees. Instead of giving 'jobs to the boys', she proposed a fair and transparent nomination process in which both men and women were considered as

candidates. Overall, in terms of symbolic relations, board directors in this organisation understood gender equality as equal opportunity at different levels including the level of sports participation and the ones of representation on the board and high performance coaching. However, directors did not demonstrate any commitment to achieving gender equality on the board because the prevailing attitude, with the exception of one woman director, was that the under-representation of women directors was an issue located within women themselves and outside the control and responsibility of the organisation.

A summary of the gender relations on sport board B, based on Connell's four structure model, can be viewed in Table four.

Table 4: Gender relations on sport board B

Gender relations	Characterised by
Production	Male dominance; gendered division in relation to advocacy for gender equality
Power	Male dominance
Emotional	Ambivalence, muted and overt hostility
Symbolic	Gender equality understood as equal opportunity at different levels (participation and representation); no commitment to achieving gender equality on the board with the exception of one woman director

Several conclusions can be drawn from analysing the gender dynamics in this sport organisation. Although at the level of sport participation there was evidence of gender equality, at board level this organisation was male dominated with women being under-represented. Directors demonstrated various understanding of gender equality but they did not show any commitment to it. This was evident in the fact that a gender quota for board

members was not supported and the belief that women needed to be more confident in stepping up to leadership positions. The only female director who had a strong commitment to changing the male-dominated culture, somewhat supported by the male CEO, was the younger woman director. Her role proved challenging; on the one hand she was required to engage with ostensibly gender-neutral mechanisms of governance to advance the objectives of the organisation, while on the other she found herself serving to advance gender equality in the organisation. The latter role provoked resistance from a longer serving male director.

Overall, the data show that complex gender dynamics are involved in the governance of this organisation. At this point in time, the gender regime of this sport board can best be characterised as one of *masculine hegemony*. This concept is further discussed in the next chapter.

6.4 Case study sport board C

Sport board C is the governing body of a national organisation representing a popular, non-Olympic, individual sport in Australia. In 2009/2010 the organisation had approximately 440,000 affiliated members with a ratio of men to women of 78.8 to 21.2% (Annual Report). These sex disaggregated data indicate that, in terms of participation, approximately one-fifth of participants was women. At the time of the study, the board of this sport organisation had six directors, two women and four men. The male CEO was not part of the board but usually attended board meetings as a non-voting member. The following is based on interviews with the chair, the CEO and four directors. Two of the interviewees were women and four were men.

Production relations

The board was chaired by a woman. Her position was remarkable as the audit of gender representation revealed that only 5 of 56 (8.9%) NSOs had a female chair at the time of the study. Apart from the position of chair there were no specific positions or roles on the board. Nevertheless, as the male CEO explained, there were a number of committees that were chaired by board members:

...We are not a portfolio based board but we do have...five or six committees, and they are chaired by board members, and it is things like Game Development, High Performance and Championships, Audit and Risk...Helen (woman director)...chairs (the) Game Development Committee.

Board committees included Audit and Risk, Rules, Championships, High Performance and Game Development, the last of which was chaired by the only other woman director who described the work of her committee in the following way:

...We talk mainly about how to increase the numbers of people playing...so it's to increase the participation in (our sport); that's its main goal at the grass roots level...We are about to launch our national junior program and that has been one of the problems in the past getting the States, they have all been doing their own programs so we want a national program to give us a higher profile so we (are) trying to develop a national framework for juniors; we (are) also trying to work particularly with women and we have been given some government money too; one of the goals is to increase the number of women on boards so we are going to do some leadership training for women on boards. The government is particularly concerned with the corporate side of women's (sport). We have just recently appointed a new National Director of Game Development. She's trying (to) promote women, junior women. Then we also have to look at all the minority groups...: the blind, handicapped and the aboriginals so all that comes under the umbrella of game development. The sport has suffered a bit; there has been a decline in some of our numbers, our affiliated numbers so, you know, we need to increase.

As this excerpt of interview indicates, the chair of this committee saw her work on the board as developing grass roots participation by attracting more juniors, women and special target populations to the sport. Besides chairing this committee, she also had responsibilities, like her male counterparts, for general matters that came to the board, managing them enthusiastically and constructively, as the woman chair commented:

Helen is great... she participates a lot in board discussions and she certainly reads all the board papers with interest and comments on them... (The Game Development) committee under (her) chairmanship...have managed...to get something moving.

The chair went on to add that women are more involved in the area of game development than men:

Game development is a really interesting thing and it seems that women are more interested in that than men. Men like the technical side, the high performance side and the championship side; there is a split in the brain somewhere.

The difference between men's and women's interests in certain aspects of the game, the female chair observed, was reflected in the gendered division in the roles on the board. As one of the male directors suggested, women on the board had a further role, namely being the voice for women's interests:

I don't look at...(the women directors) any differently to...the men...except that...they are in prime representing the 20% of (players) in this country who are women, so...they in an ideal world are the voice of the ladies...on issues that involve the ladies they are probably better equipped to comment...But in the general sense we are equal.

The distribution of board roles and tasks of the organisation was organised in relation to two main areas of responsibility: one involving matters associated with committees and the other associated with general board matters. It was in the realm of the specialist committee work that a gender division was most prominent. Yet also subject to gender differentiation was the representation of women's interests insofar as participants believed that female board members were responsible for attending to the gender specific interests of women in their sport.

Power relations

At the time of the study, the board was comprised of two women and four men, so women's representation was 33%. Five years prior to data collection for this study, the organisation underwent an amalgamation process resulting in the merger of the women's and men's organisations into one body governing both women's and men's participation in the sport.

The reason for amalgamation was to comply with government policy; non-compliance would have resulted in a loss of funding from the Federal Government. Upon amalgamation, the appointed interim board consisted of three women from the former women's organisation and three men from the former men's body with an independent chair. After the first election, the board included two women only which reflected a decline in women's representation. It is noteworthy that the constitution included a clause that the board requires a minimum of two directors of either gender.

The female chair of the board was elected by the board members at the first election of the amalgamated body and, on completion of her first term, re-elected by them. The interviewees agreed that she had a very powerful role, the most important within the organisation insofar as the incumbent was required to lead the organisation forward.

According to a male director:

She plays a very significant role. I mean she does represent us at internal and external functions, she is the voice of (our sport).

Another male director commented on the influence of the female chair as follows:

...She's a heavyweight, she doesn't *not* get her way very often because she knows how to present; she does her homework...

The other female director was clearly aware of the unusual situation of having a woman as chair in a male-dominated sport. She said:

...It's quite amazing that a woman really became chair, I mean, it's just a remarkable story that a woman in the position with (our sport) being such a chauvinistic sport could become the chair... and I don't think people are quite aware how important that is. She is an incredible woman.

As previously mentioned each board member chaired a committee. While the Championship and High Performance Committees under the leadership of men had high status and included benefits such as international travel to major events, there was some debate about the importance of the Game Development Committee. According to one male director who

believed that this area was not so important for the sport also viewed the work and influence of the chair of this committee as substandard:

Helen took on Game Development and did very little, and I got the impression that either she wasn't interested or couldn't do it or wasn't up to it, but it wasn't very good either way.

Others strenuously disagreed. The chair, the male CEO and several male board members saw this committee as critical for the growth and development of the organisation and well led by the woman director as evident in the following response:

Helen is chairman of (the) Development Committee which is a very significant committee because that, along with High Performance and Rules, is the principal area; she has been chairing that for some time and this has gained some legs.

The most influential board members were the woman chair and one of the men on the board, both strongly supported by the male CEO and the other woman board member. In contrast, another of the men on the board who used to be president of the former men's association prior to amalgamation felt, in his own words:

(N)ot marginalised but my views are less than wholeheartedly received...

He twice stood for the chair's position against the woman but was defeated on both occasions. According to the current chair:

...He wants to be chairman for ego, frankly, because he...comes to the board meetings, but he doesn't come to a lot of other things.

Several board members (male and female) referred to the sport as being historically male-dominated, male bastions and chauvinistic, including in terms of the administration and management of the sport. The male director who used to be the president of the former men's governing body explained it as follows:

I think (the) administration (of our sport) in Australia has been very male dominated I don't think anybody would argue with that, I mean my...club in particular, has a women's committee and a men's committee. The women's committee can do nothing and the men's committee dominate the whole show. And many...clubs are like that...

The chair mentioned the previous men's organisation and a residual feeling for a preference for the 'old way':

There is still that residual feeling from only two board members, two males, and obviously the old way of doing things, the male way of doing things and the old (men's association) they're still hard up to that but it's not a reflection on the (current) board as such. I think they just wish it was more like it used to be. But it isn't a reflection how things are happening or we don't respect your opinions because you are women or anything, it's not that.

It is evident that this organisation was in a transition phase, moving from two separate gender-based sport organisations to the one amalgamated body. The power relations in this organisation can best be described as male-dominated, particularly because men comprised the majority of the members. Yet their influence was strongly counteracted by the powerful woman chair.

Emotional relations

The chairperson was highly respected by most board members and the male CEO. She gained their respect mainly due to her competency in her role as chair, her professional, commercial background and strong commitment to the organisation, working up to 70 hours per week. She reported that she was able to commit much time to her role due to a very supportive partner and no responsibilities for children. The high respect for her is evident in the following response by one of the male directors:

She is an excellent chair...I strongly believe she is the best person for the job. When I looked at her cv, when I met her at the first time, it was very clear to me she was the person to get.

He continued by saying:

I'm not sure that a couple of the other men agree but anyway we are all different; this year one of the other guys stood against her but it was no contest; he might as well just kept his hand down; it was never going to be his way.

In contrast, the male director who had challenged the current chair for the position, provided a very different perspective:

She (the chair) worked for a (multinational company) in some management role...She is very good on board structure and the way boards should behave. Her financial planning is very good; I have no problem with that at all. (But) she knows very little about (our sport)...and that is where I do have a big problem...Another criticism I have... is that she wants to appear to be tough. I don't mind that necessarily, but there is a place for negotiation and we have had three or four major issues (about) which she has been tough. Lawyers have come in and it has cost us a fortune. I would have preferred much more to have gone out and tried to negotiate with these people, find a midway solution which wouldn't have cost us a lot of money, and it would have left...the door open. We slammed the doors on two or three people. (In addition), when it comes to leading, getting on television, being upfront, meeting all of the (players)... she doesn't want to do that. And that is the wrong position for a chairperson...which is disappointing and that is the reason I wanted to challenge her. I admit that she knows more about board structures...I would use her on (the) board (but she)...is not a great leader. Not a great leader at all.

According to this participant, his lack of support for the chair was attributable to her lack of knowledge about the sport itself, her poor leadership in promoting the game and in undertaking negotiations with stakeholders. He felt that she could be a good board member but should not be the chair. This director, who was defeated for the chair position, was clearly discontent on the board. He said:

I am fed-up with Susan (the chair) now, I am fed-up with Tom (male director). The only reason I am staying is because of the Asia Pacific...Federation. I want Australia to have a good reputation internationally in Asia and on the board. I think I am about the only one who can do that...That is the only reason I am staying, and I don't know how long I can do that for. I am getting very close to saying good bye.

The chair actually stated several times in the interview that she had support from both the men's and women's associations when being nominated for the board, but she also acknowledged the clash, at times, with the hostile director. She attributed his antipathy not to her gender but to his ambition to be the chair.

The second woman on the board was respected by all other directors because she was a very accomplished player and had been president of a highly prestigious club in Melbourne. She contributed in a quiet way and 'had the best interests of the sport at heart' according to all interview participants.

The three-person alliance of the chair, the woman director and one male board member seemed to do the majority of the board's work. They collaborated well and supported each other, as one of the other directors commented:

Helen (woman director) always supports Susan (chair). In fact, Susan has got two very good supporters. Tom (male director) and Helen always support Susan.

In summary, these data suggest an emotional rift in the board. On the one side were the female chair, the male CEO and a couple of directors, one of them was a woman, and on the other was a group of men, one of whom felt dissatisfied and aggrieved while the other two largely maintained an emotional detachment. Overall, the evidence suggests that this board was divided with some pronounced gender-based hostility.

Symbolic relations

Gender equality was mainly understood as equal opportunity to excel in the sport, to develop as a player or official and to become a board member. In reference to the first, the chair reported that she tracked the amount of financial resources being allocated to men's and women's programs and the number of national events for both genders. She ensured the organisation's commitment to host besides the flagship international men's event, a similar prestigious international event for women annually. In terms of board membership, both men and women directors did not interpret gender equality to mean equal numbers of men and women on the board. The chair justified this by saying that women comprise only 21% of the total number of affiliated players and women's representation on the board should take this into consideration. Other directors provided a different justification by emphasising that they needed the 'best people' on the board. They felt that an appropriate skill set had priority over gender as a criterion for board selection. The woman director explained it as follows:

I believe you need to get the best people on the board irrespective of gender and I always thought that and that's why I believed I should have been on the board initially

of my first...club, because I was...a better skilled person than the other people that I was standing against.

On the other hand, several members stressed the importance of a gender-balanced board. The male CEO eloquently described the advantage of a balanced board:

Because I think you avoid the extremes, and I think you have a more rounded view of what your direction ahead is. I think you are better able to represent your sport, I think also men and women bring different perspectives and personality traits onto boards, and reasoning abilities, not always, but often, we have different skill sets and we are able to make a better connection with a range of you know the whole sport. So I think, and in terms of balance oh I just think you are able to better navigate your way forward through the pitfalls and the traps that sports face, and I think you make better decisions as a balanced board, and you can see the arguments to both sides and work through that way. I think sometimes when you get a group of people who are really similar, they tend to see things one particular way, their views and opinions don't get challenged by a counterpoint, and I think that is probably the value of balance. I think balanced boards make better decisions on the whole.

These responses indicate that there was a tension between recruiting people with certain skills and achieving an appropriate gender balance on the board. Several board members who would have liked to see more women on the board commented on the difficulty of recruiting them. They argued that not many women have the right credentials or governance experience due to the male-dominated structure at club level. In addition, they stated that women did not seem to come forward to take on a role on the board. They identified both the sport's culture and women themselves as the reasons for the current gender composition of the board.

However, they did not demonstrate a strong commitment to ways of changing this. It was interesting to note that the woman chair insisted on being called chairman rather than chair or chairperson.

The immediate response of several board members to the issue of gender was one of denial, for example the female chair stated:

We never talk about gender, it's not an issue.

After further prompting, the two women on the board acknowledged that there was an issue with one male director, evident in the following response:

We probably have one member who doesn't really recognise women as equals in (our sport); when we talk, he forgets to talk about the Australian Women's Open. It's always about the Australian Men's Open; and now over the course of two years he...is very careful what he says about that; not sure if he actually...believes it but he goes along with it.

The fact that, initially, gender was considered a non-issue but after further questioning, was acknowledged as exerting some impact, suggests that there was some gender blindness in this organisation. In sum, directors in this sport organisation understood gender equality as equal opportunity. In addition, considering directors' perspectives that a merit-based board had priority over a gender-balanced board, it is evident that there was some confusion about the true meaning of gender equality which will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Conclusion

A summary of the gender relations on the board of sport organisation C can be viewed in Table five.

Table 5: Gender relations on the board of sport organisation C

Gender relations	Characterised by
Production	Gendered division
Power	Male dominance in numbers but influence strongly counteracted by woman chair and her alliance
Emotional	Co-operative alliance of four; pronounced hostility by one male director
Symbolic	Gender equality understood as equal opportunity; tension between merit-based board versus gender-balanced board

Several conclusions can be drawn from the responses of the board directors in this sport organisation. First, the division of tasks was gendered and the women board members had an additional responsibility to represent the interests of female players. On the one hand, then, women were required to engage with ostensibly gender-neutral mechanisms of governance to advance the objectives of the organisation, while on the other they found themselves serving as representatives for the women players. Second, although the board was male dominated in terms of numbers, the powerful woman chair, supported by the male CEO and two directors, ensured a reasonably equally shared influence of both men and women on the board. This, in turn, impacted on the organisation's decision-making, for example, to host a prestigious, international event for both men and women. Third, several male directors demonstrated a resistance to change the traditional, male-dominated culture of the sport in the new amalgamated organisation, but the female chair managed the process of change well in collaboration with a small group of alliances. Overall, the data show that complex gender dynamics were involved in the governance of this sport organisation. The gender regime can best be described as *masculine hegemony in transition*, a characterisation explained more fully in the next chapter.

6.5 Case study sport board D

Sport board D is the governing body of a national organisation representing a popular, non-Olympic, individual and team sport in Australia. In 2009/2010 this organisation had approximately 230,000 registered members with a ratio of men to women of 67% to 33% (Annual Report). At the time of the study the board had nine directors, seven men and two women. Six directors were elected and three were appointed as independent directors. The CEO was not a member of the board but attended board meetings as a non-voting member.

The following analysis is based on interviews with the female vice-president, the male CEO and three directors, one of whom was a woman and two of whom were men.

Production relations

Apart from the male president and female vice-president there were no specific positions or portfolios allocated to directors. The male CEO explained it as follows:

...The board...is not one that has...portfolios. It is more...a strategic board, and they look at policy and they look at the strategic plan, and work with me as the CEO and the management to deliver on the strategic plan. Each of the board members attends meetings and contributes to the thinking, and doesn't necessarily have to report back to the board on any specific area as such. So they are making...an overall contribution across all areas of the business as I bring them forward to the meeting.

There was, however, one board committee, the Audit and Risk Committee, which was chaired by the female vice-president who had some professional experience in budgeting and financial management. At times, ad-hoc committees or working parties were established when a specific issue arose and needed to be addressed.

Although the board did not operate with portfolios, there was a clear distinction between the role of the elected and independent directors. The elected directors tended to have had a long association with their sport before coming onto the national board. Typically, they had started in an administrative role at club level before moving to one at state level and eventually serving on the national board. Both women directors, like their male counterparts, were elected to the national board after having served on committees at club and state levels for more than 30 and 20 years respectively. The elected directors brought mainly technical sport expertise relevant to the organisation. On the other hand, the independent directors were appointed to the board because of their specific professional expertise in areas such as business, governance and financial management. As one male independent board director commented on the distinction between the two groups:

...You have got (elected) directors and you have some independent directors. The (elected) directors...I am going to have to be careful how I answer this...are usually more elderly people that have been around the (sport) for a long, long time. Generally speaking...those people do not have, and it is not always the case by the way, but a lot of the time they don't have a lot of business experience, some do but...the balance would be more the other way than leaning towards business experience. The independent directors (are) people that have some professional experience, whether it be accounting or law or marketing or one of those sorts of disciplines.

It is noteworthy that there were no women among the three independent directors on the board. The lack of women among this professional group of directors suggests a markedly gendered division of production relations.

Despite the lack of women serving as independent directors, two women served as elected directors on the board. The male CEO commented on the role of one of these two women, the vice-president, as follows:

...Given her role in Audit and Risk, she is very conscious of strong ethics and morals in regards to how we operate, and that we...do everything in accordance with (the) law... She will pick up on a lot of policy and make sure that we are enforcing and following policies that we have set...good governance is probably the broad statement...policy and the finances are her real focus...Like most board members (who) have an interest in the Australian team and how they perform, and...surrounding appointments and coaches and selectors, she is knowledgeable because she knows the personalities involved...I think her knowledge of people is good, and being able to judge a character.

One male director provided a different perspective on the role of the two women. First he proposed:

Well they principally know how the women's minds work which is sometimes quite tricky to work out.

So he emphasised here the need for these women to represent women's views and interests which were evidently difficult for him to understand as he believed they were distinctively different from men. Second, he added:

But they bring I think...a sort of calming influence on the board, the two of them,...so they bring a women's touch to the board in any case...

When further questioning the meaning of 'a woman's touch' to the board, he explained:

I think the women would bring perhaps a different idea you know...*about catering* (emphasis added), they would do it *about housekeeping* (emphasis added)...I think the women would be far less tolerant of what they might find than the men, that is what I probably mean about a different perspective... we get a couple of women on the (club) board and they would not for a minute tolerate that pile of stuff over there that needs to be shredded, all of these storage boxes hiding photographs of the boards on the wall, am I making sense? You know, I don't think they would cop that, and they would dive in and do something about it.

In contrast to the previous description provided by the male CEO, these latter comments that women were particularly competent in addressing catering and housekeeping matters provide further evidence of a gendered perspective of production relations among some board directors.

Power relations

With men occupying seven of the nine board positions, it is evident that the board was male-dominated. Women's under-representation on the board had actually increased over the past two years as there used to be three women directors, two elected and one independent. The independent director, a state politician, resigned due to work commitments and was replaced by a man. The constitution of the organisation contains a clause that in respect to the president and four elected board directors 'at least one must be male and at least one must be female'. When the men's and women's associations amalgamated in 2002, there used to be another gender clause in the constitution stating that when the president is male, the vice-president must be female and vice versa, but this clause had been deleted. The woman vice-president explained it as follows:

Originally when we first came in, if the president was a male, the vice-president had to be a female..., and vice versa. Now that has been changed so it is the best person for the job, but we still state that they have to have at least one female on the board.

Several respondents acknowledged the lower proportion of women directors and provided several explanations for it. The male CEO referred to the traditional, male-dominated history of the sport and said:

I believe (it is) a cultural trait of the organisation and of (the sport)..., where...from club to state to national (level) the role of the female is often not at the forefront. They are not actually promoted into leadership positions.

One male director offered a different perspective, attributing the under-representation of women on the board to the unwillingness of women to stand for leadership positions. He commented:

I think just the reluctance of women to put their hand up is what I see...Apathy...Yeah there is that.

Thus, in his view, the cause for the under-representation of women was not due to the organisation's traditional, male-dominated culture but was due to women themselves. The two women agreed with this point of view. I will return to this issue when discussing the symbolic dimension of the gender relations operating on the board.

The president and vice-president have an organisational status by virtue of their position on the board but as one of the male independent directors pointed out the president has one vote only, just like everyone else. Despite the fact that all had equal voting status, there were distinct differences in the exercise of influence. One male independent director, very strident, with a strong business background, was highly influential, particularly in regard to business and financial matters while both women were considered to wield little influence. According to the male CEO, even the female vice-president exerted little influence:

She is...a bit quiet, like not speaking up enough. From my perspective she probably could say more, so yeah that is probably one of the areas that she could do more in. But I mean generally when she has a comment...and has an opinion, people listen...

According to several respondents, one of the other women directors, who was fairly new to the board, seemed to lack confidence and to be somewhat intimidated. She was aware of this as her comment here indicates:

...In time I will get a bit more confidence...I am not having much to say compared to the others that have been on the board a lot longer. And some of them have brought

more skills from the workforce than what I have...But a lot of them, particularly the men, they have all been in the workforce a lot longer than I was and a lot of them are more highly qualified than what I am, university degrees and quite accomplished in the workforce.

The marginal position of the women, both in terms of numbers and influence, was clearly recognised by the male CEO. He expressed the view that a gender distribution on the board of three women and six men would better reflect the membership ratio of women to men. He intended to have this gender distribution included as a clause in the new constitution. In sum, the power and authority in this sport organisation can best be characterised as male dominated.

Emotional relations

Based on the respondents' comments, it was evident that the board did not exhibit any major rifts with the various directors working well together and ostensibly respecting each other's contributions. One male director was explicitly enthusiastic about working with the women on the board, as the following comment indicates:

...They are great, wonderful to work with, they know their game, they know the politics, they have got expertise from their own states and (the) history (of the sport). They are terrific to work with.

The male CEO agreed and added that any argument that had occurred has not been along gender lines. He explained:

...I think people respect (each other)... any conflict hasn't been along gender, it has been on a specific issue and a difference of opinion, or a difference of, a differing view of what we, what the action or outcome should be.

Although the board was generally co-operative, the female vice-president mentioned that one male director was rather dogmatic, very outspoken and quite ruthless with people, but the male president tended to calm him down. She was satisfied that both the president and CEO were men because she reported, she had never trusted a woman boss:

It was just that they (women bosses) milked you and then used it for their advantage to get where they wanted to go. They didn't care how they trod on you, trod on you along the way...I had a couple of experiences where you just didn't trust the women. A man handled things differently...it was just I never ever trusted women.

Another woman director expressed great admiration for her male counterparts on the board as evident in the following response:

...Some of the board members, for instance Paul, have played for Australia, I used to watch him... you know and here I am...on a board with him. It is just lovely. One of the committees I had was State Selection, I was the chairman of that, so I would take the state team and go to other states to play in round robins etc. So some of the other board members like...the chairman, the CEO and Bruce, some of them would come to our state board meetings too and workshop with us, ...Little did I know I would ever have the opportunity to work with them, there is so much you can learn from them. It is really good.

Based on the respondents' comments in terms of emotional relations this board can best be characterised as co-operative with and politely respectful to one another. There was no evidence of any disregard or hostility among the board members.

Symbolic relations

Some respondents had an uncomplicated understanding of gender equality. According to one male director:

My understanding of gender equality is very...straightforward; everybody gets the same opportunity, end of story.

A more practical interpretation relating to equal opportunity was provided by the male independent director who said that it was an opportunity for everyone to have their say and not be ridiculed. On the other hand, the woman vice-president elaborated by saying that she understood that gender equality involved representation from both genders on the board without one gender dominating the other. One of the women directors expressed her understanding as follows:

It means that there is no distinction between men and women, everything we are doing is equally for the men and the women...gender equality means you are not thinking men and women as such. It should be that all men and all women have the

same...opportunities whether it be playing the game or being on a board or being on a committee, being president of a club...to me that is gender equality.

These responses indicate that both women demonstrated a more sophisticated understanding of gender equality insofar as that they elaborated on what equal opportunity actually meant for them including women's representation on the board and occupying an influential position such as president. In a similar way, the male CEO showed a deeper understanding of the concept as he had obviously further thought about it when he mentioned how gender equality impacts on operational matters in the sport such as the scheduling of competitions:

The other issue we have been trying to work on is gender equality in terms of competition. Historically...women have their day, say, on Tuesday. Men play Saturday. Well, if you are a working woman, how are you going to play...if it is on Tuesday during the day? So (we introduced) competitions that are run in the evening, competitions that are run on the weekend, mixed competitions (with) men and women playing together.

These comments by the various members of the board show that there were different levels of understanding of the notion of gender equality. However, board directors were unanimous with respect to the gender specific 'value' of having women on the board, as the following comment by the male CEO demonstrates:

I think men and women think differently about different issues...and have different experiences, different views and...bring those views to the table that potentially the other gender may not think of. So I think that is just part of the diversity of whether it is gender or whether it is religious or cultural background, that there should be a good mix. And (this)... sport is traditionally Anglo Saxon and probably quite culturally conservative, and so we need to think outside the square a bit more, and that is probably where our opportunities are for the future...to be a bit creative and innovative. And gender is probably one area that we can be, there is obviously a large market in both sides and that we potentially, certainly from the female side of the sport, there is an opportunity to capture a bigger chunk of the female market...which we are not currently doing...

Although the male CEO, in the comment above, showed support for getting more women on the board, there was a lack of strong commitment among the board directors. One male director repeatedly stated that he opposed the continuation of a gender clause in the constitution. He said:

I am not interested in...(being forced to) have (certain)... numbers (of men and women)...I can live with it for the beginning of a new structure...for example (during) unification...I would expect to see some form of allocation of positions or opportunities to both genders. For example the president for the first year whatever that was then the following year it would be the opposite gender, I can live with that but provided there is a sunset clause on the end of it that says after this period of time it is the best person for the job.

Despite the fact that both women supported an increase in the number of women on their board, neither of them was confident that this would happen. They attributed the under-representation of women on the board to their work and family responsibilities as the vice-president commented:

Unfortunately in today's society a lot of women have still got to stay in the workforce, or else they have got family responsibilities. I was very lucky I could finish work and have no financial problems so this was fine, but not everybody is in that situation.

On the other hand, she referred to the attitudes of women themselves in serving on boards:

No I think it is a pity that women are not part of it but I think there is a lot of pressure on being on boards. There is a lot of anti out there and a lot of people are frightened of any repercussions that could come back. You see, you only hear all the bad things in the media; they don't put any of the good stories out. And I think that frightens a lot of women, the legal side of things, and you know they are afraid and all this sort of thing, and I think that does frighten a lot of people.

In a similar vein, one of the women directors spoke about the attitude of women:

I think the women make it easy in some cases for the men to take over because they don't put people up for nomination. They don't step up themselves, and they don't kind of look around and think, well, yeah, we could get this person onto the board. I think they do make it easy then for the men to take over.

As previously mentioned, this belief that women are not willing to be nominated and are afraid of assuming responsibility was understood as a problem among women themselves rather than the culture of the organisation. The symbolic relations on the board of this sport organisation can be summarised as having various levels of understanding of gender equality ranging from a basic level of equal opportunity for all to a more sophisticated level, namely, what gender equality means in terms of gender representation and impact on operational matters such as programming competitions. Further, despite the directors' view that women

clearly add value to the board, they did not demonstrate a strong commitment to or confidence in achieving gender equality on the board with the exception of the male CEO.

Conclusion

A summary of the gender relations on the board of sport organisation D can be viewed in Table six below.

Table 6: Gender relations on the board of sport organisation D

Gender relations	Characterised by
Production	Gendered division
Power	Male dominance
Emotional	Co-operative and politely respectful
Symbolic	Different levels of understanding of gender equality; no strong commitment to or confidence in achieving gender equality with the exception of the CEO

Several conclusions can be drawn from analysing the gender dynamics on the board in this sport organisation. Generally, the board was male dominated with women being under-represented overall as well as in the key positions of president and CEO. This may be due to the fact that the elected directors, including the two women, belonged to an older demographic who were used to this kind of working environment. In addition, the focus of the independent directors, although they represented a younger generation, was on finance and business matters and not on gender equality on the board. While the two women directors would like to see more women coming onto the board, they were not active change agents. The only one who showed commitment to changing the gender dynamics on the board was the male CEO. He held a position of influence and could be a driving force in changing the gender pattern in the organisation, but he had limited support from the directors.

At this point in time, the gender regime of this sport organisation can best be characterised as one of *masculine hegemony*.

6.6 Case study sport board E

Sport board E is the governing body of a national organisation representing a prominent Olympic team sport in Australia with approximately 120,000 members in 2010. Sex disaggregated data indicate that, in terms of participation, the majority (52 %) of players were women but the sport is also popular among men (Annual Report). At an international level the men's and women's national teams have had considerable success, consistently ranking among the top nations in the world. The board of this sport organisation was comprised of nine directors, three women and six men. Similar to the other three sport organisations the male CEO was not part of the board but usually attended board meetings as a non-voting member. The following is based on interviews with the male president, the male CEO and three directors, two of whom were women.

Production relations

The role of president was held by a man. In addition to attending to general board matters, each director was expected to assume responsibility for tasks relating to their knowledge area. This approach departed from previous practices where the board worked with committees. Governance was now structured largely, according to the expertise or professional background of board members. The women board directors' areas of expertise and tasks were as follows: the vice-president, who was a qualified accountant, focused on finances. The male CEO explained her role:

She is vice-president and she also heads up...finance...and given her expertise in finance she has been a great asset there. We are going through a process of just reengineering how we manage our finances and report on our finances as an organisation and she has been pivotal to that. (She gives) investment advice as well and (advice on) how we manage investments. So in terms of her skill set, (she is) very

good, but importantly, beyond that, she is a very good strategic thinker. She is very good at process, and very knowledgeable about...sport and competition as well. So she brings a full range of skills to the board and contributes on every level basically.

Further, the woman director who worked in sports administration, particularly in elite development, was responsible for the high performance area of the sport and the third woman director, who had a Master's degree in Business, was responsible for developing relationships with stakeholders and sponsorship. The male CEO commented on the contribution of the latter director in the following way:

She is...a very good stakeholder manager, so whether that be with prospective business partners or with the international body when they are out here and hosting them with functions. And ensuring that we are aligning ourselves well to, I guess, the powerbrokers of the sport and perceived in the right way, she is very good at that networking and positioning the national body in that way.

The expertise of the men on the board, and the tasks they performed in relation to it, were concentrated in several key areas, namely, business, law and corporate governance. All directors but one had a strong background in the sport they governed.

The male president preferred to keep the board structure simple because, as he commented:

We are not the most financial of bodies ... I leave it very much up to the individual board members to ascertain the best way forward and then they report at the board meetings as to how they are tracking. ..Sometimes structure brings cost and so less structure actually brings greater outcomes.

The male president contended that the women directors were particularly valuable for their contribution in cultivating relationships and consulting with stakeholders:

... I use Janice (director) and Heather (vice-president) and to a degree Michelle (director) more (regularly) for...talking to people and eliciting responses. And I don't know whether it is just the makeup of our board but (while) a couple of the male members ... are quite good, ... each of the girls (is) very good at talking to people and getting answers out of people, probably because they listen better than men do.

It is evident that the distribution of portfolios and tasks of the organisation was based on individual professional experience, a point emphasised by all the interviewed participants.

However, since there were six men and three women on the board, the majority of the roles

were taken by men; therefore the division of labour was male dominated. Further, it is also apparent that a significant gendered division prevailed in the work of the organisation in relation to its communication with a wide variety of stakeholders.

Power relations

Since the board had nine directors of whom three were female, women's representation was 33%. This percentage had been stable over the past few years. The constitution contained a clause that 'No one gender is to constitute less than three of the board's membership and at least two of each gender must be elected members'. After amalgamation in 2001 when the men's and women's associations became one body, the first president was a woman and the vice-president a man. The second and current president is a man while the vice-president is a woman.

In regard to hierarchy or status on the board, the male president's view was that each member brings their own expertise and skills to the table. All are equally important, as he said:

...I mean even as president I don't play on...status...I have run teams all my life in business and status is the worst way to run a business. The best success I have always had is actually (when) people are equal and think equally and every view is important, and as soon as you bring hierarchy and status in, good ideas often get lost. And so...what I try to do is make sure that the board is a team of equals, but recognise that certain people have attributes and skill based areas where they will be the experts.

This perspective was supported by other directors as one of the women who participated in the study commented:

...I would be saying that (this sport organisation) should be looking at what collectively...the board equals, and certainly I have got some qualities that absolutely contribute to that whole as does every other board member but in different ways...so I wouldn't compare us as apples and oranges but we all make up a fruit salad.

On the other hand, all interview participants reported that two board members were especially active and influential in terms of their contribution to the organisation. One, according to

interview participants was a woman who distinguished herself by asking many critical questions in relation to good governance and she had also brought several new members to the board. The male president was also identified as particularly dynamic. Both demonstrated a proactive approach towards the state associations by influencing some of their nominations. They provided advice and guidance on the sort of qualities and expertise needed on the national board. Overall, however, participants characterised the board as cohesive and democratic and one in which all voices were heard and respected, including those of women. As the male CEO commented:

Yeah my observation of the board is that gender is a non-issue totally, and contribution from anyone is received on its merit, and handled in that way, and there is absolutely no bias to one gender or the other, and a view is heard from a view perspective rather than a gender perspective...

Further, he acknowledged the importance of the gender clause in the constitution, as mentioned above, to ensure adequate women's representation on the board. One woman board member agreed and mentioned that she would not have stood for the board without the clause because she would not have liked to be part of an election, a competitive process. She said:

I think the thing that I would emphasise is having that ratio on a board designated specifically for whatever the minority is that a group is trying to address, so whether it be gender or...whatever it is, I think that allows a space for people to feel confident to have a go...There is a reason that we have you know minority representation in a number of areas and I think that is the space that allows for people to feel confident and therefore contribute on more of a level plane. So I think that is extremely important.

The gender clause in the constitution was instrumental not only to provide space for women directors and actively recruit them but also to maintain a percentage of at least 30% female representation. In sum, in view of the high ratio of male directors and the position of president and CEO being held by men, the power in this organisation was male dominated, however the female minority exercised influence through their significant board positions.

Emotional relations

As previously commented, participants characterised the board as cohesive and democratic; one in which all voices were heard and respected, including those of women. Despite having different perspectives on board matters, once a decision had been reached, the directors supported each other. As one female director stated:

...I think there is, the board is terrific. We all have a view and we will all debate it and we are all even happy to back each other's judgement if someone else feels a little bit more strongly about something. Very open, very honest, very strong have good discussions, and then also a willingness to actually support other people's direction as well.

According to the male president, this solidarity had not always prevailed and represented a change as it contrasted with the emotional relations of the former board when conflict along gender lines did occur. He observed that when a female director questioned the views of some older male directors on the former board, they became defensive. He characterised their thinking in the following way:

Well, I am right so...how do I rationalise that I am right?...Well, she is a woman, what would she know...

The shift to mutual respect, solidarity and co-operation was also emphasised by the male CEO who pointed out how well regarded and respected the female finance director was.

Another, relatively new, woman director, whose view on a particular board matter was sought and accepted, stated:

And look...(in)my first month on the board, I had the good fortune of being given a project to take recommendations from a Sports Commission review of the sport, the National High Performance Network, put that into an implementation plan format through consultation nationally and seek board approval for the content of the plan and strategies moving forward, which included recruitment of a new position. ... So I feel very well supported and I felt like I had a really good opportunity to put my strength to the test and certainly that was all well received.

Further to the board's emotional relations it is noteworthy that two women directors were openly gay to which the male CEO commented:

It is something (in the) history of the sport;...it is just part of the sport and so it is accepted as that. And actually I will say further to that as an example, Michelle brought her (same sex) partner to the (championships) and obviously felt comfortable bringing her partner into that environment, and again you know no issues and no comments, and it is just normal behaviour as it should be.

The woman director, Michelle, agreed that her sexual orientation was accepted which is evident when she stated:

I have certainly not experienced any discrimination or anything other than you know really being a person that is, you know, in a relationship with three kids.

In addition to alluding to a climate of respect and collaboration, several directors mentioned the enjoyment that they experienced from being part of the board. Overall, the emotional relations on this board can best be described as cohesive, supportive and satisfying.

Symbolic relations

In reply to the question about the meaning of gender equality the directors gave a range of answers. The male president viewed gender equality as being able to understand people and listen to them regardless of their gender, and accept that there are different points of view.

One woman director mentioned that gender equality revolves around a certain way of thinking:

It stems through a mindset so I think you need men with a gender equality mindset, you need women with a gender equality mindset as well. So it is as much about the gender of people as well as their (mindset)... so you need people on the board when decisions are being made that will think about both men and women, and see it as of equal importance and weigh up the decisions.

Yet another meaning was given by a female director who replied that it is about equitable contributions being made by men and women at every level of the sport, so her focus was on parity of contribution by both genders. On the other hand, another male board member highlighted outputs, suggesting that the allocation of resources, financial and human resources (such as quality coaches), should be equal for men and women.

There was consensus among the directors that the sport was gender equitable at many levels from participation to board composition and funding except in the area of coaching. There were few women in the position of elite coaching. The female director with the High Performance portfolio explained it as follows:

I have come round to...my own opinion that there are a lot of things that are bloody hard about coaching a national team, and they don't necessarily lend themselves to many of the qualities that women hold dear as they sort of progress through their career and have families. Everything from travelling you know day in day out, to taking huge responsibility for an outcome that is in your face like winning and losing. I actually think that they are not two key things that women are that interested in.

As this quote indicates, the respondents of this board clearly demonstrated a sound awareness of gender (in)equality. This is further evident when the male CEO stated:

I think the organisation...very much embraces the ethos of equality across a whole range of areas, and that is true of the board as well...So coming to a sport that had genuine gender equality, as well as success (in) male and female's elite sport and general sport perspective was a massive appeal coming into the role, and part of the reason why I came into the role (was) the fact that we covered both female and male.

Besides demonstrating awareness of gender equality, the board also displayed commitment to it which was evident from the following practice. Since the amalgamation of the men's and women's organisations ten years ago, the organisation had adopted the practice to achieve gender balance in the leadership positions of president and vice-president. This meant that if the president was female, the vice-president was male and vice versa. The current president explained that this also serves an external view of a gender-balanced sport organisation. One of the reasons stated for their commitment to gender equality was that the participation base in this sport in terms of gender distribution is reasonably equal. In addition, several respondents commented on the fact that, in contrast to professional football codes, this sport has both high profile men's and women's national teams who perform well internationally, promoting a commitment to gender equality. In sum, in terms of symbolic gender relations that prevailed in this board, gender equality was understood as equitable contributions and participation by men and women at every level of the sport.

A summary of the gender relations on the board of sport organisation E can be viewed in Table seven.

Table 7: Gender relations on the board of sport organisation E

Gender relations	Characterised by
Production	Male dominated; gendered division in relation to communication with stakeholders
Power	Female minority exercised influence through their significant board positions
Emotional	Cohesive, supportive and satisfying
Symbolic	Gender equality understood as equitable contributions/participation by men and women at every level of the sport

Several conclusions can be drawn from analysing the gender dynamics in this board. First, the high ratio of men directors and the occupation of the most influential role (president) by a man indicate a dynamic in which men still dominated but women were not marginalised primarily because they occupied influential board positions. Second, the president's and CEO's positions were significant as both men demonstrated superior awareness of and commitment to gender issues. There was, accordingly, strong leadership by men who supported and advanced gender equality. Third, not only the president and CEO but all interviewed participants showed an understanding of gender equality that it goes beyond numbers of women on boards and, most importantly, includes how women's representation impacts on policies, programs and funding that benefits both men and women. The key comment made by one of the women directors about the importance of a gender equality mind set, in other words, considering a gender perspective across all issues, suggests a gender mainstreaming approach. This leads us to the final conclusion: The pattern of gender relations or gender regime of this sport organisation can best be characterised as *gender*

mainstreaming in progress. The salient features of this gender regime will be discussed in the next chapter.

6.7 Summary

This chapter has presented the findings in relation to the first research question, namely, identification of the gender relations on boards of five national sport organisations in Australia. The analysis, drawing on four categories associated with the gendered organisation of production, power/authority, emotional attachment and symbolic relations, resulted in the identification of three gender regimes. Three of the five NSOs demonstrated a similar pattern in gender relations in the board, a regime of *masculine hegemony*, which was characterised by a gendered division in production relations and male dominance in power relations. In terms of emotional relations, although sport board D exhibited some co-operation and polite respect, the other two organisations representing this regime showed no evidence of a cohesive, supportive and inclusive board. Directors reported various understandings of gender equality but their common belief was that the under-representation of women directors was an issue mainly located within women themselves and outside the control and responsibility of the organisation.

On the other hand, the findings of one sport organisation showed a different pattern in gender relations in the board which I identified as a regime of *masculine hegemony in transition*. This regime had the following features. Although the board demonstrated a gendered division in production relations and masculine dominance in power relations, the woman chair, supported by an alliance of two directors and the CEO, counteracted the masculine influence and control. However, she was strongly resisted by one hostile male director which caused a gendered division in emotional relations among the board members. Further, in

terms of symbolic relations, several male directors resisted the change to a more gender equitable board and organisation initiated by the woman chair. This was evident, for example, when they reported their preference for a merit-based board to a gender-balanced board.

Finally, the findings on the board of the fifth sport organisation involved in the study showed another pattern of gender relations characterised as a regime of *gender mainstreaming in progress*. Despite a male-dominated division in production and power relations, the female minority exercised influence through their significant board position. Another marked difference with the two previously described regimes was found in terms of the emotional relations among directors which were cohesive, supportive and satisfying. In addition, directors understood gender equality as a notion that exceeded numerical parity of men and women on the board and included a gender perspective across all aspects in their sport. The following chapter discusses the findings of the study, in particular in relation to the three identified gender regimes and the prospects of each regime for gender equality in sport governance.

CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the results of the study, particularly in terms of prospects for gender equality in sport governance. The discussion addresses the two research questions:

1. What are the gender relations that characterise the composition and operation of sport boards in NSOs in Australia in terms of a 'gender regimes' approach, that is, one that draws on categories associated with the gendered organisation of production, power/authority, emotional attachment and symbolic relations?
2. In view of the above, what are the implications or prospects for gender equality on these boards in terms of the barriers and opportunities created by the specific configurations of gender relations and dynamics?

The discussion is structured in the following way. First, I provide an analysis of the gender ratios on the boards of the five case studies in comparison with national and international benchmarks and research. Second, I discuss each of the three gender regimes that were identified in the previous chapter highlighting salient features and concepts such as directors' attribution of limiting factors in women's representation, the challenging role of a woman chair, meritocracy, the use of quotas and the role of men in advancing gender equality. Third, similar to Schofield and Goodwin's study (2005), I explore the prospects for gender equality on the board for each gender regime. Finally, I summarise the conclusions in relation to the two research questions.

7.2 Gender ratios

Findings of this study suggest that although the gender ratios in NSO boards varied, in aggregate, some salient common features emerged. In all five boards, women were under-

represented, holding 10% (sport A), 22% (sports B and D) and 33% (sports C and E) of the board positions. Comparing these ratios with benchmark data in 2005 from the Australian Sports Commission (Australian Sports Commission, 2006), as discussed in chapter three, when women's representation on boards of all NSOs was 13%, it is evident that four of the five NSOs had a better representation of women than the overall benchmark seven years ago. Comparing the ratios with current data of 23.4% women's representation on NSOs boards (WomenOnBoards, 2012b), it indicates that only two of the five sport boards exceed this percentage. Nevertheless, in line with the results of Hartmann-Tews and Pfister's international comparative study (2003), the findings of this study clearly indicate that women remained under-represented in sport governance as board members.

Yet, another approach to analysing gender ratios is to compare the percentage of women board members with the percentage of women who play or participate in each of the sports (see Table eight). This approach rests on the assumption that women's representation on the board should be linked to the number of female members of the sport organisation that they are representing rather than the percentage of women in the general population.

Table 8: Percentage of women directors versus participants per sport organisation

	women directors %	women sport participants %
Sport A	10	15
Sport B	22	57
Sport C	33	21
Sport D	22	33
Sport E	33	52

Analysis of the percentages in Table eight suggests that when using this kind of comparison, women's representation was also low. The percentages demonstrate that women in four of the five case studies were under-represented. The largest under-representation of women was found in sport B: while 57% of its participants were women, only 22% of its board members were. By contrast, in sport C with 79% male members and 67% male directors, men were under-represented in this case.

Further, in relation to the gender ratios, it is noteworthy that three of the five case studies involve Olympic sports (sports A, B and E). The findings suggest that only two of them (sports B and E) had reached the target for women's participation set by the IOC, a minimum of 20% of board membership (International Olympic Committee, 2005). It is of great significance for NSOs to achieve gender balance on their boards because it impacts on the gender composition of the more influential and prestigious sport bodies, namely NOCs and IFs. This refers to the common practice or requirement that in order to be nominated for these higher level bodies, one needs to have served on the board of a national sport organisation. When women are under-represented on NSOs, there is a flow-on effect at the national and international Olympic level. This point was emphasised in two research reports commissioned by the IOC (Henry, et al., 2004; Henry & Robinson, 2010) as discussed in the literature review chapter.

In terms of vertical segregation, whereby men hold the most influential or senior positions, the findings indicate that this was the case in four organisations (sports A, B, D and E) in which both the president and CEO were men. By contrast, sport C demonstrated gender balance with a female chair and male CEO leading the organisation. Overall, the findings of the present study concur with those of McKay's research (1992, 1997) conducted almost two

decades ago. His conclusion, that horizontal and vertical gender segregation in the governance of Australian sport organisations prevails, is still valid today. A gender order which privileges men, is still a common gender pattern in sport boards (Connell, 1987; Connell, 2009; Hovden, 2006).

Although gender ratios on boards are important since they impact on power, authority and control, there is a need to go beyond numbers to examine and understand the gender dynamics involved in the production of these ratios. To that end, the following discusses and analyses the three gender regimes that prevailed in the boards of the five sport organisations examined in this study.

7.3 The regime of masculine hegemony

The findings of the study indicate that there was a dominant gender regime operating in sport boards. It prevailed in three of the five case studies (sports A, B and D) and can best be characterised as one of *masculine hegemony*. The notion of hegemony refers to a particular power dynamic and was formulated by Gramsci (1971) to advance a better understanding of Italian fascism in the 1920s and 1930s for the purposes of challenging and destroying it. Subsequently, the idea of hegemony was further developed to give it a wider application to understand relationships between dominant and subordinate social classes (Cox, 1983). Gramsci used a centaur - half man, half beast - as the image of power representing it as a necessary combination of consent and coercion. Hegemony of the dominant social class prevails when the consensual aspect of power is in the forefront. Coercion is always latent but requires active building of alliances between the subordinates. The key to the Gramscian concept of hegemony is the normalisation of the interests of the dominant group as common interests so the social divisions are naturalised (Cox, 1983; Gramsci, 1971). When this

occurs, the dominant group does not need to be coercive to maintain its power. In the following I discuss how masculine hegemony operated on the boards of the three sport organisations and its implications for gender equality. The analysis is structured on the basis of the four categories of gendered production, power/authority, emotional attachment and symbolic relations.

In terms of the gender division of production, power and authority, the results indicate that men in these sport organisations were clearly favoured because they assumed both the majority of all roles and tasks, and the most influential positions of chair and CEO. Although the women in the three case studies clearly contributed to the work of the board, such as in the areas of finance, marketing and building relationships with stakeholders, they were unable to make a robust impact on the traditional masculine culture of the sport and affect positive change. The continuation of a masculine culture in these sport organisations was evident from the various data presented in the results chapter. For example, the male president of sport A held a gender stereotypical belief that his sport was brutally tough and therefore inappropriate for women's participation. In sport B, the male CEO's comment on the discriminatory attitude of his senior coaching staff to women suggests the prevalence of a masculine culture. In sport D, the lack of women among the group of independent directors (professionals) and directors' views that catering and housekeeping duties were roles for women directors indicate that the traditional masculine culture had not changed.

Why so few: women themselves versus the organisation's culture

In terms of symbolic relations within this regime, both men and women directors' understandings of gender and gender equality involved the need to increase the number of women in sport governance. It was interesting to note that all three organisations

unequivocally reported that they would like more women on their board. Yet while some directors recognised the traditionally masculine culture as a barrier for gender balance on their board, they attributed the under-representation overwhelmingly to women themselves. In terms of McKay's distinction (1992) between external and internal barriers, that is, organisational factors and those associated within women themselves, directors generally understood women's under-representation in terms of the latter. They believed that factors such as the lack of suitable, qualified women ('can't find women'), women's unwillingness to be nominated or to assume leadership positions, women's lack of assertiveness and confidence in their own skills, and their difficulty in balancing work/life issues, were the main reasons for women's under-representation on their board. It was women themselves, they believed, who had generated the problem through their individual choices, priorities and competencies, all of which were beyond the control of the organisation.

It is evident that most directors in these organisations failed to understand that factors they identified as limitations within women themselves were limitations relating to the organisation's culture. The latter comprises assumptions, beliefs and shared values of members of the organisation as well as the members' decision making approaches and practices (Clegg, et al., 2011). While an organisation's culture is directly observable, its operation is also founded in unstated and subconscious motivations and approaches. For example, sport A tried to recruit a woman director from a group of elite sports women recently retired from international competition with a similar background as a number of the current male directors. This sport organisation had difficulty finding a suitable woman because the directors were looking for a woman of 'their kind' which severely limited the pool of candidates. The practice of selecting a woman in their own image, or as Claringbould and Knoppers (2007) have stated, a 'normal' woman who fits in with the culture of male-

dominated governance, has been identified as a common strategy to recruit women directors. More than three decades ago Kanter (1977) identified this pattern as 'homosocial reproduction', where men consciously and subconsciously choose other men in their own image. Several researchers in sport governance have recognised this approach to recruiting board candidates as a way of re-creating the existing gender structure of sports boards (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007; Hall, et al., 1989; Hovden, 2000).

In addition, several studies discussed in chapter three, have provided alternative explanations for these so-called limiting factors within women themselves. In her study on sport governance in German organisations, Radtke (2006) referred to the historically established practices of governance on sport boards which suit male directors but were not attractive to women thus impeding their willingness to be nominated for or to assume a leadership position. In regard to women's perceived lack of confidence, she found that women in comparison to men were indeed less assertive and less inclined to promote themselves. Before standing for office they carefully assessed their skills required for the position to ensure that they could meet the obligations of the position in a dutiful manner. Radtke (2006) has explained that this type of behaviour may convey the impression that women are hesitant, lack self-confidence and are, therefore, less suitable to take up leadership roles. However, according to Radtke (2006), this type of behaviour could actually be interpreted as conducive to leadership because it reflects a judicious mindfulness and reflexivity required in prudent governance. With reference to women's difficulty in balancing life/work issues, Radtke (2006) found in her study that women serving on boards had strong support from their partner in family and domestic duties. In fact, this was essential for women to succeed, a point also emphasised in several other studies (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007; Henry, et al., 2004). In sum, despite directors' focus on women themselves as the main reason for their under-

representation on the board, there is no doubt that the culture of the organisation and its relationship to the broader gender order played a significant role in the privileged status of men on sport boards.

Role of men and women to advance gender equality

Further to directors' understanding of gender equality, the findings of the study suggest that directors recognised that gender equality is an issue in different arenas of sport, namely in sport participation, in governance, in high performance coaching and in relation to remuneration for top athletes. For example, the directors of sport A acknowledged that the participation rate of women and girls in their sport was low as was remuneration for its top female athletes. Its male elite athletes, by contrast, were accorded generous financial rewards. The directors of sport B recognised that there was a significant lack of high-performance women coaches in their sport even though the majority of their sport participants were women.

The manner in which directors sought to address these issues warrants further analysis. According to the male CEO of sport A, the issue of gender diversity on the board would be solved 'naturally', that is, rectified over time as successive generations of women gradually increased their participation in the sport. This approach is flawed for two main reasons. First, the findings in one of the other case studies, sport B, contradict the likelihood of a 'natural' solution. Sport B demonstrates that when women's participation increases, even to become the majority, women's under-representation is not 'naturally' solved. In fact, this organisation had the largest under-representation of women directors in comparison to women's participation in the sport of all five cases studied, as discussed at the start of this chapter. Second, it was evident that the male-dominated board had no understanding of the

role they themselves played through their decisions and actions in shaping the board's gender composition.

While there was a desire to increase women's participation in sport governance, it was evident that such a development was not something the directors saw as part of their role. None of the three organisations had any objectives in their strategic plan to make this happen. Further, only one of the case studies, sport D, had adopted a gender clause in its constitution. Not only had this clause been downgraded over the past years but it was also clearly opposed by some directors. Despite the awareness of gender inequality by the directors at all three sport organisations, none made any commitment to implementing measures to change. To the extent that the boards accepted male-dominated governance as something not of their making, it is apparent that there was generalised consent to the gender hierarchy that prevailed. This corresponds with the Gramscian concept of hegemony that power is not simply exerted coercively but also consensually in maintaining the dominance of particular interests (Cox, 1983; Gramsci, 1971).

In terms of gender emotional relations, the findings indicate that generally, men and women directors collaborated and politely respected each other's contributions to the governance of their organisation. The few women directors, although respected by the men, did little to challenge male-dominated governance. No emotional debates about gender or gender equality were reported nor tensions between male and female directors. This suggests nullification of gendered emotions of hostility and resistance. As a consequence, the men directors did not need to defend or even justify their way of governance and no coercion was required to maintain their hegemonic status (Cox, 1983; Gramsci, 1971). The only woman director (sport B) who was strongly committed to advancing gender equality experienced on

occasions some hostility from another male director. Although she was somewhat supported by the male CEO, she received little support from the other men directors or the second woman director on the board. It was evident that no alliances were built to challenge or resist the status quo. Given the absence of an alliance between the subordinates, no coercion was required to maintain masculine hegemony (Cox, 1983; Gramsci, 1971).

Prospects for gender equality

In conclusion, given that women were under-represented on the boards of these organisations, directors attributed women's under-representation mostly to factors within women themselves, and there was no alliance between directors to resist the status quo, the prospects for achieving gender equality in sport governance were limited. Similar to Schofield and Goodwin's study (2005), the combination of the four categories of gender relations which constituted this gender regime of masculine hegemony presented a 'worst-case' scenario in terms of advancing gender equality. Schofield and Goodwin (2005) have argued that this type of gender regime maintains and reproduces the social hierarchy because it is fundamentally *consensual*. Overall, this regime of masculine hegemony in sport governance imposes formidable constraints on gender equality on boards.

7.4 The regime of masculine hegemony in transition

The findings of the study indicate that the gender regime in one of the five case studies, sport C, can best be characterised as one of *masculine hegemony in transition*. Parallel to the gender regime of masculine hegemony the gender dynamics in this sport organisation also favoured men because they fulfilled the majority of all roles and tasks. However, the dynamics in this regime differed in one significant respect: the influential position of chair in this organisation was occupied by a woman. At the time of the study, only five of 56

Australian NSOs had a woman chair rendering the woman chair of sport organisation C a notable rarity. The influence of the powerful woman chair brought about complex gender dynamics in the governance of this organisation. In the following I discuss the salient features of this gender regime.

The role of the woman chair

In terms of power and authority relations, the board was numerically male-dominated (four men and two women), but the powerful position of chair was occupied by a woman. It was evident from the findings that she exerted authority since she was highly regarded by most directors mainly due to her competency in her role as chair, her professional, commercial background and strong commitment to the organisation. Directors described her as someone with strong business and financial skills, who worked long hours and was a tough negotiator, with a supportive partner and no responsibilities for children. As discussed in chapter three, this collection of characteristics resembles the one that Kanter (1977) identified as typical for those working in senior management and governance. She explained that these characteristics represent the masculine ethic in management and only women who could 'think like a man' were able to gain entry in these leadership positions. It is evident that the woman chair of sport C was able to meet the expectations of her male colleagues in 'managing like a man' (Wajcman, 1999). As Judy Wajcman has commented about women entering senior management, contrary to expectations, they did not bring a more consultative, co-operative and caring style to the position but were pressured to 'manage like a man'. Moreover, Wajcman found that some women managers behaved and survived by being even more male than men (1999). The findings of the present study confirm those of Wajcman's research (1999) in so far as the woman chair conformed to the male model of successful leadership in governance. This is also evident from one of the male director's comments

when he said that she wanted to appear to be tough but that she should be more willing to negotiate, find a compromise and maintain positive relationship with stakeholders rather than ‘slamming the door’ on them. The female chair’s style of management in sport organisation C obviously appealed to the other directors as she was elected and re-elected by them in this position. Such a practice, as previously mentioned, mirrored the tendency within male-dominated governance towards homosocial reproduction, a pattern in which male board members select women who reflect their experiences and style of governance as found in a range of other studies (Burton, 1987; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007; Hall, et al., 1989; Hovden, 2000; Kanter, 1977; Shaw, 2006). Further, it is consistent with findings of research on sport governance in the Netherlands and in Olympic organisations which has suggested that women negotiate their entry to the board by proving their ‘fit’ (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007). These women accept and adapt to the management style and culture of the board (Henry & Robinson, 2010).

In terms of production relations, under the female chair’s leadership, the division of labour also remained stereotypically gendered in the sense that the only other woman on the board was responsible for grass roots development. By contrast, the more prestigious tasks such as managing high performance and championships, which often involved international travel to prominent events, were allocated to men. Further, the evidence suggested that a significant gendered division existed in the work of the organisation in relation to representing the women members which was perceived as a task specifically for the women directors. Thus, the woman chair had to manage several roles and tasks. Overall, her role was challenging as, on the one hand she was required to engage with ostensibly gender-neutral mechanisms of governance to advance the objectives of the organisation, while on the other she found herself serving as the voice of women to advance gender equality in her sport. She represented not

just herself but women as a group. Similar to Kanter who contended that women working among a male-dominated management group become symbols of 'how-women-can-do, stand-ins for all women' (1977, p. 207), the chair of sport C was highly visible in terms of her leadership. Her performance and behaviour as a woman chair were under continuous scrutiny evoking a range of emotional reactions.

In terms of emotional relations, the findings suggest that she was strongly resisted by one male director. This director, who used to be the chair of the former men's association before amalgamation, aspired to be chair but was defeated by the current woman chair on two occasions. He did not accept her leadership and provoked division among the directors. Nevertheless, the woman chair had the support of several co-operative and collegiate directors, a group of three consisting of the only other women director, one male director and the male CEO, all of whom formed a small alliance with the woman chair to advance the organisation including in matters relating to gender equality.

Although the woman chair had adopted the male model of governance, she - supported by the group of three - had also assumed responsibility to represent the interests of the women members. This was evident from the data that she had initiated monitoring and evaluation of the amount of financial resources being allocated to men and women's programs and the number of national events for both genders. Further, she had ensured the organisation's commitment to host a flagship international women's event in addition to the men's event annually. The rationale for this approach was that the organisation should provide equal opportunity for men and women; that is how she understood gender equality.

Meritocracy

In reference to symbolic relations, not only the woman chair but all directors who were interviewed in this sport organisation understood gender equality mainly in terms of equal opportunity to excel in the sport, to develop as a player or official and become a board member. Similar to the directors in the gender regime of masculine hegemony, board members in the present regime acknowledged the male-dominated and chauvinistic history of the sport which they believed was one of the reasons for the gender inequality on their board. By contrast with the previous gender regime, they did take some responsibility for the status quo. In other words, they recognised that besides factors within women themselves (or internal factors), the organisation's culture (or external factors) (McKay, 1992) had contributed to gender inequality in their organisation including the composition of the board.

In order to address the issue of gender equality on the board, the organisation had adopted a clause in the constitution that the board required a minimum of two directors of either gender. This clause was established at the time of the amalgamation of the women's and men's organisations into one body governing both women's and men's sport and it was still in place, unlike other sport organisations that had weakened the gender clause over time. Several directors stressed the importance of a gender-balanced board. In particular, the male CEO clearly understood the advantage of a balanced board. However, there was some resistance towards the clause in the constitution by several directors who felt that an appropriate skill set had priority over gender as a criterion for board selection. They emphasised that they needed the 'best' people on the board regardless of their gender, echoing the widely espoused understanding that a merit-based board and a gender-balanced board were somehow mutually exclusive. These board members failed to understand that a gender-balanced board was not inconsistent with a merit-based board. Further, in essence,

this issue relates to the notion of meritocracy or the ‘mobilisation of masculine bias’ in which male domination in institutions is sustained due to selection processes which favour men (Burton, 1987). Burton has argued that the opportunity to accrue merit and the attribution of merit are structured along gender lines. In her analysis of distribution of opportunities for appointment and promotion to leadership roles, she found that they are largely based on perception, evaluations and decisions which provide women with less access to opportunities than men. Although Burton’s research (1987) was mostly conducted with a range of large public sector agencies, similar findings of conscious and sub-conscious gender discrimination have also been recorded with organisations in the corporate sector (Branson, 2007) and the sport sector (Hovden, 2000; McKay, 1992; Radtke, 2006; Shaw, 2006). The findings of the present study suggest that this notion of merit played a significant role in sport C in which directors reported that not many women had the right credentials or governance experience to take a place on the board. This does not augur well for achieving gender equality on its board in the future.

Prospects for gender equality

In conclusion, the combination of the four categories of gender relations which constituted this gender regime of *masculine hegemony in transition* was a more *dynamic* pattern of gender relations than the previously discussed regime of *masculine hegemony*. Overall, this gender regime can be understood as being in transition because it contained structures of practice that both maintained *and* contested masculine dominance. The prospects for gender equality on this board were more positive than on the boards of sport organisations under the previous regime. Positive factors are measures taken by the board to address equal opportunity in the sport, the presence of a woman chair and a small alliance of directors to effect change. However there were significant constraints, including the presence of a

masculine ethic in leadership, some marked hostility towards a woman chair, and support for meritocracy which limit advancing gender equality on the board of this sport organisation.

7.5 The regime of gender mainstreaming in progress

The findings of the study indicate that the gender regime in one of the five case studies, sport E, can best be characterised as *gender mainstreaming in progress*. Similar to the two gender regimes previously discussed, the gender dynamics in this sport organisation also privileged men. They comprised six of the nine director positions and occupied the most influential roles of president and CEO. However, the gender dynamics were markedly different from the former regimes in two ways. First, the female minority exercised influence through their significant board positions. Second, the male president and CEO played an instrumental role in support of women. They promoted an organisational culture in which both women and men could contribute and develop. Their attitude reflects an approach of gender mainstreaming which, according to Rees, is one ‘to transform organisations and create a culture of diversity in which people of a much broader range of characteristics and backgrounds may contribute and flourish’ (1998, p. 27). In the following I discuss the salient features of this gender regime.

Role of men

In terms of the gendered division of production, power and authority, the role of men on the board warrants discussion. The male president and CEO of sport E were significant as both men demonstrated acute awareness of and commitment to gender issues. Organisational leadership here was characterised by overt and unequivocal support for the advancement of gender equality. As proposed by Claringbould and Knoppers (2008), men can play an important role in the doing and undoing of gender meanings to behaviours or tasks. On the

one hand, the male president in sport E ‘did gender’ by allocating stereotypical female tasks to the women directors on the board such as cultivating relationships and consulting with stakeholders. On the other hand, he *undid* gender by asking women directors to assume roles traditionally undertaken by men – in this case, the positions of finance director and the director responsible for high performance athletes. It was the president’s view that the distribution of tasks should be based on individual expertise and not gender.

The significance of the role of men in gender equality processes has been acknowledged in the context of gender politics on a world scale since the 1995 Beijing World Conference on Women (Connell, 2009). In the late 1990s and early 2000s this issue has been examined at several UN forums culminating in the formulation of a policy. It contained a broad international agreement on the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality which was adopted at the 48th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in 2004 at the UN Headquarters in New York (Connell, 2009). Subsequently in 2008, the UN Division for the Advancement of Women published ‘The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality’ (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, 2008). This monograph was part of the *Women 2000 and Beyond* series which promote the goals of the *Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action*. It emphasised the need to actively involve men and boys in gender equality work based on the premise that gender equality cannot be achieved by women alone. Reasons to engage men include that they often control the resources which are required for the work but more importantly, men will also benefit from gender equality. The continuation of an unequal gender order is likely to have negative consequences on men, for example, the absence of nurturing relationships with children (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, 2008).

Including men in the advancement of gender equality is fundamental to the concept of gender mainstreaming. It embodies a paradigm shift in thinking from a focus on equality for women to one on equality for both genders (Rees, 2002). A gender mainstreaming approach means wearing a 'gender lens' when developing policies and processes to assess if they benefit women and men equally. The findings of the present study suggest that sport E had adopted a gender perspective into their organisational structure, policies, programs, processes and projects. The key comment made by one of the women directors about the importance of a gender equality 'mind set' aptly illustrated the presence of a gender mainstreaming approach.

In terms of symbolic relations, not only the woman director who mentioned the appropriate mind set or gender lens but *all* interview participants disclosed an understanding of gender equality that exceeded numerical parity of men and women on boards. They commented on the significance of how decisions on policies, programs and funding can impact differentially and unequally on men and women. The board's gender composition and its conscious commitment to ensuring participation by women in the core business of its governance revealed a gender mainstreaming approach that suggested a strong foundation for advancing gender equality on the board and governance of the organisation.

Another factor that bode well for gender equality on the board was that, in terms of emotional relations, the board was cohesive with members respecting and supporting each other. This contrasted with the gender regime of *masculine hegemony in transition* which had a divisive board with some overt hostility, in particular, towards the female chair. In the current regime, the cohesion was evident when one relatively new woman director mentioned the support and enjoyment that she experienced as being part of the board. She commented on

the positive climate on the board in which she had been given an opportunity to contribute and her input had been well received by the other directors.

Gender quotas

Further, in regard to symbolic relations, the findings indicate that the directors assumed responsibility for gender equality on their board by demonstrating their commitment to the gender clause in the organisation's constitution. This clause prescribed a minimum of three directors of either gender and was the strongest condition found in comparison with the other four sport organisations involved in the study. One of the women directors in sport E emphasised that this clause was instrumental in her being elected on the board. She felt that the clause provided space for women directors and functioned as an incentive to actively recruit women. She emphasised that without this clause it would have been unlikely that she would have become part of the board. It is evident that the clause had a positive impact on gender equality on their board.

Further, it is noteworthy that none of the interviewed directors or the CEO in this sport organisation expressed resistance to the gender clause, another point of difference between the previous gender regimes in which several directors stated their dissatisfaction with the clause. This raises the issue of gender quotas and targets on sport boards which has been vigorously debated in past decades, at amongst other organisations the IOC, arguably the most influential and prestigious sport organisation in the world (Henry, et al., 2004). In line with the findings of the IOC study, the results of the present study indicate that the adoption of a quota for the percentage of women on boards has had a positive effect on women's representation on the board. The IOC consciously used targets which are somewhat different from quotas, the gender clause in the constitution as reported in the present study. Targets

are a goal to strive for, while quotas are a goal to be achieved and a legal requirement; however, the establishment of either as a minimum requirement proved to have been effective to some extent. The IOC study also indicated that the introduction of targets was met with significant reluctance by the affected organisations and despite the reported positive impact of the targets, it was clear that most NOCs and IFs had failed to meet the minimum target of 20% by 2005, as previously discussed in chapter three (Henry, et al., 2004; International Olympic Committee, 2005). A constraint of targets is that they cannot be enforced since they are not legally binding. A significant limitation of both targets and quotas are that they can be perceived as a maximum rather than a minimum value. As reported in the IOC study, some organisations had regarded the target as a ceiling to be attained rather than a foundation from which to build (Henry, et al., 2004). It is evident that sport E had achieved the quota but not exceeded it at the time of the study, thus treating the quota as a ceiling rather than a base.

The issue of quotas has also been the focus of several studies in the context of Norwegian sport governance (Hovden, 2006; Ottesen, Skirstad, Pfister, & Habermann, 2010; Skirstad, 2009). Since the 1970s women's representation on the board of their NOC had dramatically increased from 8% to 39% (Skirstad, 2009). A gender clause had been included in the constitution, or statute as they call it, of the organisation since 1990, and been amended several times. Currently, it stands as a minimum requirement of two representatives from each gender and that the board composition is to be proportionate to the gender distribution of the membership (Skirstad, 2009). According to Skirstad (2009), a radical proposal for a 40% quota was too radical even for the Norwegian sport movement. The proposal was rejected despite the legislation of 40% women's representation on company boards in Norway. The fact that women's representation on the NOC still reached almost 40% is likely

to have been influenced by the broader society, that is, the prevailing proactive stance on gender equality in that country. Clearly, gender quotas in sport can have a positive, albeit limited, impact and the broader context of social, cultural and political conditions in countries plays an important role in its effectiveness. Thus, in relation to sport E that did not have a clause in relation to the proportion to its membership base, nor a broader context of a gender quota on boards in the corporate sector, the impact of its gender quota was positive but limited.

Prospects for gender equality

In conclusion, the gender regime of *gender mainstreaming in progress* was the most conducive in advancing gender equality when compared with the two previous regimes. Determining factors for advancing gender equality included the occupation of women in significant board positions, the support and endorsement of influential men on the board, the positive emotional relations or cohesiveness on the board, and the presence of a gender quota for board members. However, it should be noted that gender mainstreaming as the most recent influential approach to equality for women is contested terrain (Bacchi & Eveline, 2009). The concept was developed as a reaction to a focus on ‘women’s issues’ only and the tendency that accompanied it of viewing women as the problem. The term gender was introduced to broaden the reform agenda. Bacchi and Eveline (2009) argue that the effectiveness of mainstreaming has been ambiguous since, after its introduction in some places, funding for women’s policy units have been curtailed and women’s specific interventions of affirmative action have been attacked. Therefore, it is important to emphasise that gender mainstreaming needs to be complemented by a focus on women’s interests and feminist measures, a point also made by Schofield and Goodwin’s study (2005). The prospects for gender equality in sport governance in sport E were the most positive of all

three regimes identified and discussed in this study provided women's interests remain at the heart of the organisation.

7.6 Summary

In response to the first research question about the gender dynamics on boards of NSOs in Australia, analysis of the findings indicate that gender dynamics were not uniform for the boards of all five case studies. Gender operated in diverse and complex ways on sport boards. The complexity of the gender dynamics derived from the way in which roles were allocated on the board, power and authority were exercised, emotional relations between directors were played out and in particular, the manner in which gender and gender equality were understood. Three gender regimes on NSO boards have been identified based on specific configurations of gender relations in the four categories of Connell's gender relations model (2009). The conclusion of chapter six presents a summary of the main features associated with each regime. Similar to Schofield and Goodwin's study (2005) each gender regime provides a map of the gender dynamics at play on the board. Further, 'it charts the structures that shape the opportunities for and constraints...to advance gender equality. It allows analysts to evaluate the prospects for gender change' (Schofield & Goodwin, 2005, p. 41).

Identification of the various gender regimes permits us to respond to the second research question about the implications or prospects for gender equality on the NSO boards. In this study, the *gender regime of masculine hegemony* found on boards in sports A, B and D offered the least prospects for gender equality. The main reason for this was that the gender hierarchy in this regime was consensual. Men were numerically dominant and held the most influential positions. This situation was not challenged by the directors, men or women, and

no alliance between directors was formed to resist the traditional male-dominated culture. Directors did not assume responsibility to change the gender inequality on the board as they believed that this was a ‘problem’ within women themselves which was beyond the control of the organisation.

By contrast, the *gender regime of masculine hegemony in transition* found on sport board C demonstrated a more dynamic pattern of gender relations with prospects for gender equality more positive than the previous regime. This was due to the powerful woman chair supported by an alliance of the male CEO and two directors of which one was a woman. They assumed responsibility to address gender equality in their sport including in board membership. Nevertheless, this regime also showed some constraints such as the presence of a masculine ethic in leadership, some marked hostility towards a woman chair, and support for meritocracy. Therefore, this regime was one in transition because it contained structures of social practice that both maintained and contested masculine dominance in sport governance.

Yet the *gender regime of gender mainstreaming in progress* found on the board of sport E was the most conducive for the advancement of gender equality on its board. The main reasons for this conclusion was the role of women in significant board positions, the supportive role of influential male directors, the inclusion of a gender quota clause in the constitution and the positive emotional relations among directors. The regime was one in progress because, although the prospects were most positive compared to the two other regimes, gender equality had not yet been achieved. Men still occupied the most influential positions of president and CEO, and women’s representation on the board (33%) had not reached gender parity yet.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Introduction

In this final chapter I move from analysis and discussion of the findings of the study to a consideration of the conclusions and their implications for policy and practice. Following a summary of the context of the study I draw conclusions about the key research questions into the gender dynamics and prospects for gender equality on NSO boards in Australia. I then discuss ways in which this study has uniquely contributed to knowledge and understanding of gender and sport governance. This is followed by a section providing recommendations for both NSOs and the ASC. I conclude with identifying future topics of research that can build on and extend the present study.

8.2 Context of the study

The impetus for this study was twofold. From a practitioners' perspective, despite women's stunning progress on the sports field in the past century, women's performance *off* the field, namely, in sport governance has not progressed in the same dramatic way. Women on sport boards, both internationally and in Australia, remain largely under-represented. The sustained call for action for more women in leadership positions through the various charters, declarations and policies over the past two decades has had limited effect. This is problematic because i) there is a need for gender equality in the composition of directors to ensure adequate representation of the interests of all stakeholders, men and women, in sport organisations and ii) using the whole talent pool's capital can improve the governance of organisations (Nielsen & Huse, 2010; Terjesen, et al., 2009; van der Walt & Ingley, 2003).

From an academic perspective, the impetus for the study was derived from the paucity of knowledge and understanding of women's under-representation on sport boards. Although a significant body of research has emerged on this topic, the majority of studies have investigated the gender distribution of the composition of sport boards and related issues such as factors that inhibit women's participation in sport governance (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007; Henry, et al., 2004; Henry & Robinson, 2010; Hovden, 2000; McKay, 1992; Pfister & Radtke, 2009; Shaw, 2006). Few studies have examined the underlying gender dynamics on sport boards once women have gained a seat at the boardroom table, yet this line of investigation may disclose important reasons for the lack of gender equality on sport boards. The aim of the present study was to examine how gender works on boards of NSOs in Australia with the following research questions:

1. What are the gender relations that characterise the composition and operation of sport boards in NSOs in Australia in terms of a 'gender regimes' approach, that is, one that draws on categories associated with the gendered organisation of production, power/authority, emotional attachment and symbolic relations?
2. In view of the above, what are the implications or prospects for gender equality on these boards in terms of the barriers and opportunities created by the specific configurations of gender relations and dynamics?

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to address the research questions including an audit of gender distribution on 56 NSO boards, in-depth interviews (n=26) with board directors and CEOs of five NSOs and document collection. In terms of data analysis I used both a deductive, theory inspired, approach and an inductive, data inspired, approach (Amis, 2005). To ensure credibility and legitimacy of the study, I produced a detailed audit

trail which contains an explicit account of the research methodology. The following section draws conclusions from the major findings of the study.

8.3 Gender dynamics and prospects for gender equality on NSO boards

In relation to the first research question informing this study, I found that gender dynamics - understood from a 'gender regimes' perspective as developed by Connell (1987, 2009) - were not uniform. Gender operated in diverse and complex ways on sport boards, depending on how structures of practice associated with: i) the allocation of tasks or division of labour, ii) the exercise of power and authority, iii) the enactment of emotions on a continuum from attachment to hostility, and iv) understandings or discourses of gender including gender equality, were configured and combined. Accordingly, in applying this approach (Connell 2009), the study identified three gender regimes on NSO boards. Each regime provided a map of the gender dynamics at play on the board and presented a foundation for addressing the second research question in relation to the prospects for gender equality in sport governance (Schofield & Goodwin, 2005).

The most common regime, demonstrated on three of the five sport boards, was a *regime of masculine hegemony*. This was characterised by a gendered division in production relations since men directors assumed the majority of roles and male dominance in power relations since men held the most influential positions of both president and CEO. In terms of emotional relations, none of these organisations showed evidence of a cohesive, supportive and inclusive board in which directors enjoyed working together; at best, directors exhibited polite respect towards each other. Directors reported various understandings of gender equality, and although they proclaimed a need for increasing the presence of women directors, their common belief was that women's under-representation was mainly

attributable to women themselves and outside the control and responsibility of the organisation. The prospects for gender equality in this regime were very limited and least favourable compared with the other two regimes because the male dominance that characterised board membership and executive positions was normalised and accepted.

The second regime identified was characterised as one of *masculine hegemony in transition*. This regime operated on a board disclosing a gendered division in production relations and masculine dominance in power relations but it distinguished itself from the previous regime through the occupation of the chairperson's position by a woman. She was supported by an alliance of two directors and a male CEO, and together they counteracted masculine influence and control. The role of the woman chair was paradoxical; on the one hand she 'managed like a man' but on the other, she promoted gender equality in her sport. With regards to emotional relations, she was strongly resisted by one hostile male director which caused a gendered division among the board members. Further, in terms of symbolic relations, several male directors reported their preference for a merit-based board to a gender-balanced board. They failed to understand the masculine bias of selection and promotion processes. The prospects for gender equality on this board were more positive in this regime than in the previous one but they were limited by some significant constraints.

The third regime identified in this study, and represented by the board of one sport organisation, was one of *gender mainstreaming in progress*. Despite a male-dominated division in production and power relations, the female minority exercised influence through their significant board positions. They were overtly supported by influential men, namely, the president and CEO. A marked difference with the two previously described regimes was found in terms of the emotional relations among directors which were cohesive, supportive

and satisfying. In addition, directors understood gender equality as a notion that exceeded numerical parity of men and women on the board and included a gender perspective across all aspects in their sport. By comparison with the other gender regimes identified in this study, this regime had the best prospects for gender equality in sport governance.

8.4 Contributions to knowledge

The contribution to knowledge of the present study relates to the nexus of gender and sport governance. In sport management, due to the changing nature of sport organisations from predominantly volunteer administered organisations to professionally managed entities, the area of governance has emerged as a critical issue. In order to enhance the professionalisation of the sport industry, national sport organisations need to embrace and implement principles of good governance. Ferkins, Shilbury and McDonald (2005) have highlighted the salient role of the board in sport governance and found that one area that has been scarcely addressed in this area of research to date, is board structure and composition. One line of investigation in relation to board composition has been diversity on boards, including gender diversity. A compelling case for gender diversity, based on research in the corporate domain, has now been established. As discussed in chapter one, a comprehensive review of research on women directors on corporate boards, conducted by Terjesen, Sealy and Singh (2009), and including more than 400 publications in the past 30 years, found that corporate governance was improved when women were appointed to boards because they brought ‘value-adding’ talents and represented stakeholders who had previously been excluded.

Although a growing body of research has contributed to the knowledge and understandings of the under-representation of women in sport governance, the present study has uniquely

contributed by disclosing how gender works on boards of NSOs, in particular in relation to the underlying gender dynamics between board members. This study has demonstrated how Connell's gender regimes framework (2009) can be used as an effective analytical tool to identify how gender works in sport governance as a foundation for determining the barriers to and opportunities for the advancement of gender equality. By contrast with studies that have focused on analysing gender ratios and women's representation in sport governance, such an approach provided a systematic and transparent method for analysing qualitative data to disclose the underlying gender dynamics on boards. This innovative method has previously been used in the context of examining gender regimes in public sector institutions in New South Wales, Australia (Schofield & Goodwin, 2005). The present study is the first to have adopted it in relation to governance in Australian sport organisations.

Analysis of the three gender regimes disclosed that the following are significant in advancing gender equality in sport governance. First is the presence of women on boards. In this regard, the adoption of quotas is an effective organisational strategy in achieving gender parity, especially when they are used for prescribing the minimum, and not the maximum, number of women to be elected or appointed to the board. Second is the occupation by women, in equal numbers, of leadership and other influential board positions. Occupation of such positions is foundational to the exercise of power and authority in the decision-making of boards, especially related to the directions they propose for the development of the organisation and the allocation of resources. Third involves directors' understandings and explanations of gender inequality in sport governance. Recognition and understanding of the organisational and governance dynamics in producing the board's gendered composition – rather than women themselves – is critical to the advancement of gender equality in sport boards. Proactive commitment to and action by board members towards the achievement of

gender equality in board membership is crucial. Fourth are the relations of co-operation and collaboration that exist between men and women on the board. Hostility by men on boards towards women's presence and participation, especially if women hold leadership positions, undermines gender equal governance. Conversely, active endorsement of and support for women by men on boards, particularly if these men hold leadership positions, is highly effective in advancing gender equality. Establishing solidaristic relations among women and men on boards is vital in progressing gender equality. It is critical to emphasise here that none of these structural dimensions on its own is sufficient to advance practice of gender equal governance. Rather, it is the *combination* of each of these dimensions that appears foundational to progressing such a goal.

8.5 Implications for policy and practice

In view of the findings of the study, what then are the implications for policy and practice?

One of the key findings of the study was the recognition and understanding that organisational and governance dynamics produce the board's gendered composition. This means that directors who control and govern their organisation are instrumental in the composition that exists on the board. When they assume responsibility for and commit to gender equality on the board, change will occur. Based on the results of the study, I recommend directors and CEOs of NSOs in Australia, both men and women, to be proactive in the following ways to achieve a gender equitable board. First, they need to ensure that women are being elected or appointed to the board. Although the present study found that using gender quotas, set as a clause in the organisation's constitution, was often resisted by sport organisations, they were effective in getting more women directors appointed.

Therefore, I recommend that directors adopt quotas for gender representation on their board and view them as a minimum rather than a maximum requirement. This maybe an interim

measure insofar as using a quota may become redundant when both genders hold at least 40% of the board positions and the role of women is well established on the board.

Second, directors and CEOs need to assess their recruitment procedures to ensure that women are included as candidates when board vacancies occur. Directors could adopt a policy whereby an equal number of male and female candidates are proposed for every vacant board position. The organisation could facilitate this by establishing a nomination committee with the task of identifying and nominating suitable candidates. Search strategies of this committee should involve looking beyond their own, often male-dominated, networks and include consulting registers that contain lists of qualified and experienced women candidates such as the ones established by the ASC and Women on Boards as discussed in chapters three and one respectively.

Third, when women are appointed or elected to the board, I recommend that presidents and CEOs allocate significant positions and roles to these women in a non-gender stereotypical manner, as exemplified in the behaviour of the president and CEO of sport board E. Assigning women to powerful positions, such as those of vice-president or chair of a finance and audit committee, provide women with a superior opportunity to influence decision-making and contribute in a robust way. It is important that male directors support their female counterparts in these positions as hostility towards women in leadership positions was found to inhibit gender equal governance.

Fourth, further to the study's findings in regards to emotional relations on the board, I recommend that directors and CEOs recognise the value of and work towards positive relations on the board. Creating an environment in which directors co-operate, support each

other and enjoy working together is conducive for progressing gender equality in sport governance.

Finally, given that the ASC is a major stakeholder of NSOs through providing significant funding as outlined in chapter one, I recommend that the ASC assumes a more active role in advancing gender equality on the NSO boards. It is reasonable for the ASC to expect from publicly funded bodies, such as NSOs that provide a service for the general population, to subscribe and adhere to basic principles of liberal democratic governance including gender equality. Subsequently, it is equally reasonable for the ASC to link funding to gender equality and view the latter as an important organisational performance indicator. When NSOs do not commit to achieving gender parity on their boards, their funding should be reviewed. Rather than withholding funding, the ASC could reward boards with a bonus when gender parity is achieved. Further, the ASC could actively promote the Women in Sport Leadership Register which aims to connect NSOs with potential women board candidates and monitor its effectiveness. With regard to their document on sport governance principles, as discussed in chapter two, I recommend that the ASC revises the current version which does not mention the concept of gender equality in sport governance. An explicit statement on public commitment to gender equality in sport board composition, roles and powers would facilitate the promotion of principles of gender equality on boards.

8.6 Recommendations for future research and final thoughts

One of the limitations of the present study, as discussed in chapter one, was that the target group of our investigation excluded corporate sport organisations and national organisations that govern sport for people with a disability. Corporate sport organisations such as AFL, ARU and NRL clubs, operate in a very different environment than the NSOs because their

focus is the delivery of sport as a commercial product. Similarly, national organisations that govern sport for people with disabilities work in a unique environment characterised by high needs and limited resources. I recommend that a follow-up research project be undertaken to examine gender dynamics on boards of these types of sport bodies using a similar approach and methods.

Finally, the starting point to the study, as alluded to in the prologue, was my passion for participating in sport and my strong believe that women and girls should have access to and be valued in every aspect of sport. When women are equally represented in leadership positions on boards of NSOs, they can exercise influence and power in strategic decision making, and the allocation of resources to ensure a more inclusive sport culture. This study has contributed to a better understanding of how gender works on NSO boards. In addition, it has used an innovative gender regimes approach which can also be applied to identify the gender dynamics on boards of other sport organisations. In other words, the study has also provided an important tool for sport organisations. Identification of the board's gender regime and the social practices that either facilitate or obstruct gender equality is essential for achieving gender equality in sport governance.

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Appendix 1: Gender distribution on boards of national sport organisations in Australia funded by the Australian Sports Commission

Sport	Organisation	Total n° of board members (including CEO)	N° female board members	%	Names	President	Secretary	Treasurer	CEO	Source	Comments
Archery	Archery Australia Inc	5	1	20.0%	Lynn Greenham	male Greg Goebel	-	-	male Jim Larven	Research study AOC, Feb 08	
Athletics	Athletics Australia	9	2	22.2%	Jane Hansen Bronwyn Thompson	male Robin Fildes OAM	-	-	male Danny Corcoran	Research study AOC, Feb 08	
Australian Football	Australian Football League (AFL)	9	2	22.2%	Sam Mostyn Linda Dessau	- Chairman: male Mike Fitzpatrick	-	male Chief financial officer Ian Anderson	male Andrew Demetriou	Annual Report 2007	
Badminton	Badminton Australia	6	2	33.3%	Geraldine Brown Carolyn Toh	male Robin Bryant	male Andrew Greenway	-	male Paul Brettell	Research study AOC, Feb 08	
Baseball	Australian Baseball	8	3	37.5%	Katie Bickford Deborah Healey Michelle Anderson	male Ron Finley	-	-	male John May	Research study AOC, Feb 08	
Basketball	Basketball Australia	8	3	37.5%	Lois Appleby Libby Woods Shelley Lambert	male John Maddock	-	-	male Scott Derwin	Annual Report 2007	
Bicycle motocross	Bicycle MotoX Australia Inc	7	1	14.3%	Sally Howie	male Barry Knight	-	-	male Graham Fredericks	Website, July 08	
Bocce	Bocce Federation of Australia	6	1	16.7%	Lina Cher	male Raymond Cher	male Anthony Pegoraro	male Frank Funari	-	Website, July 08	
Bowls	Bowls Australia	10	3	30.0%	Barbara Klose Margaret Radford Pru Goward	male Brian Marsland	-	-	male Neil Dalrymple	Website, July 08	

Boxing	Boxing Australia Inc	5	1	20.0%	Jandra Cox	- Chairman: male Red Tanner	-	male Governance & Finance Gary Moore	male Spiros Lambropoulos	Research study AOC, Feb 08	
Canoeing	Australian Canoeing	5	2	40.0%	Danielle Woodward Kate Heeley	male Ian Muir	-	-	-	Website, July 08	Chairman of board: female: D. Woodward
Cricket	Cricket Australia	14	0	0.0%	-	- Chairman: male Creagh O'Conner	male	male	male James Sutherland	Website July 08 & Annual Report 05/06	
Cycling	Cycling Australia	11	2	18.2%	Wendy Sanders Charlie Farren	male Mike Victor	-	male Rob Bates	male Graham Fredericks	Research study AOC, Feb 08	
Diving	Diving Australia	6	1	16.7%	Robyn Arlow	- Chairman: male Philip Pullar	-	-	female Mary Godden	Research study AOC, Feb 08	
Equestrian	Equestrian Federation of Australia	6	2	33.3%	Mary Seafried Alexandra Kentish	- Chairman: male Geof Sinclair	-	-	male Franz Venhaus	Research study AOC, Feb 08	
Fencing	Australian Fencing Federation	6	1	16.7%	Helen Smith	female Helen Smith	-	-	Secretary General: male Andrew Ius	Research study AOC, Feb 08	
Football	Football Federation Australia	8	1	12.5%	Moya Dodd	male Frank Lowy	-	-	male Ben Buckley	Website, July 08	
Golf	Australian Golf Union (AGU)	6	2	33.3%	Anne Lenagan Alison Holden	Chairman: female Anne Lenagan	-	-	male Tony Hallam	Website, July 08	
Gymnastics	Gymnastics Australia	8	3	37.5%	Margot Foster Danielle LeRay Jane Allen	male Ken Williamson	-	-	female Jane Allen	Website, July 08	
Hockey	Hockey Australia	10	4	40.0%	Pamela Tye Renita Garard Danni Roach Liane Tooth	female Pamela Tye	-	female Renita Garard	male Linden Adamson	Website July 08 & Annual Report 05/06	
Ice Racing	Australian Ice Racing	6	1	16.7%	Yvonne Hay	male Jim Hewish	-	male John Bradvury	Secretary General: female Yvonne Hay	Research study AOC, Feb 08	

Indoor Cricket	Indoor Cricket Australia Ltd	8	0	0.0%	-	male Greg Donnelly	-	-	female Karin Denman	Telephone conversation, July 08	
Judo	Judo Australia	7	1	14.3%	Midge Hill	male Peter Alway	male Stewart Brain	male Colin Hill	-	Research study AOC, Feb 08	
Karate	Australian Karate Federation	6	2	33.3%	Majella Hales Denise Austin	male Michael Kassis	male Mike Smith	male Arch Brown	-	Website, July 08	
Lacrosse	Australian Lacrosse	8	1	12.5%	Mavis Owens	male David Fox	tba	male Leighton Beamsley	male Malcolm Stokes	Website, July 08	
Motor Sport	Confederation of Australian Motor Sport	9	0	0.0%	-	male Colin Osborne	-	-	-	Website, July 08	
Motorcycling	Motorcycling Australia	5	0	0.0%	-	male Ron Kivovich	-	-	male David White	Website, July 08	
Netball	Netball Australia	7	5	71.4%	Noeleen Dix Sue Taylor Pam Smith Debra Tippet Marina Go	female Noeleen Dix	-	-	female Kate Palmer	Website, July 08	
Orienteering	Orienteering Australia	7	1	14.3%	Robin Uppill	male Bill Jones	-	Director finance: male Blair Trewin	female Kay Grzadka	Website, July 08	
Polocrosse	Polocrosse Australia	5	0	0.0%	-	male Peter Crauford	-	-	female Jane Cartwright	Website, July 08	
Pony clubs	Pony club Australia	4	1	25.0%	Judy Pitt	male Don Nixon	female Judy Pitt	male Stephen Coffey	-	Website, July 08	
Roller sport	Skate Australia	6	3	50.0%	Kaye Jackman Dr. Patricia Wallace Valerie Leftwich	male Simon Wilkins	-	male Mark Murphy	male Matt Helmers	Website, July 08	
Rowing	Rowing Australia	7	1	14.3%	Rebecca Joyce	male Patrick McNamara	-	-	male Andrew Dee	Website, July 08	
Rugby League	Australian Rugby League	10	0	0.0%	-	Chairman: male Colin Love	-	-	male Geoff Carr	Annual Report 06	
Rugby Union	Australian Rugby Union	8	0	0.0%	-	male P McLean	-	-	male J O'Neill	Annual Report 2007	

Sailing	Yachting Australia	8	1	12.5%	Adrienne Cahalan	male Andrew Plympton	-	-	male Mark A Peters	Annual Report 06/07 & Website	
Shooting	Australian Shooting Association	5	3	60.0%	Cheryl Arnol Suzie Smith Sharon Reynolds	-	-	-	-	Research study AOC, Feb 08	
Skiing	Ski and Snowboard Australia	9	2	22.2%	Jacqui Cooper Susie Warwick	male Dean Gosper	-	-	male Michael Kennedy	Research study AOC, Feb 08	
Softball	Australian Softball Federation (ASF)	9	5	55.6%	Maree Holden Jenny Cassidy Jenny Holliday Joyce Lester Susan Rindfleish	male Phil Matthewson	-	male Deion Moore	male Mark McAllion	Website, July 08	
Squash	Squash Australia	6	2	33.3%	Sarah Fitz-Gerald Carol Kawaljenko	male John Holland	-	-	male Gary O'Donnell	Website, July 08	
Surf Life Saving	Surf Life Saving Australia	11	0	0.0%	-	male Ron Rankin	male	male	male Brett Williamson	Website, July 08	
Surf riding	Surfing Australia	7	0	0.0%	-	- Chairman: male Norm Ennis	-	-	male Marc Lane	Telephone conversation, July 08	
Swimming	Swimming Australia Limited (ASI)	8	1	12.5%	Michele Garra	male David Urquhart	tba	male Director Finance&Audit Committee Chris Fydler	position vacant at the moment	Website July 08 & Annual Report 06/07	former CEO & Secretary: male Glenn Tasker
Synchronised swimming	Synchro Australia	5	5	#####	Barbara Lynch Helen Hall Juanita Juthrie Irena Olevsky Kerrie Hammett	-	-	-	-	Research study AOC, Feb 08	
Table tennis	Table Tennis Australia	7	1	14.3%	Sue Lang	male Will Goodler	-	male Peter Campbell-Innes	female Bronwyn Marshall	Website, July 08	
Taekwondo	Taekwondo Australia Inc	9	1	11.1%	Fay Shacklock	male Jae-Young Kwak	-	-	female Kate Egger	Website, July 08	

Tennis	Tennis Australia	9	1	11.1%	Andrea Mitchell	male Geoff Pollard	male David Roberts	male Des Nicholl	male Steve Wood	Annual Report 06/07	
Tenpin bowling	Tenpin Bowling Australia Ltd	7	0	0.0%	-	- Chairman: male John Coxon	-	-	female Gillian Thompson- Rogers	Website, July 08	
Touch	Touch Football Australia	7	0	0.0%	-	- Chairman: male Peter Rooney	male	male	male	Website July 08 & Annual Report 04/05	
Triathlon	Triathlon Australia	8	3	37.5%	Denise Allen Melinda Farr Melissa Ashton- Garard	-	-	-	-	Research study AOC, Feb 08	
University sports	Australian University Sport	6	2	33.3%	Ann Mitchell Margot Foster	male Jeff FitzGerald	-	-	male Don Knapp	Website, July 08	
Volleyball	Volleyball Australia	7	2	28.6%	Joan Perry Rosemary Bissett	male Christopher Schacht	male Joan Perry	male Riad Tayeh	male Joan Perry	Website & Annual Report 06/07	
Water polo	Australian Water Polo Inc	8	1	12.5%	Leanne Barnes	male Peter Kerr	-	-	Secretary General: male John Whitehouse	Website, July 08	
Water skiing	Australian Water Ski and Wakeboard Federation	6	1	16.7%	Alison Smith	male Gavin Brain	-	-	male Noel Dix	Website, July 08	
Weightlifting	Australian Weightlifting Federation	8	3	37.5%	Mary Macken Danielle Waller Lyn Jones	male Robert Kabbas	-	-	male Matthew Curtain	Website, July 08	
Wrestling	Australian Wrestling Federation	5	0	0.0%	-	-	-	-	-	Research study AOC, Feb 08	

Appendix 2: Semi-structured interview schedule for directors

Main topic areas	Questions and probes
1.Socio-demographics, social origins	Can I ask you some personal details? Place of birth, year (optional) Highest qualification Marital status, children Ethnicity: Parents' place of birth
2.Professional biography	Can you tell me briefly about your professional background? Probes: Professional career Specific skills transfer from professional career to board role Balance professional career and role on sport board
3.Sporting biography	Can you tell me about your participation in sport since childhood/adolescence? Probes: Current sporting activity Other sporting involvement – coach, official
4.Biography on sport management positions, on boards and committees	Can you give me an overview of your committee/board position(s)? Probes: Current role to first role Board roles, status of roles Recruitment Motivation to become involved Benefits of the board position
5.Contribution to board and organisation	What are your specific contributions on the board? Probes: Acceptance of your view by colleagues Influence on decisions-making process. Influence on strategic issues, policy and program, on minor or major issues
6.Comparison female/male directors' contributions	Do board members demonstrate similar contributions or qualities? Probe: To what extent are the woman's contributions or positive qualities shared by male directors

7.Difficulties/challenges	Have you experienced any challenging situations or conflicts on the board? Probes: Observation of any conflict amongst board members along gender lines What has been your response; how do you feel about it
8.Commitment to gender diversity	To what extent is diversity one of the objectives of this organisation? Probes: Included in documentation e.g. constitution or strategic plan Meaning of gender equity Strategies to achieve gender diversity
9.Evaluation and reflection	Overall, how do you feel about your role on the board? Probes: Satisfaction/dissatisfaction and why

Appendix 3: Semi-structured interview schedule for presidents and CEOs

Main topic areas	Questions and probes
1.Current status of women on your board	Can you tell me about the composition of your board and its gender distribution? Probes: Trend in number of women on the board Brief background of the female director(s) – length of appointment, sporting and professional background
2.Recruitment process	How do you recruit new board members? Probes: Usual process of selection Any special measures to recruit women Any difficulties to attract women Recruitment of the interviewed woman
3.Board roles of the male/female director(s)	What role/position do the directors fulfil on the board? Probes: Executive, subcommittee membership Status of roles Progression
4.Contribution of the male/female director(s) to board and organisation	What are the specific contributions of the male/female director(s) on the board? Probes: Acceptance of view by colleagues. Influence on decisions-making process. Influence on strategic issues, policy and program, on minor or major issues
5.Comparison female/male directors' contributions	Do the board members demonstrate similar contributions or qualities? Probe: To what extent are the woman's contributions or positive qualities shared by male directors
6.Level of activity of the male/female director(s)	Most active 25%, second most active 25%, third most active 25%, least active 25%

7.Difficulties/challenges along gender lines	Have you experienced or observed any challenging situations or conflicts on the board that involved gender issues? Probes: Observation of any conflict amongst board members along gender lines What has been your response; how do you feel about it
8.Commitment to gender diversity	To what extent is diversity one of the objectives of this organisation? Probes: Included in documentation e.g. constitution or strategic plan Meaning of gender equity Strategies to achieve gender diversity
9.Evaluation and reflection	Overall, how do you feel about the women on the board? Probes: Satisfaction/dissatisfaction and why

Appendix 4: Letter of invitation to NSOs

Appendix 4: Letter of invitation to NSOs



The University of Sydney

**Discipline of Behavioural and
Social Sciences in Health
Faculty of Health Sciences**

ABN 15 211 513 464

Dr. Toni Schofield

To

Room C42
Cumberland Campus
University of Sydney NSW 1825
AUSTRALIA
Telephone: +61 2 9351 9577
Facsimile: +61 2 9351 9540
Email: T.Schofield@usyd.edu.au
Web: www.usyd.edu.au/

26 August 09

Re: Research Project - Experiences and perceived contributions of women board members of national sport organisations in Australia

Dear Ms.

We would like to invite you and some members of your Board to participate in the research project 'Experiences and perceived contributions of women board members of national sport organisations in Australia'. The purpose of this study is to investigate the experiences and perceived contributions of women as board members of sport organisations. It seeks to contribute to a better understanding of sport governance, in particular, diversity on sport boards and its link to strategic capacity.

The study is being conducted by Dr. Toni Schofield, Senior Lecturer, The University of Sydney and Johanna Adriaanse, Senior Lecturer, University of Technology, Sydney.

Participation in this research will involve taking part in an interview of approximately 60-120 minutes which will be audio taped for analysis. The interview will take place at your office or an alternative place mutually agreed on by the interviewee and researcher.

All aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only the researchers will have access to information on participants. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

If you require more information or wish to further discuss this project, don't hesitate to contact Johanna Adriaanse by telephone on 02 9514 5142 or by email at johanna.adriaanse@uts.edu.au.

We hope that you will be able to participate and look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely

Dr. Toni Schofield

Johanna Adriaanse

Appendix 5: Participant information statement

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The University of Sydney

**Discipline of Behavioural and
Social Sciences in Health
Faculty of Health Sciences**

ABN 15 211 513 464

Dr. Toni Schofield

Room C42
Cumberland Campus
University of Sydney NSW 1825
AUSTRALIA
Telephone: +61 2 9351 9577
Facsimile: +61 2 9351 9540
Email: T.Schofield@usyd.edu.au
Web: www.usyd.edu.au/

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT Research Project

Title: Experiences and perceived contributions of women board members of national sport organisations in Australia

The purpose of this study is to investigate the experiences and perceived contributions of women as board members of sporting organisations. It seeks to contribute to a better understanding of sport governance, in particular, diversity on sport boards and its link to strategic capacity.

The study is being conducted by Dr. Toni Schofield, Associate Professor, The University of Sydney, and Johanna Adriaanse, Senior Lecturer, University of Technology, Sydney.

Participation in this research will involve taking part in an interview of approximately 60-120 minutes which will be audio taped for analysis. The interview will take place at the office of national sport organisations or an alternative place mutually agreed on by the interviewee and researcher.

Being in this study is completely voluntary - you are not under any obligation to consent and - if you do consent - you can withdraw at any time without affecting your relationship with the researchers, the University of Sydney or Golf Australia. You may stop the interview at any time if you do not wish to continue, the audio recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study.

All aspects of the study, including results, will be strictly confidential and only the researchers will have access to information on participants. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

Although no direct or discreet benefit to the sport organisation is anticipated as a result of the research we do expect that the research provides an opportunity for the participants to engage in enhancing board diversity and strategic capacity in sport organisations.

Participants are welcome to tell other people about their involvement in the study and the purpose of the research project.

When you have read this information, Johanna Adriaanse will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact Dr. Toni Schofield on tel. 02 9351 9577 or via email at T.Schofield@usyd.edu.au.

Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact the Manager, Ethics Administration, University of Sydney on (02) 8627 8175 (Telephone); (02) 8627 8180 (Facsimile) or gbriody@usyd.edu.au (Email).

This information sheet is for you to keep