

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



**A Cross-country analysis of the impacts of gender targets on the boards' diversity
of the national sports federations¹**

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Please note that article is a preprint and has not been peer-reviewed
DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.6851273

¹ **Acknowledgements**

This work was supported with the support of the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union under Grant number 590521-EPP-1-2017-1-ES-SPO-SCP.

The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

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Abstract

There is an increasing need for policies to support gender diversity in sports organizations. Drawing on the national sports federations in Italy, Portugal, Turkey, Spain, and the United Kingdom, in 2018, this study investigates whether board size, age, and country have played any role in the poor level of achievement of the gender target, set in 2000 by the International Olympic Committee of having by 2005 at least the 20% of women on the sports boards. The study confirms the low level of compliance in these five countries, and by using a binomial logistic regression, we have found that, while the federation's age is not relevant, the board size, or being from Italy, Portugal, Turkey, is negatively related to the likelihood of compliance with the gender target. These three countries have had no experience with gender quotas nor other forms of incentive concerning the gender diversity of the federations' boards in the examined period. The study's originality is conducting a cross-country analysis of gender diversity on boards of sports federations in five European countries regarding board size and age. Moreover, it offers new insights into the debate about quotas-versus-targets and brings it into the under-researched scenario of sports governance. Specifically, the main contribution relies on questioning the quotas-versus-targets debate and promoting a perspective of

complementary use of the two forms of regulatory intervention to increase women's percentage on sports federations' boards.

Keywords: Women, corporate governance, sports boards, gender targets and quotas

1. Introduction

There is an increasing need for policies and support for gender diversity in sports organizations (Wicker and Kerwin, 2020). Women's access to leadership positions and decision-making in the sports context is limited, both locally and internationally (Oglesby and Iwg Wsi, 2007). International literature has long shown that women are usually underrepresented in the world's sports governing bodies (Adriaanse & Claringbould, 2014; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007, 2008, 2012; Fink, 2016). Starting from the seminal contribution of Theberge (1984), the topic has been explored, especially with attention to Northern Europe (Adriaanse & Claringbould, 2014; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007, 2008, 2012; Hovden, 2000, 2006, 2010, 2012; Ottesen et al., 2010; Pfister & Radtke, 2009; Shaw & Hoerber, 2003; Sally Shaw & Hoerber, 2003; Sisjord et al., 2017), Australia (Adriaanse and Schofield, 2013; Sibson, 2010), New Zealand (Shaw, 2006), Canada (Wicker and Kerwin, 2020), and also the United States (Schull et al., 2013).

The two most discussed forms of regulatory intervention to increase women's percentage on boards are to set gender quotas or targets (Klettner, Clarke, and Boersma, 2016). The quotas-versus-targets debate parallels the long-running regulatory debate of rules versus principles or complicated versus soft law. There are strong arguments that may be planned both for and against each of them (Whelan and Wood, 2012).

Setting quotas forces organizations to perform regulations by appointing a specific number of women on boards (Adriaanse, 2017). However, Terjesen and Sealy (2016) highlighted three ethical tensions that make gender quotas controversial:

- (i) The motivations for quotas, including political ideologies;
- (ii) Legitimacy in terms of meritocracy and ethics;

(iii) Outcomes of implementing quotas for society, organizations, and individuals.

Some authors have also emphasized that there is a risk which women elected on a quota basis may tend to be considered “token” or “proxy women” (Dahlerup & Freidenvall, 2010) or have just a symbolic value (Burke, 1994). Based on Kanter’s (1977) tokenism theory, where these women are few compared to men, especially in the case of the status of ‘one woman’, they become symbols and face the ‘loneliness of the stranger’ in a foreign culture. Thus, they may easily feel under pressure from the dominant group of men, and their performances are often affected by the sexist culture (Kanter, 1977; Simpson, 1997). Moreover, in implementing gender diversity, actors may utilize their practices that undermine the intention of an equal balance of men and women (Voorspoels & Bleijenbergh, 2019).

The targets are not supported by the law, as is the case of quotas, and their guiding principle is to promote a gradual change that is consistent with an organization’s physiology. They are often proposed by representative bodies to provide a cultural shift so that targets may become more embedded in the organizations’ strategic goals.

In this perspective, the target-quota debate is explained by the ‘the incremental track’ metaphor versus ‘the fast track’. Setting targets implies giving time and opportunity for gradual cultural shifts (Dahlerup & Freidenvall, 2005). The primary aim of targets, known as soft approaches, is the incremental and gradual increases in the women’s numbers on boards with the common intention to develop procedures for selecting and nominating board members (Sojo, Wood, Wood, and Wheeler, 2016). However, the supporters of quota regulation and forceful implementation procedures show impatience with the slow pace of change of women’s positions on the boards (Dahlerup and Freidenvall, 2005), and gender quotas are generally assumed as an eventual political option when target attempts fail (Grosvold and Brammer, 2011).

The literature regarding the quotas-versus-targets debate has usually explored the effectiveness of these regulatory interventions in corporate companies (Brieger, Francoeur, Welzel, and Ben-Amar, 2019; Du Plessis, O'Sullivan, and Rentschler, 2014; Klettner et al., 2016; Mensi-Klarbach, Leixnering, and Schiffinger, 2019; Seierstad, Warner-Søderholm, Torchia, and Huse, 2017). In sports governance, this debate remains an unexplored field with a few exceptions focusing on the sole impact of gender quotas (Adriaanse & Schofield, 2014; Fasting, 2003; Sisjord et al., 2017; Skirstad, 2009). The existing literature has highlighted that implementing gender targets and quotas to support gender diversity in governance has not had enough relevant positive effects in the realm of sports yet (Varriale, Briganti, Tafuri, and Ferrara, 2019), and addressed that attempts and research on the impacts of gender targets and quotas has not still been enough in the global context (Varriale and Mazzeo, 2019).

This study aims at filling the mentioned gap by investigating whether board size, age, and country played any role in the poor level of achievement of the gender target set in 2000 by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) of having by 2005 at least the 20% of women on the boards of the National Sports Federations (NSFs). The literature has already shown that the IOC targets have not been globally succeeded in the NSFs yet (Adriaanse, 2016, 2017; Adriaanse & Schofield, 2014; Hoerber, 2007; Hovden, 2010; Sartore & Cunningham, 2007). Furthermore, this study also focuses on the NSFs of five countries, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, and the UK, for which the topic concerning the gender issue in sports governance is still under-researched. Specifically, using a binary logistic regression model, the research aims to verify if and how board size, age, and the country of the NSFs investigated affected the likelihood of not achieving the IOC gender target.

The study contributes in two directions. First, it offers new theoretical insights into the debate about quotas-versus-targets and brings it into the under-researched scenario of sports governance. Second, it has implications for policy and a focus for future research. The structure of the paper is as follows. The next sections provide a reconstruction of the gender target set by the IOC and a review of state-of-the-art policies for gender targets in the NSFs. Subsequently, we explain the data sources used in the research and the methodology for constructing a predictive model of NSFs that have reached the target according to the IOC's recommendations. Finally, we present the results and conclusions.

2. The gender target setting by the IOC

The IOC, which represents 205 National Olympic Committees (NOCs), including those of the five countries we investigate, plays an important institutional role in promoting women in and through sport. According to the Olympic Charter (Rule 2, Paragraph 8), which codifies the fundamental principles of Olympism, and the rules and bye-laws adopted by the IOC, one role of the body is “to encourage and support the promotion of women in sport at all levels and in all structures with a view to implementing the principle of equality of men and women” (International Olympic Committee, 2020a, p. 13). Since the adoption of the Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport (1994)¹, the IOC has promoted gender equality in balancing the total number of athletes participating at the games and, more recently, appointing more women to leadership roles within its administration and governance.

Since 1995, the IOC's international conferences on women and sports have recommended implementing policies to advance gender equality at the upper echelons of sports organizations. At the First World Conference, held in Lausanne in 1996, the creation of committees and working groups in the International Federations and the National

Olympic Committees with at least 10% of women were recommended; their role would be to design policies to promote women in sports (International Olympic Committee, 1996). Four years later, in Paris, at the Second World Conference, Juan Antonio Samaranch, the IOC President was asked:

“to call upon the International Sports Federations, National Olympic Committees, National Federations and sports organizations to meet the goal of 10% minimum representation of women in decision-making positions by December 31, 2000, in keeping with the decision of the 1996 the IOC Session, to evaluate the reasons for failure to meet the targets, and draft a plan of action for implementation to address them, and if need be, to extend the period to June 2001, and ensure that the 20% goal for 2005 is maintained and attained” (International Olympic Committee, 2000, p. 1).

At the Third World Conference, held in Marrakesh in 2004, the target of 20% of women was reaffirmed (International Olympic Committee, 2004). This commitment has also alluded at the next conference in Jordan three years after the deadline for reaching the 20% target. In this case, the IOC stated, “we should not lose track of our 20% target of female representation in our decision-making structures since progress is still needed to reach it” (International Olympic Committee, 2008, p. 7). In that year, according to the IOC, the percentage of women on the executive boards was 6.7%, the rate of the IOC members was 14.5%, and women in commissions were 12.7%. Despite those figures being far from the target, the IOC recognized that “it is undoubted that the IOC corporate culture has changed and is more gender-balanced than before” (International Olympic Committee, 2008). At the Fifth World Conference in 2012, it was again repeated that “the IOC and all the constituents of the Olympic Movement, especially the NOCs, International Federations and national federations, should ensure that, for 2012/13 and all

future election cycles, they achieve a more equitable representation on their Executive Committees” (International Olympic Committee, 2012, p. 2). Additionally, in 2018, the IOC suggested a series of recommendations related to women’s leadership roles in corporate governance; in this case, it has highlighted the lack of women vice-presidents and presidents and includes advice about gender equality leadership (International Olympic Committee 2018).

This setting target process was supported by three initiatives to facilitate the achievement of the goal. First, the IOC collaborated with Olympic Movement stakeholders to provide sports registries for governance boards and commissions candidates. Second, the IOC organized a unique senior executive-level roundtable for the top women leaders worldwide. Third, the IOC announced a co-mentoring program for women and candidates with top board members (International Olympic Committee, 2018). In 2016, following the recommendation of the IOC Women in Sport Commission, the IOC Executive Board (EB) approved a revised target of 30% for the Olympic Movement constituents, “Members of the Olympic Movement are advised to set a minimum target of 30 per cent for women’s representation in their governing bodies by 2020, and to adopt accompanying measures that will help them to reach this goal”.

Nevertheless, compliance with the targets through the years has been scarce (Adriaanse & Schofield, 2014; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007). A study highlighted that, in 2019, the IOC had only 33 women members, including board members and honorary members, out of a total of 144, and also, women took seats less than 20% of the members in governance positions of the NOCs and the Association of National Olympic Committees (Katsarova, 2019). In January 2020, the IOC achieved the target of a minimum of 30% women in governance positions, with 36 out of the 100 active IOC members being women (International Olympic Committee, 2020b).

3. The gender diversity on the boards of the NSFs

Women are represented as a minority on sports boards, known as a man-dominated context (Varriale and Mazzeo, 2019). Moreover, women presidents are a rarity; for example, women presidents in the European NSFs were only 8% in 2019². Sisjord et al. (2017) argued that the increase of women in organised sports practices did not involve a significant increment in their representation in governing bodies and the literature pointed out that the reasons for this imbalance have been unclear (Pfister and Radtke, 2009).

Some studies focus on women's attitudes. For example, Sartore and Cunningham (2007, p. 259) suggested to pay attention to "the internal identity processes of women seeking membership" within sports organizations. Women who are a part of the boards of German sports organizations, even though they have similar professional qualifications as men, do not manage to reach top positions in sports organizations' executive governing bodies (Pfister, 2010).

Other studies explored the perspectives of men. Hoeber (2007, p. 275) stated that "the knowledge that gender inequities were not a problem was espoused by administrators and coaches with positional, agenda-setting and dialogue power, and by athletes with little power". Hovden (2010) also argued that, in the Norwegian NSFs, younger men who were members of sports boards were more aware of implicit discourse biases and how they influenced women's opportunities than the older men. Knoppers (2011, p. 18) pointed out that the discourses of managers of non-profit sports organizations "suggest that these men exercise power by controlling how managerial and sports skills are to be understood". As a solution, some research has proposed that the relevant governing bodies develop comprehensive theoretical policies to promote gender parity and enforce sanctions for non-compliance because denying inequalities is one way to protect the status quo (Fletcher, 2001; Hoeber, 2007).

At the national level, some countries are experimenting with gender quotas obliging the NSFs to respect them if they do not want to incur sanctions. First, gender quotas on the boards of NSFs were introduced in Norway in 1987, then in the UK in 2013³, in Germany and France in 2014, in Sweden in 2017, and in Italy in 2018⁴. In some of these countries, their full achievement is still in progress. In Canada, the NSFs are forced to achieve the target of 40/60 for membership on boards of directors by 2024 (Demers, Thibault, Brière, and Culver, 2019; Wicker and Kerwin, 2020).

Other countries have experienced alternative measures. For example, in Spain, to promote, facilitate and improve women's participation in all spheres of sports, financial aid was created for the so-called "Women and Sports" program in 2014. The NSFs must have at least three women on the sports boards or similar representative bodies, or 33% of women's representation, to deserve these grants⁵. Despite this, 14 federations out of 45 have not applied for this type of subsidy for women⁶. For the year 2021, the minimum requirements to access these subsidies became the 40% of women's representation on the sports boards or four women on those boards with more than ten people, five for those of more than 15, 6 for those of more than 20, 7 for those of more than 30 people⁷. Gender quotas in Spain have been established only to access a financial support (Valiente, 2020), while the Spanish legislation does not generally dictate quotas. The Preliminary Draft of the new Sports Law⁸ in section 51, 1.3 prescribes a balanced composition of men and women. Still, it does not impose a numerical quota or speaks about a penalty.

The capacity of the gender quotas is often questioned in the sports governance context to promote substantial participation of women in the decisional process. Adriaanse and Schofield (2014) suggested that the quota must provide at least three women to advance gender equality in sports governance, and it must operate with other gender dynamics to move toward equal participation by men and women in decision making. Valiente (2020)

argued that quotas make gender inequality more visible and concludes that gender quotas have substantial consequences for sports management other than the numerical increment of women managers. The major criticism of the quota solution involves the perception that women are appointed simply to fulfil the quota, even if they lack the required qualifications and competency for the position. “There is, however, no research evidence that women appointed under quotas are less competent or perform less effectively” (Adriaanse, 2017, p. 88).

On the other hand, gender targets have raised the issue of their effectiveness because their adoption relies on self-regulation, a solution that essentially draws on voluntary collaboration rather than coercion (Hart, 2010; Mensi-Klarbach et al., 2019). The management literature has long recognized the beneficial effect of target-setting under the condition that objectives must be measurable and specific to be achieved (Drucker, 1954). During the years, as suggested by Mensi-Klarbach et al. (2019), the IOC has introduced concrete targets for women’s representation and the public monitoring of fulfilment.

3. Data and hypothesis

This study builds on data from all the NSFs, belonging to the five countries, 299 organizations, published on their websites in 2018. However, we have analysed the data from 297 organizations because the Turkish Rafting and E-sports federations were established in late 2018 and did not have websites during the data collection time. Thus, there was no information about the board of directors of these federations.

Our first research question is to what extent the NSFs of Italy, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, and the UK have followed the IOC’s recommendation to have at least 20% women on the

sports boards 13 years later the deadline. Our second research question is whether the board size, age, and country of the NSFs play a role in the target's achievement.

The second research question requires taking into account the existing literature concerning the three variables and gender diversity on sports boards, as well as the nature of the organizations under analysis. The NSFs have peculiar characteristics. In carrying out a public function (organization, promotion and development of sports practice) and being governed by a voluntary board, they move towards a more business-like system of operations, essentially to increase further their access to funds (Madella, Bayle, and Tome, 2005). Their hybrid nature, for which they “cannot (or can no longer) be described as completely belonging to the civil communities, private sector, or state sector” (Lucassen and Bakker, 2016, p. 75), makes it difficult to transform them into traditional literature schemes for providing gender diversity on boards.

Size is a characteristic of the corporate board that has essential effects on its operation and potential (Chaganti, Mahajan, and Sharma, 1985; Forbes and Milliken, 1999; Golden and Zajac, 2001; Hillman, Canella, and Harris, 2002; Hillman, Withers, and Collins, 2009). Literature about the gender issue has usually explored the link between board size and gender diversity in a wide range of organizational contexts. Some authors found a greater representation of women on smaller non-profit boards (Ali et al., 2014; Odendahl & Youmans, 1994). Burke (2000) revealed that larger boards contained more women directors. Similarly, Brammer, Millington, and Pavelin (2007) found positive and statistically significant links between board size and composition and gender and ethnic dimensions on board diversity. Dunn (2012) observed that having a woman appointed to an all-men board is negatively associated with the board's size and that men's boards tend to be small.

Concerning size, we test the following null hypothesis:

H1. The board size of a NSF does not predict the breach of the IOC recommendation to have at least 20% of women.

Regarding age, the literature suggests the existence of non-profit board life-cycles models where the organizational age affects boards' composition and behaviour (Dart et al., 1996; Mathiasen, 1990; Wood, 1992). In particular, older non-profit boards/organizations are more extensive and diverse. Some studies have argued that firms with longer histories are more complex and have a greater need for experience and skills (Fama and Jensen, 2008; Guest, 2008). Also, there is evidence that board age and gender diversity directly affect performance (Ali, Ng, and Kulik, 2014; Mahadeo, Soobaroyen, and Hanuman, 2012). On the other hand, other authors developed the concept of path dependence within the context of boards where inertial pressures increase the "stickiness" of board characteristics (Lynall et al., 2003).

Concerning age, we test the following null hypothesis:

H2. The age of the NSF does not predict the breach of the IOC recommendation to have at least 20% of women.

Institutional theory, finally, has long suggested that the institutional environment determines how workers, managers, and other stakeholders interpret and evaluate an organization's practices and structures (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Powell and DiMaggio, 2012; Scott, 1987; Suchman, 1995; Zucker, 1987). Thus, societal norms and rules can influence how people approach diversity (Joshi and Roh, 2009; Shore et al., 2009). The level of acceptance of gender diversity targets set but an international body is often country specific, and this is why we also focus on the NSF's country in our analysis.

Concerning the country, we test the following null hypothesis:

H3. The country of the NSF does not predict the breach of the IOC recommendation to have at least 20% of women.

3.1. Analysis

The statistical method of the study has been a binary logistic regression. The dependent variable is dichotomous and represents if the board of the NSF complies with the IOC recommendation to have at least 20% women or not. The logistic regression model employs a binomial probability theory. There are two values to predict: that probability (P) is one rather than zero, the NSF meets the IOC's recommendation to have at least 20% women, or not. A model is created that includes all predictor variables useful in predicting the response variable. Logistic regression calculates the probability of success over the likelihood of failure. The general form of a logistic regression equation from which the probability of Y is given by:

$$P(Y) = 1 / (1 + e^{-(\beta_0 + \beta_{1i}x_{1i} + \beta_{2i}x_{2i} + \dots + \beta_{ni}x_{ni})})$$

$P(Y)$ is the probability of Y occurring, e is the base of natural logarithms, and $\beta_0 \dots \beta_{ni}$ are the coefficients. A value close to zero means that Y is very unlikely to have happened, and a value of one implies that Y is very likely to have occurred. In our study, the logistic model predicts NSF's probability of meeting the IOC recommendation to have at least 20% women for a national federation's i -th national board. So, for a given NSF corporate board, Y will be either zero if the outcome did not occur or one if the outcome did occur. On the other hand, $P(Y)$ will be a value between zero and one, where zero is no chance that the NSF board meets the IOC recommendations, and one means that the board of the NSF will certainly meet the IOC recommendations.

Following the proposed hypotheses, the predictor variables considered in this study consist of the corporate board size, the NSF's age, and the country of the NSF. The board size is measured as the total number of directors on the board, including the president, and the NSF's age will be the year of its foundation.

Among the analysed countries, the United Kingdom has been taken as a reference country as it is the country with the highest proportion of women in decision-making positions and is the only country implementing a quota system on sports boards. In Italy, the gender quotas were not in effect during the period under investigation yet. Although in Spain, the Women and Sports Program and the subsidies associated with the program have influenced women's more significant presence on corporate sports boards⁹, gender quotas are not imposed within the Spanish legislation during collecting data.

Logistic regression provides the knowledge of relationships among the variables and, in this case, the NSF's propensity to comply with the IOC recommendations. We have developed a logistic regression equation with the predictor variables as shown below:

$$\ln(\text{odds of the board of the federation complies with the IOC's recommendation}) = B_0 + B_1 \text{Federation Age} + B_2 \text{Board Size} + B_3 \text{Italy}(1) + B_4 \text{Portugal}(2) + B_5 \text{Spain}(3) + B_6 \text{Turkey}(4) + e$$

A positive value of R^2 indicates that as the predictor variable increases, so does the likelihood that the NSF board complies with the IOC recommendation. A negative value implies as that the predictor variable increases, the probability of the outcome occurring decreases. If a variable has a small value of R^2 , it contributes only a tiny amount to the model. The odds ratio $\text{Exp}(B)$ of an event occurring is defined as the probability of an event occurring divided by the likelihood of that event not occurring:

$$\text{Odds} = P(\text{event})/P(\text{no event})$$

$$P(\text{event } Y) = 1 / (1 + e^{(\beta_0 + \beta_{1i} x_{1i} + \beta_{2i} x_{2i} + \dots + \beta_{ni} x_{ni})})$$

If the value is higher than one, it indicates that the outcome's odds increase as the predictor increases. Conversely, a value less than one suggests that the odds of outcome decrease as the predictor increases. Values less than one mean that as the predictor variable increases, the odds of the sports board complying with the IOC recommendation decrease. The positive values indicate that the NSF board which complies with the IOC recommendation is more likely than will not comply. In contrast, the negative values indicate that the NSF board with the IOC recommendation is more likely than not to occur.

3.2. Results

In this section, the data analysis and SPSS results based on the NSFs of the five countries are analysed and discussed. The empirical results are based on data for 299 NSFs, but the sample was reduced to 297 organizations because of no existing info about the boards of two Turkish federations. To carry out the study, we have calculated the number of NSFs that comply with the recommendations of the IOC; that is, those that maintain a percentage equal to or greater than 20% of women on corporate boards, and those that fail to reach this percentage. The total number of NSFs whose corporate board complies with the IOC indication is 134, representing 45.1% of the total. It means that thirteen years after the established deadline, more than half, 54.9%, do not adhere to the recommendation of meeting a minimum percentage of 20% of women.

Among the 134 NSFs that meet the recommendation, 54 (37.87%) belonged to the United Kingdom, 53 (34.45%) to Spain, 12 (28.36%) to Italy and 13 (25.47%) to Portugal. Finally, Turkey is equivalent to 24.05% with two federations, as shown in Table 1.

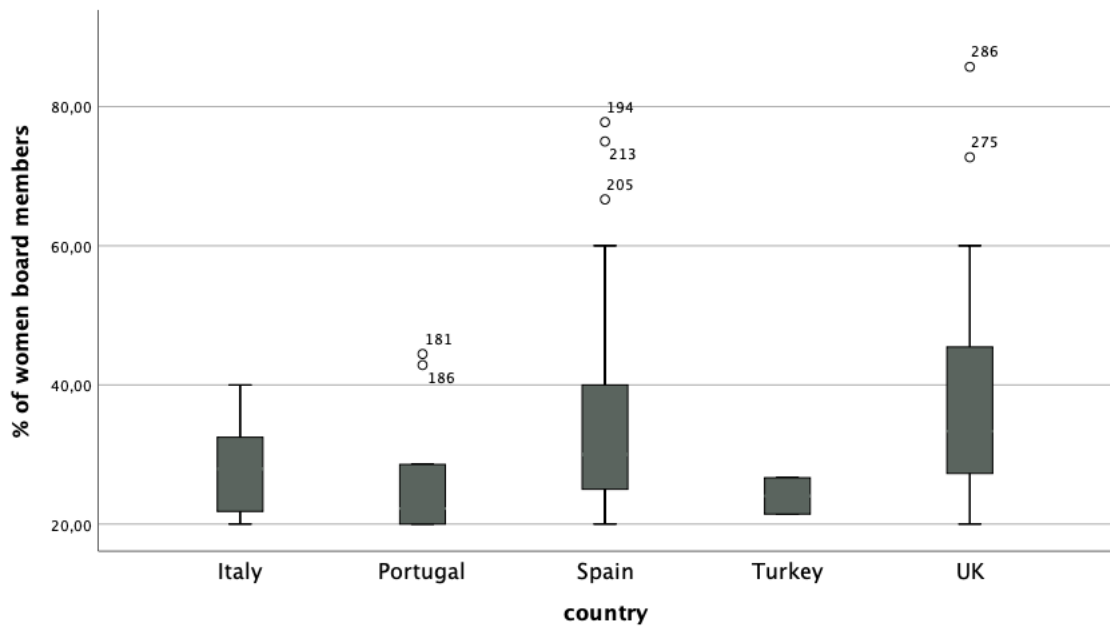
Table 1: The NSF's with at least 20% of women on boards (2018)

Countries	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error of Mean	Minimum	Maximum
UK	37.87	54	14.23	1.94	20	85.71
Spain	34.45	53	15.66	2.15	20	100
Italy	28.36	12	7.15	2.07	20	40
Portugal	25.47	13	8.63	2.39	20	44.44
Turkey	24.05	2	3.70	2.62	21.43	26.67
Total	34.26	134	14.33	1.24	20	100

Source: Own elaboration

Graph 1 shows the NSF's that comply with the IOC recommendation. Higher compliance is observed in the United Kingdom and lower in Turkey.

Graph 1: NSF's that comply with the IOC recommendation of 20% of women on boards



Source: Own elaboration

The country with the highest non-compliance is Turkey, where the average number of women on the boards is 3.43% (see Table 2). Portugal follows with 6.52% women and

43 non-complying NSFs. Italy has 9.57% of women and 43 NSFs, while Spain has 13.19% and 13 non-complying the NSFs.

In the United Kingdom, only four NSFs not fulfilling the requirement have been available, with an average of 15.68% of women in those NSFs. Figure 1 shows the data regarding the NSFs that have not met the 20% women board members in 2018, although they should have met since 2005.

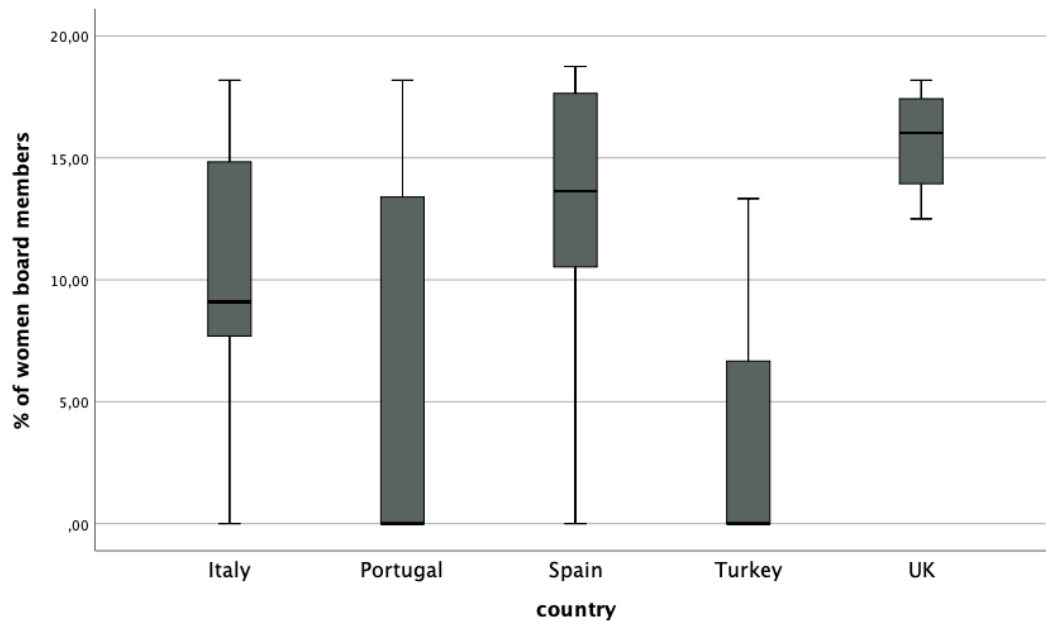
Table 2 The statistical data belonging to NSFs with less than 20% of women on boards (2018)

Countries	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error of Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Turkey	3.43	60	4.83	0.62	0	13.33
Portugal	6.52	43	7.20	1.10	0	18.18
Italy	9.57	43	6.50	0.99	0	18.18
Spain	13.10	13	5.43	1.51	0	18.75
UK	15.68	4	2.41	1.21	12.5	18.18
Total	6.94	163	6.82	0.53	0	18.75

Source: Own elaboration

In Graph 2, we can see the distribution of NSFs that have not reached the target of the IOC for the year 2005 on sports boards. In this group, two countries stand out: the UK for not having NSFs without presence of women, the minimum percentage of women on a board is 12.5%; and Turkey for the minimal presence of women in this group the maximum rate of women on a sport board is 13.33%.

Graph 2: NSFs that do not comply with the IOC recommendation of 20% of women on boards



Source: Own elaboration

A logistic regression model was conducted to assess whether the independent variables significantly predicted whether or not the NSF board complies with the IOC recommendation of 20% women. The dependent variable is a dummy variable that takes the value one, when the percentage of women in a federation is 20% or higher and zero otherwise. In the model, when all predictor variables are considered together, they significantly predict whether or not a board complies with the recommendation.

The whole model significantly predicted the board of the NSF complying with the IOC recommendation (Omnibus chi-square = 196.792, df = 6, $p < 0.01$) (Table 3). The Chi-square p-value suggests that the overall model significantly predicts compliance with the IOC recommendation occurrence or non-occurrence. The pseudo R^2 estimates indicate that approximately 49% and 66% of the variance on whether the board of the NSF complies with the IOC recommendation can be predicted from the combination of independent variables, with 86.6% complying with the IOC recommendation successfully predicted. The Nagelkerke R^2 indicates that this model accounts for 66% of the variability in complying with the IOC recommendation. Table 3 gives coefficients, the Wald statistic

and associated degrees of freedom, and probability values for each predictor variable. This shows that board size and three countries reliably predicted the NSF board complying with the IOC recommendation of 20% women.

Table 3. The results of logistic regression analysis: variables in the Equation

	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Exp(B)
Foundation year of the federation	0.003	0.005	0.449	1	1.003
Board size	-0.207***	0.052	16.086	1	0.813
Country			91.895	4	
Italy (1)	-3.955***	0.629	39.539	1	0.019
Portugal(2)	-4.467***	0.653	46.845	1	0.011
Spain (3)	-0.129	0.703	0.034	1	0.879
Turkey (4)	-5.232***	0.92	32.335	1	0.005
Constant	-1.651	9.676	0.03	1	0.192

Variable(s) entered on step 1: 1 foundation year, 14 Board size, country coded.

Significant at different levels: * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001, R²=0.493 (Cox and Snell), R²=0.660 (Nagelkerke), Model X²(6, 290)=196.792 p<0.01, Classification accuracy: 86.6%.

Source: Own elaboration

The value of the coefficient of the board size and belonging to Italy, Portugal, or Turkey reveals that an increase in the value of this predictor is associated with a decrease in the odds of complying with the IOC recommendation by a factor of 0.88, 0.019, 0.011, and 0.005. The coefficient of these variables suggests a negative relationship between this variable and complying with the IOC recommendation occurrence. The Spanish boards did not add significantly to the model.

Exp(B) value for the variable board size is 0.813. The negative value of B indicates that an increase in the board size will result in a decreased probability of the NSF board complies with the recommendation of 20% women. This suggests that the more board members one NSF has, the less likely it will reach at least 20% women. The value of

Exp(B) for the variable country is 0.019 in Italy; it indicates that if the board of the NSF belong to this country, then there would be a decrease in the odds of 98.1% ($0.019-1=-0.981$), in Portugal is 0.011, that indicates a 98.8% less ($0.011-1=-0.989$), and in Turkey is 0.005 ($0.005-1=-0.995$) an 99.5% less. In other words, the chances of success of an Italian NSF to comply with the recommendation of having at least a 20% of women would be 98.1% less regarding the UK if the other variables were kept constant. If the NSF belongs to Portugal, the chances of complying with the recommendation would be 98.8% less. Similarly, a Turkish NSF has a 99.5% chance less than one from the UK, provided other variables are kept constant.

Conclusions

Drawing on the whole population of NSFs in 2018 in Italy, Portugal, Turkey (except for two federations), Spain, and the UK, the study enhances our understanding of the impact of the gender targets on the corporate boards within the sports governance system. It has investigated the extent to which the IOC recommendation of having by 2005 at least 20% of women on the sports boards has been adopted in the selected countries and what kind of role board size, age, and also countries of the NSFs have played in the level of compliance.

The compliance level of NSFs analysed is scarce (45.1%), especially considering the period the NSFs had to adopt it, more than thirteen years from the 20% deadline and almost twenty years from the 10% deadline. This result confirms that the gender double standard in the mobility to leadership positions in sport has resisted through the years in the countries we investigated in a similar way to what is evidenced by the literature on northern Europe (Adriaanse & Claringbould, 2014; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007,

2008, 2012; Hovden, 2000, 2006, 2010, 2012; Ottesen et al., 2010; Pfister & Radtke, 2009; Sisjord et al., 2017).

Other insights come from the investigation of the three variables under consideration. We find that the board size, or being an NSF from Italy, Portugal, and Turkey, has negatively contributed to predicting that the NSF board has a 20% or greater percentage of women. Thus, the study suggests that it is more likely to not find women board members in NSFs that belong to these three countries and have larger sports board sizes. The two variables significantly predict a board with less than 20% of women.

The fact that the NSF's age plays no role in complying with the IOC gender target favours the path-dependence thesis proposed by Lynall et al. (2003) over the model of board life cycles argued by several authors (Dart et al., 1996; Mathiasen, 1990; Wood, 1992). Older NSFs do not give evidence of evolving towards a more gender-diverse composition suggesting the prevalence of inertial pressures to keep the domination of men.

The result concerning the board size strengthens the literature that found a greater representation of women on smaller boards (Dunn, 2012; Odendahl and Youmans, 1994) and is consistent with other studies that found that women belong more to smaller voluntary organizations than men (McPherson and Smith-Lovin, 1982). This finding could reflect a gender stereotype supported by the "scope of operations hypothesis". Despite the board role varies according to the different types of organizations (Yeh and Taylor, 2008), this hypothesis suggests that as the size of the organization expands, the size of its board of directors is also likely to grow as a consequence of the information needs deriving from more complex operations. Several studies demonstrated that board size in voluntary organizations is driven by the scope and complexity of the organization's operations in both the corporate area (Boone, Casares Field, Karpoff, and Raheja, 2007; Ching, Firth, and Rui, 2006) and the non-profit arena (Cornforth and

Simpson, 2002; de Andrés-Alonso, Azofra-Palenzuela, and Romero-Merino, 2009). As a consequence, if smaller boards are perceived as reflecting more simple organizations, the findings of our study suggest that women's access to the board is easier in organizations that are perceived as less complex to manage.

The fact that being a NSF from Italy, Portugal, and Turkey has negatively contributed to predicting that the NSF board has a 20% or greater percentage of women gives evidence that gender target -even if recommended by an authoritative body to which all five investigated countries adhere-, can hardly be included into the strategic planning of organizations so that further steps are necessary. Differently from the UK and Spain, three countries, Italy, Portugal and Turkey, have had no experience neither with gender quotas nor some form of incentive concerning the gender diversity on boards of their NSFs in the period under investigation. Some might correctly observe that, as also highlighted by the goal-setting theory (Locke and Latham, 2013), the difference in cultural values at the national level could play a role in this. However, it is a fact that the UK and Spain do not have a similar national culture (Hofstede, 1983) and are united by adopting policy tools that are complementary to gender targets. This paves the way for further reflections concerning the capacity of the gender targets in sports governance to activate self-regulation based on voluntary collaboration without some form of coercion or incentive. Our findings increase awareness that, in gender equality policies for the governance of the sport, a participative target-setting at an international level cannot occur in isolation but must be part of a system involving some form of external rewards or deterrent.

This study contributes to the literature regarding gender targets, sports governing, and also policymaking in several directions. First, the results support previous studies that indicate a poor fulfilment of the IOC's gender targets by completing the picture of 2018 with few countries explored so far (Authors, 2019). **The fact that the IOC or the**

organizations that report to this organization do not comply with their own recommendations support the idea that “it is also unclear how committed the IOC is to respecting all human rights beyond discrimination and certain labor issues” (Hess & Bishara, 2019, p. 272). Moreover, the findings provide policymakers with a further signal about the progress of NSFs to meet Goal 5, “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”, contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development accepted by the United Nations and 193 countries in 2015.

Second, it adds to the literature about gender diversity on boards by exploring sports governance and focusing on peculiar hybrid organizations. In this sense, it stimulates further research, especially concerning country-specific analyses. Just to give an example, it would be interesting to investigate whether the larger size of the Spanish boards is due to an increase in the women’s representation to obtain grants and meet the objective of an absolute number of women on the sports boards instead of a percentage of women’s representation.

Finally, consistent with Mensi-Klarbach et al. (2019), our findings emphasise that self-regulation of gender diversity on NSFs’ boards is ineffective if merely based on recommendations and additional compliance forces must be triggered. In this sense, the study questions the quotas-versus-targets debate, at least in the sports international governance system, promoting the perspective of complementary use of the two forms of regulatory intervention to increase women’s percentage on boards. The gender issue in sports governance requires an architecture of various regulatory interventions involving different national and international institutional levels and combining both, pressures to self-regulation and coercion. The overall societal demand for gender equality in sports governance is still too low to reward the abandonment of prevailing man-oriented

governance only in the name of an ethical principle, and opportunity gains should accompany the target setting.

¹ Brighton Declaration on Women and Sport. (1994). International Working Group on Women and Sport. Retrieved March 12, 2022 from <http://www.icsspe.org>.

² Council of Europe European Union, <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/gender-equality-in-sport/-/women-make-up-only-8-of-the-presidents-of-the-national-olympic-sport-federations-in-europe> (accessed March 13, 2021).

³ In the United Kingdom, the governance strategy of Sport England, ‘On board for better governance 2013–2017’, requires national governing bodies as well as regional and local sporting bodies to ensure that women represent at least 25 % of board members by 2017 (Sport England, 2013, p. 11). A Code for Sports Governance establishes that all organizations must “adopt a target of, and take all appropriate actions to encourage, a minimum of 30% of each gender on its Board; and demonstrate a strong and public commitment to progressing towards achieving gender parity and greater diversity generally on its Board, including, but not limited to, Black, Asian, minority ethnic (BAME) diversity, and disability” (UK Sport, 2017). According to this Code, sports boards receiving the highest level of public funding (Tier 3) should be of an appropriate size to meet the organization’s requirements and have an appropriate balance of skills, experience, independence and knowledge. It should not exceed 12 persons unless there is a specific agreement with UK Sport and Sport England. Critically, each organization should adopt a target of and take all appropriate actions to encourage a minimum of 30% of each gender on its board and demonstrate a public commitment to progressing towards achieving gender, BAME and disability parity.

⁴ In Italy, in April 9, 2018, the National Council of the Olympic Committee (CONI) has established that from the next term (2021), at least 30% of women members must be present in all corporate boards of Italian NSFs.

⁵ Resolution of August 14, 2014, of the Presidency of the Higher Sports Council, calling for grants to the Spanish Sports Federations for the Women and Sports Program in 2014. BOE No. 212, of September 1, 2014, pages 69096 to 69122 Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports, https://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2014-9024 (accessed Mars 9, 2021)

⁶ See https://www.elconfidencial.com/deportes/2014-10-16/hasta-catorce-federaciones-no-solicitan-subvenciones-para-sus-deportistas-chicas_247696/ (accessed Mars 9, 2021).

⁷ According to section four, VI of the Resolution of the Presidency of the Higher Sports Council, by which aid is summoned to the Spanish Sports Federations for the Women and Sports Program in the year 2021 (accessed Mars 9, 2021).

⁸ https://www.mujareseneldeporte.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/borrador_anteproyecto_de_ley_del_deporte.pdf (accessed Mars 10, 2021).

⁹ Resolución de 14 de agosto de 2014, de la Presidencia del Consejo Superior de Deportes, por la que se convocan ayudas a las Federaciones Deportivas Españolas para el Programa Mujer y Deporte en el año 2014. 69096 <https://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2019/01/12/pdfs/BOE-A-2019-317.pdf> (accessed, Mars 9; 2021).

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