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Women's involvement in sport governance - A case study of New Zealand rugby

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Chapter 23: Women's Involvement in Sport Governance - A Case Study of New Zealand Rugby

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Chapter outline

As with many other domains of sport, the lack of women's involvement within the formalized setting of governance has raised concern from scholars and policy makers alike (Adriaanse, 2016; Henry & Robinson, 2010). Despite calls for greater gender diversity within sport governance, women are still strongly underrepresented across international, national, and local levels (Burton, 2015; Sibson, 2010). The purpose of this chapter is to explore the topic of women's involvement in sport governance, and in doing so help explain why women are still largely absent from sport governance, highlight the contribution women can make to sport governance, and to suggest ways forward for research and practice. We do this by first providing some background about sport governance scholarship, which leads us to identify predominant theories that have been used to explain sport governance and gender dynamics. We particularly highlight institutional theory as a lens to examine women's involvement in sport governance as well as considering the small number of studies that have focused on gender and sport governance. Next, we offer a contextualized account of women's involvement in sport governance by using New Zealand Rugby (NZR) to explore the forces that have influenced the governance of that sport. Institutional theory is used here to help explain this setting. We conclude by highlighting a landmark in the governance journey of NZR, the inclusion of the first women to the national board in 2016. Farah Palmer's backstory is offered as our leader profile before we conclude and offer future directions for research and practice.

Background to the study of sport governance

The field of sport governance scholarship has gained moment over the past 15 years where organizational level governance has dominated the literature (O'Boyle & Shilbury, 2016). Sometimes referred to as 'corporate governance', organizational governance focuses on the board grouping and/or individuals charged with the responsibility of governing sport organizations (Henry & Lee, 2004). Commonwealth countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the United Kingdom, as well as Greece, Portugal, Spain, and Taiwan, where the sports systems are dominated by non-profit organizations have been the primary contexts for investigation (Shilbury, Ferkins & Smythe, 2013). Within these countries, scholars have found common topics and issues that have helped to strengthen our understanding of sport governance as a global concern (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007; Hoye & Doherty, 2011). Early work established

the role of the board (Inglis, 1997; Shilbury, 2001), and was followed by studies that considered the CEO-chairperson relationship (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2003), board member motivations (Hoye, 2007), board effectiveness and the link to organizational performance (Hoye & Doherty, 2011), and more recently a collection of studies that have centred on the strategic capabilities of boards (Ferkins & Shilbury, 2015). The issue of women's underrepresentation on sport boards is also a growing area of sport governance research across numerous countries (Adriaanse, 2016; Adriaanse & Schofield, 2013, 2014; Burton, Grappendorf & Henderson, 2011; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007, 2008, 2012; Schull, Shaw & Khill, 2013; Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Slack, 2002), which seems to have gained momentum in the last five years.

Early working definitions of sport governance largely captured the organizational level view of governance within sport organizations. While no agreed definition exists, most scholars consider that sport governance involves establishing a strategy or a direction, controlling the activities and regulating the behaviour of a sport organization (O'Boyle & Bradbury, 2013). Likewise, Ferkins, Shilbury and McDonald (2009) defined sport governance as, "The responsibility for the functioning and overall direction of the organisation and is a necessary and institutionalised component of all sport codes from club level to national bodies, government agencies, sport service organisations and professional teams around the world" (p. 245). The establishment of such definitions and the focus at the board/organizational level has been influenced to a large extent by the study of governance within the business/for-profit sector (Ferkins, Shilbury, & McDonald, 2005). Perhaps it is the influence of an increasing focus on gender within the corporate/for-profit context of governance research that has encouraged and strengthened the more recent focus on this topic for sport scholars. More specifically, a number of studies in the corporate sector relating to women in governance have increasingly established the advantages of women on boards (Fondas & Sassalos 2000; Geerat, Alm, & Groll, 2014; Zelechowski & Bilimoria 2004). These studies have stated that female presence on boards leads to improved governance and that boards with at least three women score higher in applying corporate strategy, conflict of interest rules/code of conduct, and more generally, bring a different voice to debates and decision making (Fondas & Sassalos 2000; Geeraert, Alm, & Groll, 2014; Zelechowski & Bilimoria 2004). Further, studies have established a positive link between the financial performance of a firm and board gender diversity (Geerat et al., 2014; Terjese, Sealy, & Singh, 2009). This burgeoning research agenda has seemingly provided a springboard for those researchers interested in the role of women within the sport governance context.

More latterly, sport governance researchers have also turned their attention to a wider systemic view of governance which involves not just the work of the board of an individual organization, but the way a network of organizations (e.g., within a sporting code) might work together. Taking this view, Shilbury et al. (2013) considered sport governance as a network of sport organizations that allocate resources, and exercise control and co-ordination. Underpinning this dual focus on both organizational and systemic governance, researchers have engaged a range of major theories to help explain the dynamics of sport governance. At the board and/or individual level, such theories have included agency theory, stewardship theory, institutional theory, leader-member exchange theory, and managerial hegemony theory (Ferkins, Shilbury & O'Boyle, 2017; Hoye, 2004; Shilbury, 2001; Welty Peachey, Zhou, Damon, & Burton, 2015). Theories that have proven instructive at the organizational and system wide level have included institutional theory, resource dependence theory, stakeholder theory, network theory and inter-organizational relationships (Ferkins et al. 2017).

Institutional theory stands out as a multi-use theory across both individual and board groups as well as at the organization level and system wide. Additionally, Walker, Schaeperkoetter and Darvin (2017) drew heavily on the notion of institutionalized practices in sport to help explain the overrepresentation of male leadership within sport organizations. In a general sense institutional theory provides some insight regarding why sport governance practice is seemingly repeated across sporting codes. Scott (2004) explains that institutional theory is a theory that reveals the deeper, more resilient aspects of a social structure (i.e., organization). More specifically, the theory is used to help explain the *processes* by which structures (e.g., rules, norms, routines etc.) become established as authoritative guidelines which might dictate social behavior. In considering its application to sport, the ideas embedded within institutional theory help explain how sport organizations and the practice of governance seem resistant to change. As Ferkins and Kilmister (2012) note, “Governance structures and decision-making are taken for granted, institutionalised, and thus resistant to change” (p. 146). This explains why there may be “a lack of incentives to explore new or improved ways of carrying out the board’s business” (p. 146). The movement toward the involvement of women in sport governance, where men have previously dominated, may therefore be in-part explained by the ideas captured by institutional theory. Next, we turn our attention to the small number of studies that have focused on women in sport governance.

Background to the study of women’s involvement in sport governance

Worldwide we have seen a rise of women’s participation in sport (Cunningham, 2008), and more latterly, in codes that have formerly been dominated by men (e.g., Ice Hockey, Australian Football League, Rugby, Cricket). In addition, at the 2016 Olympics, for example, women represented 45% of all athletes competing, compared to 44.3% at the 2012 Games (Adriaanse & Schofield, 2014; Donnelly & Donnelly, 2013; Leberman & Burton, 2017). The rise of women’s on-field sport participation, however, has not been matched by off-field participation in governance (Adriaanse & Schofield, 2014; Burton & Leberman, 2017). Perhaps, it is the growing momentum in identifying the contribution women make to corporate boards (noted above), the continued underrepresentation of women on sport boards, and a seeming resistance for this to change, which has led to a growing focus on the study of women’s involvement in sport governance (Adriaanse, 2016; Adriaanse & Schofield, 2013, 2014; Burton et al. 2011; Claringbould & Knoppers 2007, 2008, 2012; Schull et al., 2013; Shaw 2006; Shaw & Slack, 2002).

A recent study by Adriaanse (2016) examined the gender diversity in National Sport Organizations (NSOs) boards in 45 countries (referred to as ‘The Sydney Scoreboard Global Index of Participation’ [SSGIP]) and identified three key indicators of global underrepresentation of women on sport boards. These indicators include the roles of chief executives, board chairs and board directors. The authors of this and other studies advocated that a threshold of 30% women in these roles, or at least three women per board is needed if we are to have some confidence that governance gender equity on sport boards is being advanced (Adriaanse, 2016; Adriaanse & Schofield, 2014). The SSGIP study, involving 1,600 NSOs, further revealed that the global mean for women directors was 19.7%, chairs of boards 10.8% and chief executives 16.3% - all below the 30% threshold (Adriaanse, 2016).

An enduring argument for increasing the number of women on sport boards has focussed on the ethical dimension. Ahn and Cunningham (2017) argue that sport organizations have a responsibility to be inclusive not only from an ethical but also a social perspective. Central to the argument for fostering women’s representation in governance is the fact that “women represent stakeholders who should be included (ethical principle) and that their inclusion

increases the pool of talent available for selection into leadership positions (business principle)” (Adriaanse, 2016, p. 159). More recently, the case is being strengthened from an economic perspective on the basis that the inclusion of women not only increases the pool of talent available for selection into leadership positions but also positively impacts a firm’s financial performance (Post & Byron, 2015). As noted above, several studies about women’s underrepresentation in sport leadership and governance have drawn heavily on institutionalized practices as a framework for understanding (Burton, 2015; Walker & Sartore-Baldwin, 2013; Walker et al., 2017) In the next section, we draw on the tenants of institutional theory and institutionalized practices to help understand why women have been largely invisible at the governance level of NZR. Through a case-study approach, we seek to identify what forces came into play, influencing the appointment of the first women to the Board of NZR, in 2016.

Institutionalization of New Zealand Rugby governance: The forces against change

Rugby was first introduced to New Zealand in the late 1860s, with the first game played in 1870. The national body, now known as *New Zealand Rugby*, was established in 1892 (New Zealand Rugby, 2018a). For a long time females have been excluded from participating in rugby union and it was not until the 1980s that NZR began to have some involvement in the women’s game (Carle & Neurite, 1999; Tucker, 2015). In 1998 the governing body officially recognized the first national women’s rugby team, now known as the *Black Ferns*. This national side competed at the first world cup in 1991 (New Zealand Rugby, 2018a). What is referred to as ‘institutionalization’ within sport could be one reason in explaining the gender bias that has occurred within the sport of rugby union in New Zealand as represented by the national body, NZR. The over-dominance of males in governance and leadership has resulted in what Walker et al. (2017) refer to as institutionalized practices which have “valued male ideals, provided men with unquestioned power, and devalued women’s contribution” (p. 33). Burton and Leberman (2017) advocate the importance of seeking to understand why such underrepresentation of women in leadership and governance established such a strong-hold and the reasons it continues to reign – albeit with signs of change starting to occur - in some sporting domains. This raises the questions as to what were the values and behaviours of the New Zealand rugby culture that created an institutional bias disadvantaging women’s contributions in rugby governance. In this section we examine three concepts: gendered space; the notion of the ‘glass wall’ and ‘glass ceiling’; and homologous reproduction, that may help to explain prevailing values and behaviours within the governance of NZR.

Gendered space

In an authoritative review of literature pertaining to the underrepresentation of women in sport leadership (encompassing governance), Burton (2015) argues that sport should be viewed as a gendered space. This view of sport recognizes “gender as a fundamental aspect of organizational and social processes” (p. 156) which helps to reveal the issue of underrepresentation as well as the reasons for it. This approach is supported by Walker and Sartore-Baldwin (2013), who sought to understand the perspectives and attitudes of men’s basketball coaches toward women in what they refer to as the “institution of men’s college basketball and within the male-dominated organizational culture of sport” (p. 303). Their findings allude to male sports as being gender exclusive, also well as hyper-masculine and resistant to change. There may be some parallels with the culture of such a long-standing male dominated sport of rugby as well as a relevance to a gendered view of sport advocated by Burton (2015).

In 2016, there was significant focus on women’s rugby in New Zealand as the sevens Black Ferns team were serious gold medal prospects for the 2016 Rio De Janeiro Olympics. Evidence

indicates that female rugby players had to fight strong negative perceptions prior to being introduced into the Olympics (Adjepong, 2017; HSBC, 2017). One perception was that ‘rugby is a man’s game’ - a carry-over from the early days of sport - was a judgment that women were not physically able to handle the rigours of full contact sports, nor have the temperament to attempt it (Corbett, 2016). This judgement enabled another reoccurring negative perception, namely the labelling of rugby, amongst other traditionally-defined male activities, as a lesbian sport based on the fact that the game contains large amounts of physical contact (Russell, 2007). As noted by Russell (2007), such a perception has potentially discouraged heterosexual women from competing in the game. Countering this, according to Griffin, McLellan, Presland, Rathbone, and Keogh (2017), Olympic inclusion accelerated global participation and paired with the success of the Black Ferns, sevens has been a strong growth area in women’s sport in New Zealand.

Several studies/authors (e.g., Burton, 2015; Burton et al., 2011; Burton & Leberman, 2017) have found that such inherent biases toward women in sport and sport leadership (which might often be subconscious), becomes more overt when sport is viewed as a gendered space. Anderson’s (2009) article on understanding the maintenance of masculinity among stakeholders in sport also supports these assertions. He notes that “Competitive teamsports ... exist as a microcosm of society’s gendered values, myths and prejudices about gender” (p. 4). Anderson also considers that competitive team sports condition males to show, value, and reproduce traditional ideas of masculinity. Such an explanation appears to fit with the game of rugby in New Zealand which has seemingly promoted the ‘maintenance of masculinity’ since being first established in the 1860s (Pringle, 2008). As pointed out by Theberge (1985) some 30 years ago, if we view sport as an institutionalized male preserve, then it enables us to better understand the male dominance within the sporting context.

The glass wall, and the glass ceiling

A second factor that scholars have claimed contribute to the institutionalization of sport is referred to as the ‘glass wall’ and the ‘glass ceiling’ phenomenon (Walker, Bopp, & Sagas, 2011; Walker et al., 2017). Both terms are used to describe the institutionalized barriers women face in organizations and in being appointed to leadership and governance positions in ‘men’s sport’ (Walker et al., 2017). Again, it is worth remembering that in 2018, rugby is still a male dominated sport in New Zealand and as Burton and Leberman (2017) state, it is the “sexist and hyper-masculine culture of men’s sports, which supports the glass wall phenomenon” (p. 37). Farah Palmer’s appointment to the Board of NZR in 2016 might be an example of the glass wall phenomenon. “It has taken more than a century but finally a woman has joined the upper echelons of New Zealand’s rugby hierarchy” (McKendry, 2016).

The glass wall and ceiling phenomena also conveys the lack of opportunities available to women to progress upward in the leadership hierarchy of the organization (Burton & Leberman, 2017). An example of the glass ceiling being broken in rugby governance in New Zealand occurred in 2017, when the first women to chair a provincial rugby union board was appointed - Jane Duncan on the Buller Provincial Rugby Union. A New Zealand Herald reporter, Chris Rattue, referred to the appointment as ‘making history’, and made reference to her as having “broken through the glass ceiling” (Rattue, 2017). Duncan’s response to her appointment was,

It is changing times for women in New Zealand, especially in sport, but I really don't think this should come as a surprise. Maybe it's because rugby has a reputation for being male, pale and stale ... I certainly never felt that way about rugby but there is increased

awareness about women putting themselves forward for governance roles. (Rattue, 2017)

Homologous reproduction

A third contributor to the institutionalization of sport that has potentially resulted in underrepresentation of women in governance is what is referred to as homologous reproduction (Anderson, 2009). This idea helps to explain the tendency of male leaders to appoint to positions, those akin to oneself, and in doing so replicate “the masculinized nature of their sport” (Anderson, 2009, p. 11). It would appear that the NZR Board adopted a homologous reproduction approach in their appointments to governance for 124 years whereby male board members (of Provincial Unions) appointed/elected other men to the board who brought seemingly similar backgrounds and experiences. This, in turn, reinforced the institution of rugby favoring men over women in the governance of the sport. Figure 1 below, which is an image of the 2013 members of the NZR board, visually *indicates* the notion of homologous reproduction.

Insert Figure 1 here.

Challenges to institutionalization: Forces contributing to change

Just as there are forces against change that can be in part better understood by applying an institutional theory lens, so too are there forces that influence change. In this section we highlight some of these forces that we think have challenged the status quo and indeed institutionalization processes within the governance of NZR.

Women’s increasing participation and profile in rugby

World Rugby (formerly the International Rugby Board) labelled rugby the fastest growing women’s sport in the world between 2012-2014. Additionally, its Development Department announced that 23% of rugby participants were female in 2014 compared to 7% in 2009 (Corbett, 2016). In 2017, Rowan (2017) claimed that 25% of those participating in rugby globally were female.

New Zealand too has experienced a surge in the growth and interest in the women’s game Curtin (2017). It is possible that this growth as well as the profile and success of the Black Ferns (New Zealand women’s 15 aside) and Black Ferns sevens teams has begun to break down some of the earlier stigmas relating to women playing rugby as well as their contribution to leadership off-field. Greater recognition by NZR for the development of women’s rugby may also have played a role in contributing to a growing recognition that female participation in the governance of the sport also needs to change. This opportunity for change was recently highlighted by the Chair of NZR, Brent Impey in a national newspaper article. Impey pointed out that NZR cannot afford to be “out of step with where the rest of society is going and I think that's being recognised” (McKendry, 2016). He went on to say that,

Of 155,000 players, 21,000 of them are women. It's my personal view that, particularly around women's sevens and the Olympics, it can become the No. 1 women's team sport in this country. It's just inconsistent to have those numbers and those ambitions without that group being represented at the governance level. (McKendry, 2016)

Risk to the reputation of rugby: The glass cliff or glass wall/ceiling?

A second element that we consider has influenced change has been a perceived risk to the reputation of rugby in New Zealand. A number of off-field incidents have raised concern for the reputation of the game leading to NZR initiating an independent review in 2016, referred to as the Respect and Responsibility Review (RRR). According to NZR:

The recommendations provide all of rugby a pathway to continue to ensure everyone involved in the game has the right information and understanding with regards to respect and responsibility to enable them to make the right decisions. This includes ensuring that our attitudes towards women in rugby, diversity, respect, responsibility and inclusiveness are in keeping with a world leading sports organisation. (New Zealand Rugby, 2017)

It is interesting to note that this review panel was chaired by a woman (Kathryn Beck), and five of the nine panel members were women. This raises the question of why, after more than 124 years of the dearth of women in positions of influence, did NZR appoint a panel that was proportionally opposite to what existed in the governance of the provincial unions and national board? Is this an example of the 'glass cliff' or the start of the fracturing of the glass wall/ceiling (noted above)? As explained by Jackson and Parry (2011), "Women are more likely than men to be appointed to leadership positions associated with an increased risk of failure and criticism because these positions are more likely to involve the management or organizational units that are in crisis" (p.29). Interestingly in a study about the glass cliff, Haslam and Ryan (2008) found that women were associated with glass cliff appointments due to an underlying belief that women's particular capabilities were more or best suited to glass cliff situations.

Public expectations and pressures

In 2012, the New Zealand Human Rights Commission initiated a campaign challenging rugby over the lack of gender diversity on its national and provincial boards. A survey highlighted that of the 26 provincial rugby unions in New Zealand, only four included a woman (McGregor, 2012; New Zealand Herald, 2017). The commissioner at the time, Dr Judy McGregor referred to rugby as 'the last bastion of chauvinism' (Johannsen, 2016). This campaign highlighted, the gender inequality that prevails in the country's 'national sport' and NZR, an organization that aspires to be world-leading.

According to Gregor Paul of the New Zealand Herald, "such adverse publicity highlighted the lack of diversity in the governance at all levels of the game and ramped up NZ Rugby chairman Brent Impey's desire to bring a woman on to the previously all-male board" (Paul, 2016). This campaign, combined with the issues and questions raised by the RRR (noted above), as well as the increase in women's participation in rugby may have contributed to igniting the public voice and expression of expectations about gender diversity in rugby governance in New Zealand.

Breaking the glass wall/ceiling: A champion for change

Another critical factor that has seemingly influenced change may have been the leadership and influence of the Chairperson of NZR, Brent Impey. As expressed by Burton and Leberman (2017), change often comes when leaders and influencers inside the sport, who are mostly men, consider women as viable candidates for leadership in what are predominantly known as men's sports. The Chief Executive of New Zealand's government agency for sport, Sport New Zealand, also suggested that leaders from within the sport who are prepared to speak out and demand change is a critical step in the right direction (Johannsen, 2016). In an interview with the New Zealand Herald, Miskimmin was quoted as saying "We've got a lot of women that

want to go on boards, but we haven't got boards that are ready for women". He went on to say, "I do applaud Brent for standing up in what has been a fairly male-dominated sport, to say the world of rugby is different now and their decision-making processes should reflect that" (Johannsen, 2016).

Could it be that Brent Impey is a champion for challenging the institutionalization of rugby in New Zealand, and with his leadership influence, is playing a key role in fracturing the glass wall and ceiling? Impey has been chair of the Board since 2014 and made it publicly known of his aspirations to ensure NZR board was more reflective of New Zealand society. He believed the appointment of at least one woman on the board was non-negotiable (McKendry, 2016). That moment came in 2016 when Farah Palmer was elected as the Maori representative onto the New Zealand Rugby board ending a 124-year all male run. Below, we provide a profile of Farah and some context around her inclusion onto the board.

Leader profile: Dr Farah Palmer (based on work by Sophie Parker)

Farah Rangikoea Palmer was born to Bruce Palmer and Judith Palmer on 27th November 1972 in Te Kuiti, New Zealand. In 1998, 2002, and 2006 she captained the Black Ferns, New Zealand's women national rugby team, to victory in the Women's Rugby World Cup. She retired from her active playing career in at the end of the 2006 season. With 35 caps for the national team between 1996 until 2006 she is New Zealand's second most appointed player after Anna Richards. In addition to being one of the greatest Black Ferns in history, Dr. Palmer also completed her PhD in 2001 and is employed by Massey University as a senior lecturer in management with a focus on leadership issues in sport management. More specifically her research interests have involved gender issues in sport from a sociological or kaupapa Maori perspective, diversity issues in sport management and leadership, and Maori leadership and governance in sport and business (Massey University, 2018).

Palmer was recognized for her services to rugby when she was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit (ONZM) in 2007. She has obtained several accolades including but not limited to, Women's Player of the Year 1998, International Women's Personality of the Year 2005, and was the sixth women to be inducted to the International Rugby Hall of Fame in 2014. On 14th December 2016 Farah was elected as the Maori representative onto the NZR board. She had previously been an independent member of the New Zealand Maori Rugby Board for over a decade.

Despite her outstanding playing career, her contribution to Maori Rugby, and being unanimously elected by NZR's voting members, Palmer still expressed some concerns that her appointment could be seen as tokenism and said in an interview:

I talked to lots of different people about it. One of the things that I was talking to people about is that I would be seen as a token gesture. I think there is an element of that, but someone has to be the one to break that stronghold. I feel that I am there because I have the skills and expertise that are needed. (Eade, 2017)

The grounds for those doubts quickly dissipated as she received extensive support regarding her appointment from various sides, including Brent Impey, who stated in an interview with a local newspaper, "While Dr Palmer becomes the first woman elected to NZR's Board in its almost 125 history, she clearly represented the best person for the role and the interests of Maori rugby" (Eade, 2017). Another commentator (Jonathan Howe) offered:

But make no mistake - this was not a decision done to tick a demographic box. Putting her legendary status to one side, Palmer has held executive positions on

international and Maori rugby boards, making her uniquely qualified to thrive in such a role. (Allblacks.com, 2016)

Palmer is eager to be a strong role model and calls on other women to follow in her footsteps. In an interview after her first board meeting she stated "I do see this as opening the door to encourage other women to put themselves forward for board positions at provincial and Super Rugby level" (McKendry, 2016). Palmer states that her approach will be predominantly collaborative but challenging where it needs to be (McKendry, 2016).

Insert Figure 2 here.

Conclusion and directions for research and practice

The chapter has explored the topic of women's involvement in sport governance using the lens of institutional theory and the situational context of rugby in New Zealand (i.e., NZR). While institutional theory is not the only theory to understand governance practice, as demonstrated in this case study, it is a useful theory to help explain the forces for and against change in governance practice within NZR in relation to women's involvement. The concepts of gendered space, glass wall/ceiling, and homologous reproduction help explain prevailing values and behaviors that have contributed to institutionalized practices where men have dominated the governance of rugby in New Zealand. Women's increasing participation and profile in rugby, the risk to the reputation of rugby, public expectations and pressures, and a champion for change have all seemingly challenged institutionalization processes and forces with the context of rugby in New Zealand.

While we join a growing number of authors who have raised concern about the underrepresentation of women in sport governance, an appreciation for the influencing forces that underlie the resistance to change offers much opportunity to initiate change. We therefore advocate for greater momentum in research that embraces the ideas of institutional theory and institutionalized practices and for those who are influential in the practice of sport governance to understand and recognize the forces for change at play within their specific sporting context. In particular, as Burton and Leberman (2017) note, much of the research pertaining to the glass wall and glass ceiling experiences in sport are in the context of coaching and that there would be much to gain from future research focussing on sport leadership and governance in relation to these concepts.

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Figure 2: Photo of Farah Palmer