

‘It’s just an old boy’s club’

**The under-representation of women and institutional
discrimination in football governance in Europe**

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The original study

Identify levels of representation in football in Europe amongst minorities and **women**

- Playing
- Coaching
- **Leadership**

Identify structural barriers impacting on levels of representation of minorities and **women**

- Socio-economic and cultural barriers
- Overt racisms and sexism
- Physical and cultural stereotypes
- Organisational provision and **institutional discrimination**

Presentation format

- The under-representation of women in leadership positions
- Definition of institutional discrimination
- Examples of institutional discrimination impacting on women in football
 - i. Recruitment, selection and networks
 - ii. Norms, values and gender stereotypes
 - iii. Power, hegemony and cultures of resistance
 - iv. The limitations neutral criteria approaches
- Towards positive action and gender mainstreaming
- UEFA and the policy context
- UEFA meeting the challenges?

The under-representation of women in leadership positions

- Under-representation of women in leadership positions in social, economic, political life (Eurostat 2008, EC 2006, 2010, COE 2010a, 2010b, 2010c)
- Under-representation of women in leadership positions in sport (IWGWS 1994, IOC 1997, ISLP 2004, Elling/Knoppers 2005, EWS 2010)
- Relative absence of women in leadership positions in football (Williams 2006, Bradbury et al 2011)
- Strong link between under-representation and institutional discrimination
 - i. Society: (EC 2006, EU 2007, COE 2009)
 - ii. Sport: (Birrell 2000, Elling/Knoppers 2005, Claringbould/Knoppers 2008, Pfister 2010)
 - iii. Football: (Williams 2006, Bradbury et al 2011)

Definition of institutional discrimination

- The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate service to people because of their ethnic, cultural, religious background or their gender
- It can occur intentionally or through a lack of understanding and ignorance
- It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, thoughtlessness and stereotyping
- It can also be evident in an apparently neutral provision, criterion or practice that limits equality of opportunities and equality of outcomes for minorities and women
- It occurs at all levels of an industry or organisation

(i) Recruitment, selection and networks

Senior administration and closed processes of recruitment

- ‘Why are we not seeing women coming into administration? I’m sure the recruitment processes are limited. Are jobs advertised in what you would expect to be an open or transparent way. Not always. How can women get these jobs, or even apply for these jobs, if they don’t know that they exist, or there is not a proper process for them to go through to even be considered for these jobs’

Football governance, pyramid structures and male patronage

- ‘In many cases they will make decisions which keep men in powerful positions. They may or may not do it deliberately, but in a way, that doesn’t matter. It’s way you end up with that matters. More older men. The way they recruit means that they will always get more of the same’

(ii) Norms, values and gender stereotypes

Recruitment premised on shared norms, values and backgrounds

- ‘It’s an old boys club. Because the clubs, leagues, the national associations, the regional associations, are full of older white males. It’s a closed system. You elect people who basically you know, you trust. Who share the same values as you do, who come from the same backgrounds’

Gender stereotypes, competence and marginalisation

- ‘The heads of clubs are mostly males. Also, in the governing bodies at a national level and internationally they are mostly males, There is gender discrimination because they don’t expect females to know about football. There is a lot of stigma, stereotypes, the whole mentality is so sexist. They don’t value women’s experience or value women’s competence inside the game

(iii) Power, hegemony and cultures of resistance

Power, hegemony and resistance

- What you find in football is a very conservative mentality and change is a very big word. People like the status quo. Change is very difficult thing to implement and forced change is probably more so because it's always going to be resisted at the top, where they feel like they are going to lose something along the way'

The generation game

- 'Women just don't seem to have been able to breakthrough but I would suggest it's a lot of old men set in their ways. These men want to stay in these positions for so long, they don't want to let younger people in. They don't want to involve any-one new into that equation. It's a generational thing because we are talking about older males at that top level'

(iv) The limitations of neutral criteria approaches

Neutral criteria and institutional discrimination

- ‘We might argue that there are processes of structural discrimination against females in the neutral criteria idea of football governance, which doesn’t look beyond people recruiting like themselves. People have to see that this means that you miss some talent which can very useful to your organisation’

From equality of opportunities to equality of outcomes

- ‘To treat people equally is not necessarily making them become more equal. Sometimes you have to treat people differently to make them more equal, to create an equal situation for them. This is the case in football at the highest level. Because the women are on a different level at the moment, so you have to have a strategy to get them to the same level as men’

Towards positive action and gender mainstreaming

Towards positive action and quota's

- For things to move forward in a quicker way there needs to be an introduction of something like quotas. They can be creative in how it is introduced, but to implement some sort of measures which ensure that women are at least given the opportunity. You have to force open the structures if it is not going to open up on a voluntary basis of it's own accord'

Positive action in practice

- 'I worked my way through the club and the regional federation and was then quota'd into a position at the Norwegian FA. But I was not quota'd as the Vice President or as the General Secretary. I progressed on the basis of merit. But I would never have been able to prove my skills and competence and to have gained experience had I not been quota'd in the first provision'

UEFA and the policy context

UEFA and wider policy shifts

- ‘Across Europe, if we look at the European Commission, they’re putting pressure on governments to have more women in their parliaments. There’s the gender equality act, there’s all sorts of movements from outside of sports that are impacting on the sport. UEFA and national federations have to be attentive to these developments. This has to change. They cannot be stagnant’

The challenge for UEFA

- ‘No organisation in 2010 can address the society or the political bodies, the parliament or whatever, by just organising activities for one sex, it’s impossible. You don’t have any legitimacy if you don’t prove you are inclusive to both sexes. UEFA need to set the standard. I think national federations themselves need to see women at senior management level at UEFA’

UEFA meeting the challenge?

January 2011

- 'A first step in tackling institutional discrimination' (24th January, uefa.com)

March 2011

- 'We must find a way to break the glass ceiling says Platini as UEFA makes decision to quota a place for a woman' (24th March, farenet.org)

June 2011

- 'UEFA appoint woman to Executive Committee' (17th June, farenet.org)

August 2011

- UEFA/FARE research group: shaping the agenda on tackling institutional discrimination