

All-Party Parliamentary Group on Sport, Modern Slavery and Human Rights

Session Summaries

March 2019

Discrimination in Sport

Summary – Gender Discrimination in Sport

Research from *Women in Sport*, in partnership with the Youth Sport Trust, found that only 56% of girls enjoyed taking part in school sport compared with 71% of boys and only 45% of girls saw the relevance of physical education to their lives, against 60% of boys, despite evidence demonstrating that participation in sport improves career opportunities. This evidence is in fact overwhelming – a 2017 *EY report* found that 94% of female executives in Fortune 500 companies played sport, making a very strong correlation between a woman's participation in sport and future career success.

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Few men's clubs yet recognise that investing in their women's side presents the single best growth opportunity available to them.
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There are significant disparities between men's and women's sport in the UK, with much of the spotlight being placed on football. Often times, the reasons given for these inequalities include excuses such as “the women's game is not as popular”. However, as evidence presented to this APPG notes, part of the reason for this is that the English Football Association (the FA) **banned women's football in 1921** at a time when women's matches drew larger crowds than the men. This ban was supposedly to help the men's game and was justified by the FA saying they were: “impelled to express their strong opinion that the game of football is quite unsuitable for females and ought not to be encouraged.”

In addition, it was noted that the same excuse was used for women's tennis in the 1960s and with financial equality of prize money, the women's game today is now more popular with **4.6 million viewers** tuning into the women's singles Wimbledon final in 2018 and 4.5 million tuning into the men's. Women's football in the UK however continues to lack the financial and practical resources necessary to help it recover.

What are the Issues?

The prize money between men's and women's side is often cited as a gross inequality. The prize money for the men's FA Cup Final totals over £30 million, whereas the prize money for the women's side sits at just £250,000 – less than 1% of what the men get. Yet the inequalities go deeper still and include:

- unequal spending of UK taxpayers money;
- lack of female representation on the Boards of football (and all sporting) federations;
- lack of sporting opportunities for women and girls;
- fewer, or poorer quality, resources for the women's side.

Unequal Spending of UK Taxpayer Money

Many of the large stadiums and other sporting venues are built, at least in part, using taxpayer funds. Governments should be spending this money for the benefit of society and their constituents, but what if this money was only being spent on resources for some of society? Take Wembley stadium as one example. Wembley receives approximately £120 million in government funding, yet last year, they hosted 16 men's events for every one women's event. Information such as this is available for a stadium like Wembley, but is not available for local community centres or parks and is worth consideration.

Lack of Female Representation on Boards

A lack of female representation on Boards is an issue in more sectors than sport alone. In the FA's 2016-2017 Handbook, it was reported that there are only two committees on which more than two women sit – the Women's Committee and the Judicial Committee (however, there are 23 members of the Judicial Committee and only 3 women). This means that women are either underrepresented, or not represented at all on critical committees such as on youth, football development and national game finance.

Lack of Sporting Opportunities

The Equality Act on Schools says that segregated PE is okay in some cases. The Equality Act states that schools have to provide equal resources for comparable activities – this does not have to be the same sport, it could be netball for girls and football for boys. In other words, schools can decide that some sports are suitable for boys and others are suitable for girls.

Resource Disparity

Finally, inequalities exist not only in remuneration, but can also exist in what access to resources women's sports and teams have. For example, women may play on pitches that are not as well maintained as the fields the men play on. This can increase the chance of injury. If and when injury occurs, issues have also been cited with regard to healthcare provisions and health insurance. Female players are required to go through public healthcare services and return on a weekly basis to continue to be signed off of work. In addition, kit allocation can be unequal. Cases have been reported of women's clubs teams being given one set of kit, whereas not just the men's team, but the boys teams, receive multiple sets of kit.

Intersectionality

Various forms of discrimination are often interrelated and women facing discrimination based on their gender, might also face barriers based on their ethnicity, social class, age, sexual orientation or other factors.

Title IX of the United States Education Amendments Act of 1972

Many cite the reason for women's sporting success in the United States as being rooted in a law which passed through Congress in 1972. The Education Amendments of 1972 included a clause, Title IX, which explicitly forbade discrimination on the basis of sex. Title IX was enacted as a follow-up to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The 1964 Act was passed to end discrimination in various fields based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin in the areas of employment and public accommodation. The 1964 Act did not however prohibit sex discrimination against persons employed at educational institutions. Feminists during the early 1970s lobbied Congress to add sex as a protected class category. Title IX was then enacted to fill this gap and prohibit discrimination in all federally funded education programs. The legislation specifically states that:

"No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

In terms of its effectiveness, a 2006 study pointed to an increase in the number of women participating in athletics at both the high school and college level by a factor of nine, while the number of women in college sports had increased by more than 450%. Some however maintain that the legislation has led to a decrease in sporting opportunities for men; however there remain more boys and men participating in sport in the US than women and girls.

Summary – Racial Discrimination in Sport

Hate crime is at some of the highest levels it has ever been with fragmented and divided communities – while sport has been heralded as an avenue to resisting this and providing opportunities for social integration and connection, sport continues to face issues of its own. Not only does sport face these issues on the field, but in the boardroom as well with only 4% representation of board members from ethnic minority communities. Sport is the most monocultural industry in the UK, disappointingly lagging behind business, law, government and industry.

What are the Issues?

In sport, when looking at the area of "diversity and inclusion", many organisations tend to think of 'diversity' as gender and 'inclusion' as disability which is backed up by the UK Sports Governance code. The reality is that the issues are far more widespread than that.

Knowledge Gap on Racial and Broader Diversity

The UK Sports Governance code sets a 30% target for gender, meaning that organisations should strive to have at least 30% of their Board be female. However, this does not go far enough and in fact creates a sort of "hierarchy of oppression" by saying gender is more important, or is the only issue that needs to be considered when looking at "diversity and inclusion".

Because of the lack of accountability and understanding of the diversity picture as a whole, it misses the case for intersectionality. In other words, we cannot look at issues in isolation because the reality is we do not live our lives in this way. The whole picture needs to be considered.

Raheem Sterling and The Times Manifesto to End Racism in Football

Manchester City forward Raheem Sterling has become the latest player in English football to speak out about issues around racism affecting the game. In an article he wrote for The Times, he said it “seemed crazy” to be writing an article in a newspaper outlining these issues and cited racial abuse including taunts he faced from fans while playing against Chelsea FC as well as black England players being booed in Montenegro as examples of how racism in football “runs so deep, and is nowhere near being sorted”.

That is why Sterling, together with nearly 50 individuals and organisations, have signed a **manifesto** calling for “radical change” to address the lack of diversity in football’s leadership, both at the clubs and within the governing bodies. The manifesto also calls for:

- consistency of sanctions and other punishments taken across Europe to deal with racist incidents;
- working towards developing a diverse industry and reflecting the diversity on the field in leadership positions across football including coaches, technical leaders, match officials, and sports administrators;
- social media platforms need to do more to regulate content, particularly given the volume of racial abuse that occurs online;
- establish an independent review group to ensure organisations are following procedures and sanctions are being applied correctly;
- governing bodies must accept their responsibility for ensuring that players have a workplace that is free from discriminatory abuse;
- introduce a specific sponsorship programme for anti-discrimination where sponsors can opt to support community inclusion and anti-racism programmes;
- all media organisations (newspapers, broadcasting, social media) should be aware of the negative impacts their words can have on reinforcing stereotypes.

Lack of Available Data

While gender reporting is becoming more common, it is still difficult to aggregate data by gender. This becomes even more difficult however when trying to collect data on people of colour, or disability, sexuality etc.

Sport England has introduced a new initiative working with Board ready candidates from diverse backgrounds and matching them to potential board level vacancies as a result of the governance code compliance. This is in its early stages and will be interesting to see how it develops.

Code for Sports Governance

A **Code for Sports Governance** was developed by Sports England and UK Sport following the Rio 2016 Summer Olympics in recognition of the changing nature of sport and public funding in sport. It was recognised that over £1 billion was invested by the UK Government in sport between 2012 and 2016 and that with that investment must come greater accountability. This Code was therefore developed as part of the UK Government's "Sporting Future" strategy for an active Britain to protect the value of these investments and to ensure they are utilized effectively.

The Code is split into three tiers:

- Tier 1 – minimum requirements for funding. An investment is generally categorised as Tier 1 if it is granted on a one-off basis and is less than £250,000.
- Tier 2 – these investments are generally for more money than Tier 1 but not as much as Tier 3 so the requirements are not as stringent.
- Tier 3 – this is the top level of mandatory governance requirements. The highest level of governance is required because these investments are large (generally over £1 million) and funding is given over several years.

Tier 3 requires the most stringent requirements, including on diversity. It mandates:

- a target on gender so that a minimum of 30% of the Board should be one gender;
- a strong commitment should be made towards achieving "greater diversity" including on Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) representation and on disability.

One critique of the Code is that it places BAME diversity within the context of "greater diversity" which the Code itself outlines can also include age, religion, sexual orientation, marital status or socioeconomic background among others. This reinforces the notion that ethnic diversity is an "other" or "additional" category whereas gender diversity has targets to actively work towards.

Interim Findings for Government and Legislators

There is a need to mainstream intersectionality in sport. Diversity and inclusion are relatively well-known subjects in boardrooms and government departments across the country; however, as evidenced by this session, they are often placed in a box that sits outside the main management discussions, or are not looked at holistically.

Gender

- Government, in collaboration with local authorities, to start tracking who is using what when it comes to public spaces and logging this information in a central database. MPs should also consider whether it is possible to look at this information in their local constituencies. They should ask questions such as:
 - Who is using the school fields? Is it equal? If not, why not?
 - How many girls' teams and boys' teams are playing?
 - How often do the girls' and boys' teams play? In other words, do the boys play in a regular league

- while the girls simply play in a one-off tournament?
 - Who uses parks and community centres? Are there facilities there for everyone to use?
 - Who uses stadiums? Both in terms of the teams playing in the stadiums and the fans attending?
- Consider undertaking similar initiatives as other sectors to encourage greater female participation on Boards in sport – ex. 30% women in FTSE 100 companies.
- Consider enacting legislation similar to Title IX which views sport as an educational opportunity for girls and key to their future career success.

Knowledge gap on racial and broader diversity

- While government should continue to push for gender equality, government must also recognise that this is not the only form of diversity that can exist on Boards and should be careful not to reinforce this thinking with quotas and targets.
- The government should look at its guidance and codes calling for quotas and targets on gender and consider whether there are more meaningful metrics relating to, for example, race and disability. The government should incentivise that where reporting is separated by gender, that this be expanded to include other diversity metrics.
- The government should apply this reporting to their own practices and spending and consider whether public spaces are being fully utilised by all members of a community, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds.