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Division I Collegiate Women Athletic Directors' Perceptions of Sexism and Career Experiences

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DIVISION I COLLEGIATE WOMEN ATHLETIC DIRECTORS' PERCEPTIONS OF
SEXISM AND CAREER EXPERIENCES

by

Ashley L. Kies

A Dissertation Submitted in
Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

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ABSTRACT
DIVISION I COLLEGIATE WOMEN ATHLETIC DIRECTORS' PERCEPTIONS OF
SEXISM AND CAREER EXPERIENCES

by

Ashley L. Kies

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2014
Under the Supervision of Nadya A. Fouad, Ph.D.

The following study investigated eight Division I (DI) collegiate women athletic directors' (ADs) career experiences and perceptions of sexism within their careers and athletics as a whole. Over the last century, women's sports have made great strides toward equality in athletics. Specifically, the last four decades have yielded notable progress including the amendment of Title IX in 1972, which allowed women and men equal access to federal funding for sports, as well as the creation of women's professional sports leagues, increased numbers of girls and women participating in athletics, increased numbers of women's collegiate teams, and increased rates of women employed in collegiate athletics (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). Despite these many efforts and accomplishments, sexism and gender inequities continue to loom within the sports' world. As a result, women and girls involved in athletics are experiencing numerous harmful effects regarding poor self-concept (Leaper & Brown, 2008), distorted body image (Greenleaf, 2002; Krane, Choi, Baird, Aimar, & Kauer, 2004; Parsons & Betz, 2001; Steinfeldt, Zakrajsek, Bodey, Middendorf, & Martin, 2013), challenges in socioemotional adjustment (Leaper & Brown, 2008), and a lack of career opportunities (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014), to name a few. Moreover, the realm of college sports is no exception to gender inequality, and is of particular interest because it is federally funded

vis-à-vis Title IX. Currently, only 10% of DI collegiate ADs are women, and 11.4% of collegiate athletic departments have no women in administration positions (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014).

With the 42nd anniversary of the enactment of Title IX occurring this year, it is imperative to acknowledge improvements around the status of women in sports, but more importantly reexamine areas that have not improved, or have in fact regressed. One of the most important areas in need of improvement is the representation of women in leadership positions within collegiate sports administrations. Due to the limited research on women collegiate ADs' perceptions of sexism in athletics, this qualitative research was framed as an exploratory study, and it utilized a critical feminist theory framework and grounded theory analysis. Data was obtained in semi-structured exploratory interviews with eight current DI collegiate women ADs.

Four significant concepts emerged from the data, including Luck Over Talent, which captured how participants attributed their success to luck versus talent; Ambivalent Awareness of Sexism, which described how most participants expressed ambivalence around their awareness of sexism in their careers and in athletics; Prevalence of Subtle Sexism, which encapsulated how participants acknowledged experiencing sexism but typically in a “subtle” fashion as opposed to a blatant fashion; and Overcoming Hurdles, which related to participants describing strategies for success. In addition, a visual model based on grounded theory was proposed to further explain how DI college women ADs might navigate sexism within their careers. Results from this study aim to provide direction for future research on sexism in athletics, improve the underrepresentation of women ADs in college athletics departments and career fields traditionally dominated by

men, and inform counseling psychologist's practice with girls and women who are involved in or interested in pursuing careers in athletics.

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For my brother, Kelly.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In May 2013, Julie Hermann was hired as the athletic director (AD) at Rutgers University. Few people truly understand the historical significance and monumental implications of this hiring decision. Out of the nearly 350 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I (DI) member schools, Ms. Hermann became one of only a few dozen women ADs and one of only a few openly lesbian or gay ADs. Notably, she also became the first woman and first openly lesbian AD throughout Rutgers University's long athletic history and robust sports legacy. Rutgers and Princeton are credited as playing the first official intercollegiate football match in 1869 ("The First Intercollegiate Game," 2014; Zirin, 2008). Further, Rutgers University qualifies as a Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS), formerly known as Division I-A, which is acclaimed as the most elite and competitive collegiate athletic status. Rutgers University's FBS divisional status is especially noteworthy because Division I subdivisions are sculpted around football. At some institutions, the head football coach simultaneously acts as the AD, or upon retiring from the head football coach position, he will transition to the head AD position. With no collegiate football team equivalency for women, football remains a men's only sport as well as the highest-grossing revenue sport in college athletics. More recently, Rutgers University has been marred with a number of controversies including the suicide of gay-identifying student, Tyler Clementi, in 2010; lawsuits against former head men's basketball coach, Mike Rice, in 2013 alleging physical and verbal abuse of players, including anti-gay slurs; and recent assault allegations in 2014 against football quarterback, Philip Nelson, who has since been dismissed from the team. Within her first

year in the AD position, Ms. Hermann was surrounded by controversy at Rutgers University, and she was not immune from the controversy either. She was criticized in public for leadership decisions, and allegations of verbal and emotional abuse within her former volleyball coaching career surfaced. Within her first year as AD at Rutgers, it appeared that critics were quick to scrutinize Ms. Hermann. Was this because she was one of only a few women who have held the title of AD at an elite DI FBS college? Was this because she was one of the only lesbian or gay people to have held the title of AD at an elite DI FBS college? Was it because of the centuries of historical discrimination, controversy, and legacy that preceded her at Rutgers and in athletics? Was this because of a culture of violence, homophobia, and masculinity at Rutgers or within college sports? Ms. Hermann's story is ripe with complexities, and it is important to ask questions, dig deeper, and explore the insular dominant narrative within sports. This dissertation research strives to examine the complexities surrounding the underrepresentation of women in AD positions at the DI college level.

Over the last century, women's sports have made great strides toward equality in athletics. More specifically, the last four decades have yielded notable progress including the amendment of Title IX in 1972, which allowed women and men equal access to federal funding for sports. Also, recent efforts have resulted in the creation of women's professional sports leagues, such as the Women's National Basketball Association in 1996 and the Women's Professional Soccer league in 2009, respectively. Since the amendment of Title IX in 1972, the number of girls and women participating in athletics has grown from approximately 300,000 to over 3 million. For the first time in history, the women athletes (269) outnumbered the men athletes (261) for the United States' Olympic

Team at the 2012 Olympic Games in London (ESPN.com News Services, 2012). There are now 9,581 women's collegiate teams and an average of 8.83 collegiate teams per college, the highest both these numbers have ever been. In addition, 13,963 women are employed in collegiate athletics as athletic administrators, coaches, assistant coaches, sports information directors, athletic trainers, and strength and conditioning coaches, which is historically the highest number of women ever employed in athletics (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014).

Despite these efforts and accomplishments, sexism and gender biases continue to pervade the sports' world, especially at the collegiate level. In 1972, 90% of head coaches for women's college teams were women, but that number has greatly decreased over the years with the current number of women head coaches for women's teams at only 43.4%. Also, only 2% to 3.5% of collegiate head coaches for men's teams are women, which is notably similar to the rate in 1972 (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). Additionally, women and girls involved in athletics experience numerous harmful effects regarding poor self-concept (Leaper & Brown, 2008), distorted body image (Greenleaf, 2002; Krane, Choi, Baird, Aimar, & Kauer, 2004; Parsons & Betz, 2001; Steinfeldt, Zakrajsek, Bodey, Middendorf, & Martin, 2013), challenges in socioemotional adjustment (Leaper & Brown, 2008), and fewer career opportunities (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). With the 42nd anniversary of the enactment of Title IX occurring this year, it is imperative to acknowledge how far women's sports have progressed, but more importantly, reexamine areas that still need to be improved. One of the most crucial areas in need of improvement is the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in college athletic administrations.

Currently, only 10% of DI collegiate ADs are women. Within the last decade, we have seen that number waver marginally, with the current number being the highest. This underrepresentation of women at executive leadership positions within college athletic departments may be due to a number of potential factors, most notably interpersonal and systemic sexism, which will be discussed in greater detail later within this paper.

Ultimately, very little is known about the factors related to women who seek and stay in college athletic leadership positions. As a result, the purpose of this research was to provide an exploratory qualitative analysis of the underrepresentation of women ADs at the DI level, by exploring perceptions of sexism in athletics as well as the role of gender in administrative leadership roles. This research was framed as exploratory research because there has been very limited research on women collegiate ADs' perceptions of sexism and their careers, and thus, exploratory research is needed to guide and shape future research.

Sexism has been defined as the negative beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that denigrate, devalue, stigmatize, and/or restrict women (Worell & Remer, 2003). Common and persistent examples of sexism in athletics might include sustaining the belief that men are better at sports than women, denying that women are sexually objectified in many areas of the sports' world, or supporting only men's athletic events, teams, and players. A historically consistent example of sexism in athletics, existing for several decades, has been the disproportionate amount of media coverage for women's athletics. In 1995, 5% of sports media coverage involved women, whereas in 2002 the sports media coverage of women was even less at 3.6% (Adams & Tuggle, 2004; Tuggle, 1997). Lack of media coverage further reinforces the notion of male hegemony within athletics.

Additionally, although women employed in collegiate athletics are at an all-time high, it currently stands that only 22.3% of all collegiate ADs (within DI, DII, DIII levels) are women, 32.4% of head athletic trainers are women, and 11.3% of colleges have no women involved in any part of the athletic administration (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). There are a number of recent studies that explore gender and leadership within athletic organizations. Although not all the studies discussed here are from a qualitative lens, the studies are helpful in conceptualizing the current research with AD's views of sexism in athletics and the roles of women in sports.

This research is being conducting from the perspective of a counseling psychologist and critical feminist theorist. According to the American Psychological Association's Division 17: The Society of Counseling Psychologists, counseling psychology focuses on "facilitating personal and interpersonal functioning across the life span" (Society of Counseling Psychology, 2014). Conducting this research within the discipline of counseling psychology is particularly pertinent given the nature of this research topic and because the research is qualitative. Counseling psychology has deep roots in vocational psychology as well as multiculturalism and social justice (Brown & Lent, 2008). In addition, critical feminist theory maintains the promotion of equality between women and men at a political level, the analysis of gender from a substantive level, and describing the world in a way that is congruent with that of women's experiences as well as social change to promote equality between sexes from a methodological perspective (Rhode, 1990; p. 619). Additionally, a goal of feminist qualitative research is to result in transformative research (Creswell, 2007). As a result, the researcher chose to study women in positions of power within their work to

potentially facilitate social change. Although social change can emerge at many levels, women in positions of power and leadership within collegiate athletic organizations have immediate access to power, and thus, could be effective in creating social change within collegiate athletics and athletics as a whole. Also, it has been shown that when the AD in an athletic department is a woman, the number of women coaches is typically higher, and when the AD is a man, the number of women coaches is typically lower within that university's athletic department (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014).

Significance of Research

By conducting qualitative semi-structured interviews with women in leadership positions in athletic administrations, the researcher gained insight into the perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs about sexism in athletics and the role of women employed within DI AD positions. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed participants to have more freedom and control in their responses compared to other research mediums, such as forced response scales in questionnaires, which can often result in limiting a participant's voice. Because women have historically experienced instances of feeling silenced, (Rhode, 1990; Skrla, 2000; Swim, Eyssell, Murdoch, & Ferguson, 2010), especially within the male-dominated context of sports (Fink, Borland, & Fields, 2010), semi-structured interviews strived to empower women to have voice and share their stories, thoughts, and perceptions of sexism in athletics. The semi-structured style of interview was also important in creating room for emerging ideas and concepts within the data. Further, women collegiate ADs may not have access to a safe space in which they can discuss sexism within their careers and within athletics, and thus, these interviews

could have potentially serve as an outlet for them to discuss these topics and reflect upon their careers.

Additionally, this research could be beneficial in helping to provide insight regarding the negative effects that sexism in athletics has on collegiate AD's mental health, well-being, and career development. Furthermore, this research will help explain the perpetuation of sexism and male supremacy in sports, shed light on resource allocation in the collegiate sports' world, help to inform the potential revision of legislation efforts to support women's sports, and could lead to further investigation of women's sports coverage in the media. In addition to sexism, this research could also lead to the exploration of the equally important concerns of racism, homophobia, and heterosexism that notoriously permeate athletics as well. There is growing research and burgeoning support for women's athletics, and this timely research aims to respectfully contribute to previous literature. This exploratory qualitative study strived to set the groundwork for future research and dialogue about sexism in sports and the underrepresentation of women ADs and women in athletics.

The researcher acknowledges that this qualitative research is being conducted with a specific and specialized population. Consistent with the limited research on women ADs' perceptions of sexism, there is currently little research that has examined ADs' perceptions of racism, homophobia, and heterosexism within collegiate athletics and athletics as a whole. Similar to sexism, other constructs like racism, homophobia, and heterosexism persist within various levels and domains of athletics, and thus, it is also important for future research to examine the complex and detrimental effects of these areas within a sports context as well. Ultimately, this research aimed to provide a critique

of sexism in athletics, shed light on the underrepresentation of women in DI collegiate AD positions, examine DI collegiate women ADs career experiences, and inspire social change and transformation of collegiate athletics and athletics as a whole.

Purpose

The purpose of this research was to explore why women are underrepresented in DI AD positions. The hypothesis is that sexism plays a large role in contributing to this underrepresentation of women in DI AD positions, similar to a breadth of research related to the underrepresentation of women in executive leadership positions. However, it is unclear if women who have attained DI AD positions view sexism as a contributor to the lack of DI women ADs. Thus, a goal of this research was to investigate whether or not DI women ADS acknowledge sexism, and if so, demonstrate how they perceive and experience sexism. In order to gain insight into ADs' perceptions of sexism, participants were asked a number of exploratory questions within a semi-structured interview format. Questions addressed DI women ADs' career experiences, encounters with sexism, thoughts about underrepresentation of DI women ADs, and other factors contributing to gender disparity within sports and college athletics, which helped to shape the study design and interview questions. An initial pilot interview involved a semi-structured interview with a current woman associate AD within a DI university athletic program.

Main Research Question

1. Why are women underrepresented in DI collegiate AD positions?

The researcher hypothesized that sexism plays a prominent role in contributing to the underrepresentation of women in DI collegiate AD positions, based on literature in other disciplines about the underrepresentation of women in athletics and in executive

leadership positions. However, because the topic of this paper and the population in this study has limited research surrounding it, this study was framed as an exploratory study and also explored the following sub-research questions:

Sub-Research Questions

1. How do DI collegiate women ADs' perceptions of sexism within their athletic department and career experiences vary?
2. How do DI collegiate women ADs' perceptions of sexism within their leadership position in administration vary?
3. How do DI collegiate women ADs' perceptions of sexism within other college athletic departments vary?
4. How do DI collegiate women ADs' perceptions of sexism in the athletics realm (e.g. professional-, collegiate-, amateur-levels, etc.) as a whole vary?

Summary

This dissertation is organized into five chapters, which describe the study in its entirety. This first chapter provided an overview of this exploratory qualitative research study, which examined the perceptions of sexism and career experiences of eight DI collegiate women ADs. The first chapter also identified the problem statement, purpose, significance of research, background information, and research questions. The second chapter provides an in-depth review of literature related to history of sports and women in sports, women's employment status, women's leadership in athletics, women's leadership in college athletics, sexism in athletics, stereotype threat, and critical feminist theory. The third chapter presents the methodology utilized in this study. The fourth chapter discusses

the analytical procedures and findings of the study. Finally, the fifth chapter of this dissertation describes the findings and conclusions from the data. Also, the fifth chapter discusses implications for the research, future areas for growth, and concluding remarks.

Definition of Terms

- Athletic Director (AD)*: The athletic director is the head employee within an athletic department at a university. The athletic director oversees all student athletes and athletics employees, including but not limited to coaches, athletic trainers, administrators, assistant athletic directors, associate athletic directors, senior deputy administrators, and senior woman administrators.
- Division I (DI)*: “Among the three NCAA divisions, Division I schools generally have the biggest student bodies, manage the largest athletics budgets and offer the most generous number of scholarships...With nearly 350 colleges and universities in its membership, Division I schools field more than 6,000 athletic teams, providing opportunities for more than 170,000 student-athletes to compete in NCAA sports each year. Division I is subdivided based on football sponsorship. Schools that participate in bowl games belong to the Football Bowl Subdivision. Those that participate in the NCAA-run football championship belong to the Football Championship Subdivision. A third group doesn’t sponsor football at all. The subdivisions apply only to football; all other sports are considered simply Division I” (National Collegiate Athletic Association [NCAA], 2014).
- National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)*: According to the NCAA’s non-profit organization website, “The NCAA is a membership-driven organization dedicated to safeguarding the well-being of student-athletes and equipping them with the skills to succeed on the playing field, in the classroom and throughout life...NCAA members—mostly colleges and universities, but also conferences

and affiliated groups—work together to create the framework of rules for fair and safe competition” (NCAA, 2014).

- *National Association of Collegiate Women Athletics Administrators (NACWAA)*: According to NACWAA’s website, “NACWAA is the premier leadership organization dedicated to empowering, developing and advancing the success of women in the profession. NACWAA membership is open to all (men and women) of any job type, level and industry. While our focus is on the advancement of women leaders in intercollegiate athletics, our mission is to ultimately advance the success of our members in whatever path they choose, at any career level” (National Association of Collegiate Women Athletics Administrators [NACWAA], 2014).
- *Senior Woman Administrator (SWA)*: “The Senior Woman Administrator (SWA) is the highest ranking female in each NCAA athletic department or member conference. The designation of SWA is intended to encourage and promote the involvement of female administrators in meaningful ways in the decision-making process in intercollegiate athletics. The designation is intended to enhance representation of female experience and perspective at the institutional, conference and national levels and support women’s interests” (NCAA, 2014).
- *Sexism*: The negative beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that denigrate, devalue, stigmatize, and/or restrict women (Worell & Remer, 2003).

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The purpose of this research was to provide an exploratory qualitative analysis of the underrepresentation of Division I (DI) collegiate women athletic directors (ADs). Based on related literature, the researcher hypothesized that sexism would be an integral aspect of participants' views on factors which contribute to gender inequity within their career field. This chapter will provide relevant literature related to athletics, leadership, gender, and sexism, which has been conducted in a broad range of disciplines including sociology, religious studies, education, gender studies, social psychology, and feminist studies. However, after an extensive literature review, it appears the only discipline contributing specifically to the research on collegiate athletic administrators' perceptions of sexism is gender studies. Some European research on athletics has focused on the concerns of women in leadership positions in professional athletic organizations but not at the collegiate level in athletics. In addition, this research has not been executed from a counseling psychology perspective.

The following literature will be reviewed from the discipline of counseling psychology and a critical feminist theory lens in order to better understand factors influencing women who hold athletic director positions in athletic departments. The literature review will provide a context for the status of women in athletics as well as for women in athletic administrator positions. First, in order to comprehend DI women AD's perceptions of gender inequity and sexism, it is important to first acknowledge the historical context which precedes modern athletics. Factors within the historical context directly and indirectly impact the conditions and experiences of women ADs today.

Athletics has a long and complex history, which is beyond the scope of this paper. As a result, the literature review first presents a brief history of women's athletics and is followed by a brief history of women's presence within collegiate-level athletics. Next, this literature review will examine the current status of working women, women in athletic leadership positions, and women in college athletic leadership positions. Then, the review will explore factors, such as sexism and stereotype threat, which might account for the underrepresentation of women in AD positions in college. This chapter also provides an overview of critical feminist theory, which is the overarching and guiding framework for the current study. Finally, because research with DI women ADs is limited, the review also addresses significant growth areas within the current literature. This extensive literature review utilized the following electronic search methods: PsycINFO, ERIC, SPORTDiscus, Academic Search Complete, and Google Scholar.

Women's Athletic History

Examination of the history of American athletics is crucial in conceptualizing the current sports' world, understanding the present status of women in sports, and shedding light on the legacies that persist in sustaining inequality today. Women's athletic history spans over five centuries, and cannot be fully presented in this paper. As a result, this is intended to be a glimpse into the resilience of women in athletics. Earliest sport within what is now known as North America could be traced to the 17th century when Indigenous tribes and clans engaged in sports similar to what would now be known as lacrosse, wrestling, football, racing, and hunting. However, popular American athletics as we know today grew within the 19th and 20th centuries, and have deep roots in masculinity, patriarchy, the military, Christianity, classism, racism, and violence (Zirin,

2008). U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt played a large role in the integration of sports into mainstream society as he as he encouraged sports within public schools (boys only) and groomed lower-class urban individuals for military combat by, “keeping urban poor in shape for war” (Zirin, p. 35). In the late 1800s, sports for women were accessible to primarily White, upper-class, and privileged elite. Golf, horse riding, and tennis were accessible sports for those women with enough financial means and social status at country clubs.

In the absence of men during World War II, women were able to take advantage of the opportunity to fulfill atypical gender roles, including work and sports. In 1943, the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL) was created, which featured all White and mostly working class women. The AAGPBL could only be sustained for eleven years before public disinterest ensued and subsequent financial difficulty occurred. The AAGPBL focused heavily on femininity, including having the players attend charm school, wear feminine clothing, and utilize beauty manuals (Zirin).

One AAGPBL player was let go from the League as a result of a masculine haircut, which fueled suspicions of lesbianism (Zirin). Women in sport have a history of being subject to heterosexism and homophobia. African American women athletes were subject to even further sexist, racist, and homophobic discrimination in sport. Early in the 20th century, Olympic official, Norman Cox, lobbied to the Olympic Committee for a new competition category for “hermaphrodites.” He asserted that African American women had unfair advantages due to muscular body types compared to White “normal women,” who were of “child-bearing” body types (Zirin, p. 42). Even a century later, Black women are still prone to discriminatory practice in sports. For instance, successful

South African track and field athlete, Caster Semenya, was subject to a gender test in 2009. In the late 20th century, Martina Navratilova had much success in professional tennis but was criticized for being too good and too masculine. Ms. Navratilova challenged her critics by winning more tennis tournaments, coming out publically as lesbian, and unapologetically acknowledging her partner in public (Cahn, 1994).

Women's Collegiate Athletic History

President Roosevelt was the impetus for the inception of the Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States (IAAUS), which was later changed to the present-day National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) in 1906, in an attempt to reform violence and death within men's college football matches (Zirin, 2008). The NCAA is the current governing body for university and college athletics. White, upper class women initially played basketball at elite universities during the late 1800s. However, "rough play and negative publicity" led to rule changes for women's basketball in 1901, which prohibited physical contact and limited defense tactics (Cahn, 1994). Additionally, African American women found success as track and field athletes at historically black colleges and universities, such as Alice Coachman who went on to be the first African American woman to win an Olympic gold medal (Zirin).

One of the most historically significant moments in collegiate athletics was the legislative implementation of Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972. Preceded by the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX was the result of a re-energized women's rights movement. Congresswoman Patsy Mink, Congresswoman Edith Green, and Dr. Bernice Sandler provided the motivation for the proposition and eventual passage of Title IX on June 23, 1972 (Valentin, 1997). Specifically, Section 1681.a. of Title IX states, "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” (United States Department of Labor, 2012). Implications for Title IX initially focused on women’s employment and hiring concerns in federal institutions, and thus Title IX does not explicitly reference athletics or sports within the Amendment. However, Title IX was intentionally written to be brief and inclusive, which required further clarification within the implementing regulations throughout Sections 1681 through 1688 (National Coalition of Women and Girls in Education, 2008).

Following the passage of the Title IX Amendment, concern grew for how the implications of Title IX would affect men’s collegiate athletics, particularly in revenue-generating sports. The NCAA initially declared Title IX to be illegal and opposed the legislation (Suggs, 2005). Regardless, federally-funded institutions were legally required to be in compliance with Title IX by 1978 (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). A number of collegiate institutions posed legal resistance to Title IX, resulting in court cases such as *Grove City College v. Bell* in 1984, *Cohen v. Brown University* in 1992, and *Cook v. Colgate University* in 1992. While most universities and institutions forged ahead with their compliance of Title IX by funding more women’s athletic teams, many opted to eliminate men’s sports programs instead of adding more women’s sports programs due to budgetary restraints. For example, many collegiate wrestling programs, which involved (and still involve) overwhelmingly male athletes and coaches, were eliminated in compliance with Title IX. Although a number of men’s sports programs typically existed at universities, wrestling programs were ultimately eliminated due to their status as low-

revenue generating sports programs. However, it was also during this time that wrestling programs within high schools were growing. Because high school-level wrestlers then had limited collegiate opportunities compared to years prior to Title IX, many in the wrestling community took issue with Title IX compliance. Although the wrestling community has been working to improve their status within collegiate athletics for many years, it was not until recently in 2002 that the National Wrestling Coaches' Association filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Education challenging Title IX (Ridpath, Yiamouyiannis, Lawrence, & Galles, 2009). Ultimately, it was ruled that the implementation of the Title IX Amendment could not be held accountable in the elimination of university wrestling programs.

Although it is unclear the exact impact that Title IX posed to men's athletics, as research in this area is limited, it is apparent that some supporters of men's collegiate sports hold a certain degree of resentment or lack of understanding toward the implications of Title IX (e.g. *National Wrestling Coaches' Association v. U.S. Department of Education*, 2003, 2005), and thus women's athletics. This historical shift of Title IX provided an interruption in the tradition and legacy of patriarchal sports system (Daddario & Wigley, 2006; Norman, 2010), which is likely a contributing factor to the sexism that women in athletics endure, including women collegiate ADs.

Women's Employment Status

Although women have been progressing toward equality in employment over time, gender inequity still insidiously persists within the workforce. In the U.S., women continue to earn only 77% of what men earn for similar positions and jobs. For African American women that wage percentage drops to 68% and falls even lower to 58% for

Latinas (United States Department of Labor, 2012). In addition, of the 500 largest companies in the United States, women hold only around 3% of chief executive positions (Egan, 2010). Men continue to hold power at societal, political, economic, and institutional levels (Ryan, Haslam, & Postmes, 2007). A related factor in men sustaining power is that women continue to work in traditionally female-dominated careers, which are typically not associated with macro-level power or leadership responsibilities. These traditionally women-dominated careers include preschool and kindergarten teachers, dental hygienists, administrative assistants or secretaries, child-care workers, cleaners and servants, nurses, occupational and speech therapists, and teachers' aides.

Barriers that women face in obtaining careers in traditionally male-dominated fields, and subsequently leadership positions, include gender and occupational stereotypes, socialized belief systems, socialized behavior patterns, low self-efficacy, low outcome expectations, and restricted ranges of vocational interests (Betz, 2005). For example, young women in college often experience a challenging educational environment compared to their men counterparts. Challenges could include lack of mentors and role models, experiencing sexual harassment, discouragement of participation in the classroom or related extracurriculars. These barriers tend to create an unwelcoming and unsupportive environment for women, especially those interested in pursuing a major typically dominated by men. One study examined women's experiences in higher education. Findings indicated differential treatment of women, including lacking support for women's intellectual and professional potential, perceiving marriage and children as barriers to success for women in a career, and intentionally setting lower academic and career goals for women (Ehrhart & Sandler, 1987). These disparaging differences in

career development experiences for women compared to men could be contributing to sustaining the homogeneity of men in leadership positions.

Women's Leadership in Athletics

Few U.S. research studies have been conducted with women who hold athletic administrator positions, especially within collegiate athletic programs. A common perception of leadership is gendered one, in which men are typically viewed as being more effective leaders for a number of reasons, including perceptions of being better decision-makers and exhibiting fewer emotions than women. Peachey and Burton (2011) explored leader effectiveness by examining perceptions of leaders among 112 Division I and II female ($N = 13$) and male ($N = 99$) collegiate ADs. Specifically, the researchers examined the perception of transformational versus transactional leadership styles of these collegiate ADs. Transformational leadership encompassed the notion of providing for subordinates, whereas transactional leadership emphasized the importance of resource sharing. Participants were provided with vignettes containing either a female or male leader. It was hypothesized that compared to transactional leadership, transformational leadership would result in more follower effort and support as well as the perception of a more effective leader. Results indicated that top female leaders were found to be evaluated as more agentic and more communal than top male leaders. Also, organizational success was attributed more to female directors. The researchers found no support for a female style of leadership having an advantage in collegiate sport, nor did they find an advantage in male style of leadership. Instead, they found that the perception of competence was one of the main factors in advantageous leadership in college athletics.

Although research with women collegiate ADs based in U.S. is limited, a good deal of the literature on women in leadership positions in sports organizations has been conducted throughout Europe, though at the professional sports level. First, Hovden (2010) explored dominant leadership discourse in Norwegian sports organizations, with an emphasis on the conceptualization of female leadership. The study utilized a qualitative method by gathering data through open-ended telephone conversations, which were taped and transcribed. The participants consisted of eight men and eight women, who were board members of some of the biggest Norwegian sports organizations. The study concluded that a main attitude found among many of the interviewees was that female candidates for top leader positions were seen as possessing fewer of the most preferred leadership qualities. In addition, all participants emphasized that women can make a positive impact as a leader.

Additionally, Pfister and Radtke (2009) conducted a mixed methods study examining leadership and gender within German sports organizations. Specifically, the study utilized a survey with 697 female and male sports executives to gather information regarding sociodemographics and their careers as executive members of sports organizations. Next, the researchers conducted 23 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with women in leadership positions within sports organizations. Results indicated that gender hierarchies are present in sports organizations, in which positions and responsibilities in executive committees are allocated according to gender. Also, researchers found that leadership in sports careers began at early levels in the organizations, such as at the play and volunteer levels, and thus leadership positions were usually the result of a cumulative commitment to a sports organization. Because men

dominated sport two and three decades ago, few women considered leadership positions then, and few were doing so now as well.

Next, Pfister (2010) examined gender and leadership hierarchies in Danish sport organizations by utilizing a mixed methods research approach. First, the researcher administered surveys to 1,566 female officials and a random sample of male leaders in sports organizations. Second, the researcher conducted problem-centered qualitative interviews with 10 female and 10 male “drop-outs” of sports organizations, which meant that people left their job earlier than intended. Results indicated that contrary to initial assumptions, male participants indicated greater importance to maintaining gender equality in sports organizations than female participants. Also, most of the “drop-out” participants denied that their gender was a factor in their resignation from the sports organization.

Women’s Leadership in Collegiate Athletics

Women’s leadership in college athletics can take several different forms including positions as athletic administrators (e.g. AD, associate AD, assistant AD, senior deputy administrator, senior woman administrator [SWA]), coaches, organizational administrators (e.g. NCAA commissioner, NCAA conference director), and players. In a notable national and longitudinal study, Acosta and Carpenter (2014) analyzed women’s presence within collegiate sport over a span of 37 years. Since 1977, the researchers have gathered information from the SWA at every NCAA member school via an annual questionnaire. Acosta and Carpenter’s results describe areas in which women have progressed toward equality in athletics as well as areas in college athletics in which women have not progressed, and in some cases have regressed, since the study began in

1977. For example, 88.7% of college athletic departments (within DI, DII, DIII levels) include at least one woman administrator, which is a large increase compared to 1986 when only 68.1% of college athletic departments included at least one woman administrator. However, this also means that 11.3% of college athletic departments currently have no woman present within the athletic administration. Acosta and Carpenter found that the most common athletic administration structure (within DI, DII, DIII levels) was comprised of four people, in which a man was the head AD with one woman assistant/associate AD and two men assistant/associate ADs (12.95%).

But, it is arguably more important that the researchers results highlight that inequalities continue to persist within collegiate athletics. For instance, in 1980 only 20.0% of collegiate ADs (within DI, DII, DIII levels) were women. However, in 2014 the number of women collegiate AD remains disproportionate at only 22.3%. Among Division I universities, that number decreases to approximately 10% of ADs being women in 2014. What remains unique of the Acosta and Carpenter study is that it is not maintained or funded by affiliates of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) but instead by various university funds. Although information and statistics provided by the NCAA are valuable, an outsider perspective can be beneficial in providing a different or less biased result. Additionally, this study has maintained a consistently high response rate, with some respondents maintaining allegiance to the study for 37 years. Although the researchers' results show clear increases in girls and women's involvement in athletics, this study does not capture any direct effects of the implications of Title IX.

Sexism in Athletics

In addition to the historical context of inequality and current working conditions for women, a breadth of other causes could be contributing to the sustained marginalization of women in athletics. One heavily supported rationale for this marginalization is sexism, which has been broadly defined as the negative beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that denigrate, devalue, stigmatize, and/or restrict women (Worell & Remer, 2003). Within the vast realm of athletics, sexism can be accounted for in every domain, including at the athlete, spectator, and employee levels. It is difficult to know the degree of impact that sexism has within athletics, although several studies have attempted to examine sexism at various levels. For example, sexism is often viewed as quantifiable and behavioral, such as the disproportionately lower amounts of both print and broadcast media coverage for women's sports. A number of studies have examined the disparity of media coverage given to women's sports compared to men's sports. Historically, broadcast air time provided to women's sports has been significantly lower compared to media air time of men's sports (Bryant, 1980; Shifflett & Revelle, 1994). For instance, Tuggle (1997) assessed women's sports media coverage on two national television programs, *ESPN SportsCenter* and *CNN Sports Tonight*, both of which broadcast sports-related coverage. Results drastically favored coverage of men's sports over women's sports, with only about 5% of air time covering women's sports.

More recent studies of media coverage yielded even more disparaging results. Specifically, Adams and Tuggle (2004) replicated Tuggle's initial media coverage study and found that broadcast media coverage of women's sports had decreased to even less at 3.6% coverage. Furthermore, the media coverage involving women was found to be

related to women in popular culture who were unrelated to sports (i.e. Britney Spears). Ultimately, although the number of women who participate as athletes, spectate, and are employed in athletics is at an all-time high (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014), broadcast and print media coverage continues to consistently provide disproportionately lower amounts of coverage of women's sports compared to men's sports. The implications of these studies communicate the message that men are the standard in sports and come first, and consequently, women's sports do not meet the standard and are secondary. This hegemonic male narrative can undermine women's contributions to the sports' world and hinder potential for women to thrive in athletics.

Although disproportionate amounts of media coverage for women's sports can be considered a tangible example of sexism, less tangible notions of sexism exist as well. These less blatant forms of sexism have often been viewed as trivial. For example, language within the United States often utilizes specifically gendered speech, as a result of tradition, learned behavior, and habit. This type of speech can lead to the specific gendered treatment of men and women, including sexist treatment, which subsequently can lead to negative outcomes toward those whom the sexist language is directed (Smith, Johnston-Robledo, McHugh, & Chrisler, 2010). Language in sport appears to be no different from language in dominant culture. For instance, Ward (2004) researched how nicknames of colleges and universities affected athletic opportunity and resource distribution. The study sample was comprised of 112 Division I-A collegiate sports programs from the 2000-2001 academic year. The researcher categorized sexist university nicknames into four categories based on common team-naming practices. The first team-naming practice was incorporating "lady" in the nickname, such as the Lady

Razorbacks vs. Razorbacks of the University of Arkansas. The second team-naming practice was assuming “man” as a false generic, such as Statesmen vs. Statesmen of Baruch College. The third team-naming practice was utilizing a male name with a female modifier, including the Lady Gamecocks vs. the Fighting Gamecocks. The fourth category of team-naming practices involved implementing female/male polarity, such as the Blue Angels vs. the Blue Devils of Kaskaskia College. Sexist team names can trivialize women in sports, emphasize the notion that women’s status in sports are secondary to that of men’s, reinforce insidious gender roles, and in many cases infantilize women. Of the 112 collegiate sports programs, 36 (32%) had sexist nicknames and 76 (68%) had nonsexist nicknames. Most of the colleges with sexist nicknames followed the first team-naming practice of incorporating “Lady” within women’s team names (86%). Additionally, at colleges with sexist team names, athletic participation for women was far lower than colleges with non-sexist team names. Regarding athletic employment, Ward found that there were fewer women assistant coaches at colleges with sexist team names. However, the researcher did not find evidence of fewer numbers of athletic administrators at schools with sexist team names. That is not to say that athletic administrators at colleges with sexist team names are not affected or impacted by the sexist team name, but further research is needed. For example, Ward implies that sexist team names might represent a culture in which men are hired over women for coaching jobs because men are seen as more resilient in the face of coaching stressors.

Another area of sexism in sports that affects women at disproportionately greater rates than men is body image. Compared to the general population, women have historically experienced more challenges with body image than men (Thompson &

Heinberg, 1999; Wilfley et al., 1995). Additionally, women's experiences with body dissatisfaction remain constant over the lifespan, and in particular it is self-objectification, habitual body monitoring, appearance anxiety, dietary restraint, and disordered eating that occur at higher rates when women are younger (Tiggemann & Lynch, 2001). These aforementioned aspects of body image can have a negative impact on physical health, mental health, and well-being for women.

Consistent with the general population, women in sports endure body image concerns as well. Greenleaf (2002) conducted six exploratory qualitative interviews with former competitive women athletes in order to examine athletic body image and social body image. Collectively, the participants were involved in a number of competitive sports at the collegiate club-, collegiate-, and amateur-level including track, cross-country, swimming, cycling, volleyball, beach volleyball, softball, multi-sport events, cheerleading, and water polo. Findings indicated that uniforms, coaches, and level of physical fitness impacted the participants' body image. Greenleaf concluded that how the participant felt about her body in a social atmosphere appeared to be moderated by the extent of her athletic identity. All six participants reported that their sport uniforms resulted in them feeling more self-conscious of and mostly unhappy with their body shape, with one participant indicating that she did not like being sexualized in her uniform. Results indicated that five of the six participants felt her physical appearance impacted her feelings toward her body in a sport context. Participants focused less on how their body shape may be beneficial to their sport performance than on how they appeared in an athletic context. Although only six participants were utilized in this study, the in-depth qualitative interviews provide important insight into social and athletic body

image. A limitation of this study is that not all sports were represented in this sample. For example, women collegiate basketball players might have different perceptions of athletic and social body image than compared to women collegiate swimmers or volleyball players who typically wear body-fitting and revealing uniforms.

Based on this research, it is clear that sexism has a widespread presence within various athletic domains. The research supports that these examples of sexism are not trivial and can in fact have problematic outcomes for women as seen in the aforementioned research. Further, it has been demonstrated that groups of individuals who are marginalized and who endure low-level stressors (e.g. sexist language, sexist discrimination) can experience a cumulative impact and amplification of the stressors (Fischer & Holz, 2010; Root, 1992).

Stereotype Threat

Another explanation for the underrepresentation of women in athletic leadership positions could be related to stereotype threat. Steele, Spencer, and Aronson (2002) described stereotype threat as the following:

When a negative stereotype about a group that one is part of becomes personally relevant, usually as an interpretation of one's behavior or an experience one is having, stereotype threat is the resulting sense that one can then be judged or treated in terms of the stereotype or that one might do something that would inadvertently confirm it. (p. 389)

That is, individuals perceive they will be judged based on their social identity group membership versus their performance or potential to succeed (Block, Koch, Liberman, Merriweather, & Roberson, 2011). Within Steele, Spencer, and Aronson's comprehensive

research report, they concluded that moderators of stereotype threat were related to task difficulty and frustration, stereotype relevance, domain identification, degree of identification with the stereotyped group, and consciousness of the perceived social stigma. In addition, the researchers indicated that when faced with stereotype threat, individuals often resort to quick defenses, which might include domain avoidance, self-handicapping, counterstereotypic behavior/disproving the stereotype, or disengagement. Individuals who are presented with stereotype threat might also adapt with longer-term adaptations, including chronic disidentification of one's self views from one's performance, less concern about performance as mediated by the psychology of low expectations or low motivation, bifurcating one's identity to only identify with those aspects which are perceived to be positive, and favorable or unfavorable unintended adaptations, such as a more elaborate self-concept. Although Steele, Spencer, and Aronson's research report is extensive, most of the research cited within their paper is related to gender and race/ethnicity in the context of undergraduate college students' test performance and short-term tasks.

In their conceptual paper, Block et al. (2011) provided a framework for how individual's respond to stereotype threat in a long-term context, including fending off the stereotype, feeling discouraged by the stereotype, and being resilient to the stereotype. To elaborate on resiliency in the face of stereotype threat, Block et al. postulate strategies that can help in combatting stereotype threat. One strategy is challenging negative group stereotypes, such as direct confrontation in interaction with others. A second strategy is exhibiting positive distinctiveness, which might involve communicating favorable attributes of one's social identity group. A third resilience strategy is taking collective

action to change the context. An individual can feel empowered when they know they are not alone in a struggle. A fourth strategy is to redefine one's own criteria for success at work, which might involve consciously ignoring others' standards for evaluation or upward progression. A fifth resiliency strategy for coping with stereotype threat is gaining and internalizing a deeper appreciation for one's identity. Conveying positive distinctiveness and maintaining high self-esteem is crucial in continuing to exhibit resilience. Although these resiliency strategies appear promising, these strategies likely require a high degree of awareness around identity, social identity group membership, oppression, and power analysis. Also, exhibiting resilience in the presence of stereotype threat can be taxing on many levels. Further, depending on the intersections of one's social identity demographics (i.e. sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, gender, religion/spirituality, ability), these resiliency strategies could have much greater consequences for some compared to others who implement them.

Critical Feminist Theory

This exploratory qualitative research was conducted from a critical feminist theoretical framework. Critical feminist theory integrates both classic feminist theory and critical theory to create a uniquely useful research methodology. Past theoretical literature has marginalized and demeaned feminism in academia as only a "woman's point of view" (Rhode, 1990). On the contrary, an overarching critical feminist lens can help to examine gender and power in not only a critical fashion but also an inclusive and original fashion.

According to Rhode (1990), critical feminist theory asserts three different tenets, although she cautions that the tenets be "loosely" interpreted as critical feminist theories

because of diverse interpretations of critical feminist theory as well as a growing body of literature from various fields. First, from a political level, critical feminist theories aim to promote equality between women and men. Second, from a substantive level, critical feminist theories emphasize the analysis of gender. And third, from a methodological perspective, critical feminist theories aspire to describe the world in a way that is congruent with that of women's experiences as well as aspire for social change that promote equality between sexes (p. 619).

In comparison to other critical theories (i.e. race, legal), Rhode asserts that critical feminist theory shares the commonality "to challenge existing distributions of power" (p. 619). However, critical feminism differs from other critical theories in future projections of what a "good society" might exemplify (p. 635). Critical feminist theory also asserts that not one theory or methodology fits every mold. Each research theory, including critical feminist theory, should be scrutinized and examined for fit and applicability. Further, different feminists have different interpretations of critical feminist frameworks.

As such, Kushner and Morrow (2003) include slightly different assumptions of critical feminist theory, including (a) the status of women as a main concern, (b) empirically understanding conditions from which dominant gender relations have emerged, and (c) utilizing methods of inquiry to transform gender relations, in which reflexivity plays a crucial role. Additionally, Lather (2004) indicates that critical feminist inquiry is useful within qualitative research particularly in helping participants find voice. Given the dense history of women's voices being silenced in various contexts (Rhode, 1990; Skrla, 2000; Swim, Eyssell, Murdoch, & Ferguson, 2010), especially in a sports context (Fink, Borland, & Fields, 2010), it is crucial to aid in empowering women to find

and share their voice. Thus, this qualitative study utilized semi-structured interviews, which helped to capture important narratives that other data collection techniques may not capture. Because little research exists on this topic, critical feminist theory was fitting as a theoretical framework to strive toward “understanding and emancipation, reflection by women about their lives, consciousness-raising, making public the oppressive nature of women’s circumstances, and acting for liberation” (Kushner & Morrow, 2003, p. 36). By conducting interviews with women in DI college AD positions, the stage was set for rich data regarding the underrepresentation of women ADs at the DI level as well as their perceptions of sexism and their career experiences.

Significant Growth Areas in the Literature

Among research areas in need of further inquiry include research with both women and men collegiate ADs, as men could provide varying perceptions of sexism and explanations for the marginalization of women in athletics compared to women. Additionally, much of the current literature related to gender, leadership, and athletics is lacking in racial and ethnic diversity, despite being a historically significant piece within athletics. Next, there has been minimal research on gender, leadership, and athletics that has also taken into account individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender, which might be representative of current employment conditions. Finally, future research should examine social gender norms for men. By examining men and masculinity within the context of collegiate athletics, research could shed light on the culture that sustains dominance of men as well as help to inform strategies to increase gender equality in athletics.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter presents the methodology utilized in this qualitative exploratory research study with eight Division I (DI) collegiate women athletic directors (ADs). This chapter will provide a summary of the epistemology and methodology of grounded theory. Data collected within semi-structured, audiotaped interviews were utilized to answer the following question:

Main Research Question

1. Why are women underrepresented in DI collegiate AD positions?

The researcher hypothesized that sexism plays a prominent role in contributing to the underrepresentation of women in DI collegiate AD positions, as evidenced in relevant literature in other disciplines about the underrepresentation of women in athletics and in executive leadership positions. Because the topic of this paper and the population in this study has limited research surrounding it, this study was framed as exploratory and also examined the following sub-research questions below:

Sub-Research Questions

1. How do DI collegiate women ADs' perceptions of sexism within their athletic department and career experiences vary?
2. How do DI collegiate women ADs' perceptions of sexism within their leadership position in administration vary?
3. How do DI collegiate women ADs' perceptions of sexism within other college athletic departments vary?

4. How do DI collegiate women ADs' perceptions of sexism in the athletics realm (e.g. professional-, collegiate-, amateur-levels, etc.) as a whole vary?

Research Design

The purpose of this research was to provide an exploratory qualitative analysis of DI collegiate women ADs in collegiate athletic administrations regarding their perceptions of the underrepresentation of women in DI college AD positions, perceptions of their career experiences, and perceptions of sexism in athletics. This research was conducted from within a counseling psychology discipline and from a critical feminist theory lens. Specifically, the discipline of counseling psychology lends itself well to the topic of this research and qualitative research because it is historical rooted in vocational psychology, social justice, and multiculturalism (Brown & Lent, 2008). Also, critical feminist scholars view frameworks for critical feminism in different but also similar ways, which captures the essence of an aspect of critical feminism in that all theories should be scrutinized for fit and applicability (Rhode, 1990). Kushner and Morrow (2003) conceptualize critical feminist theory as having three assumptions including viewing the status of women as a main concern in research, striving to empirically understand conditions from which dominant gender relations have emerged, and utilizing methods of inquiry to transform gender relations, in which reflexivity plays a crucial role. In addition, Rhode indicates that critical feminist theory promotes gender equality at a political level, promotes the analysis of gender from a substantive level, and aims to describe the world in a way that is congruent with that of women's experiences (p. 619).

Grounded theory, discussed in more detail later, was utilized as the analytical tool for interpreting and making meaning of the data.

Women's voices have historically been silenced in a multitude of contexts (Rhode, 1990; Skrla, 2000; Swim, Eyssell, Murdoch, & Ferguson, 2010), particularly within the domain of sports (Fink, Borland, & Fields, 2010). As a result, the researcher strived to create a research design in which the women participants felt empowered to have voice and feel able to share their voice. Thus, semi-structured interviews were utilized as a means to capture the important narratives and stories that surveys with forced response scales might not have captured. These semi-structured interviews with women in DI AD positions in college athletic departments led to insight around the perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs about sexism in athletics and career experiences of women in athletic administrative leadership positions. Prior to initiating the current study, a pilot semi-structured interview was conducted with an associate AD at a DI institution. The pilot data were instrumental in shaping the current study's research design as well as interview questions.

Overview of Grounded Theory

This study maintained an overarching critical feminist theoretical framework and utilized grounded theory to analyze findings. In 1967, Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss collaboratively developed grounded theory, which is "a specific methodology for the purpose of building theory from data" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 1). Rooted in interactionism and pragmatism, core to ground theory is the idea of "symbolic interaction," which asserts that people interpret and react to others' actions (Blumer, 1969). Also, grounded theory assumes that truth is what we know right now and is

subject to change with time, even if proved wrong entirely (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Grounded theory recognizes that social interactions and phenomena are complex in nature, thus, it helps to examine and understand the complexities inherent within these social phenomena.

Grounded theory was a particularly helpful methodology to the current study because it is socially based and exploratory in nature, useful with this population given that minimal research exists with DI collegiate women ADs. Grounded theory helped to denote theoretical constructs derived from qualitative analysis of the data. Grounded theory allowed for the emergence of salient concepts from the data, which will lead to additional research.

Protection of Human Subjects

This dissertation research study was initially granted approval from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Institutional Review Board (IRB) on March 28, 2013 (See Appendix C). A small modification was made to the methods, in order to obtain verbal consent from participants at the beginning of the interview, and IRB approval for the modification was granted on May 8, 2013 (See Appendix D). The IRB approval information was included in each of the initial recruitment e-mails and within the recruitment flyer (See Appendix E). In addition, this researcher completed the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Program for Social and Behavioral Researchers on October 5, 2011, as well as the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Human Subjects Training on September 10, 2006.

Prior to the interview, each participant was e-mailed information about the study details, the Informed Consent form (see Appendix B), the interview questions, and

provided the opportunity to ask questions about the study. At the beginning of each interview, the participant was read a statement about her rights as a participant and offered the opportunity to have any questions answered. She then was asked to provide verbal agreement to participate and allow audiotaping to occur (See Appendix A). Although all participants agreed to audiotaping, they were also given the option to not allow audiotaping and instead allow for answers to be recorded in writing. In addition, participants were encouraged to ask questions at any time within the interview or after interview.

Following the completion of interviews, transcripts were transcribed and de-identified in order to protect participant identity. Data were stored on password-protected computers. Upon completion of transcription of interviews, participants were e-mailed a de-identified copy of their interview transcript and offered the opportunity to proof, edit, or add any additional information to the interview content. Participants were given two weeks to respond with any changes or additions. Only one participant responded to the e-mail acknowledging that no changes were needed to her transcript.

Participants

A sample of eight women ADs ($n = 8$) from DI universities consented to participate in the study. Because the population for this study was a considerably limited number ($N = 32$), demographic information that was obtained was intentionally restricted to general descriptors, in order to protect participant identity. Three participants self-identified as women of color. One participant self-identified as lesbian. Education level ranged from Master's degrees to Doctoral degrees, with all participants having at least a Master's degree. Participants self-identified their socioeconomic statuses while growing

up as “very low” ($n = 1$), “not very well off” ($n = 1$), “lower middle class” ($n = 2$), “middle income” ($n = 1$), and “upper middle class” ($n = 1$). Two participants did not provide information about their socioeconomic status while growing up. Participants self-identified their current socioeconomic statuses as “middle class” ($n = 2$), “upper middle class” ($n = 4$), “upper class” ($n = 1$), and “uncertain, but more than comfortable” ($n = 1$). Additionally, participants were offered the opportunity to provide other important information about their identity. As a result, one participant indicated being a first-generation college student. One participant reported that her mother immigrated to the U.S. One participant indicated growing up in a different country, which had a different athletic environment and philosophy on college sports compared to the U.S.

To maintain participant anonymity, AD position tenure was aggregated into the following year increments: ≤ 5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years, ≥ 21 years. Three participants reported being in the ≤ 5 years category, four participants reported being in the 6-10 years category, and one participant reported being in the 16-20 years category. No participant reported being in 11-15 years category or the ≥ 21 years category.

Five participants reported their university’s DI athletic subdivision status as being affiliated with football, and three participants reported that their university’s DI athletic status was not affiliated with football. DI universities are categorized around football, with the top subdivision being Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS; formerly known as Division I-A), and subsequently the Football Championship Subdivision (FCS; formerly Division I-AA) and the non-football subdivision. This was important information to obtain because there are no collegiate football team equivalencies for women, and

football remains the highest-grossing revenue sport in college sports. However, in order to protect participant confidentiality, the type of football Subdivision (FCS or FBS) was not reported.

The participant sample in this study was representative of the four general U.S. geographical regions of Midwest, Northeast, South, and West. Geographical regions are characterized as regions that subdivide the U.S., as indicated by on the United States Census Bureau (2014). The most represented region was the Northeast and the least represented were the South and West regions.

Setting

This research study included a multi-campus college setting across the U.S. In conducting qualitative interviews, Glesne (2011) advises that the location and time of qualitative interviews should aim to be “Convenient, available, and appropriate,” and to defer to the preferences of the participants regarding the logistics of the interview (p.113). In this study, participants were provided the option to complete interviews in person, by telephone, or by Skype, whichever was most convenient for her. Seven participants opted to complete the interview via telephone, and one participant opted to participate via Skype. For phone interviews, participants were notified at the beginning of the interview that the researcher would utilize the speaker-phone function so that the interview could be recorded with a digital audio recorder. The one Skype interview was also recorded with a digital audio recorder. Additionally, it was important to this research that the participants maintained a sense of control and comfort within the interviews, to enable open and honest narratives and responses within the semi-structured interviews. As a result, participants were able to choose the location in which they participated in the

interview. Seven participants completed their interviews while at their places of employment (presumably in their private offices), and one participant engaged in the interview while at home in her place of residence. The researcher conducted one interview while she was in a private campus office, two interviews while at home in her place of residence, and five interviews within a private work office. Each of the aforementioned spaces served as private, quiet, and confidential spaces. In addition, the researcher worked collaboratively with the participant or the participant's administrative assistant to find at least a 45-minute window of available time that was convenient for her to participate in an interview. Seven interviews occurred during the work day, and one interview occurred on a weekend morning.

Instrumentation

The researcher utilized a one-on-one semi-structured interview format in order to make space for participant voice and allow room for any emerging questions. In developing interview questions for this study, the researcher took particular care in the question mechanics, structure, and order. All interview questions were intended to be open-ended and relevant to the topic. To begin the interviews, the researcher utilized a "grand tour question," which asks respondents to provide information about a period of time, a group of people or objects, an activity, an experience, or a sequence of events (Spradley, 1979). Within each interview, the first question that participants were asked was related to her career trajectory (e.g. "How did you become an athletic director?"). This type of grand tour question, which typically results in a broad answer, is useful as a first question because the participant can readily and easily answer this question (Glesne, 2011). Further, all but one interview occurred via telephone, and therefore, participants

were not able to see and interact with the interviewer. Thus, the grand tour question was intentionally utilized as the opening question in order to help participants feel a sense of ease, comfort, and trust as well as aid in cultivating candid and honest responses.

Additional interview question content was shaped by a pilot interview, research questions, and critical feminist theory. As part of a requirement for a doctoral-level qualitative research methods course, the researcher completed a pilot interview with a woman who was a current associate AD at a DI university. In addition to her role as an associate AD, the pilot participant indicated that she was also a former DI collegiate head coach and athlete. The pilot interview was a one-on-one, semi-structured format and consisted of 13 interview questions. The pilot interview was insightful and thought provoking, as the data confirmed anticipated hypotheses as well as provided new hypotheses and questions, which the researcher had not previously considered. Also, the pilot interview participant served as an informant for the current study's interview questions. Following the initial pilot interview, the interview questions were amended to reduce redundancy, to reflect the research questions more accurately, and to increase clarity. The interview questions were also rearranged to reflect a smoother flow within the interview.

The final interview protocol utilized within the current study included 10 questions related to the participants' career experiences, the representation and underrepresentation of women in athletics and in AD positions, and sexism in athletics (See Appendix A). Final interview questions were reviewed and approved by two dissertation committee members. Initially, the researcher had planned to ask 10 main questions along with 12 follow-up questions to some of the main questions. During the

first interview, it became clear that the 12 follow-up questions felt exhaustive and unnatural to the ease and flow of the interview. Also, many of the 12 follow-up questions were answered within the original 10 questions, and did not need to be asked. As a result, the researcher aimed to ask the 10 main questions within each interview. Further, as the eight interviews progressed, the initial interview questions and structure were viewed as malleable and flexible in content, pending the outcome of interviews and data that emerged (Glesne, 2011).

Based on the pilot interview results, the researcher utilized “learner” and “patiently probing” interview techniques (Glesne, 2011). The “learner” technique was useful so as not to assume a participant had the same view on the research topic as the researcher. The “patiently probing” technique allowed the participants space to feel as though their voice was valued and their time was respected. Also, the “learner” and “patiently probing” techniques were beneficial when new or provocative information arose, of which the researcher was previously unaware. During the pilot interview, the participant was provided with a set of questions at the start of the interview, which seemed to equalize the power in the space. Each participant in the current study received a copy of the interview questions via e-mail one to three days prior to the day of the interview so that she was aware of which questions would be asked.

In addition to the interview questions, participants were asked to provide answers to a number of background questions including racial/ethnic identity, socioeconomic status, educational background, years in AD position, type of Division I program at university, administration structure within athletic department, and any other important information about her identity that she would like to share for the study. Providing this

information was voluntary, and if a participant did not want to disclose information about her identity, then her privacy was respected by the researcher. However, all participants answered all background and demographic questions. Due to time constraints and in order to maximize the sometimes limited interview time, some background and demographic information was collected through e-mail. One participant provided answers to the background/demographic questions via e-mail pre-interview, and one provided answers to the background/demographic questions via e-mail post-interview. The other six participants answered the background/demographic questions at the end of the interview.

Procedure

The target number of participants for this study was initially seven, though the final number of participants was eight. Sample size recommendations within grounded theory qualitative research have ranged from as few as six participants to as many as 30, although there is little rationale for those recommendations (Creswell, 1998). However, it is suggested that researchers strive to achieve data saturation within grounded theory qualitative studies, which is “when no new categories or themes are emerging” within the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Also, researchers have noted the difficulty and unlikelihood of fully achieving data saturation. The present study followed Corbin and Strauss’ guidance, “if a researcher determines that a category offers considerable depth and breadth of understanding about a phenomenon, and relationships to other categories have been made clear, then he or she can say sufficient sampling has occurred, at least for the purposes of this study” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 149). Based on this information

and with the assistance of memo-writing, open coding, and an external auditor, the researcher deemed the data to be saturated after eight semi-structured interviews occurred.

Participant recruitment occurred throughout the months of June 2013 to December 2013. Three women were hired and began their jobs as DI collegiate ADs in that time, bringing the total number of possible participants to 32. Potential participant information was obtained from the NCAA website and from the National Association of Collegiate Women Athletics Administrators (NACWAA) website and member e-mail listserv. Contact information was then subsequently obtained from each participant's university athletics' website. In deciding which potential participants to contact, the researcher was purposeful in striving for a diverse representation of race/ethnicity, geographic region, football divisional status, and employment tenure. Initially, four DI college women ADs were contacted. Recruitment efforts were then staggered in order to allow for snowball sampling based on participants' referrals. Of the eight participants in this study, six were asked if they could provide any participant referrals for the study, and thus, snowball sampling occurred, which was crucial in obtaining participants for this study. Of the two participants who were not asked for referrals, one was not asked due to interview time constraints, and one was not asked because she was the last participant to be interviewed.

In total, the researcher solicited participation via e-mail from 20 out of 32 possible participants. Of the 20 potential participants contacted, 12 responded with interest in participating. Two women initially expressed interest in scheduling an interview but did not respond to follow-up e-mails. One woman expressed interest in participating after the target number of participants had been reached, and due to time constraints for this

dissertation, she could not be interviewed. One woman opted to withdraw from the study during the interview, indicating concern with the interview questions. Her data was not included within this research.

Interviews occurred throughout the months of July 2013 to January 2014.

Upon confirmation of interest in participating in the dissertation research, the researcher communicated directly with the AD or her administrative assistant through e-mail to schedule a convenient interview time. Seven interviews occurred via telephone and one interview occurred via Skype. Interviews varied in length, with the shortest interview lasting 13 minutes and 30 seconds to the longest interview lasting 73 minutes and 30 seconds. The mean interview length was 59 minutes and 30 seconds, and the median interview length was 63 minutes and 45 seconds. The length of interviews might have varied based on a number of factors, including but not limited to participants' schedules, work commitments, unpredictability of daily environmental factors, or the research content. The participant with the shortest interview of 13 minutes and 30 seconds initially stated she would allow for 45 minutes for an interview. However, at the beginning of the interview, she indicated that she had limited time. This interview was still included within the data reported in this study because she expressed a unique perspective and had valuable insight related to this research. Following completion of data collection, the researcher and a trained research team carefully transcribed each semi-structured interview in preparation for data analysis.

Bias

Whether it is qualitative or quantitative, "All research is subject to bias" (Morrow, 2005, p. 254). Recent qualitative scholars have posited, "Objectivity is viewed as a

neither possible, nor desirable” within qualitative research (Glesne, 2011, p. 152). Further, feminist scholars have noted objectivity to be typically associated with patriarchy (e.g. “man of reason”), whereas subjectivity has been traditionally associated with inclusivity (Glesne, 2011). As such, this study aimed to monitor biases and subjectivity but also to avoid striving toward full objectivity. A number of considerations could contribute to biases within qualitative research, including emotional involvement with the research topic or population, information and preconceptions acquired from literature, and interactions with participants (Morrow, 2005) as well as one’s multicultural or social identity and environmental or life experiences. In using a qualitative design, Creswell (2007) indicates that it is important for researchers to acknowledge and consider the perspective, competence, orientation, past experience, and potential biases of the researcher. One traditional method of addressing subjectivity within qualitative research involves “making one’s implicit assumptions and biases overt to self and others” (Morrow, 2005, p. 254). As such, this researcher identifies as a White/European American and heterosexual woman, who at the time of this research was a doctoral candidate in an APA-accredited counseling psychology doctoral program at a public Midwestern university. This researcher has historically been involved in athletics as an athlete, employee, volunteer, and spectator, since she was a child. Specifically, the researcher has consistently participated in various team and individual sports since age 4, including soccer, gymnastics, football, basketball, volleyball, softball, and baseball. In high school, she was employed as a soccer referee for two years and volunteered as a soccer coach for two years. In college at a DI university, she participated in competitive club-level soccer for five years as well as participated in various intramural and

recreational sports. At the time of this study, she was participating in various recreational team sports' leagues and active in individual physical activity. Also, at the time of this research, she had been employed at a university athletic and fitness facility for over ten years. In addition, she has conducted quantitative research with a collegiate student-athlete population as well as taught a vocational and life skills course to student-athletes. For over four years, she was a member of an active research team, which studied vocational concerns, career development, career decision-making, and multicultural competence with mostly a quantitative and mixed methods focus. Additionally, the researcher satisfactorily completed a doctoral-level qualitative methods course, and audited a community-based participatory research course.

Another standard method for minimizing bias involves utilizing external auditors within data analysis (Morrow, 2005). As a result, research assistance was sought in order to validate and cross-check data analysis as well as to expedite the interview transcription process. It was especially crucial to have outside researchers to code and analyze in order to ensure validity, exhaustive exploration, and intense scrutiny of the data. As Corbin and Strauss (2008) state, “[Coding] means putting aside preconceived notions about what the researcher expects to find in the research, and letting the data and interpretation of it guide analysis” (p. 160). The research team served as a group of researchers removed from the topic. Although the primary researcher provided team members with some background information on the topic and information about the research methods, some members had limited knowledge of the topic and research method, which enabled the strategy of “thinking outside the box” and for the potential of different concepts to emerge (Wicker, 1985).

As a result, a research team was formed, and members were solicited through a counseling psychology doctoral program e-mail listserv as well as a counseling master's program e-mail listserv. The research team consisted of six students in various stages of a counseling Master's program, one doctoral-level counseling psychology student, and the primary researcher. Members initially met in person once for a meeting and subsequently communicated via e-mail after for research tasks. All research team members completed the Human Subjects Training from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Institutional Review Board. All research team members were provided with adequate training in qualitative research methods and critical feminist theory. Also, all research team members engaged in a reflexivity exercise in order to gain awareness into their potential research interests, positions, assumptions that might have influenced their analysis (Charmaz, 2006).

Additionally, consistent with qualitative research methods, all team members were asked to self-identify some demographic information to the degree with which they felt comfortable. This step is important in informing the reader of this paper of other factors which might be directly or indirectly influencing this research and data analysis. Excluding the primary researcher, the team was comprised of six women and one man. One team member identified as Afro-Caribbean, one member identified as White and Portuguese, and five team members as White/Caucasian/European American. Five members identified as heterosexual, and two did not indicate their sexual orientation. One member was a doctoral-level counseling psychology student, and six team members were part-time or full-time masters-level community counseling students at various stages in the program. Four members indicated having formal research experience at the graduate

or undergraduate level, and three members indicated that this was their first experience with research. Research team members had varying levels of athletics knowledge and exposure. Specifically, one team member stated they were a former athlete and raised in a family of women athletes and coaches; one team member reported playing competitive sports as a child and adolescent, currently playing recreational sports, and avidly watching professional sports on television; one member indicated being a Division III collegiate dance team coach; and four members stated that they had limited knowledge of athletics. Finally, three research team members noted an important part of their identity was being a mother.

In addition to the research team, an external auditor provided consultation in early stages of analysis (open coding) as well as formal analysis following the axial coding stage and finalization of concepts. The external auditor identified as an Egyptian-Brazilian woman, who is a tenured and distinguished professor within an APA-accredited Educational Psychology doctoral- and masters-level program.

Analysis

Grounded theory served as the analytical tool for this research. Once careful and accurate transcription was completed, the researcher and members of the research team coded each interview separately. Initially, interview content was coded line-by-line utilizing the grounded theory technique known as open coding, which serves as an initial data analysis technique which “fractures the data and allows one to identify some categories, their properties and dimensional locations” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). A goal of open coding was to strive toward saturation, which is “when no new categories or themes are emerging” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). However, researchers caution that

saturation is difficult to achieve, and it is unlikely a researcher can ever fully attain saturation. Further, this researcher adhered to Corbin and Strauss' guidance, "if a researcher determines that a category offers considerable depth and breadth of understanding about a phenomenon, and relationships to other categories have been made clear, then he or she can say sufficient sampling has occurred, at least for the purposes of this study" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 149). Based on this guidance, the researcher was rigorous in analyzing the data, and thus deemed the data to be saturated.

The research team open coded interviews by using the track changes function within Microsoft Word. The researcher utilized NVivo, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, in the initial open coding phase of data analysis. Although computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software is advantageous in many ways, Corbin and Strauss (2008) caution that computer data analysis programs can lead to haphazard coding in which labels are assigned to a piece of data and then put into piles under a label, which can lead to the risk of a series of concept unreflective of the data. This researcher strived to heed this cautionary guideline. Upon initial analysis, over 200 open codes emerged. Then, the researcher cross-checked and validated her codes with the research team codes. Codes were reduced into a more manageable amount of codes, which were approximately 30. In narrowing down codes to categories, the researcher consulted memos and interview notes, taken during and immediately after the interviews occurred. Memos are considered to be specialized written records of data analyses (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 117). Next, the process of axial coding was implemented by analyzing data documents by hand. Corbin and Strauss (1990) indicate axial coding as the succeeding step following open coding in which "the researcher takes the categories of

open coding, identifies one as a central phenomenon, and then returns to identify (a) what caused the this phenomenon to occur, (b) what strategies or actions actors employed in response to it, (c) what context (specific context) and intervening conditions (broad context) influenced the strategies, and (d) what consequences resulted from these strategies” (p. 97). The researcher engaged in axial coding and identified categories that corresponded over the preponderance of the data as well as any significant and critical pieces of data. A goal of grounded theory data analysis was to achieve emergent theoretical concepts, which Charmaz (2006) described as being interpretive frames for the data that offer an abstract understanding of relationships. She further states that “Theoretical concepts subsume lesser categories and by comparison hold more significance, account for more data and often are more evident” (p. 140). Corbin and Strauss (2008) note that concepts are representative “words that stand for ideas” within the data and are interpretations as a result of analysis (p. 159). Various theoretical conceptualizations were postulated before settling on four final concepts, which were then provided to the external auditor for analyzing. The research team and external auditor were instrumental in identifying potential biases or inconsistencies that emerged within the data, compared to that of the main researcher. Also, the research team and external auditor provided confirmation of emerging concepts and final results compared to that of what the main researcher found.

Trustworthiness

Morrow (2005) describes four main areas in which trustworthiness can be achieved within postpositive qualitative research. These four areas include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, which were adapted from Gasson’s

(2004) methods of striving for rigor in qualitative research using a grounded theory methodology. These four areas constituting trustworthiness within grounded theory are described in more detail below.

Credibility. Credibility in grounded theory research addresses “how we ensure rigor in the research process and how we communicate to others that we have done so” (Gasson, 2004, p. 95). A number of means can be utilized to attain credibility including prolonged engagement with participants, constant comparative method, negative case analysis, researcher reflexivity, use of peer researchers, participant check, and data saturation (Gasson, 2004; Morrow, 2005). To ensure rigor and quality within this study, the researcher employed a semi-structured interview dynamic; audiotape-recorded each interview; provided participants with the opportunity to review their interview transcript for accuracy as well as change or add content; and encouraged participants to ask questions at any time throughout the study. The interview questions were refined via the use of an informant, who was a current DI college woman associate AD. Also, the initial target sample number was seven participants, but to ensure data saturation, the final sample number was eight participants. Additionally, the researcher, research team, and external auditor engaged in researcher reflexivity discussion exercises, in order to scrutinize her or his own assumptions, positions, background, or interests, which might influence inquiry around the research and topic (Charmaz, 2006). Further, the primary researcher engaged in periodic meetings with the chair of her dissertation committee and the methodologist of her dissertation committee to address concerns, provide updates, and discuss emerging categories and concepts.

Additionally, triangulation can be an effective means of establishing credibility within qualitative research. Marshall and Rossman (2011) indicate that triangulation demonstrates that the data is credible, authentic, and representative of the participants' real views and behaviors. Triangulation is the act of bringing more than one source to bear on a single point. In doing so, one strives to show how different sources can be used to collaborate, elaborate, or illuminate the research question/s. Further, triangulation involves finding the multiple perspectives for knowing the social world. Within the present study, the researcher strategically utilized multiple researchers to validate results. For instance, the research team provided assistance in the initial open coding phase of data analysis. An external auditor provided consultation in early stages of open coding analysis, scrutinized data in the axial coding stage, and assisted in finalizing the resulting concepts and emergent grounded theory model. These efforts by external researchers strived to address investigator triangulation, which is considered good practice, helped to safeguard against bias, and aided in increasing the credibility of the study (Denzin, 1978). Additionally, triangulation of data occurred as a result of the main researcher engaging in reading participant biographies prior to interviews, asking participants for feedback or additional comments on their interview transcript, and gathering data within semi-structured interviews and e-mails. Also, multiple analytical lenses are beneficial for theoretical triangulation (Mathison, 1988). This study purposefully utilized more than one analytical lens (e.g. critical feminist theory, grounded theory, counseling psychological lens). In comparison to a single theory study, multiple lenses were imperative in overcoming bias and examining multiple views. Further, the researcher utilized memo-writing to keep track of triangulation methods and to ask questions about the data or

monitor divergent views. This helped to ensure triangulation of theory and so that multiple, credible sources of data were being gathered, thus increasing the credibility of the study.

Transferability. Transferability focuses on “how far a researcher may make claims for a general application of their [sic] theory” (Gasson, 2004, p. 98). That is, this domain of trustworthiness examines how generalizable the study results are to the context. Transferability can be achieved through providing “sufficient information about the self (the researcher as instrument) and the research context, processes, participants, and researcher-participant relationships to enable the reader to decide how the findings may transfer” (Morrow, 2005, p. 252). To ascertain transferability, the researcher provided detailed information regarding the context and participants within “Chapter 1: Introduction” of this paper; provided a descriptive picture of the current and historical context surrounding women in athletics and the context of women in sports’ leadership positions within “Chapter 2: Literature Review” of this study; and discussed the participant backgrounds within “Chapter 3: Methodology.” In addition, the researcher elaborated on her own background as a researcher as well as the research team and external auditor’s backgrounds in “Chapter 3: Methodology” within the Bias section. Finally, in the latter part of data collection and throughout the conceptualization of results, the researcher engaged in memo-writing, which is crucial in developing codes and emerging categories early on in the research process as well as “increasing the level of abstraction of their ideas” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 188).

Dependability. According to Gasson (2004), dependability addresses “the way in which a study is conducted should be consistent across time, researchers, and analysis

techniques” (p. 94). As such, this study followed consistent recruitment, interview, and analysis techniques. The researcher was detailed and thorough with the protection of human subjects, participants, setting, instrumentation, and procedures, which were explicitly discussed in detail earlier in this chapter. Further, frequent consultation with dissertation committee members occurred, in order to ensure careful tracking and timely completion of research tasks and procedures.

Confirmability. Confirmability addresses the issue that “findings should represent, as far as is (humanly) possible, the situation being researched rather than the beliefs, pet theories, or biases of the researcher” (Gasson, 2004, p. 93). This counseling psychological research was grounded in a critical feminist theory framework and grounded theory, which allowed for rigorous analysis and consideration of multiple perspectives, thus contributing to the integrity of findings. This theoretical framework combination was discussed in detail within the present chapter. Also, the researcher made biases explicit within the aforementioned Bias section in this chapter.

Chapter 4

Results

As indicated previously in this paper, the purpose of this research was to explore Division (DI) collegiate women athletic directors (ADs) perceptions of sexism and their career experiences. This chapter presents the results of a qualitative exploratory research study with eight DI collegiate women ADs. “Chapter 4: Results” will revisit the research questions, discuss four significant concepts that emerged from the data, present a visual model of an emergent theory for how the participants might navigate sexism in their careers, and provide a summary of the results of the research questions, which were analyzed using grounded theory. The selected data presented within this chapter are intended to provide the reader with quotations and narratives that best capture participant voice. This research explored the following questions:

Main Research Question

1. Why are women underrepresented in DI collegiate AD positions?

The researcher examined related literature in other disciplines regarding the marginalization of women in athletics and in executive leadership positions. Based on this research, sexism was hypothesized to play a prominent role in contributing to the underrepresentation of women in DI collegiate AD positions. Because the topic of this paper and the population in this study has limited research surrounding it, this study was framed as being exploratory.

During the interview process, the emerging data shifted the nature of the initial sub-research questions. This occurred because the original research questions were formulated in an attempt to avoid the preconception and assumption that sexism played a role in DI collegiate women ADs' career experiences. However, within each interview, participants expressed their own nuanced understanding of various systems of oppression present within their professional experiences. Thus, the sub-research questions shifted to accommodate this and other emergent findings. The former sub-research questions were: 1) How do DI collegiate women ADs' perceptions of sexism within their athletic department and career experiences vary?; 2) How do DI collegiate women ADs' perceptions of sexism within their leadership position in administration vary?; 3) How do DI collegiate women ADs' perceptions of sexism within other college athletic departments vary?; and 4) How do DI collegiate women ADs' perceptions of sexism in the athletics realm (e.g. professional-, collegiate-, amateur-levels, etc.) as a whole vary? The revised sub-research questions are as follows below.

Sub-Research Questions - Revised

1. How does sexism manifest in the professional lives of DI collegiate women ADs?
2. How do DI collegiate women ADs react, respond, cope, and/or resist sexism?

Concepts

Four significant concepts surfaced from the data collected within the interviews, including **Luck Over Talent**, which captures how participants attributed their success to

luck versus talent; **Ambivalent Awareness of Sexism**, which describes how most participants expressed ambivalence around their awareness of sexism in their careers and in athletics; **Prevalence of Subtle Sexism**, which encapsulates how participants acknowledged experiencing sexism but typically in a “subtle” fashion as opposed to a blatant fashion; and **Overcoming Hurdles**, which relates to participants describing strategies for success. Upon analysis, all participants endorsed each of the four concepts within their interview data. Although these concepts stood alone within the data, it was common for these concepts to overlap within the data. Each of these concepts is discussed in greater detail below under the bold headings. As indicated previously, due to the limited number of potential participants within the population of DI college women ADs, identifying information was not included in these results in order to protect participant identity, and participants were assigned a pseudonym. Pseudonyms for the eight participants include Pam, Sharon, Alex, Elizabeth, Maria, Patricia, Anita, and Jackie. Within the transcript excerpts throughout this section, “I” represents the interviewer’s voice and “P” represents the participants’ voice.

Luck Over Talent. Participants commonly attributed their success within athletics to luck as opposed to talent or skill. They tended to externalize their success or accomplishments by describing their career experiences or trajectories in terms of an opportunity, as a natural inclination, as happenstance, or being serendipitous in nature. Further, participants frequently expressed feeling “lucky,” “grateful,” “fortunate,” and “thankful” for career experiences or being unaffected by sexism, versus being skilled, talented, or deserving of their career experiences or to work in non-sexist environment. Participants rarely described themselves as being entitled to their positions, such as being

deserving of or earning their position. Participants consistently exuded a humble or modest attitude or expressed humility toward their career paths and experiences in athletics.

For example, when asked how she became an AD, Pam exemplified the Luck Over Talent concept:

I was really fortunate, just a little bit about my background is that I started in student affairs, did my master's in student affairs and started as an assistant dean of students at [University]...and did that for a couple years. And an opportunity became available in the athletic department and honestly didn't even think of a career in athletics, just happened to know the associate AD/SWA [Senior Woman Administrator] at the time. We were running buddies, ran every morning together.

Pam's aforementioned quote is notable because it encapsulates the Luck Over Talent concept in a few ways. First, she describes herself as being "fortunate" within her career path in obtaining a DI AD position as opposed to being deserving of the position as evidenced by her commendable work or competence within previous university positions. Also, it is noteworthy that she states that she obtained an assistant dean position immediately upon completion of a master's program, which provides further evidence of her skill and high desirability as a candidate for employment. Second, she frames the AD position as an "opportunity" that she "honestly" had not considered previously, versus a deliberate career aspiration. Finally, participants in this study routinely referred to the collegiate athletic networks as being male-dominated and a "good ol' boys'" network, which often involve decisions being made on a golf course or over drinks after work. In

her quotation, Pam did not appear to view her “running buddy” as networking or as a strategic career move, but framed her relationship as happenstance (e.g. “just *happened* to know the associate AD/SWA at the time”). Later in the same answer, Pam elaborated on her career trajectory and feeling fortunate for her success: “Then, I was really fortunate that I worked for an athletic director who was...he really prided himself in mentoring and providing professional development opportunities for his staff.” Within a different response later in the interview, Pam further references the same colleague above by stating, “I mean I’ll forever be grateful to him—he started me as an associate athletic director.” In both of the latter quotations, Pam appears to externalize her success to others. It is important to note that within this interview, Pam also discussed experiencing gender salary discrimination with this same man AD for whom she described feeling “fortunate” to work and “forever grateful.”

Additionally, seven of the eight participants consistently and mechanically utilized the term “opportunity” to describe career experiences throughout their careers. “Opportunity” might seem innocuous, however, the term manifested itself in a loaded and pervasive manner throughout the data. Participants framed athletic career opportunities as rare and hard to obtain for women. Because they had been exposed to, been provided with, or had access to so few opportunities within their careers, “opportunity” was exemplified as a perk or privilege, for which participants felt grateful or fortunate. For example, Pam indicated, “...kind of going back to the barriers question, it was interesting when we had some transition in the previous department I was in, it was a great opportunity for me to try to oversee men’s basketball.” A key word in Pam’s previous quote is “try” because she alludes to overseeing men’s basketball as being a rare

occurrence within athletics, and thus, frames it as an opportunity, which has implications of doubt surrounding the effectiveness of women's leadership. In another interview, Jackie sheds light on concept of "opportunity." She said:

So many people should have had a better chance than I did. You know, I got lucky. I was mentored by my predecessor and the president of the college—he passed away, but he was a great mentor. He wasn't afraid to hire women.

Again, Jackie expresses a gratefulness as well as acknowledgement of how rare "opportunities" are for women. She sheds light on the condition of hiring in college athletic departments, which appears to involve gender discriminatory practices based on fear (e.g. "He wasn't afraid to hire women."). Also, Anita expressed feeling fortunate in being unaffected by sexism and not experiencing differential treatment as a woman. She stated, "I think that I've been very fortunate in that in participating in athletics, I had coaches who treated me with a great deal of respect."

Within an interview with a different AD, Maria was asked about her career path and indicated,

And...and then from there, [I] really continued to grow and develop and get opportunities that I was able to take advantage of, and...and yeah, here I am now, I guess 16 years later with a wonderful opportunity to serve as an AD at a Division I institution.

Additionally, in response to what propelled her into a career within a DI administration versus coaching, Alex stated, "Yeah, I was just kind of caught up in it...I kind of have an inclination towards administration. I don't love it, but it just kind of comes naturally to

me.” Alex’s quotation is dismissive of her hard work and exceptional abilities. Also, Elizabeth discussed how she achieved her current position stating, “Yes, I was...at that year, I was also looking [for an AD position]...it was very fortunate and by chance that this position opened up, but I was looking at other AD positions.” Finally, Patricia spoke to the concept of Luck Over Talent when she stated:

So I, you know, there was an interesting newspaper ad for this job out here in [City], and I applied thinking it would never happen, and it happened to—I happened to come to work for an amazing female president, who really just said she wanted to fix things from a Title IX perspective.

Although Luck Over Talent was prevalent within each participant’s interview, the data were reflective of exceptions to Luck Over Talent as well. These exceptions included some reflections from participants about their hard work, competence, or merit in achieving a DI college AD position and differential treatment as a woman. In response to whether or not she had ever been treated differently within athletics as a woman, Alex stated:

I’m certain that there have probably been lots of times, and, way way more than I can understand. But it’s really a two-sided deal. You know, I think that there’ve been lots of times that I’ve been treated differently because I’m a woman to the benefit. You know, like it was a benefit—in other words, I had opportunity *because* I was a woman. To give one quick example, is the internship that I was in at [University] was only for women and ethnic minorities. So I wouldn’t have even gotten that opportunity if I wasn’t a woman. And then I was fortunate in the

fact that the people I worked under had an inclination to really want to advance women. And so, I just had great—I don't, I don't feel like I was ever was advanced because I'm a woman [I: Mm.]...and like, *that* was the reason. Because, pretty sure it's 'cause I worked hard and I'm an asset.

In the last sentence of her quotation, Alex attributes her success to merit and owns her competence. However, she contradicts herself at the same time with “pretty sure,” as if to say it with some degree of doubt. Alex also describes feeling as though she benefited from her internship experience because of her gender. But upon closer examination, the type of internship that she was describing was specifically implemented in order to address the existing inequities that have led to the underrepresentation of women and ethnic minorities in top-tier athletic administrative positions in the first place.

Ambivalent Awareness of Sexism. Second, participants described perceiving sexism in athletics with an ambivalent awareness. They tended to view sexism as a current problem within athletics, but nearly always reflected with the exception that the status of women in sports is improving, has come a long way, or is “getting better” compared to years ago. They often acknowledged sexism but expressed that they are unaffected by sexism. Also, participants often expressed concern or confusion about the definition of sexism or why women are treated differently within athletics.

Alex expressed the notion of Ambivalent Awareness of Sexism when she discussed her view of the status of women in sports:

Well, I think women have come a long, long way in sports. I think as athletes, certainly women are having more and more opportunities, and they're respected.

You know, they're making it, they make an equal commitment to what the men do in terms of time and their talents are improving. You know, games are becoming more competitive. Parity is getting stronger, and you know, we still have a ways to go, but making a lot of progress as athletes.

Maria expressed a similar sentiment about women's status in sports, which was representative of Ambivalent Awareness of Sexism. Specifically, Maria reported, "...I think we are viewed in a much more positive light than 20 years, 30 years, or 50 years ago. But, but probably still I think...you know, not in the same light as, as male athletes."

Jackie was no exception to the trend in the data regarding the prevalence of Ambivalent Awareness of Sexism. She indicated,

I think we, we are favorably looked upon in a positive way and more so now than back when I was just getting into sports. And of course Title IX has helped us tremendously. I don't think I would be sitting here talking to you about this, and whether it's, you know, positive or negative, if it wasn't for Title IX.

Although Jackie initially perceived women as being viewed favorably, she alludes to ambivalence near the end of her quotation when she questioned the status of women in athletics as being "positive or negative."

Sharon shared an ambivalent perspective about the current perception of women in sports, which was congruent with other participants. She stated,

In general, I think in recent years, in recent times, there's been more of a respect for women, as women and as competitors, as athletes, across the world of sports.

And obviously we've seen so many great new opportunities for women, whether behind the camera, in front of the camera, coaches, administrators...So, I think, you know, in recent times, it's certainly much much better. And we've seen some progress but not nearly enough...

Also, Anita reflected on the well-being of women in athletics, which she initially perceived as positive. She stated, "Well, I think women today are viewed in a very positive way, women who participate in sports. I think it's much more—I think it's much different than it was maybe 20 or 30 years ago." However, a short time later within the interview, Anita expressed a perception congruent with Ambivalent Awareness of Sexism. She indicated the following:

There are barriers because most people, most of the people in decision-making positions are men. And so we tend to hire people that we're comfortable with, although more and more college presidents are becoming women. And so I think hiring, hiring is a little bit different than it was even 10 years ago or 5 years ago.

In the aforementioned quotation, Anita fluctuates with ambivalence between identifying a problem and providing excusable justification for the problem.

Further, when asked to elaborate on a similar response to the one above, Anita continued to express Ambivalent Awareness of Sexism. Specifically, in her attempt to sift through and find reason for the underrepresentation of women in DI college AD positions, she appeared to take a blaming perspective toward women because they often don't meet the standard set by men ADs. She asserted,

Well, women also have been our own worst enemies. You know, we, women—Men are willing to apply for a job whether they're prepared to do the job or not. Women on the other hand are more reluctant to apply for jobs because they don't think they're qualified. Men on the other hand will apply whether they're qualified or not. Women are less, are less—are more reluctant to move around the country to accept a job, whether they're—it's because they have to take care of their family, or their...or take care of their children or parents. You know, I think, I think women—sometimes we limit ourselves and because of this we don't feel like we're prepared, or we're unwilling to move. Or we, you know, we want more quality of life issues. Where guys, they're willing to do just the opposite. You know, I think women, we have to learn that we have to be better at what we do than our male counterparts. And so, I think women sometimes are our own worst enemies.

Perhaps the clearest example of how Ambivalent Awareness of Sexism manifested within Anita's data was when she and the interviewer discussed the following:

P: ...It does seem like that you see more and more women being doctors, and lawyers, and politicians and...I think that athletics is the last bastion for women to be treated equally with their male counterparts.

I: Yeah, that's—Yes, excellent point. Do you feel that sexism is present within the sports' world? And why or why not?

P: Well, again I think it—to ask a broad question like that I don't think it's a fair—I don't think it's a good question, quite honestly. I think you could say

sexism and racism is prevalent in a lot of things, but I, you know, I haven't experienced it. Do I think it exists? I think racism also exists. So, I wouldn't want to limit it to just sexism. But, I think it depends on the, again, on the institution. To generalize, I don't know I can do that.

In one sentence, she clearly articulated that women are treated differently compared to men in athletics. She goes so far to say that out of all professions, "athletics is the last bastion" for gender equality. It was only when I (the interviewer) mentioned the word "sexism," that her ambivalence toward sexism seemed to be triggered. Also, Anita appeared to exhibit a defensive attitude toward sexism, as evidenced by critiquing the interview question and denying that she has experienced sexism.

Also, Anita very clearly recognized that sexism is a contributing factor to the underrepresentation of women in DI AD positions, and she very importantly recognized other oppressive forces, such as racism and heterosexism being at play. However, she consistently expressed ambivalence and provided minimal detail into how these oppressive forces interact to create inequality within athletics. For instance, Anita said,

I think, you know, I think historically speaking, we could go back and say, 'There's always been some type of discrimination against women and people of color and gays and lesbians in athletics.' Is it better? Absolutely. But, but I, you know, of course—Does it still exist? Yes. Is it better than it was? Yes. But, see you're limiting it to just sexism. So I wouldn't, I can't talk about that comfortably without looking at all the other '-isms.'

In addition, the urge for participants to provide an almost mandatory mention that the status of women athletics “is getting better” might be best explained by Maria. In the following quote, she references the importance of a generational perspective and expressed feeling a degree of guilt or judgment from her foremothers within athletics.

Maria explained,

...If you asked a woman who was trying to be an athletic administrator in college athletics 25 years ago—if you told her that what I identified as one of my greatest challenges is that I can’t go for a run [within an hour-long lunch break] without having to do my hair and makeup and everything, they would laugh at that. They would probably be ecstatic that that was one of my biggest challenges [Laughs]. You know? [I: Yeah.] Because the challenges they faced 25 years ago were very different from what I’m experiencing now, and I’m grateful for that.

Elizabeth’s conceptualization of the current status of women within athletics was captured in the Ambivalent Awareness of Sexism concept as well. Elizabeth said,

I think it depends how you look at it I guess. I think on the competitive standpoint, I think very positively. However it’s just not getting out there in the media as much for whatever reason. And from a consumer standpoint, I think they’ve—it’s shown that women do love sports and watching sports and in terms of, you know, being consumers very good. I think [women] seen as coaches, I think that has changed in the eyes of parents and student athletes where I—I would think for coaching a woman’s sport, they would most likely prefer a man to do that...and then there’s no thoughts of a woman [coach] for a men’s sport.

In her quotation, Elizabeth highlights areas she perceives that women are experienced favorably and also unfavorably. However, she does not commit to either view, which is definitive of ambivalence.

Finally, although Patricia seemed to have a high awareness level of sexism in athletics compared to other participants, she also expressed Ambivalent Awareness of Sexism. In discussing whether or not any barriers that she identified in her career could be attributed to sexism, she replied,

Well, I think that's a good question because I—you know, when you don't get an opportunity, you don't really know why. You know, you can only speculate that. People didn't think a female could do the job. Now is that sexism? Mm, maybe not. It's just what they know, that old doppelganger theory of—so they're comfortable hiring and they just feel like a male could relate, could raise money, could do the things that they know are important to the job and they just don't know if a female can do it because they haven't seen enough role models of that—They haven't seen enough success. So I—are we talking about somebody that...a man that hates women and doesn't think women are capable? No, I just think maybe it's just more of perception, so I think that's a tough question to answer.

In this quote, Patricia expresses ambivalence and uncertainty around the definition of sexism and what constitutes as sexism. She states, “People didn't think a female could do the job. Now is that sexism? Mm, maybe not,” and continues to elaborate by painting a

hypothetical picture of a gendered hiring example. In fact, that example is a very clear example of what constitutes as sexism at a systemic level.

Prevalence of Subtle Sexism. Third, participants often acknowledged experiencing sexism within their careers and in the sports' world, however, they commonly utilized the caveat that sexism was "subtle," "covert," or "nuanced" in nature. Although participants provided more "overt" or blatant examples of sexism, they tended to report more retroactively distant examples, which had occurred much earlier in their careers. The Prevalence of Subtle Sexism concept was developed from an in-vivo code of "subtle," which appeared throughout many of the participants' interviews. In-vivo coding deduces a theme or concept from the data, typically from the participant in a verbatim manner, as opposed to the researcher naming the code (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

In response to a question about being treated differently due to gender, Maria indicated:

So I guess the impact is there, but mostly it's subtle. People rarely come right out and say, 'You're a woman. You can't be an athletic director.' It's not really what happens, you know? [Laughter] I think leadership—generally, women have fewer leadership roles within our world and athletics. Certainly a leadership—athletic director is a leadership role in a male-dominated culture. And yeah, I feel it. I feel it pretty often.

Another example of Prevalence of Subtle Sexism was how participants commonly referenced the sheer numerical majority of men in athletics and in athletic leadership

positions as a subtle factor contributing to the difficulty of women obtaining AD positions. For instance, Pam indicated,

...Just the sheer numbers, that we don't have a ton of women who are going into athletics and taking those leadership positions. And so when the pool is so small, then, you know, when AD jobs come open you got 100 guys applying and maybe, you know, 10 women, if that. So, you know, a lot of—a ton of barriers.

In addition to Pam, Maria also stated, “You know, the more external roles tend to be filled by males because a large percentage of times or a majority of fans and donors happen to be male.”

Two participants described instances within their careers in which they were offered a DI college AD position but were subject to extra hoops and overt job discrimination. First, Alex indicated:

I had to come back for a second interview at [University]. The second interview was never part of the equation. The first interview, you're supposed to, I mean I had a phone interview and then the in-person interview. Then the president called me and said, 'You know, I'd like to invite you out for the second interview.' And I said, 'Really?' I said, 'I've never been...' And I was told that the decision would be made after the first interview. And he said, 'Well, you're a unanimous choice for the boys and it's just that...well...' And in all his presidential speak, basically he said, 'We now need to just double check how this whole being-a-woman thing is gonna work,' because he said, 'I need you to come out...there's one meeting

that you're going to have—dinner at my house, and it will be all men. You and all men.'

In addition to Alex, Patricia stated that she was offered a DI college AD position, and then the offer was rescinded entirely, which she felt was because of her gender. She indicated,

I was a finalist for a job. There were three of us. The first guy was just using it to get ahead, and so he dropped out. The second guy dropped out before because he heard he wasn't the final candidate and soon they offered me the job. And then they took it back because, because they just thought that maybe just didn't have enough consensus from the committee, which, you know, I know that was a female thing. [I: Mm.] And I didn't—I had a president that wasn't willing to stand up to it so...

Also, participants frequently discussed how the legacy of football and good ol' boys' network interferes with employment opportunities via systemic sexism. Systemic sexism is often well camouflaged in the subtleties of legacy and normalcy. Patricia highlights this below:

I mean I've always said that it's crazy how some presidents and search committees feel like if you haven't worn a football helmet, you really can't be an AD. That's becoming less and less a pre-requisite as people go out. But, you'll also find these references. Every time, I laugh—I laugh every time I see an AD being hired or a head coach being hired and... 'Well, they played football.' I mean, it's the whole Penn State—looking for a new football coach, whether they

played at Penn State or not. And I understand that football coaches will have played football, but even look at the AD, you know. I read them all the time—who got hired? ‘Well, they played football with so-and-so or they were a teammate of so-and-so.’ It’s stuff that we [women] can’t manufacture.

Sharon echoed Patricia’s perspective on how football programs have been historically dominated by males, and as a result, that male-dominated legacy creates subtle sexism in hiring decisions for leadership positions. Sharon stated,

...We still have to get a little further along and let them [search committees] evaluate you on what you can and cannot do and not the fact that you’re a female that might have to be over a football program.

One example of overt sexism was exemplified in Alex’s data. Early in her coaching career, she described receiving a job assignment from her athletic department, in which she was to attend a week-long coaching clinic for men’s water polo within another city. She indicated that the coaching clinic was comprised of approximately 80 boys trying out for the junior national water polo team and approximately 40 men coaches. She was the only woman within the coaching clinic. In the following quotation, Alex was in the midst of coaching an athlete at the coaching clinic and experienced “overt” sexism. She said,

So I called him over to the side. ‘Hey Johnny,’ or whatever his name is, ‘Come over here for a second.’ Well, he comes to the side. I bend down. I’m talking to him about getting his legs up from under him before he tries to change directions in the water, and the coach that I’m coaching with literally lays his body across

my back and whispers in my ear, ‘Don’t hustle the boys.’ So no...nothing else in my life has been that overt.

Overcoming Hurdles. The fourth concept is related to how participants commonly described strategies for success within their careers, within the field of athletics, and for coping with sexism and discrimination. The Overcoming Hurdles concept was developed as a result of an in-vivo code (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) within an interview, in which a participant reframed “barriers” to “overcoming hurdles.” Interestingly, this metaphor is also directly related to sport. Alex captured the Overcoming Hurdles in-vivo code:

I believe that the difference in how I'm treated at times or quote unquote “barriers” that might be there or hurdles—I look at them more as hurdles than barriers and sometimes I've gotta use, you know, both hands to pull myself up and then swing my leg up to get over the hurdle and sometimes I can just bore over it...

When faced with sexism, Sharon discussed a strategy that involved hope, exhibiting a mechanical reaction, and involved her adopting a primal identity. When she was asked if she had ever been treated differently as a women in athletics, she responded by comparing herself to her university’s mascot, which was an animal. Sharon stated,

Well...treated differently because I was a woman...I’m trying to think back...

Man, if you knew me... [Laughs] You know, we’re the [Mascot] here and people say, and I’m not saying this in a bad way, you know, [Mascot] are people that are animals that persevere, they grab onto something and, you know, hang on and

because of that kind of personality that I am, I'm sort of, always feel like there's a way. And, so if I was ever treated differently, I might have paused and said, 'Oh, they treated me this way because I'm a woman,' then I would get into my next gear [which] is how can I figure this out so that it doesn't stop, stop me or my program or whatever. [Laughs]

In another example of Overcoming Hurdles, Patricia discussed two coping strategies. In the quotation below, Patricia refers to being emotionally "hurt" by an instance earlier in her athletics career in which a DI college AD position was offered to her, only to be rescinded because there was not enough "committee consensus." Also, she discusses experiencing social hostility when she initially began her DI AD career at her current institution. She indicated:

So yeah, I mean, I think most of the stuff I tried to forget about because you can't sort of, some of it, it's very difficult. That one in particular still sticks out as just—hurts. But...[I: Yeah.] And you can't—I mean I got vilified here, I got, you know, hated, terrible letters, etc., and non-support. If I hadn't had a great president who stood behind me I probably would have been out of this job the first two years...

In this quotation she highlights her strategy to "forget" painful career experiences. Patricia also highlights how important her relationship with a woman in a position of power at the institution (the university's president) as an ally to her in her position. Patricia further elaborates on the importance of her professional relationship with the university president. She said,

But you had to—absolutely had to have the president in my corner and to me...I know at [University] when I was a failed candidate I had a good relationship with the president, but it was more of a friendship relationship not a professional one. And I realized then that what I needed to do was make sure the president knew that I was capable. One thing to be a friend but the other one to get him to realize that, you know, this person knows what they're doing. [I: Right.] I didn't spend enough—So to me it's absolutely imperative that you have the president's—that there's somehow you forge a relationship with the president...But, it's just a matter of learning to, a matter of learning to figure out who the 'head coach' is and what do they want.

In describing her strategies for Overcome Hurdles, Patricia directly related her strategy for success to her experience as an athlete. She likened her sustained employment in a top-tier position within a college athletic department to a “competition.” She reported needing to identify the “head coach” (the university's president), as if she were an athlete on a team, and then appease the “head coach” to get more “playing time.”

Many participants discussed the importance of having colleagues to push, encourage, and mentor them. Nearly all participants cited the National Association of Collegiate Women Athletics Administrators (NACWAA) as a source of support in Overcoming Hurdles within their careers. NACWAA is a professional organization geared toward advancing women into and within athletic administrations. Elizabeth indicated:

Sure...the number one [support] for me would be NACWAA. It just opened my eyes, it gave me the, the support, the professional development, the connections, and not with just women. And I've noticed that change since, I don't know, three years ago? I think since Patti Phillips took over. There are a lot of—NACWAA's introduced me to so many key men in the field, and the ADs, and where I constantly seek advice and so it—one, I think it helped prepare me for an AD position, gave me the support and kind of a push to, to move forward, and actually apply, interview, have expectations of that [obtaining an AD position] being a goal of mine...

Maria discussed how feeling a sense of agency and influencing girls' career aspirations was a strategy for Overcoming Hurdles within athletics. She discussed this in reference to before she had obtained a DI college AD position. Maria recalled,

And I remember having a conversation with my boss at the time—we were talking about the few number of women in leadership positions in Division I, and I remember saying, 'You know, if I'm not willing to do something about it, then I can't complain.' And that's something I have to think about in my life. Like if I'm not willing to do something about it, if I'm not willing to—and I know that I'm capable, very likely capable of being a leader in college athletics—then I can't complain. And I finally came to the conclusion that I want to complain. I want to bitch about it. So, in order to do that, in order to give myself license to do that, I better be willing to do something. So that's, that's motivated me, you know.

That's part of my 'why' is I want to make sure that I'm providing a model that

other girls and women can look at and go, ‘Oh wow!’ Probably a lot of them look at me and go, ‘Oh, she can do that? If she can do that, I can do that.’

Patricia discussed a method to Overcome the broader Hurdle of systemic sexism within society. She expressed how women and men allies need to build up legacy, support, and connection in women’s sports, which takes time. For example, Patricia said,

...You know, we have a particular love of the women’s soccer team because we have an alum from [University] who’s on it—who’s been on it for years. And you know, the conversation here all the time is about how women—how is women’s soccer doing because of that? So I do believe that the ability of the female athlete is improving tremendously and it’s going to make a difference. I also truly believe that there are more and more women out there that understand how important it is to get their young daughters and young nieces into sports. And that, in turn, is starting to make a difference as you see moms and dads now coming out to more women’s games because they want their girls to see other women competing and enjoying it and those kind of role models, which didn’t happen 15 years ago—are happening on a regular basis. So I think that is probably more than a small tsunami. I think that’s really starting to make a huge difference.

Finally, Patricia discussed the importance of Title IX in increasing opportunities for women to attend college; however, she expressed how important it is for men to become educated as well, in order to ultimately benefit women. She implies that women cannot be the only one’s becoming educated within college and about gender inequity.

Patricia stated:

And I think athletics can be a huge mover and shaker. And it's, for somebody that's been in the trenches for Title IX fighting for opportunities for women, I think it's time we look at Title IX as an opportunity to bring men to campuses and figure out how we can help equalize. And I want men educated. I want them with university education. This could be a much better society if we had both men and women educated, so...It's an interesting shift, and it's one that I'm kind of intrigued by.

Emergent Grounded Theory

Consistent with grounded theory methodology, the data were reflective of an emergent grounded theory. It should be noted that Charmaz (2008) asserts that the method and inquiry of grounded theory is emergent, not only the final product of inquiry, such as an emergent theory. Also, central to grounded theory is the notion of flexibility in conceptualization as opposed to rigidity or prescription (Charmaz, 2008; Hallberg, 2006). Thus, the emergent theory described in this section strives to provide a conceptual framework for further understanding the underrepresentation of women ADs in DI collegiate athletics, and acknowledges that this theory is not intended to be prescriptive in nature. Findings indicate that the underrepresentation of women ADs at the DI college level may be attributed to various forms of sexism, with subtle forms of sexism being core to the experiences of the participants in this study. *Figure 1* illustrates how these findings fit into a visual model of an emergent grounded theory for how DI college women ADs could be navigating sexism within their athletic careers. Specifically, participants might have a desire for sexism to be non-existent, but they might also perceive that sexism is vast and impenetrable within athletics, which results in navigating

ambivalence toward the notion of sexism (Ambivalent Awareness of Sexism). Also, cumulatively experiencing subtle sexism could erode one's sense of agency in athletic careers, which makes way for participants to adopt a Luck Over Talent orientation, including the belief that success is due to luck, happenstance, or serendipity, as opposed to talent or skill. This belief system is not particularly problematic in and of itself, but in a field where the major players and those in charge are part of a dominant group who often see themselves as entitled to their positions, feeling "lucky" or "fortunate" can lead to difficulty in combatting systemic oppression or removing hurdles.

Moreover, sexism is well-rooted in athletics, and has been present in athletics well before any of these participants became involved with athletics (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Zirin, 2008). Rather than striving to remove these hurdles entirely, participants might engage in habituation of sexist circumstances (Habituating to Sexism) because sexism manifests itself as a no-win situation and what is perceived as an unsolvable problem. In order to still be successful, they might adapt to the system in Overcoming Hurdles by accepting sexism or resisting sexism. Acceptance of Sexism involves accepting the status quo and attempting to navigate within the dominant system. Resistance of Sexism includes engaging in additional work to counteract or resist the dominant framework.

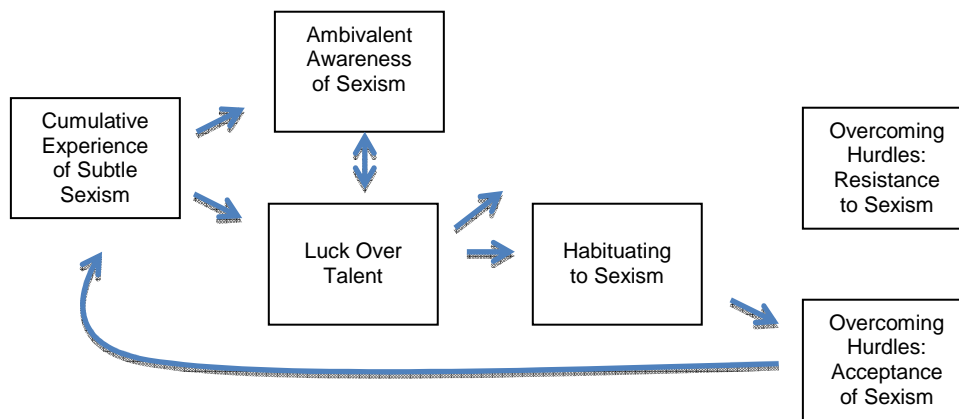


Figure 1. Visual model of emergent grounded theory of navigating sexism.

The following is an example of how one participant, Alex, navigated sexism in her career across the emergent theory model presented in *Figure 1*. She appeared to progress through the Navigating Sexism model as follows: Cumulative Experience of Subtle Sexism → Ambivalent Awareness of Sexism → Luck Over Talent → Habituating to Sexism → Overcoming Hurdles: Resistance to Sexism. Within her interview, she reported experiences with both subtle sexism and blatant sexism (Cumulative Experience of Subtle Sexism). For instance, as stated within the “Results” section of this paper, she described being the only woman coach at a boys’ water polo coaching clinic and being subject to one of the men coaches laying his body across her back to critique her coaching skills. Next, Alex indicated, “Well, I think women have come a long, long way in sports...Parity is getting stronger, and you know, we still have a ways to go, but making a lot of progress as athletes.” The previous quotation exemplifies the concept of having an ambivalent perspective toward sexism and the status of women in athletics (Ambivalent Awareness of Sexism).

Additionally, Alex expressed “And, I think women want to have a full life, and it’s difficult to figure it out, and hopefully—knock on wood— I have.” Alex appears to allude to needing luck or fortune (e.g. “knock on wood”) versus possessing the skill or talent (Luck Over Talent) in order to achieve a “full life.” In response to a question about her career trajectory, she also indicated, “And, I just kept getting more and more opportunities and enjoyed it. And before I knew it, it was sixteen years later...” She appears to frame her career success as happenstance instead of competence or ability (Luck Over Talent). Next, Alex discussed her appreciation for having obtained an internship for women and ethnic minorities, which was created in an attempt to increase the prevalence of and mobility for women and ethnic minorities within the NCAA. This seems to imply that she was appreciative of having one opportunity created for her within the dominant system, which is representative of how she might be habituating to sexist circumstances (Habituating to Sexism).

Finally, Alex discussed her experience in challenging the accepted norm (Overcoming Hurdles: Resistance to Sexism) of her athletic department wearing the university’s athletic apparel in only men’s sizes. She stated:

You know when I first got there, I had to make sure I got shirts and all that stuff with [University] on it. Well, they were all men’s shirts. And, were they were my size? Well, not much because I’m not a man, but they would fit me. Do you know what I mean? [I: Yeah] But, I finally had to tell them, I said, ‘Listen, if you purchase another shirt for me that’s a man’s shirt, I’m going to start buying all women’s shirts. And, I know that you could fit in a women’s XX—a guy, so I’m going to start buying female shirts. But, I’ll buy them the right size for all the men

in here.’ And they like look at me like, ‘Haha.’ And I go, ‘I’m *not* joking. This is a man’s shirt. It’s made to be on a man. Don’t buy another shirt that’s not designed to be on a woman for me, right? You buy a men’s shirt for you, and buy a woman’s shirt for me. Do not buy another men’s shirt for me.’ And they’re like, ‘Oh my God.’ They didn’t even think about it.

In her quotation, Alex resisted sexism by utilizing her power to challenge the status quo within her athletic department. Not only did Alex change apparel sizes and styles, she educated staff members on gender inclusive practices and began carving out space for women within her athletic department (Overcoming Hurdles: Resistance to Sexism).

Within *Figure 1* regarding navigating sexism, it is important to indicate that the navigation of Overcoming Hurdles (Resistance to Sexism or Acceptance of Sexism) was rarely unilateral, with most participants engaging in a combination of strategies to navigate hurdles. However, some participants gravitated toward one over the other, depending on various contextual factors. Additionally, the Cumulative Experience of Subtle Sexism could lead to Ambivalent Awareness of Sexism, Luck Over Talent, or both. The navigation of Ambivalent Awareness of Sexism and Luck Over Talent in *Figure 1* is often not linear as it might have a reciprocal relationship or might occur simultaneously. Further, upon Acceptance of Sexism, participants might continue to experience sexism, as their actions do not directly disrupt the ongoing subtle sexism they are experiencing. In this way, the model can become cyclical in nature. Implications of this emergent grounded theory are discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

Conclusion of Results

The purpose of this research was to gain an understanding about the underrepresentation of women as DI collegiate ADs. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight DI collegiate women ADs to explore this topic. After analytically examining the data from a grounded theory methodology and a critical feminist lens, four concepts emerged including **Luck Over Talent**, **Ambivalent Awareness of Sexism**, **Prevalence of Subtle Sexism**, and **Overcoming Hurdles**. Within the interviews, all participants endorsed these concepts, which are also contained within the answers to the revised sub-research questions stated previously in the chapter.

Sub-Research Question 1 was the following: *How does sexism manifest in the professional lives of DI collegiate women ADs?* This question was addressed in the Ambivalent Awareness of Sexism concept and Prevalence of Subtle Sexism concept. In the Ambivalent Awareness of Sexism concept, participants commonly acknowledged sexism and the problematic nature of sexism in athletics, but they often felt unaffected by sexism with their current careers. Also, they expressed concern or confusion about the definition of sexism or what constitutes as sexism. Nearly all participants provided an ambivalent view on the status of women in athletics as being better and improved compared to the past but also needing more improvements now. In addition to Ambivalent Awareness of Sexism, participants' experiences with sexism are encapsulated within the Prevalence of Subtle Sexism concept. Participants indicated that their perceptions or encounters with sexism were more likely to be covert and subtle versus being overt and blatant. Most participants described an instance of overt sexism but it tended to be an earlier career experience from years prior.

Sub-Research Question 2 was the following: *How do DI collegiate women ADs react, respond, cope, and/or resist sexism?* This question was answered within the Luck Over Talent concept and Overcoming Hurdles concept. Regarding the Luck Over Talent concept, participants articulated how they perceived their success in terms of luck versus talent or skill. Participants commonly externalized their accomplishments or success in athletics by referring to career experiences in terms of an opportunity, as a natural inclination, as happenstance, or being serendipitous in nature. Also, they frequently utilized language such as “lucky,” “grateful,” “fortunate,” and “thankful” to describe their feelings toward positive career experiences, advances within their careers, or experiences in dealing with sexism. They rarely discussed being highly talented, deserving to work in a non-sexist environment, or entitled to their success, and instead displayed modesty and humility around their career experiences. Next, participants’ reactions, responses, and coping strategies to sexism were also captured within the Overcoming Hurdles concept. All participants described utilizing strategies for success in obtaining a top-tier leadership position in college athletics and coping with sexism and discrimination. Some of these methods for success and for overcoming hurdles included developing a sense of hope, “forgetting” hurtful incidents, forming relationships with university presidents, building strong relationships with women and men allies, changing the status quo within their work environment, and opening doors for other women involved in or interested in athletics.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter provides a summary of the research, including the purpose of the study, research questions, and methods. In addition, “Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion” will discuss a summary of the findings as well as expand upon their implications in social justice advocacy, mainstream society, and counseling psychology. Also, the limitations of the research, recommended future directions, and final remarks are presented within this chapter.

Summary

Currently, only 10% of DI collegiate ADs are women, which subsequently means that an overwhelming 90% of DI collegiate ADs are men. Unfortunately, these numbers have fluctuated only slightly in the last few decades. This research aimed to explore the underrepresentation of women ADs at the DI level within college athletic departments. Based on related literature about the underrepresentation of women within athletics and within leadership positions, it was hypothesized that sexism contributes greatly to disparity of women DI collegiate ADs. Given that there is minimal research with women in top-tier positions within college athletic departments, this study was framed as being exploratory in nature. Thus, data were analyzed utilizing grounded theory methodology, which was useful in capturing emerging categories and concepts. The overarching theory guiding this research was critical feminist theory. Participants consisted of eight current women ADs at DI universities. Data were collected within semi-structured interviews with participants via telephone and online via Skype. In an attempt to avoid preconceived notions about participants’ perceptions of sexism, four initial sub-research questions were

proposed. However, as data were being gathered, participants expressed varying and unique interpretations of sexism, discrimination, and oppression. As a result, research questions were revised to reflect the emerging direction of the data, consistent with principles of grounded theory methodology.

Main research question:

1. Why are women underrepresented in DI collegiate AD positions?

Sub-research questions:

1. How does sexism manifest in the professional lives of DI collegiate women ADs?
2. How do DI collegiate women ADs react, respond, cope, and/or resist sexism?

The findings resulted in four concepts that were salient within the experiences of the participants in this study. First, the concept of Luck Over Talent represented the notion that participants felt lucky, fortunate, or serendipitous toward their career success instead of feeling deserving or attributing their career success to talent and skill. Second, the concept of Ambivalent Awareness of Sexism encapsulated participants' ambivalent perceptions of sexism within their athletic careers. They recognized sexism as a past and current problem, but often denied experiencing it in their recent careers and frequently reported the caveat that it is getting better. Third, the concept of Prevalence of Subtle Sexism emerged from participants describing their experiences with sexism but more frequently indicated experiencing it in a "subtle" fashion as opposed to a blatant manner. Although some participants reported experiencing overt sexism, it tended to have occurred years ago for them or earlier within their athletic careers. Fourth, the concept of

Overcoming Hurdles was indicative of participants' strategies to combat sexism, manage barriers, and achieve success within athletics.

These findings provide evidence that sexism is integral to DI college women ADs' career experiences, which could explain the perpetuation of women in DI college AD positions experiencing marginalization. Based on these emergent findings, the researcher proposed a grounded theory to help explain how women engage in navigating sexism (See *Figure 1*) within their DI college AD positions. Specifically, the researcher proposed that throughout their athletic careers, participants encounter cumulative subtle sexism, and at times overt sexism, which has been well-established in the sports' world many years prior to their career (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Cahn, 1994; Zirin, 2008). In turn, this can lead to having an ambivalent view of sexism and/or aligning with a perspective of feeling lucky, serendipitous, or fortunate for their success. These are not necessarily problematic views to have; however, in a system that favors opposite views, it can pose challenges for underrepresented groups to emerge or succeed. Then, this can lead to habituating to sexist working conditions, environments, and interactions, such as the erosion of one's sense of agency (e.g. complacency in career non-mobility). In reacting to sexist habituation, participants appeared to strive to overcome the hurdles or barriers by resisting sexism, accepting sexism, or sometimes performing a combination of both. Also, upon accepting sexism, participants might experience a cyclical effect because acceptance might not directly interrupt the ongoing encounters with subtle sexism. Finally, the emergent grounded theory model for Navigating Sexism is non-linear and participants might vacillate among stages.

The following section further discusses the four emergent concepts (Luck Over Talent, Ambivalent Awareness of Sexism, Prevalence of Subtle Sexism, and Overcoming Hurdles) as well as the researcher's proposed emergent theory model (See *Figure 1*) for how DI college women ADs traverse through experiences with sexism.

Discussion of Findings

Cumulative experience of subtle sexism. As data collection progressed, it became apparent that all participants had a unique and nuanced narrative of how sexism manifests itself within their athletics career. Participants commonly articulated that their experiences with sexism happened to be more covert or subtle in fashion. Although some participants indicated experiences with being overtly discriminated against because of their sex (e.g. salary discrimination, unequal resource allocation for coaching needs, stereotypical gender comments, behavioral microaggressions, and verbal microaggressions), overt sexism typically happened earlier in their athletics careers and prior to their AD tenure. These findings on the prevalence of sexism are comparable to earlier research on sexism. Swim and Cohen (1997) parse out sexism into three different manifestations: overt, covert, and subtle. They cite Benokraitis and Feagin's (1986) conceptualization of overt sexism as "unequal and harmful treatment of women that is readily apparent, visible, and observable, and can be easily documented" (p. 30). Swim and Cohen define covert sexism as "unequal and harmful treatment of women and men in a hidden or clandestine manner" (p. 104). Further, Swim and Cohen describe subtle sexism as being similar to covert but delineate that subtle sexism is often unnoticed or unchallenged because it is perceived to be the norm or customary in nature. These results appear to be indicative of how women ADs will inevitably encounter sexism in some

form (within their career and is no fault of their own because sexism is ubiquitous and historically engrained within athletics (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Cahn, 1994; Zirin, 2008). The participants in the current study articulated mostly experiencing subtle sexism and covert sexism. In their analysis of various types of sexism, Swim and Cohen stated that perpetrators of covert sexism might express pro-gender equality sentiments, but then engage in problematic or undermining behaviors toward women that set them up for failure, which was supported within the findings of the current study. Clear support for this finding can be found in Patricia's account of being offered a DI AD position, only to have the position rescinded, which she perceived as being because of her gender.

Ambivalent awareness of sexism. As a result of experiencing subtle sexism, participants might strive to make sense of sexism. They often expressed an awareness of sexism in the past but nearly always indicated that conditions were improving, have come a long way, or are “getting better” now. In addition, participants often acknowledged sexism in other regions or realms of athletics but expressed that they can't or don't let sexism affect them. Further, some participants expressed concern or confusion about the definition of sexism or why women are treated differently within athletics. For example, Maria indicated,

Well, we've made some progress, I think, in that area—a lot more to go. But, certainly, like many places in our society, women are starting to take advantage of those opportunities and dispel some of the socialized norms that we have been constrained by.

Later in the interview, Maria indicated, “I think I do feel it [sexism]. But, I don't let it distract me from what is really important...for me as a leader.”

Further, when Pam was asked about any barriers to success within her career, she reported awareness around being treated differently in a gendered manner by her former employer, but she expressed ambivalence about the meaning behind the gendered treatment. She stated,

Yeah, I mean, you just get that. I worked for an athletic director who couldn't—he was very respectful—wouldn't cuss around me and was very conscientious about that. So, I definitely change the room when I go in there, and I'm the only female in the room.

Hovden (2010) elaborated on how women in athletic leadership positions are “prisoners of their gender.” Much of the literature on leadership and gender suggests that masculine traits such as being a “heroic male,” being task-oriented, and being action-oriented are valued in athletics leadership (Martin, 1996; Pfister, 2006). Women often cannot manufacture these traits, such as being a “heroic male.” And in fact, if they are perceived as being masculine or violating gender norms (e.g. too masculine or not feminine enough), they might experience consequences or backlash, such as being labeled as bitchy, pushy, or mouthy (Enns, 2012; Rudman & Glick, 2001; Tosone, 2009). As a result, participants who perceive ambivalence toward sexism might be doing so in order to navigate their own dissonance around sexism and still be successful within a field where male-dominant leadership discourse is the standard. Tosone (2009) supports this view that in navigating a corporate patriarchal environment, women might experience internalized misogyny, which requires them to act in a sexual dissonant manner to ensure success. Conversely, Peachey and Burton (2011) explored leader effectiveness by examining perceptions of leaders among DI and DII female and male

collegiate ADs. Their results indicated that top female leaders were evaluated as more agentic and more communal than top male leaders. Also, organizational success was attributed more to female directors. These contradictory findings about gender and leadership might speak to the ambivalence around sexism that was present within this study's results.

Luck over talent. After encountering subtle sexism or experiencing ambivalence around sexism, participants might move to the Luck Over Talent conceptual phase within the Navigating Sexism conceptual model (See *Figure 1*). All participants thematically discussed feeling “fortunate,” “thankful,” or “grateful” for “opportunities” throughout their careers. Participants were less inclined to attribute their success in their athletic careers to hard work, merit, or skill. They were also hesitant to express feeling that they earned, were deserving of, or were entitled to their position as AD. This was captured within the Luck Over Talent concept discussed earlier in this paper. For instance, Jackie indicated the following:

So many people should have had a better chance than I did. You know, I got lucky. I was mentored by my predecessor and the president of the college—he passed away, but he was a great mentor. He wasn't afraid to hire women.

Exhibiting a modest or gratuitous orientation is not necessarily a disadvantageous orientation to have. However, within the realm of college athletics, in which the vast majority of leaders are men and the dominant style of leadership is hierarchical and patriarchal, modesty can be disadvantageous. In discussing workplace-specific sexism, Szymanski & Moffitt (2012) suggest that there is little support, direction, or mentorship for women in navigating the management ranks. Thus, the findings from this study might

indicate that supports and mentoring for reaching upper management and executive positions are so scarce in athletics that participant's exhibited a sense of luck in finding a mentor, who was perceived as rare or a needle in a haystack.

Habituating to sexism. After internalizing an orientation of feeling lucky versus skilled, participants might consciously or unconsciously begin to habituate to sexist conditions. For example, Alex indicated,

You know, I think that there've been lots of times that I've been treated differently because I'm a woman to the benefit. You know, like it was a benefit—in other words, I have opportunity *because* I was a woman. To give one quick example, is the internship that I was in at [University] was only for women and ethnic minorities. So I wouldn't have even gotten that opportunity if I wasn't a woman. And then I was fortunate in the fact that the people I worked under had an inclination to really want to advance women. And so, I just had great—I don't, I don't feel like I was ever was advanced because I'm a woman [I: Mm.]...and like, *that* was the reason. Because, pretty sure it's 'cause I worked hard and I'm an asset.

As indicated within the “Results” section of this paper, Alex expresses a contradictory view of her success within athletics. She attributes her accomplishments to her hard work and skill, however, she also indicates some doubt, as evidenced by the language she chose to use (e.g. “pretty sure”). Furthermore, in her quotation Alex expresses gratitude for being afforded the “opportunity” to complete an internship, which was specifically implemented in order to improve employment disparity for women and ethnic minorities in athletics. To expand upon this further, Alex's quotation implies that she feels fortunate

for having access to only the bare minimum of a single position. This finding demonstrates the extent to which participants habituate to sexism in their field as if it is the norm or the standard. These participants voiced feeling grateful if one single position is created for them, rather than feel outraged or distraught that the majority of the available positions are denied to them.

Findings indicate that men might also habituate to sexism, and in this study, it appears that women pay the price. For instance, Anita indicated,

Because generally speaking, historically, the people that hire ADs are trustees, board of regents, or CEOs. And the majority of them in the past have been men. And so, they're more comfortable in hiring people like them, although that's changing.

Thus, men could be perpetuating the marginalization of women in athletics based on their comfort levels with the status quo. A breadth of literature supports the notion of a "glass ceiling" being a barrier for women striving to advance in the organizational hierarchies of their careers (Bruckmuller, Ryan, Rink, & Haslam, 2014; Smith, Caputi, & Crittenden, 2012; Szymanski & Moffitt, 2012).

Participants also seemed to experience an eroded sense of agency. This might explain the commonly discussed notion of how collegiate women athletic administrators are overrepresented in compliance and student service positions within athletic departments. Also, data were reflective of women's career mobility in college athletic departments being hindered. For example, a number of participants discussed how women are often complacent in the "#2" spot, implying the assistant or associate AD

position within an athletic department and not the head AD position. Pam provided data related to this notion:

When you talk about sexism, those examples started coming into my mind about how people have encouraged me that ‘No, being the #2 person in the department is the best thing for a woman because of the family and not having to have the pressure.’ And I was discouraged by a handful of people again, ‘It’s a tough world out there to be an AD, Pam, but it’s going to be a hundred times tougher being an AD and a woman.’ And again [laughs], I just didn’t listen to it, really didn’t understand it. Now, after sitting in this seat, I understand it a lot more, but it’s nothing you can’t overcome.

Recent literature does address that habituating to sexism affects one’s sense of agency, however, the research was not conducted within athletic administrations. For instance, Shapiro, Ingols, O’Neill, and Blake-Beard (2009) studied women human resource managers’ sense of agency. Their findings indicate that women might be complacent in sub-leadership positions because a lack of flexible work arrangements, such as taking temporary leave from work due to pregnancy, caring for children or family members, or for work-life balance. From a critical feminist view, these concerns are core and directly related to the status of women and gender equality (Kushner & Morrow, 2003; Rhode, 1990). Organizational environments could be interfering with women’s ability to strategically make life choices, and thus, hindering women’s empowerment and sense of agency (Kabeer, 1999). Thus, college athletic departments could be implementing more gender inclusive practices around flexible work arrangements.

Overcoming hurdles: Resistance to sexism. In response to habituating to sexism, participants might engage in strategies for success, which was in-vivo coded as the notion of Overcoming Hurdles in participants' careers. In this study, results were indicative of two main categories in Overcoming Hurdles, including resisting sexism or accepting sexism. At times, participants engaged in a combination of the two categories. Findings for methods to Overcome Hurdles by resisting sexism were reflective of participants redefining notions of effective leadership, exhibiting a vigilant awareness to continue in their positions, carving out a space for women, and seizing moments in an unapologetic manner. Each strategy is discussed in detail below. These findings are congruent with research on stereotype threat. Specifically, Steele, Spencer, and Aronson (2002) have defined stereotype threat as the following:

When a negative stereotype about a group that one is part of becomes personally relevant, usually as an interpretation of one's behavior or an experience one is having, stereotype threat is the resulting sense that one can then be judged or treated in terms of the stereotype or that one might do something that would inadvertently confirm it. (p. 389)

Block, Koch, Liberman, Merriweather, and Roberson (2011) provided a structure for how individual's respond to stereotype threat in a long-term context, including fending off the stereotype, feeling discouraged by the stereotype, and being resilient to the stereotype. The theory in this study of Overcoming Hurdles: Resisting Sexism is comparable with Block et al.'s concept of being resilient to the stereotype.

Fashioning new and inclusive narratives for effective leadership styles. Similar to the Luck Over Talent concept, participants often exuded a degree of modesty and

humility in how they viewed their careers, which appeared to be different compared to their perception of the corporate leadership mentality that is characteristic of the more dominant leadership style in athletics. From a critical feminist theory, exhibiting a leadership style that is characteristic of less entitlement and less privilege could be greatly beneficial to leadership and sportspersonship as well as help to increase gender equality, egalitarianism, and inclusiveness. This is congruent with critical feminist ideals to strive for social change and the promotion of equality between sexes (Rhode, 1990). A modest and inclusive leadership mentality could also be helpful in supporting and improving the mental health of athletes, diminishing the culture of coaches abusing players, supporting education for players, and finally, this more collaborative leadership style could contribute to a healthier work environment with higher morale for those working in DI athletics. Participants cited how deviating from the dominant hetero-patriarchal business style of leadership has been advantageous for them. However, participants also described the trend in hiring ADs is shifting toward hiring people with business backgrounds. Patricia indicated,

—although the trend now is to hire lawyers, CEOs, marketing people, fundraisers, business folks. And this is a business, I understand that, but I do think that the educational value that some of us bring to the table from the kinds of backgrounds we have is extremely important and kind of getting lost in the whole scheme of things.

This makes one wonder how varying styles of leadership will fit in with this trend. The trend of hiring individuals with corporate leadership styles could prohibit equal representation of women, LGBTQ individuals, and racial or ethnic minorities within

college AD positions. In addition, the resisting sexism strategy of redefining what leadership means is reflective of the stereotype threat resilience strategy of rethinking one's own criteria for success at work, which might involve consciously ignoring others' standards for evaluation or upward progression (Block et al., 2011).

Vigilance in retaining her job. Most participants wavered between ambivalent language around sexism and a ubiquitous narrative that sounded at times like prepared, professional-speak. For instance, when asked about the status of women in athletics, a routine answer involved acknowledging how far women have come compared to years ago coupled with the notion that there is still a long way to go to improve gender parity in athletics. It seemed difficult for participants to find balance in celebrating the accomplishments and progress of women as well as examining the current status of women in sports and inequities with a critical lens. Participants did not singularly characterize the current status of women in athletics as being problematic or discriminatory. Participants' commonplace response could be viewed as participants describing the status of women in athletics from a strength-based perspective.

Or, this commonplace and at times mechanical narrative might be reflective of a sound bite designed to assist the participant in maintaining her current AD position. The ADs need to appear "neutral" in order to keep their jobs and represent their athletic departments in a non-controversial manner. However, a byproduct of this well-rehearsed narrative might also be that they are trained to be complacent and feel comfortable as second class within their profession. If one expresses too much awareness of sexism, she or he may very well be weeded out or may self-select out. For example, Patricia appeared to have higher awareness of sexism in athletics compared to other participants.

Coincidentally, she also had the longest career in athletics, spanning four decades, in comparison to the other participants in this study. In her interview, Patricia discussed being very aware of sexism in athletics throughout her entire athletics career, however, she reported feeling threatened and having to be on guard regarding some of her male colleagues whom she feared were creating a “boy’s club” and might attempt to oust her, despite her long tenure in her position.

Additionally, participants expressed another view on why some women might feel complacent in the “#2” spot, which was typically an assistant, deputy, or associate AD position. They reported that in the “#1” spot, or head AD position, one experiences much more criticism, receives public ridicule, and has to take the fall if necessary, even if that means being terminated from their job. This was the case that led to Julie Hermann’s hiring as the AD at Rutgers University, as a result of the former AD resigning amidst reports of a coach within the department engaging in athlete abuse. Patricia reflected on the onslaught of media attention that Ms. Hermann received upon her hiring:

And you know, we said it all along, Title IX did such a great job of opening opportunities for women that they just have so many more opportunities. And they [hiring committees] don’t see a lot of women being terrifically successful in the AD’s chair. Just the whole Julie Hermann story—and I know Julie and I like her, and I’ve had her down here on campus and...I respect her. But, what young woman is going to look at the Julie Hermann story and say, ‘Boy, I can’t wait to get into that profession.’

The strategy of exhibiting a vigilant demeanor in order to retain an AD position was not represented in the stereotype threat literature. However, this resisting sexism

finding could be directly related to having a high awareness of sexism and awareness of the dominant hetero-patriarchal leadership discourse. This might speak to the skill and competence of the AD in being able to navigate the complex nature of sexism in athletics and leadership.

Carving out a space for women.

As referenced within the “Results” section of this paper, Alex described a tactic for resisting sexism by directly confronting the accepted norm within her athletic department of wearing the university’s athletic apparel in only men’s sizes. To revisit her quotation, she said:

You know when I first got there, I had to make sure I got shirts and all that stuff with [University] on it. Well, they were all men’s shirts. And, were they were my size? Well, not much because I’m not a man, but they would fit me. Do you know what I mean? [I: Yeah] But, I finally had to tell them, I said, ‘Listen, if you purchase another shirt for me that’s a man’s shirt, I’m going to start buying all women’s shirts. And, I know that you could fit in a women’s XX—a guy, so I’m going to start buying female shirts. But, I’ll buy them the right size for all the men in here.’ And they like look at me like, ‘Haha.’ And I go, ‘I’m *not* joking. This is a man’s shirt. It’s made to be on a man. Don’t buy another shirt that’s not designed to be on a woman for me, right? You buy a men’s shirt for you, and buy a woman’s shirt for me. Do not buy another men’s shirt for me.’ And they’re like, ‘Oh my God.’ They didn’t even think about it.

Alex resisted sexism by asserting her power to challenge the status quo within her athletic department, which Block et al. (2011) also cite as being a stereotype threat

resiliency strategy. Specifically, they indicate that it can be effective to challenge negative group stereotypes, such as direct confrontation in interaction with others.

Seize the moment and be unapologetic about who you are. Consistent with the Overcoming Hurdles concept, participants commonly reported achieving success in athletics by seizing an opportune moment, in which they had awareness that sexist, racist, or heterosexist factors were at play. Essentially, participants expressed that when a crack in the armor of the majority occurs, that is the crucial point in which one can seize power, regardless of the circumstances. In discussing the hiring processes of college ADs, Pam, who also identifies as a woman of color, captured this notion well:

And I don't think people should be apologetic either. If you're in the [hiring] mix just because it's helping the number, then go do the best job you can do in the interview, and it doesn't matter how you got there. The joke is...you think about...well let's just take George Bush for instance. He's never apologized for getting to the place that he is because of his father, you know? It doesn't matter how you got there or got your opportunity, just take advantage of it. And if you're the token female or the token minority, don't be apologetic for it, just take your opportunity.

Julie Hermann, who was discussed in detail in “Chapter 1,” seemed to be a shining example of seizing the moment and being unapologetic for obtaining her position as the Rutgers University's AD amidst controversy. Three participants discussed the importance of Ms. Hermann's hiring within their interviews. Jackie indicated the following:

You have to have an opportunity. Somebody—I mean, you play with the big boys...you've got to have a foot in. And I don't think people realize how huge Julie Hermann getting that [DI college AD] position was. And because of all the barriers that she had to go through, and all the, you know, media and all that. I mean when you erase all that and you just look at her, you talk to her, she's passionate. She is doing an absolutely wonderful job so far. There isn't a person who says she's not, you know?

Also, Elizabeth reflected on current DI college ADs being unapologetic and courageous in being public about their personal and cultural identities. Elizabeth referenced Julie Hermann's courage in publically identifying as being lesbian, “—like she puts her partner front and center, and I think...would that happen even five years ago? I don't know. But we need people who could just, you know—Julie Hermann comes out...It's just awesome.” The ability to seize the moment and be unapologetic about identity was congruent with stereotype threat resilience strategies. For instance, Block et al. (2011) indicated that exhibiting positive distinctiveness about one's social group as well as gaining and internalizing a deeper appreciation for one's identity can be helpful for resiliency over stereotype threat.

Overcoming hurdles: Acceptance of sexism. As indicated in the previous section, participants might engage in strategies to overcome career hurdles or barriers as a response to habituating to sexism. Once again, findings from this study were indicative of two main categories in Overcoming Hurdles, including resisting sexism or accepting sexism, with participants often engaging in a combination of the two categories. In describing methods to Overcome Hurdles by accepting sexism, participants described

feeling a generational dilemma and complacency in slow progress, which are described in further detail below. Further, these strategies in overcoming hurdles by accepting sexism are related to stereotype threat literature. According to the Navigating Sexism model presented in this paper (See *Figure 1*), resisting sexism and implementing stereotype threat resilience strategies can combat and interrupt sexism, as opposed to accepting sexism, which might continue to perpetuate sexism. However, resisting sexism and implementing resilience can be taxing, challenging, and even have consequences for some. In order to resist sexism or utilize stereotype threat resilience strategies, one would likely require a high degree of awareness around identity, social identity group membership, oppression, and power analysis (Block et al., 2011).

Foremothers' dilemma. Part of the culture of ambivalence toward sexism might be related to an idea of generational resentment or envy, in that people may not fully understand how difficult times were prior to Title IX and shortly after. For example, Patricia, whose athletics career is in its fourth decade and is a self-described 'Title IX bra-burner,' discussed feeling defensive about allocating resources for women's sports within her own athletic department. She said,

And in some ways I hear that from our coaches, some of our female coaches. Like, 'Why can't I have this and this and this?' And I sort of hesitate, and I don't want to have a lecture on the history, but I want them to remember that it hasn't always been this easy. You know, we've really fought some battles for you to get this opportunity and now it's not good enough for you? So back off.

Conversely, Maria, who is much earlier in her athletics career, expressed feeling dissonance about having only an hour for her lunch break to exercise and beautify

herself, compared to her foremothers who were fighting for equal working conditions and equal funding. Maria stated:

—if you asked a woman who was trying to be an athletic administrator in college athletics 25 years ago—if you told her that what I identified as one of my greatest challenges is that I can't go for a run without having to do my hair and makeup and everything [within an hour-long lunch break], they would laugh at that. They would probably be ecstatic that that was one of my biggest challenges [laughs]. You know? [I: Yeah.] Because the challenges they faced 25 years ago were very different from what I'm experiencing now, and I'm grateful for that.

Progress is moving at a snail's pace. Although helpful, simply achieving equal numbers of men and women in DI collegiate AD positions will not solve the problem of marginalization of women nor ameliorate sexism in college athletics. Mary Jo Kane, director of the Tucker Center for Research on Girls and Women in Sport at the University of Minnesota, asserts that Title IX appeared to have helped resource allocation for women but not the status of women in sports. Kane states, “It is one thing to pass a law. It is quite another to enforce it, particularly when the law itself challenges, both structurally and ideologically, notions of power, prestige, and untold resources” (2012; p. 3). Many participants reflected on the positive effects of the implementation of Title IX in 1972 and expressed that change takes time. For instance, Pam indicated,

And I think now, it's important for us to help today's students remember about Title IX because again people are taking it for granted. That now it's not unusual for girls to play on boys' teams in the little leagues, and that would have never happened before...I think there's just more focus now, and we still have a huge—

a long, long way to go but...And, obviously more women are going to school now, and how Title IX opened up not just for athletics but for girls who want to be engineers and scientists...

However, hasn't 42 years been long enough? Patricia stated the following:

But, the sad thing—and you mentioned it too—when I came here, I think I was 1 of 22 women in Division I athletics. Nearly two decades ago, 1 of 22. And now what, I'm 1 of 32? Nearly two decades and that's the progress we've made? It's so, it's so sad.

Patricia's response reflected the exception to the more common viewpoint expressed by participants, who appeared more complacent and accepting of the discouraging reality that gender equality in college athletics is improving at a snail's pace. Things are good enough because they are better than they were years ago, which is a mindset that can inhibit change. As Kane (2012) indicated above, the structural and ideological "notions of power, prestige, and untold resources" are interfering with change. A critical feminist perspective asserts that existing sources of power should be challenged (Rhode, 1990). Significant change is no easy feat; however, current conditions are ripe for a new shift in power, equivalent to Title IX.

Overcoming hurdles: Combination of acceptance and resistance of sexism. It is notable that six out of eight participants cited the National Association of Collegiate Athletics Administrators (NACWAA) as being helpful for them in Overcoming Hurdles to cope with sexism or succeed at some point in their careers. Upon closer examination of this organizational support, it appeared to be both helpful and problematic in navigating sexism.

Organizational support. As participants in this study expressed, it seems that NACWAA has been beneficial in uniting and centralizing women and men allies in college athletics for the purposes of peer support, career support, career education, networking, and professional growth, which is crucial to women's career success in management (Szymanski & Moffitt, 2012). The action of using NACWAA as a tool to overcome career hurdles might also be comparable to the stereotype threat resilience strategies of taking collective action to change the context as well as exhibiting positive distinctiveness, which includes identifying favorable attributes of one's social identity group. Also, an individual can experience empowerment when they know they are not alone in a struggle (Block et al., 2011).

However, NACWAA seems to be pushing a White, hetero-patriarchal, and capitalistic perspective, as evidenced by the messages communicated to NACWAA members via their e-mail listserv, literature, website, and online blog. For instance, in a recent blog post, NACWAA (2014) cites an Ernst & Young report (EYGM Limited, 2013) in which they assert that women are the "largest emerging market in the world." In their blog, NACWAA uses the commodification of women as justification to hire women for positions of leadership. Also, NACWAA chose the book, *Lean In*, as the theme for their organization for 2013. Within *Lean In*, Sheryl Sandberg pontificates methods for successful leadership for women within western corporations. NACWAA sculpted workshops, events, and literature around *Lean In*. Debi Hemmeter, cofounder of the organization, Lean In, and LeanIn.org, was even invited as a keynote speaker at 34th Annual NACWAA Convention in 2013 (NACWAA, 2014).

At times, Ms. Sandberg's book exhibits a blaming and pathologizing attitude toward women. Instead of striving to acknowledge women's effectiveness, reinforce the leadership abilities women already have, or explore how men could be perpetuating oppression, Ms. Sandberg scolds women for not behaving correctly and not knowing better. In the following excerpt, Ms. Sandberg describes a "watershed moment" for her in which she hosted a professional meeting with former U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, Timothy Geithner. She writes in *Lean In*,

Our invited guests, mostly men, grabbed plates and food and sat down at the large conference table. Secretary Geithner's team, all women, took their food last and sat in chairs off to the side of the room. I motioned for the women to come sit at the table, waving them over so they would feel welcomed. They demurred and remained in their seats. The four women had every right to be at this meeting, but because of their seating choice, they seemed like spectators rather than participants. I knew I had to say something. So after the meeting, I pulled them aside to talk. I pointed out that they should have sat at the table even without an invitation, but when publicly welcomed, they most certainly should have joined. (2013; pp. 27-28)

In her anecdote, Ms. Sandberg does not consider the women's behavior in the meeting as potentially being a reflection of Secretary Geithner's leadership style. Instead, she appears to reprimand the women for not being assertive and for not having the intelligence to "sit at the table" when given to be what Ms. Sandberg perceived as not one, but two chances to do so. She essentially seems to assert that White, hetero-patriarchy leadership is the norm and the standard in business, and there is little room for

different styles of leadership or decision-making. Her message to women appears to be: “Lead more like White, straight men.” bell hooks supports a critical stance on Ms. Sandberg’s book. In her essay, *Dig Deep: Beyond “Lean In”* (2013), hooks critiques *Lean In* by asserting, "Sandberg uses feminist rhetoric as a front to cover her commitment to western cultural imperialism, to white supremacist capitalist patriarchy." Furthermore, Ms. Sandberg’s message could be dangerous as she has a high degree of social access and mainstream influence by proxy of her current position as chief operating officer of Facebook, the online social media networking service.

One wonders how *Lean In* would change and be improved with a critical lens and strength-based approach as opposed to a deficit-focused approach. Additionally, *Lean In* is far from applicable to all women. The book seems to be geared toward corporate applicability and is written from the perspective of a White, heterosexual, highly educated, socioeconomically-privileged woman. The examples Ms. Sandberg paints for women in the book often appear to be heteronormative, exclusive to individuals with higher socioeconomic status and social capital, and dismissive of differences in race or ethnicity. In regards to the present study, participants who participate in NACWAA could also be habituating to sexist circumstances, as NACWAA could be perpetuating sexism by encouraging women athletic administrators to conform or adapt to the dominant White, hetero-patriarchal style of leadership that pervades college athletics.

Limitations

There are a handful of limitations to this study. First, it would have been beneficial to examine other areas of inequality within college athletics and leadership positions, such as racism, heterosexism, homophobia, and ableism. Although this study

acknowledged other existing forms of oppression in college athletics and some participants discussed other forms of inequality, these topics could not be explored rigorously due to the complex scope of intersecting topics, which would require additional time and resources unavailable to the researcher. A second limitation was that the participant sample was small and could have included more participants. However, this was challenging because recruitment efforts required snowball sampling through referrals and took several months to obtain eight participants. Given the limited amount of time for this dissertation research, the researcher needed to set limits with recruitment and the number of participants. Third, although some cultural diversity was achieved within the sample of participants, it would have been advantageous to have greater participant diversity by geographic region, race/ethnicity, religion, and sexual orientation. A fourth limitation was that all data were obtained via self-report as opposed to other data sources affiliated with DI women ADs (e.g. supervisees or supervisors), which could have strengthened triangulation of data as well. Finally, although participants were given the option to participate in an interview in person, seven participants opted for the interview to occur via telephone, and one participant opted for the interview to occur online using Skype. If interviews had been in person, the participant responses and dynamic of the interview might have changed or improved, as this might have created a safer, more personable, or more comfortable interview setting. However, time and financial resource limitations prevented interviews from transpiring in person.

Implications for Counseling Psychology Practice, Research, and Advocacy

This timely research could help inform counseling psychologists both as practitioners and researchers. Specifically, counseling psychologists who engage in

vocational counseling could benefit from this study, as it could inform their practice in working with girls and women who are involved in athletics or who are striving for a career in athletics. For example, a counseling psychologist could provide psychoeducational information to clients about the prevalence of subtle sexism within college athletics employment. It would be helpful to engage in clinical discussions providing language, tools, and supports to cope with subtle sexism and work through ambivalent awareness of sexism. Also, this research could help counseling psychologists in practice by heightening their awareness of oppressive factors (e.g. sexism, racism, heterosexism, ableism, etc.) that exist in the sports' world. Counseling psychologists who view sports as a neutral topic that is inclusive of all people risk harming the well-being of a client because they could commit microaggressions, exhibit a dismissive attitude, compromise the integrity and strength of the therapeutic relationship, and create an unfavorable power difference within the therapy dynamic. Instead, counseling psychologists can actively challenge their own assumptions and the mainstream view that sports are neutral and inclusive in nature. Counseling psychologists can validate client experiences with marginalization or discrimination in sports. They can also provide a non-judgmental and validating therapeutic environment, in which to critically examine client concerns around oppression from a multicultural lens.

In addition to practice, the findings from this study are applicable to future counseling psychology research. The researcher felt strongly that this study focus on women's voices, as they have been marginalized in sports for centuries and for the last century in college athletics. However, additional research could include the voices of men collegiate ADs, who could provide their perceptions of why women are

underrepresented, their awareness of sexism, their awareness of their privileges as men in athletics, and solutions to improve inequality in college athletics. Additionally, AD positions are not the only leadership positions within college athletics. Future studies could benefit from examining women in organizational administrator positions such as NCAA commissioners, chiefs, or conference directors. As noted previously, it would be useful to critically examine other forms of marginalization and oppression that occur in leadership positions in college athletic departments. Additional research could examine racism, heterosexism, homophobia, or ableism as individual topics or in an intersectional manner. Analysis of varied forms of oppression could yield similar results or look very different compared to the current study.

Finally, within the field of counseling psychology and in other academic fields, this research could be beneficial in informing future studies related to the negative effects that sexism in athletics has on collegiate AD's mental health, well-being, and career development. Additionally, a few participants in this study discussed the importance of relationships with university presidents. Additional research could examine the type of relationships (e.g. cohesive or disjointed) that athletic departments have with university presidents and other areas of the university (e.g. academic support). This research could also provide essential information for future studies examining resource allocation in collegiate and professional sports empires as well as for revising legislative efforts (e.g. Title IX) to support women's sports.

Concluding Remarks

Although sexism has been defined and explored in many ways, such as being overt, covert, and subtle (Swim & Cohen, 1997), make no mistake that it is still sexism.

Sexism is a current insidious problem in college athletics as well as within the national and international sports' realm. One participant referred to athletics as "the last bastion for women to be treated equally with their male counterparts." Sports involve complex intersections of socio-cultural factors, which lead to injustice and oppression of marginalized groups. The sports' world appears to be the perfect storm of sexism, heterosexism, homophobia, racism, and ableism that sustains oppression, capitalism, and White supremacy, to which society often gives a free pass. Although a growing number are calling for changes in college sports, including the decoupling of athletics from the academy, paying athletes from DI schools, revisiting implications of Title IX, or adjusting the pay structure for ADs compared with others in the academy, college sports remain relatively unchallenged decade after decade (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). This complacency and acceptance of the status of women and other oppressed groups in athletics is problematic and unacceptable for changes in conditions to occur.

The notion that more women in positions of power and high-level management within athletics will be sufficient to ameliorate sexism and achieve equality is idealistic and unrealistic. Parity in numbers is just one step toward gender equality in college athletics. Equal numbers in employment does not mean equal power within an organization. The nature and type of position are crucial in considering when analyzing gender equity within college athletic departments. Implementing more systemic changes could be helpful in addressing the trickle-down effects of leadership on organizational culture and affect intra-cultural changes within athletic departments (Cohen, 2007; Szymanski & Moffitt, 2012). A recommendation is that Title IX be reexamined from an employee level and not just at the athlete level, regarding equal funding for athletes. This

could help in interrupting the cycle of women being pigeon-holed into compliance positions, student service positions, and positions where women do not work directly with finances or make leadership decisions.

In addition, women are redefining what it means to be employed in athletics, and subsequently establishing a grander vision of leadership. Current models of leadership involve legacy and entitlement based on White hetero-patriarchy, which can lead to oppressive and unsupportive conditions for those who are not in a position of privilege. To continue growth, men can become educated about their privileges, relinquish and share power, and accept there is no “one size fits all” style of leadership.

Organizations such as NACWAA, who are uniting women and men allies in a concerted effort to empower women and improve the underrepresentation of women in college athletic leadership positions, are on the right path. However, NACWAA could be consulting with counseling psychologists who are engaging in vocational psychology research, practice, and consultation. As such, this research strived to heighten awareness and pique interest around gender equality as well as be a useful tool to end sexism in athletics and beyond.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Protocol

- In order to voluntarily agree to take part in this study, you must verbally agree. You may withdraw at any time. You are not giving up any of your legal rights by agreeing. Your verbal agreement indicates that you have read or had read to you the entire consent form, including the risks and benefits, and have had all of your questions answered, and that you are 18 years of age or older.
- Do you understand and agree to voluntarily participate in this study?
- Do you understand and agree to this interview being audiotaped, and to the use of this audiotaped interview in the research?
- Do you have any questions before we begin the interview?

1. How did you become an athletic director?

2. In your opinion, how do you think women are viewed in sports?

a. How do think women are viewed in college athletic departments?

3. Was there ever a time in athletics in which you were specifically treated differently because you are a woman? If so, please describe.

a. How did this affect you?

4. Do you feel there are barriers for women involved in athletics? If so, please tell me about them.

a. Do you feel there are barriers for women ADs? If so, please tell me about them.

b. Have you experienced any barriers throughout your employment in athletics?

c. Can you share any examples that really stand out for you?

d. What do you attribute these barriers to?

e. Do you think any of these barriers were due to sexism?

5. What supports and motivators are helpful for women in athletics?
 - a. What supports have been helpful for you as a woman AD?
 - b. What do you attribute these supports to?
6. Do you feel that sexism is present within the sports' world? Why or why not?
 - a. Can you share any examples that really stand out for you?
 - b. Do you feel that sexism is present within college athletics? Why or why not?
 - c. Do you feel that sexism is present within college athletic departments? Why or why not?
7. Why do you think more women are not in athletic director and decision-making positions in athletics?
8. In general, what do you think has helped women succeed in athletics (e.g. now compared to decades ago)?
9. What do you think needs to happen in the future for the gender inequities in sports to improve?
10. Is there anything else that you would like to share that you feel is important to the research?

APPENDIX B

**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN – MILWAUKEE
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH
ATHLETIC DIRECTOR CONSENT**

1. General Information

Study title:

Women Collegiate Athletic Directors' Perceptions of Sexism and Career Experiences

Person in Charge of Study (Principal Investigator):

My name is Dr. Nadya Fouad. I am a Distinguished Professor in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

2. Study Description

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Your participation is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate if you do not want to.

Study description:

The purpose of this study is to explore the perceptions of women collegiate athletic directors regarding sexism in athletics as well as their career experiences.

This research is being done because few studies have examined the experiences of women collegiate athletic directors, and none have focused solely on women athletic directors from Division I colleges. This study will help us understand collegiate women athletic directors' career experiences and perceptions of sexism as well as contribute to a growing body of literature on women in athletic director positions. The study will also help to contribute to social change and transformation of inclusivity within the sports world.

One interview will take place in-person at your office or at a private on-campus location (e.g. reserved library room). Should interviews not be able to be completed in-person, interviews will be conducted via telephone or Skype. Your participation will take approximately 45 to 120 minutes. Approximately 8 athletic directors will participate.

3. Study Procedures

What will I be asked to do if I participate in the study?

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to meet with Ashley Kies, who is my advisee and a counseling psychology doctoral student conducting her dissertation research. You will meet at your office or at a private on-campus location (e.g. reserved library room) for an interview. Should the interview not be able to be completed in-person, it will be conducted via telephone or Skype.

Interviews will include approximately 20 questions. To ensure confidentiality, you will be asked to choose a pseudonym or a number that will be incorporated into study results. Your participation will take approximately 45 to 120 minutes.

With your permission, we will record your voice during the interview with a tape recorder. The recording will be done to make sure we accurately record your views. If you do not want your voice recorded, please let the researchers know and we will write down your responses on paper instead.

4. Risks and Minimizing Risks

What risks will I face by participating in this study?

The potential risks for participating in this study are minimal. There is a small possibility that you will experience psychological effects. For example, you may feel emotional discomfort when discussing your experiences with the researcher. If you are asked a question that you do not want to answer, you do not have to answer that question.

5. Benefits

Will I receive any benefit from my participation in this study?

You might benefit from an increased well-being as well as helping advance research with women in athletic leadership positions.

6. Study Costs and Compensation

Will I be charged anything for participating in this study?

You will not be responsible for any cost of taking part in this research study.

Are subjects paid or given anything for being in the study?

You will not be compensated for taking part in this research study.

7. Confidentiality

What happens to the information collected?

All information collected about you during the course of this study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. We may decide to present what we find to others, or publish our results in scientific journals or at scientific conferences. Only the PI and research team will have access to the information. However, the Institutional Review Board at UW-Milwaukee or appropriate federal agencies like the Office for Human Research Protections may review this study's records.

You will be identified on tape or on paper with a pseudonym or number. Your name will not appear anywhere and no one will know about your answers except the PI and the research team.

Within a week after the researcher, Ashley Kies, meets with you, the voice recordings of the activities will be typed word for word by the research team. The recordings will be erased immediately after this is complete. The transcripts of the recordings will be stored in a password-protected computer.

All of the information collected for this study will be destroyed when the study is complete.

8. Alternatives

Are there alternatives to participating in the study?

There are no known alternatives available to you other than not taking part in this study.

9. Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal

What happens if I decide not to be in this study?

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to take part in this study. If you decide to take part, you can change your mind later and withdraw from the study. You are free to not answer any questions or withdraw at any time. Your decision will not change any present or future relationships with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The investigator may stop your participation in this study if they feel it is necessary to do so.

10. Questions

Who do I contact for questions about this study?

For more information about the study or the study procedures or treatments, or to withdraw from the study, contact:

Nadya A. Fouad, Ph.D.
University Distinguished Professor and Chair
Department of Educational Psychology
PO 413
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Milwaukee, WI 53201
(414) 229-6830

Who do I contact for questions about my rights or complaints towards my treatment as a research subject?

The Institutional Review Board may ask your name, but all complaints are kept in confidence.

Institutional Review Board
Human Research Protection Program
Department of University Safety and Assurances
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee
P.O. Box 413
Milwaukee, WI 53201
(414) 229-3173

11. Signatures

Research Subject's Consent to Participate in Research:

To voluntarily agree to take part in this study, you must sign on the line below. If you choose to take part in this study, you may withdraw at any time. You are not giving up any of your legal rights by signing this form. Your signature below indicates that you have read or had read to you this entire consent form, including the risks and benefits, and have had all of your questions answered, and that you are 18 years of age or older.

Printed Name of Subject/ Legally Authorized Representative

Signature of Subject/Legally Authorized Representative

Date

Research Subject's Consent to Audio/Video/Photo Recording:

It is okay to audiotape me while I am in this study and use my audiotaped data in the research.

Please initial: ___Yes ___No

Principal Investigator (or Designee)

I have given this research subject information on the study that is accurate and sufficient for the subject to fully understand the nature, risks and benefits of the study.

Printed Name of Person Obtaining Consent

Study Role

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date

APPENDIX C



Jessica Rice
 IRB Administrator
 Institutional Review Board
 Engelmann 270
 P. O. Box 413
 Milwaukee, WI 53201-0413
 (414) 229-3182 phone
 (414) 229-6729 fax

<http://www.irb.uwm.edu>
ricej@uwm.edu

New Study - Notice of IRB Exempt Status

Date: March 28, 2013

To: Nadya Fouad, PhD
 Dept: Educational Psychology

Cc: Ashley Kies

IRB#: 13.348

Title: Women Collegiate Athletic Directors' Perceptions of Sexism and Career Experiences

After review of your research protocol by the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee Institutional Review Board, your protocol has been granted Exempt Status under **Category 2** as governed by 45 CFR 46.101(b).

Unless specifically where the change is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects, any proposed changes to the protocol must be reviewed by the IRB before implementation. It is the principal investigator's responsibility to adhere to the policies and guidelines set forth by the UWM IRB and maintain proper documentation of its records and promptly report to the IRB any adverse events which require reporting.

It is the principal investigator's responsibility to adhere to UWM and UW System Policies, and any applicable state and federal laws governing activities the principal investigator may seek to employ (e.g., [FERPA](#), [Radiation Safety](#), [UWM Data Security](#), [UW System policy on Prizes, Awards and Gifts](#), state gambling laws, etc.) which are independent of IRB review/approval.

Contact the IRB office if you have any further questions. Thank you for your cooperation and best wishes for a successful project

Respectfully,

Jessica P. Rice
 IRB Administrator

APPENDIX D



Jessica Rice
 IRB Administrator
 Institutional Review Board
 Engelmann 270
 P. O. Box 413
 Milwaukee, WI 53201-0413
 (414) 229-3182 phone
 (414) 229-6729 fax

Modification/Amendment Notice of IRB Exempt Status

<http://www.irb.uwm.edu>
ricej@uwm.edu

Date: May 8, 2013

To: Nadya Fouad, PhD
 Dept: Educational Psychology

Cc: Ashley Kies

IRB#: 13.348

Title: Women Collegiate Athletic Directors' Perceptions of Sexism and Career Experiences

After review of your proposed changes to the research protocol by the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee Institutional Review Board, your protocol still meets the criteria for Exempt Status under **Category 2** as governed by 45 CFR 46.101 subpart b, and your protocol has received modification/amendment approval for:

- Minor revisions to survey questions
- Change consent procedures to emailing consent documentation and then obtaining verbal consent at the time of the interview
- Change in study end date
- Change in data collection procedures- participants will choose number or pseudonym, if don't consent to taping, hand written notes will be taken

Unless specifically where the change is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects, any proposed changes to the protocol must be reviewed by the Institutional Review Board before implementation.

Please note that it is the principal investigator's responsibility to adhere to the policies and guidelines set forth by the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee and its Institutional Review Board. It is the principal investigator's responsibility to maintain proper documentation of its records and promptly report to the Institutional Review Board any adverse events which require reporting.

Contact the IRB office if you have any further questions. Thank you for your cooperation and best wishes for a successful project.

Respectfully,

Jessica Rice
 IRB Administrator

APPENDIX E



Why aren't more women working as Division I athletic directors?

- ❖ **We invite you to participate in a national dissertation research study**, in which Division I women ADs are being interviewed about their career experiences and views on gender in athletics.
- ❖ **Less than 8%** of Division I ADs are women, despite nearly 14,000 women being employed in college athletics. **So why aren't more women working as Division I ADs in college sports?** We are eager to hear your perspective!



Research Details:

- **TIME:** We know your time is valuable. The interview will be 45-75 minutes and can be in 2 sessions if preferred.
- **INTERVIEW:** The interview will take place with the researcher (Ashley Kies) via phone, Skype, or in-person (whichever is most convenient). A copy of the interview questions can be provided prior to the interview.
- **CONFIDENTIALITY:** The interview is completely confidential. No individual participant is ever identified with her research information.
- **BENEFITS:** You will be playing an important role in helping advance women in athletics, as well as contributing to a growing body of research on women in athletics and women in leadership positions. Also, you might enjoy reflecting on your career to date.
- **ACCURACY:** The interview is tape recorded to ensure accuracy of information. You will have an opportunity to view a transcript of the interview to ensure accuracy of information and/or add any information. (If you decline to be tape recorded, responses are written down.)
- **OTHER INFO:** Risks are considered minimal. There is a small possibility that you will experience emotional discomfort (e.g. describing a challenging event within your career). You may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Interested in participating? Contact us!

Ashley Kies, M.S.
NACWAA Member
Doctoral Candidate, Counseling Psychology
Dept. of Educational Psychology
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
alkies@uwm.edu
(608) 732-2495

Nadya A. Fouad, Ph.D. ABPP
University Distinguished Professor and Chair
Dept. of Educational Psychology
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
nadya@uwm.edu
(414) 229-6830

Please **contact us** with questions or to schedule an interview!

alkies@uwm.edu - nadya@uwm.edu

This study was granted approval by the UW-Milwaukee Institutional Review Board (#13.348) on May 8, 2013.

APPENDIX F

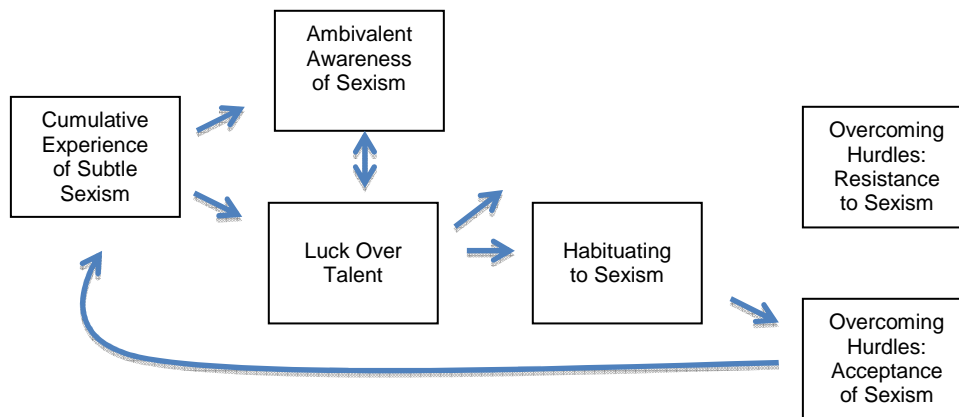


Figure 1. Visual model of emergent grounded theory of navigating sexism.

CURRICULUM VITAE

ASHLEY L. KIES**Ph.D. Candidate****EDUCATION**

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE	Milwaukee, WI
• Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology (APA-Accredited)	Aug 2014
• M.S. in Educational Psychology (Community Counseling)	May 2009
• B.A. in Psychology	May 2007

CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY COUNSELING CENTER (APA-Accredited) Pre-Doctoral Intern	Boston, MA Aug 2013-Aug 2014
MILWAUKEE LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER Doctoral Practicum Student	Milwaukee, WI Feb 2012-May 2012
MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY COUNSELING CENTER Doctoral Practicum Student	Milwaukee, WI Aug 2010-2011
GERALD L. IGNACE INDIAN HEALTH CENTER Doctoral Practicum Student	Milwaukee, WI Sep 2009-May 2010
INDIAN COMMUNITY SCHOOL Doctoral Practicum Student	Franklin, WI Oct 2009-May 2010
SPOTTED EAGLE INC. AND HIGH SCHOOL Masters Practicum Student	Milwaukee, WI Sep 2008-May 2009

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

APA'S <i>THE COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGIST</i> Editorial Assistant	Milwaukee, WI July 2011-Aug 2013
UW-MILWAUKEE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY Graduate Researcher	Milwaukee, WI June 2008-May 2013
UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO, PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM Community-Based Participatory Research Workshop Participant	Albuquerque, NM June 2011
UW-MILWAUKEE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY Undergraduate Researcher	Milwaukee, WI May 2006-May 2007

CLINICAL SUPERVISION EXPERIENCE

SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY COUNSELING CENTER Supervisor	Boston, MA Sep 2013-Present
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UW-MILWAUKEE EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY DEPARTMENT Supervisor	Milwaukee, WI Sept 2011-Dec 2011
--	-------------------------------------

OUTREACH & CONSULTATION EXPERIENCE

SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY COUNSELING CENTER Liaison with Suffolk University's Office of Diversity Services	Boston, MA Aug 2013-Aug 2014
--	---------------------------------

HONG AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION Consultation Project Team Member	Milwaukee, WI Sep 2011-Feb 2012
--	------------------------------------

MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY COUNSELING CENTER Practicum Student	Milwaukee, WI Sep 2010-May 2011
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CLINICAL TRAINING EXPERIENCE

UC4—SERVICE MEMBERS AND VETERANS ON CAMPUS Workshop Participant	Milwaukee, WI Mar 2013
--	---------------------------

ASSESSMENT EXPERIENCE

ST. ROSE YOUTH & FAMILY CENTER Psychological Assessment Specialist – Doctoral Practicum	Milwaukee, WI Aug 2011-Jun 2012
--	------------------------------------

HYDE AND LICHTER INC. Assessment Administrator	Milwaukee, WI Jan 2010-May 2013
---	------------------------------------

HUMBER, MUNDIE, AND MCCLARY Assessment Administrator	Milwaukee, WI Sep 2012-May 2013
---	------------------------------------

MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY COUNSELING CENTER Doctoral Practicum Student	Milwaukee, WI Aug 2010-May 2011
--	------------------------------------

UW-MILWAUKEE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY Proseminar 3: Psychological Assessment (Advanced Graduate Course)	Milwaukee, WI Sep 2010-Dec 2010
--	------------------------------------

UW-MILWAUKEE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY Assessment I (Advanced Graduate Course)	Milwaukee, WI Sep 2010-Dec 2010
--	------------------------------------

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

UW-MILWAUKEE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY <i>Success in Academics & Athletics</i> Course Instructor – Undergraduate Level	Milwaukee, WI Fall 2011, Fall 2012
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<i>Planning Your Major and Career</i> Course Instructor – Undergraduate Level	Aug 2009-May 2011
--	-------------------

<i>Multicultural Mental Health Guidelines, Working With First Nation Persons</i> Course Co-Instructor – Graduate Level	Jan 2010-May 2010
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LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

UW-MILWAUKEE GRAD SCHOOL SCHOLASTIC APPEAL COMMITTEE Graduate Student Representative	Milwaukee, WI Oct 2012-Aug 2013
UW-MILWAUKEE COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY STUDENT ASSC. President	Milwaukee, WI May 2011-May 2012
AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OF GRAD STUDENTS Campus Representative	Milwaukee, WI Jan 2009-Jul 2010
UW-MILWAUKEE RECREATIONAL SPORTS & FACILITIES Building Manager	Milwaukee, WI Sep 2003-Aug 2013
URBAN INDIAN WELLNESS CONSORTIUM Affiliate	Milwaukee, WI Oct 2009-May 2010
UW-MILWAUKEE LADY PANTHER SOCCER CLUB President, Captain, Officer, & Founding Member	Milwaukee, WI Oct 2004 -Mar 2009

VOLUNTEER & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

2013 DIVERSITY CHALLENGE AT BOSTON COLLEGE Volunteer	Boston, MA Oct 2013
HISPANIC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF WISCONSIN Volunteer English Tutor	Milwaukee, WI Jan 2012-May 2013
UW-MILWAUKEE CENTER FOR VOLUNTEERISM & STUDENT LEADERSHIP Volunteer	Milwaukee, WI Sep 2003-May 2013
2012 AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION CONVENTION Volunteer	Orlando, FL Aug 2012
UW-MILWAUKEE WOMEN'S RESOURCE CENTER Volunteer	Milwaukee, WI April 2012
2011 WHITE PRIVILEGE CONFERENCE Volunteer	Minneapolis, MN April 2011

PUBLICATIONS

- Fitzpatrick, M.E., Cotter, E.W., Bernfeld, S.J., Carter, L. M., **Kies, A.**, & Fouad, N.A. (2011). The Importance of Workplace Bullying to Vocational Psychology: A Research Agenda to JCD. *Journal of Career Development*, 38, 479-499.
- Helion, A. M., Reddy, D. M., **Kies, A. L.**, Morris, D. R., & Wilson, C. M. (2008). Influence of communicator's race on efficacy of an HIV/STD prevention intervention among African American and Caucasian college students. *Public Health Nursing*, 25,

440-450.

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS

- **Kies, A.** (2014, Jun). Practicing self-care in social justice work. Suffolk University Office of Diversity Services Consultation.
- **Kies, A.** (2013, Oct). Practicing self-care in social justice work. Suffolk University Office of Diversity Services Consultation.
- **Kies, A., & Fouad, N. A.** (2012, Aug). 40 years after Title IX: The insidious effects of sexism in athletics and a call for change. 2012 APA Convention, Division 35: Society for the Psychology of Women, Poster Presentation.
- **Fouad, N. A., Kies, A., & Parisot, M.** (2012, Aug). Consultation and implementation of social justice with a community-based organization. 2012 APA Convention, Division 17: Society of Counseling Psychology, Conversation Hour.
- **Kies, A., Parisot, M., & Xiong, I.** (2012, Feb). Social justice for immigrant and refugee populations. 2012 Around the Winter Roundtable, Roundtable Discussion.
- **Kies, A., Fouad, N. A., Liu, J., & Figueiredo, C.** (2011, Aug). Convergent validity of the Family Influence Scale on career decision-making. 2011 APA Convention, Division 17: Society of Counseling Psychology, Poster Presentation.
- **Lucas, V., Kies, A., & Martinez, M.** (2011, Mar). Department outreach: Student anxiety at Marquette University. Presentation to Marquette University College of Arts and Sciences.
- **Fouad, N. A., Kies, A. L., Thomas, R. P., Liu, J., & Fitzpatrick, M. E.** (2010, Aug). Perceptions of Career Transitions Among Division I Collegiate Student Athletes. 2010 APA Convention, Division 17: Society of Counseling Psychology, Poster Presentation.
- **Fitzpatrick, M. E., Cotter, E. W., Bernfeld, S., Carter, L., Kies, A., and Fouad, N. A.** (2009, June). Importance of workplace bullying to vocational psychology: A research agenda. Poster presented at the Society for Vocational Psychology Biennial Conference.

PROFESSIONAL & ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- American Psychological Association (APA)
- American Psychological Association of Graduate Students (APAGS)
- Division 17, APA, Society for Counseling Psychology (SCP)
- Division 35, APA, Society for the Psychology of Women (SPW)
- Division 44, APA, Society for the Psychological Study of LGBT Issues
- Division 45, APA, Society for the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues
- Division 51, APA, Society for the Psychological Study of Men & Masculinity
- APA, Student Affiliates of Seventeen (SAS)
- UW-Milwaukee Counseling Psychology Student Association (CPSA)
- UW-Milwaukee Milwaukee Graduate Assistants Association (MGAA)