

EXPLORING THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP ROLES  
WITHIN INTERCOLLEGIATE SPORT IN PUERTO RICO

A DISSERTATION

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BY

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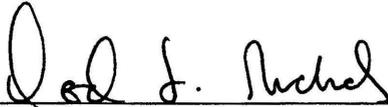
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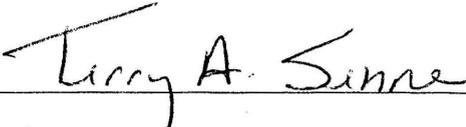
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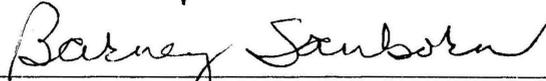
I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Luisa Velez entitled "Exploring the Representation of Women in Leadership Roles within Intercollegiate Sport in Puerto Rico." I have examined this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy with a major in Kinesiology.

  
Bettye Myers, Ph.D., Major Professor

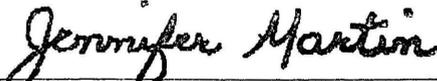
We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

  
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Accepted:

  
Dean of the Graduate School

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this research study to all women, past and present who have committed their lives to building bridges making it possible for those in the future to fulfill the dreams for which you fought.

I dedicate this dissertation to all future female coaches and leaders in all aspects of the sport industry. Others worked and sacrificed for the benefits you enjoy today. Dare to make the best of your lives.

I also dedicate this dissertation to all men who have contributed to achieving social justice specifically in the sport industry by means of curriculums, lectures and seminars, institutes, research studies, publishing, and practice. Your dedication to this cause is not overlooked.

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Most important, I acknowledge the love and power of God throughout my life. For when I am weak, He is strong...and will continue to do amazing things among us.

## ABSTRACT

LUISA VELEZ

### EXPLORING THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP ROLES WITHIN INTERCOLLEGIATE SPORT IN PUERTO RICO

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The representation of women as athletes is an achievement to be acknowledged as it has experienced incredible growth (Acosta & Carpenter, 2006). The same cannot be said of the representation women in leadership positions in sport. Female underrepresentation in leadership positions in sport is not a new issue nor is it one specific to the United States (Cui, 2007; Hoerber, 2007; West, Green, Brackenridge, & Woodward, 2001). The continued growth of male head coaches for female sports has lessened the possibilities for females to advance into these roles (Drago, Hennighausen, Rogers, Vescio, & Stauffer, 2005).

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the representation of women in leadership roles within intercollegiate sport in Puerto Rico. Semi-structured interviews with female head coaches ( $n = 6$ ) and their male athletic directors ( $n = 4$ ) of National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) athletic departments in Puerto Rico were conducted.

The researcher used a phenomenological approach to capture the participant's point of view regarding the underrepresentation of females in leadership positions in

intercollegiate sport in Puerto Rico. Results of this study brought to light barriers to increasing the representation of women in leadership positions and strategies that facilitate the path for women in attaining a leadership position in sport. The identified barriers were: a) administrative structure of the sport organization, b) women as a barrier, c) cultural roles and expectations, and d) the nature of a career in sport.

Even though participants faced different constraints, factors that allowed them to pursue their goals were: a) experience, b) communication/family support, c) self-determination, and d) sport as a family affair. It seemed important to participants in the current study obtaining a leadership position in sport to be as involved as possible in the sport field inside and outside the NCAA/university setting. There is an undeniable gender gap in leadership regarding intercollegiate sport in Puerto Rico. Culture and traditional practices play a significant role in perpetuating gender discrepancy. There are signs of a possible paradigm shift in different areas of the Puerto Rican culture regarding gender and positions of leadership in sport.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The culture of a people encompasses all the invented ways of thinking, feeling, and acting in a particular group. A culture can change as “people struggle over what is important in their lives, how to do things, and how to make sense of their experience” (Coakley, 2004, p. 5). Throughout history, sport has been a reflection of society at a specific point in time; at times supporting the status quo and at other times bringing about change through its practices.

The practice of women as athletes is an achievement to be acknowledged as it has experienced incredible growth influenced by legal demands and organizational initiatives (Acosta & Carpenter, 2006). It is the disparity of women in leadership positions in sport that needs attention. Female underrepresentation in leadership positions in sport is not a new issue nor is it one specific to the United States (Acosta & Carpenter, 2006; Cui, 2007; Hoeber, 2007; West et al., 2001).

Underrepresentation of females is also present at the international level. The importance of female representation has been recognized even by international sport governing entities. Since 1912 the International Olympics Committee (IOC), has continued to add women’s sports for Olympic participation. The Olympic Movement indicates that while the participation of women in athletic events continues to increase, equality for women in leadership and sport administration positions has not increased

(International Olympic Committee and the Institute of Sport & Leisure Policy, 2004). In addition, the IOC has implemented policies for increasing the representation of women in decision making positions within their organization.

The underrepresentation of women in sport was first addressed in the United States in the Higher Education Act of 1972, better known as Title IX, making equal opportunity for women a legal obligation for any institution accepting federal funds. This law prohibits the discrimination, exclusion in participation or denied benefits in educational programs on the basis of gender (U.S. Department of Labor, 2005). Efforts to support Title IX were made by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). The NCAA established three stipulations for an athletic program to be in compliance with gender equity: a) participation opportunities proportionate to enrollment, b) history and continuing practice of program expansion, and c) effective accommodation of athletes' interest and abilities (NCAA, 2008). As a result of these stipulations, athletic departments in colleges and universities throughout the United States have made efforts to create equal opportunities for both males and females in their athletic programs.

Title IX and the NCAA regulations concerning gender equity placed women's sports at the same level of importance as men's sports within the educational environment. These regulations directed finances toward women's programs. Consequently, salaries paid to coaches for women's teams were made more competitive (Acosta & Carpenter, 1992). The number of women's sport teams dramatically increased giving more women the opportunity to participate in sports and develop as athletes. Although the number of female athletes and programs has increased since the passing of

Title IX, the presence of female head coaches has decreased significantly (Acosta & Carpenter, 2006). In spite of growing evidence revealing this decrease, the disparity between men and women in sport leadership positions continues to grow.

In particular, there is a paucity of studies that examine this issue in Puerto Rico. However, observational evidence indicates that a disparity between men and women in sport leadership positions also exists in Puerto Rico. Investigating this phenomenon in an understudied population will contribute to the body of knowledge in the field of Sport Management, and may suggest ways in which the status of gender equity may improve within intercollegiate sport in Puerto Rico, and perhaps elsewhere.

Female underrepresentation has been examined through quantitative and qualitative studies with head coaches, athletic administrators, and athletes in colleges and universities in all three divisions of the NCAA in the United States (Acosta & Carpenter, 2006; Sagas, Paetzold, & Ashley, 2005). The continued growth in the number of male head coaches for female sports has lessened the possibilities for females to advance into these roles (Drago et al., 2005; Sagas et al., 2005). The “old boys network” (Knoppers, Meyer, Ewing, & Forrester, 1993) and a small female applicant pool only exacerbated the situation (Jacobson, 2001).

The year 2006 showed the lowest percentage (42.4%) of females coaching women’s teams in history (Acosta & Carpenter, 2006). This decline was continuous as the analysis showed 44% and 45.6% of women’s teams were coached by females in the years 2002 and 2004, respectively (Acosta & Carpenter, 2002). The majority of the

existing research on this topic has focused on colleges and universities in the United States.

### Statement of the Problem

The gender disparity in leadership roles within intercollegiate sport continues to grow since the passing of Title IX (Acosta & Carpenter, 2006). Women are limited in their opportunities to role model for younger women since these roles continue to be increasingly dominated by men (Cheatham, 1992). The majority of the existing research on this topic has focused on colleges and universities in the United States. However, there is a dearth of research concerning this issue in the same environment in Puerto Rico, a territory of the United States.

The criterion for selecting the participants in this study was that they had to work in NCAA athletic department. At the time the research took place, there were only four athletic departments in Puerto Rico that are members of NCAA Division II. The ten potential candidates contacted agreed to be participants. On-site interviews were conducted with each participant. Questions were structured to provide the participants opportunity to reflect on their experiences in intercollegiate athletics and the status and future of women in leadership roles in this environment in Puerto Rico.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the representation of women in leadership roles within NCAA collegiate sport in Puerto Rico. Causes for underrepresentation, if any, of women in these positions were examined. Strategies that may be useful to improving the representation of women in leadership positions in sport

were identified. The objective of this qualitative study was to interview female head coaches and athletic directors in intercollegiate athletics in Puerto Rico.

### Methodological Framework

This study utilized a qualitative phenomenological research design. Qualitative research is commonly used to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups attribute to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2008). Phenomenology allows the researcher to study a phenomenon through the interpretation and description of the participant's experience (Moustakas, 1994). This methodology was appropriate for this study because the intent was to investigate the representation of a group in an organization. In accordance to the nature of phenomenological approach, this phenomenon was investigated through descriptions of experiences expressed by participants during open-ended interviews.

### Theoretical Framework

The current research sought to explore the representation of women in leadership positions in sport through the feminist lens. The researcher sought to discover the realities of women's lives and understand their experiences rather than just knowing about it. For the purpose of this study Feminist Theory served as the theoretical framework with the suggestion that equal access and equal opportunity for women is the solution that may put female oppression to rest (Birrell, 1984).

Feminist Theory enables an individual to rethink gender assumptions by positioning gender at the center of the analysis with the intent to eliminate domination on the basis of gender. Patriarchal beliefs offer the concept of masculinity as more powerful

than femininity, thus establishing social thought in gender roles (Whelehan, 1995). Social thought is translated to organizational practice thus generating a practice that may be disadvantageous to a gender. From a Feminist Theory perspective, new ideas generated from research concerning oppressive situations for women can set the stage for further research (Cui, 2007).

### Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the current status of gender representation in leadership roles in intercollegiate athletics in Puerto Rico?
2. What are barriers that may influence female representation in leadership roles within intercollegiate sports in Puerto Rico?
3. What are the perceived benefits of having women in leadership roles in intercollegiate sports?
4. What is the perceived future of women in leadership roles in intercollegiate athletics in Puerto Rico?

### Delimitations of the Study

To maintain acceptable standards of measure for the study, the investigation was subject to the following delimiting factors:

1. The whole participant sample consisted of six female head coaches and four athletic directors of colleges and universities that are members of NCAA Division II in Puerto Rico.
2. The use of a semi-structured interview to collect data.

## Limitations of the Study

This study was subject to the following limitations:

1. The small number of participants may affect the generalization of findings to other populations interested in the topic.
2. Participants were limited to female coaches and male athletic directors of NCAA athletic programs in Puerto Rico. Thus, experiences of other female head coaches and male athletic directors in Puerto Rico were not included in this study.

## Definitions of Terms

1. Administrative structure: Anything related to administrative decisions, organizational culture, and policies.
2. Athletic Director (AD): The person who gives direction and is the highest authority within the athletic department. The athletic director may report to the “rector” (provost) and work independently of other departments while other athletic directors work in conjunction with the department of physical education.
3. Barriers: Factors, structures, attitudes, or any obstacle intentional or unintentional, that hinders women from achieving a leadership position in the sport field.
4. Head Coach: The person in charge of a sport team, makes decisions regarding the team, and responds directly to the athletic director.
5. Leadership roles: Positions of authority requiring its holder to make significant decisions and contribute to the program. Positions of head coach and athletic director will be classified as leadership roles.

6. National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA): The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is a voluntary organization through which the nation's colleges and universities govern their athletic programs. It is comprised of institutions, conferences, organizations and individuals committed to the best interests, education, and athletic participation of student-athletes ([www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org)).
7. Phenomenology: Concerned with understanding how the everyday, intersubjective world is constituted; locates the observer in the world of the observed; a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher identifies the essence of human experience (Creswell, 2008; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).
8. Principal Investigator (PI): The researcher conducting the study. For the purpose of this study, the principal investigator conducted, transcribed, translated, and analyzed the interviews.
9. Professional Athlete: Athletes who paid to play in a sport league. These athletes may receive endorsements including those of monetary nature from outside organizations.
10. Title IX: A federal statute passed by Congress in 1972 prohibiting discrimination in educational settings on the basis of gender (Educational Amendments Act, 1972).

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study was to explore the representation of women in leadership roles within intercollegiate sport in Puerto Rico. Causes for underrepresentation, if any, of women in these positions were examined. Strategies that may be useful to improving the representation of women in leadership positions in sport were identified. The review of literature presents past studies that have addressed inequities in sport by gender. This issue was examined from the perspective of studies conducted in organizations like intercollegiate athletics and the NCAA, as well as sport organizations like the International Olympic Committee and sport clubs and federations around the world. The current status of women in leadership positions in intercollegiate sport, causes for the decline of women in leadership positions in sport, and facilitators for achieving leadership positions were of particular importance to this study. The review of literature throughout this chapter is presented under the following topics, a) current status of women in leadership positions in intercollegiate sport, b) barriers to women in leadership positions in sport, and c) strategies that have helped women acquire leadership positions in sport.

## Current Status of Women in Leadership Positions in Intercollegiate Sport

The growth in the number of women as athletes is an achievement to be recognized as their participation in intercollegiate athletic programs has experienced incredible growth influenced by legal demands and organizational initiatives. It is the disproportion of women in leadership positions in sport that requires attention. Female underrepresentation in leadership positions in sport is not a new concern nor is it specific to a particular country or industry (Acosta & Carpenter, 2006; Cui, 2007; Hoeber, 2007; West et. al., 2001).

The underrepresentation of women in sport was first addressed in the United States in the Higher Education Act of 1972, better known as Title IX. This law made equal opportunity a legal obligation for any institution accepting federal funds. This law prohibits the discrimination, exclusion in participation, or denied benefits in educational programs on the basis of gender (U.S. Department of Labor, 2005). Gender equity in the athletic environment is measured in three areas: participation, scholarships, and other benefits such as equipment, scheduling, and facilities. Efforts to support and comply with Title IX have been made by the NCAA. The NCAA established a three-part test to ensure the accommodation of athletes' interests and abilities. As part of NCAA regulations, an institution is considered to be in compliance with Title IX if it can demonstrate the following: a) participation opportunities for male and female students are proportionate to enrollment, b) a continuing practice of program expansion, and c) effective accommodation of athletes' interest and abilities (NCAA, 2008). These criteria allowed

for a clear mandate to intercollegiate athletic departments in regard to providing finances and resources and equitable opportunity for females who wish to participate in sport.

Due to requirements of the three-part test, athletic departments in colleges and universities throughout the United States are allowing females to enjoy access to sport at different levels of performance similar, if not equal, to that of men. According to Acosta and Carpenter (2008), female athletes enjoyed the highest participation in sport competition in history with an average of 8.7 teams per NCAA member school. This translates into a total of 9,101 sport teams available to women. This growth can be better appreciated by pointing out that in 1970, 2 years before the enactment of Title IX, only 16,000 women participated in intercollegiate athletics. In 2008, over 180,000 females are intercollegiate athletes.

Studies indicate that though an incredible growth of female athletes took place, there was also a massive decrease in female involvement as coaches (Acosta & Carpenter, 2006; Lapchick, Little, Lerner, & Mathew, 2009). In 2006 the percentage of females coached by women was lower than ever at 42.4%. This fact is worrisome when you consider that in 1972 over 90% of the women's teams were coached by females. The percentage of men's teams that are coached by women have stayed the same since the enactment of Title IX in 1972, but the percentage of women's teams coached by women has dropped to 42.8% as of 2008 (Acosta & Carpenter, 2008).

Despite the passage of Title IX and several initiatives related to gender equity, recent studies reported the decrease in the involvement of women as leaders in women's sports in the United States (Lapchick et al., 2009; Willis, 2005). The decline and

underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in sport has been a concern of various national and international organizations (Drago et al., 2005; International Olympic Committee and the Institute of Sport & Leisure Policy, 2004; NCAA, 2008). Researchers sought to trace the progression or digression of women in leadership positions in NCAA member institutions (Acosta & Carpenter, 2006), women in national sport organizations (Cui, 2007; Hovden, 2000), how gender is reinforced and/or challenged in sport organizations thus excluding and/or including women (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007, 2008), and influential factors on a woman's lifetime involvement in sport (Dixon, Warner, & Bruening, 2008; Heilman, 2001; Walseth, 2006).

Since the passage of Title IX in 1972, the pool of potential women coaches has increased over 10-fold. This increased has not translated to females in leadership positions in sport (Drago et al., 2005). The Coaching and Gender Equity Project (CAGE) conducts policy-relevant research regarding the decline of women in coaching female teams. The CAGE Report documents several concerns regarding the decline of females in coaching. These concerns are related to: a) the quality of coaching in a situation where large numbers of men and women are in the talent pool; b) the decline of gender equity during a period when substantial gains were experienced in other professions that were considered a man's domain; and c) the lack of women coaches serving as role models may lead to female student athletes avoiding athletics-related leadership roles entirely. According to the CAGE Report, all of these concerns were identified as major constraints to increasing the number of females in leadership positions.

## Barriers to Women in Leadership Positions in Sport

For the purpose of this study, barriers are factors, structures, attitudes, or any obstacle intentional or unintentional, that hinders women from achieving a leadership position in a sport field. Barriers to attaining a leadership position by females can be categorized as a) administrative structure, b) women as their own barrier, c) cultural roles and expectations, and d) the nature of a career in sport.

### *Administrative Structure*

Administrative structure in this study will be referred to as anything related to administrative decisions, organizational culture, and policies. Barriers related to administrative structure include lack of administrative support, lack of financial support, hiring practices, organizational culture, power, and resistance to change (Abney & Richey, 1991; Wentling, 1996).

### *Lack of Administrative Support*

Wentling (1996) conducted face-to-face interviews with middle management women ( $N = 30$ ) employed in Fortune 500 companies. The results demonstrated that obstacles that hindered women's career as managers were: bosses who did not encourage the career progression of women, gender discrimination, and the lack of political savvy on behalf of women. Based on those results, it is clear that in order for change to occur, the administration of an organization needs to support equal and fair opportunities to all represented groups.

Abney and Richey (1991) took into consideration race and gender as they explored obstacles to black women as athletic administrators and/or coaches. The authors

identified obstacles for black woman according to the predominant race of the institution. Inadequate salary, lack of support groups, and being a woman were obstacles in both black and white institutions. Employer discrimination and low expectations by administrators were obstacles at black institutions; whereas, being black and the lack of cultural and social outlets in the community were obstacles at white institutions. The salary the administration was willing to invest in their employees or lack of was another indication of administrative support.

### *Financial Support*

The following studies explored the issue of financial support. Jacobson (2001) brought to light the disparity in salaries of coaches by gender. A comparison of the coaches' salaries by gender in all NCAA Divisions revealed that male coaches were consistently paid more than female coaches. Although equal salaries are not a requirement of the NCAA, the disparity in wages has been an issue of much debate as it may be a cause for women to retire from coaching or avoid it altogether (Cunningham, 2007).

Quarterman, Dupréé, and Willis (2006) conducted a qualitative study to examine the major challenges confronting female intercollegiate athletic directors and directors of women's intercollegiate athletic programs ( $N = 85$ ) of NCAA member institutions. The study brought to light different issues related to financial and resource support that impact those working with women's programs. The 34-item open-ended questionnaires were analyzed for emerging factors. The most predominant issue that emerged from the responses was related to budget/financing. The responses from the participants included

insufficient resources and incredibly low budgets among other things. Other emerging factors were personnel issues, Title IX, organizational and program changes, inadequate facilities, lack administration support, “good old boys” network, lack of recognition by peers, time constraints and commitments, stereotypes of women in leadership roles, lack of experience, sexism and sexist attitudes, and career development issues.

Issues that emerged from the above study may be factors that cause those working in programs to leave. Administrative support is key to attaining and retaining women or any under-represented group in an organization. Without administrative commitment, the hiring process, in addition to low wages, may serve in various forms as a barrier to joining the organization. Other researchers identified these hiring practices as contributors to the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in sport (Heilman, 2001; Miller, Whisenant, & Pedersen, 2007; Stangle & Kane, 1991; Welch & Sigelman, 2007).

### *Hiring Practices*

The presence of women in leadership positions in sport is of great value considering that their occupation in a leadership position impacts the gender diversity of coaches in that athletic department. A particularly common theme among studies was the practice of hiring based on similarities. This practice was found at different divisions of the NCAA. Programs of Divisions I, II, and III had less female coaches (43.9, 32.2, 45.2% respectively) when the athletic director was male than when the athletic director was female (50, 38.9, 49.3% respectively). Furthermore, when there are no females in the administrative structure, the percentage of female coaches was 30.6, 29.7, and 45.8%

respectively (Acosta & Carpenter, 2008). These results suggest that similarities based on gender tend to influence the choice in the candidate to be hired.

Miller et al. (2007) looked into the communication of opportunities and barriers to prospective job applicants in interscholastic athletics. Specifically, authors sought to study gender bias in job postings. Using a sample of 301 job postings studied for athletic administrative positions, 73% required the applicant to coach a boy's sport and 68% of postings required the applicant to serve as head football coach. This requirement discreetly limits applicants to men in different ways. Women may automatically shy away from positions that require them to coach a boy's sport and the few women that may be confident enough to apply may encounter a series of questions regarding her physical skill and mental strength to coach boys compared to men who may apply. Job posting that require the person to be head football coach automatically disqualifies women since a miniscule amount of women play football at a level that may give them the bare qualifications to enter the pool. The authors concluded that responsibilities of job positions are embedded with bias by gender at the interscholastic level. Furthermore, this practice contributes to the underrepresentation of females in leadership positions.

Welch and Sigelman (2007) sought to explore probable explanations for the scarcity of female coaches in NCAA Division I institutions ( $N = 329$ ). According to the information gathered from websites and documents on file, larger, more affluent institutions with more resources directed towards women's athletics hired a significant number of female coaches. These institutions tended to have more visible sport programs, which may in turn put pressure on them to diversify staff. Also, larger programs tend to

have more resources available to hire the most qualified and successful female coaches. This practice is recognized as a commitment from the administration for a diverse work place.

Further, Welch and Sigelman (2007) point out differences of hiring and promotion practices in sport when compared to other firms and/companies. In law firms or other businesses or companies, women tend to be hired and/or promoted by less prestigious, smaller firms while men dominate the best paying higher-status positions. In contrast, in sports fields, specifically in NCAA Division I institutions, women coaches that were hired dominated the most visible women's sports. Possible explanations to this hiring practice may be that larger more affluent institutions may be more diverse and more interested in increasing the share of women in visible leadership positions. Another reason offered by the authors is that these institutions have resources to provide more extensive support services for gender and racial diversity, such as affirmative action offices, multicultural support services, and more aggressive human resources departments.

A woman's likeability has been found to influence hiring decisions (Heilman, 2001). Heilman sought to determine the number of women at the top level of organizations by reviewing past studies concerning the influence of gender stereotypes on evaluations and a woman's career progress. The author reported that it is important for women applicants to be liked by the group in which they wish to be promoted. More important than the skills the candidate may bring to the organization is the importance of her personality and collegiality. A woman may be qualified, but if she is not liked it is

probable she will experience resistance to obtaining a promotion. Promotion within the organization may allow women to influence its organizational culture.

### *Organizational Culture*

Every organization has its environment and its way of conducting business. This includes what is valued and respected, whether publicly as in written documents, or in silence and in the true practices of the organization. Accordingly, researchers sought to analyze how a woman, or more specifically, gender, is accepted and managed within certain sport organizations (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007; Pfister, 2006). The appreciation for women and the perceived value of having a woman on the board of the sport organization was of interest to researchers.

Claringbould and Knoppers (2007) examined a woman's physical fitness levels as a candidate for board membership of national sport organizations by means of semi-structured interviews with male ( $n = 12$ ) and female ( $n = 12$ ) board members of Dutch national sport organizations. Additionally, the authors sought to determine if board members reinforced and/or challenged gender in their sport organizations. The study used the concepts of "do gender" and "gender undone." "Do gender" refers to stereotypes or sex-typed behaviors reinforcing gender differences, and "gender undone" refers to behaviors or decisions that disprove traditional gender preconceptions. Results of the study revealed that men, by affirming and/or ignoring affirmative action policies, can control and manipulate the recruitment and selection of new members, which in turn protects and purports the male-dominated culture. According to the authors, it became apparent that those on gendered-skewed boards justified the lack of women as being

‘normal’ in the sport environment. It was reported that there was a scarcity of women because these did not want to become board members.

Research studies have found the inclusion of women on boards of sport organization to be insignificant to the dominant group (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007; Hovden, 1999). The need for women was disregarded by the understanding that not having a woman, on the board was not a problem, and the board was not missing out on anything. Claringbould and Knoppers (2007) found that it was expected for women on these boards to perform gendered tasks, such as pouring coffee and cleaning up after sessions. Participants thought board membership fit men better than women. Another way in which gender was reinforced within the board was by expecting women to accept and comply with traditions and symbols including failure to address issues such as sexual harassment.

Claringbould and Knoppers (2007) also reported that gender-balanced boards differed from gender-skewed boards in task assignments in Holland. Females in Claringbould and Knoppers study expressed an appreciation for the cultural environment of the board and the emphasis placed on content and accomplishments instead of wasting time on power games and macho behavior. An organizational culture led by power and prestige conflicts was found to influence women to leave the organization (Pfister & Radtke, 2006). The length of terms men spent serving on the board; however, was identified as a limiting factor for women. The lengthy occupancy of men in board positions does not allow others the opportunity to serve (Pfister & Radtke, 2009). In addition, Claringbould and Knoppers (2007) found that the frequency of men acquiring

top positions on boards, gave the perception that men are better suited for board membership than women since they constantly occupy these positions.

Another organizational culture barrier is gender hierarchy. Pfister (2006) studied reasons for the existing gender hierarchy in Danish sport organizations. Questionnaires were sent to all senior women officials ( $n = 874$ ) and to a random sample of men officials ( $n = 692$ ) above club levels. The questionnaire inquired about the structure and culture of their organization regarding gender relationships, attitudes, judgments, barriers, and opportunities in leadership positions in addition to demographics.

Findings revealed that 38% of men compared to 21% of women were entrusted with leadership responsibilities. The author concluded that female officials were a very adaptable minority among members of executive boards. The higher the leadership position, the lower the occupancy of women in these positions. In addition, 6% of women started their careers as a committee chair person compared to 12% of men. In fact, women in this study expressed strong commitment and self-confidence as did males in the study. The author found that organizational culture played a role in the disproportion in numbers between men and women in the form of the expectations of an ideal leader. This was attributed to the large amounts of time invested at work which appeared to affect women more than men because it left less time to spend with family which is primarily a woman's responsibility (Pastore, 1991). The election system and the lack of regulation regarding the length of time a person can hold an office served as a barrier because it limited opportunities for new candidates to gain access to executive bodies. According to the data, involvement in sport seemed to be socially inherited. Women in

the study seemed to have more family involvement (their mother volunteered and/or the child served as an assistant instructor) within sport than the males. Organizational culture impacts practices within an organization. Resistance to change; however, perpetuates traditional practices regardless of its practicality and the effect it may have on the organization and/or its members.

### *Resistance to Change*

Resistance to change often becomes a barrier to women who are trying to climb the hierarchical ladder within their sport organization. Hoeber (2007) studied how organizational members made sense of meanings and practices of gender equity as an organizational value in Canadian universities. The investigator used three sources, a) document analysis including mission statements, operating budgets, and policy documents and how it was reflected in resource allocations and promotions; b) observations of team practices and competition; and c) semi-structured interviews with women ( $n = 14$ ) and men ( $n = 14$ ) who were either an athlete, coach, or administrator. The researcher found that equity was related to different sports. Swimming and basketball teams seemed to have equal allocation of resources for both the men and women; however, that was not the case in the sports of ice hockey and rugby, where findings of the study revealed numerous inequities including staffing, facility access, and budgets. Results that emerged from this study were that a majority of respondents, both male and female, tolerated gender inequities as “just the way things are” (Hoeber, 2007, p. 274). Most participants claimed that there had been some advancement for female athletes. Inequities were expected as natural or normal and not worth challenging. Over

one-third of respondents suggested gender inequities were not a problem. Some female participants in the study were not aware of the degree of inequities. Further, gender inequities were explained by attributing them to factors such as marketability and popularity of teams. Administrative barriers, like those shared above, most served to reinforce the common practice and close the doors to change.

### *Self-Imposed Barriers*

In contrast to previous studies related to administrative structure and its effect on an organization, the following studies identified barriers that have been imposed by women themselves that prevented gaining a leadership position in sport. These barriers were created through the lack of action, determination, confidence and/or communication from the same women who are been negatively affected (Marback, Short, Short, & Sullivan, 2005). Identified within the literature were obstacles that were self-imposed by the population under study. They included: lack of confidence (Marback et al., 2005), self-identity (Sartore & Cunnigham, 2007; Walseth, 2006), and cultural roles and expectations (Cui, 2007).

### *Lack of Confidence and Low Self-Efficacy*

Women's lack of self-confidence was identified as a factor that works against them in achieving a leadership position in sport. Marback and colleagues (2005) surveyed intercollegiate coaches ( $N = 187$ ) regarding their confidence in coaching. The authors reported that female university coaches were less confident than males in game strategy efficacy, coaching during competition, knowledge of strategies and tactics, and ability to motivate their athletes. Gender differences were found on performance-oriented coaching

roles. Males reported higher than women in those duties required for successful team performance (e.g. strategizing, motivation). Women tended to report lower levels of confidence and accomplishments. The authors suggested that a person's confidence will impact their intention to apply for a job, resign from a job, and/or their motivation while on the job.

### *Identity*

A single study regarding an individual's identity effect on sport involvement was that of Walseth (2006). The researcher sought to study the relationship between the source of identity and involvement in sport and physical activity with young Muslim women living in Norway. Participants' ages ranged from 16 to 25 years and were sampled through a sport club or through their former status as pupils at one elementary school. After analyzing interviews of participants ( $N = 25$ ), it became evident that their participation in physical activity was related to their source of identification (e.g., ethnicity, religion).

For a Muslim woman whose sense of identification is ethnicity, participating in sports is not appropriate since the behavior one engages in performing sport goes against what is regarded in her culture as ideal feminine behavior. Results of Walseth's study (2006) revealed that engaging in behaviors not accepted by the participants' culture (i.e., jogging or playing football or having friends who are in the dominant culture) may lead to harassment or sanctions by those who uphold different boundaries for behavior related to ethnicity or religion. On the contrary when the Muslim women's sense of identification was religion (e.g., Islam) they viewed health and physical activity as important and

involvement in those activities was accepted by their parents. Accordingly, a person's source of identity may influence a person's decisions and actions.

### *Cultural Roles and Expectations*

Culture and the roles and expectations it upholds influence internal and external factors. Culture influences how a people think and their beliefs. Consequently those people work within organizations and establish an organizational culture which is influenced by the culture in their society. Therefore, decisions and actions taken by people who are a part of administrative structures are influenced as well. An important aspect of culture is the family and the influence the family have on each member. Stakeholders in every organization are influenced by values imbedded by their upbringing such as family responsibilities and feminine traits.

Cui (2007) examined positions held by women in three Chinese National Sport Organizations (NSO). Data were obtained through individual semi-structured interviews with male ( $n = 5$ ) and female ( $n = 9$ ) sport administrators from the State Sport Commission. Additional data were obtained from the Department of Sport Policy of the State Sport Commission, proceedings of sport conferences and symposia, and governmental and nongovernmental organization official websites among others. The author found that Chinese culture played a part in the underrepresentation of women in top management positions in sport organizations. According to findings in Cui's study, girls are not trained to demonstrate assertiveness and be tough, characteristics seen as important to coaching and developing athletes. Participants shared that in the Chinese culture finding a good husband was more important than pursuing a graduate degree. Cui

concluded that women are stereotyped and presumed to be inferior to men. Contributions women bring to organizations as emerged from interviews were traits such as attentiveness, carefulness, and cautious, traits that are not looked at for leadership positions. The author found this as an excuse used to exclude women from top executive decisions in Chinese NSO. Women in NSO served in powerless positions traditionally considered gendered roles.

Similarly, there is the perception that if women do coach they will not last long because they will get married and have children. A woman's opportunity to obtain a coaching position may be hindered if her commitment is questioned due to family responsibilities (West et al., 2001).

#### *Gendered Professions and Gendered Characteristics*

When a certain job is gendered and considered a man's or woman's job, barriers are automatically created for those other than the expected ones to attain the position. Thus others may encounter difficulties if they intended to enter a career that has been gendered to the opposite sex. Gender stereotypes assume women's management behaviors to be nurturing and service-oriented instead of tough and achievement-oriented. Characteristics identified with women are not associated with leadership. (Heilman, 2001).

West et al. (2001) explored female underrepresentation in sport coaching roles. Qualitative data regarding participants' experiences as coaches were gathered by means of the Witz Model of Occupational Closure, in-depth interviews from female coaches in the United Kingdom ( $N = 20$ ) coaching at different levels (e.g., high school, college). The

results of the study revealed women's access to coaching roles were limited because it is gendered as a masculine role. Female participants in the study may have been excluded because of her home responsibilities. Gendering the coaching profession as masculine may limit the access to networks for women.

Hovden (2000) examined meanings of gender as it related to the selection process of candidates to elected positions in the Norwegian Confederation of Sport and how these meanings influenced organizational gender structure. Hovden gathered pertinent information through participation, observation, and field notes at board meetings and general assemblies or annual meetings. Group interviews with election committee members, nominated candidates, and board members were also conducted. The researcher provided a comparative framework in the interview guide. His findings demonstrated that the selection of the candidate to occupy a position of leadership was focused on finding the right person for the positions. The preferred criteria for leader selections were related to heavy weight abilities meaning, characteristics often related to heroic, masculine traits that would contribute to organizational success. Other aspects important to the board were positive evaluations of leaders by sponsors/private investors and the use of personal male-dominated networks. These procedures; however, were a biased form of selection. Through the use of this process only two females were considered "heavyweights," thus signifying that women did not possess necessary abilities to hold a position on the board. Female underrepresentation was further justified with lack of competence and individual deficiencies. The author concluded that the

selection patterns utilized by boards of the Norwegian Confederate Sport further supported gender hierarchy.

### *Nature of a Career in Sport*

An additional barrier for women may be simply the nature or demands of a career in sport (Acosta & Carpenter, 1992; Drago et al., 2005). The sport industry is associated with long hours, unpredictable schedules, travel, and extreme stress. This is especially true for positions in coaching and athletic administration. Consequently, responsibilities and commitments that come with those positions are ones that are under study as issues that may contribute to the low representation of females in those positions.

The CAGE Project conducted focus groups with athletes to assess their perception regarding a coaching career. Researchers of the CAGE project found that extreme workloads of head coaches and athletic administrators attributed to the decline of females occupying such positions (Drago et al., 2005). The same study tied extreme workloads as a contributor to the family-unfriendly perspective of coaching and athletic administrative positions. Responsibilities that play a part in the family-unfriendly nature of coaching and athletic administrative positions were identified as timing of practices, games and recruiting trips, and institutional cultures (Pastore, 1991). These findings may explain why females do not consider entering coaching, as well as the high overturn or women in the field.

Similarly, Acosta and Carpenter (1992) identified work schedules such as long hours, and evening and weekend work as barriers to women seeking a coaching position

or that of athletic director primarily because it interfered with their family responsibilities (Pastore, 1991). Additional realities that made this work unattractive as proclaimed by women was that the salary was not equal to time/work commitment, dealings with the “old boy network”, and that athletics takes over their lives.

### Strategies for Overcoming Barriers

Strategies and initiatives that help women overcome barriers they encounter in climbing the hierarchical ladder of their organization will be discussed in this third and final section of the literature review. Thus far the literature reviewed for current status of women in sport leadership roles, and barriers to women occupying leadership positions in sport. Just as important are strategies that helped women enter the sport field and achieve leadership positions. These are communicated in the form of recommendations or as organizational initiatives in the following section.

### *Networks and Female Administrative Representation*

Relationships, communication, and commonalities are all related to networks. The following studies have identified networks as an important factor to opportunities and growth in any field of work. (Lovett & Lowry, 1994; Meyerson & Fletcher, 2000; Pastore & Meacci, 1992; West et al., 2001). Networking is at the core of entering the sport field, professional growth, and promotions. Therefore, not having access to networks was detrimental because it may (a) deprive the person of developing professional relationships with people in high places who do the hiring in their organization, (b) limit access to information which is shared only through networks, as well as (c) limit the opportunity for others to get to know those in leadership positions. In fact, women’s

exclusion from informal coaching networks was seen as disadvantageous since those occupying influential positions of appointing coaches are mostly male (West et al., 2001).

Acosta and Carpenter (2006) stated the opinion that coaches and administrators perceived the success of the “old boys club” network as having perpetuated the dominance of males in leadership positions in sport. Furthermore, female lack of support systems such as the failure of the ‘old girls club’ further contributed to the diminishing presence of females in leadership positions in sport. In light of the effectiveness of the “good old boys” club which consists of men in administrative powerful positions, it is important to have women in administrative positions so they may influence certain decisions. Lovett and Lowry (1994) sought to study representation in coaching by gender as it relates to the gender of the administrative structure. The study had a sample of 1,106 public secondary schools in Texas and two types of administrative structures (two-person and three-person administrative structure). The data revealed that when a two-person administrative structure was all male (principal; athletic director) coaches in the athletic program would be mostly male. If the two-person administrative structure had at least one woman, then the majority of coaches (including all sport teams) were female. The three person administrative structure (principal, athletic director for men’s program, athletic director for women’s program) had more female coaches only if the athletic director was female. If the athletic director was male then the majority of coaches were men. The authors concluded that women occupying high administrative positions, especially that of athletic director, facilitated female presence as coaches.

Another advantage that stems from having female administrative representation is the commitment to a diverse staff. Pastore and Meacci (1992) requested two-year college administrators from the National Directory of College Athletics, males ( $n = 117$ ) and females ( $n = 19$ ) to evaluate the effectiveness of recruitment and retention strategies regarding women as head coaches with a five-point Likert scale survey. The strategies that were considered effective (received at least 50% of agree and/or strongly agree) were: administrators actively recruiting females for coaching positions (men: 82%; women: 85%), increasing opportunities for females to get practical experience in coaching (men:76%; women: 95%), recruiting female athletes into the coaching profession (men:74%; women: 72%), colleges/universities implementing coaching curriculum (men: 62%; women:74), and increasing the number of coaching workshops/clinics (men: 56%; women: 63%). Women in the study also chose recruiting female athletes for the coaching profession as a necessary strategy with 85%.

#### *Discussion on Sensitive Issues and Workshops*

Just as important as having diverse representation in management positions is the openness to discuss issues that benefit under-represented groups. Webb and Macdonald (2007), interviewed seventeen teachers ( $N=17$ ) (7 males and 10 females) for their study on power and the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in athletics. Researchers suggested the adoption of normalized discourses as a way to open conversations that would eventually facilitate women's entrance into leadership positions. Strategies to address the underrepresentation of females in leadership positions are: flexible work arrangement, support systems for new leaders, and increase awareness of

underrepresentation. They concluded it was important for both men and women to have such issues put on the agenda for discussion. In turn, this could create a more conscious and positive environment for everyone.

The literature offered nuggets of information that may help women overcome barriers commonly faced in acquiring leadership positions in sport (Abney & Richey, 1991; Kilty, 2006; Wentling, 1996). Kilty suggested continuing to provide opportunities for female coaches to enable them to learn from one another while developing skills to better manage the current social context. Furthermore, she recommended a restructuring of the work environment to encourage an environment of cooperation, collaboration, trust, and mutual learning. Finally, Kilty proposed helping female coaches navigate career and life transitions through mentoring and use collective power to advocate for change. For these recommendations to be implemented, there must be male and female administrators and/or veteran coaches who are committed to the cause.

Abney and Richey (1991) addressed the issue of gender and race. They offered recommendations for black women to overcome obstacles to coaching or athletic directing. These included utilizing support groups, formal and informal mentoring programs within governing bodies, and exercises to improve personal characteristics. Personal characteristics include enhancement of confidence, competence, determination, and perseverance, positive sense of self, ability to meet challenges, qualifications necessary to compete for leadership roles at all levels, and involvement in sport associations, organizations, and committees. To break through barriers that keep women underrepresented as leaders in sport, women must find opportunities to get involved in

sport organizing bodies because which may lead to overcoming leadership stigmas attached to gender (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007). Networking and mentorship has been recommended as important for the professional growth of underrepresented groups (O'Brien & Janssen, 2005)

### *Policies and Initiatives to Equal Opportunities*

It is also important for organizations to make policies that put in place a fair and safe environment for all involved. Findings of the CAGE Project (Drago et al., 2005) suggested four broad policies to ameliorate the decline of women coaching women's collegiate athletic teams. These policies included:

- 1) Increase the number of women in the coaching pipelines at all levels of athletics
- 2) The importance to formalize hiring practices, decision-making processes, training and development, and the career paths of coaches

The policies mentioned above would provide women a better chance at coaching and athletic directing positions. In regard to the environment of athletic departments, two other suggestions stand out:

- 3) Make coaching and careers in athletic administration more welcoming of and flexible in relation to family commitments
- 4) Provide a more inclusive environment within athletic departments and across athletic teams and organizations for women, people of color, and individuals with non-traditional sexual orientation (pp. 51-52)

The authors further suggested that the business of athletics and the athletic department adjust to accommodate new trends and values of today.

The importance of female representation is recognized by international sport governing entities. Since 1912, the International Olympics Committee (IOC) continues to add women's sports for participation. The Olympic Movement indicated that while the participation of women in athletic events continues to increase, much needs to be done in the area of equality of leadership in sport administration positions (International Olympic Committee and the Institute of Sport & Leisure Policy, 2004). Also, the IOC implemented policies regarding percentage representation, for increasing the representation of women in decision making positions within their organization. Their hope is that the implementation of policies will lead to an increase of female presence.

### *Parental Influence*

During a person's formative years, the environment that surrounds him or her influences his or her beliefs and future decisions. Support from parents and role models frequently influences or decisions to pursue career goals. As pointed out by a recent study, parental influence can never be underestimated. Dixon et al. (2008) interviewed female head coaches ( $N = 17$ ) of NCAA Division I to examine the influence their parents had on their continued participation in sport. Researchers used NVivo7 software using an ongoing coding process with a method of agreement. Throughout their interviews various themes emerged as having influenced participants' sport involvement. The first theme was that parents served as strong role models as almost all participants had one or both parents participate in competitive sport. Participants shared that they became interested in

sport because their parents participated in sport. Therefore being involved in sport was a “normal” family activity. Authors point out that the family environment was important to consider because just as societal culture influences what is appropriate for a woman, family culture influences a person's self-confidence, identity, and their drive to overcome obstacles.

A theme that emerged from the study conducted by Dixon et al. (2008) was that parents of participants also served as supporters of their child's experiences in sport. Sport support came in the form of attending games (the most frequently mentioned), coaching or managing sport teams to which they belonged (usually done by fathers), or providing transportation (usually done by mothers). Another theme that emerged from the study was how parents gave meaning to the experience of sport. The meaning given to their sport experience was communicated in the form of values, appropriateness, and the importance of sport participation. Within the interpretation of sport experience was gender appropriateness and encouragement without pressure. Dixon and colleagues defined gender appropriateness as the meaning that participating in sport was acceptable and desirable for women. On the other hand, encouragement without pressure was referred to parental support without demands. Decisions regarding their participation were made by them not their parents. According to the results, it was apparent that parents influence the participants' long-term involvement in sport by normalizing their sport experience or making sport part of their everyday life. The sport environment in which participants were raised was one where sport was not a gendered activity, and participants decided their involvement. According to the authors, regardless of the

intensity of parental involvement, sport participation became part of women's social identity.

These studies identified what may help or positively influence opportunities for women to reach a leadership position in sport (Abney & Richey, 1999; Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007; Dixon et al. 2008). The ability to network with people who influence hiring and/or promotion decisions, whether they be men or women, that occupy an administrative position can help overcome barriers. Women in administrative positions can also serve as mentors to those who are starting in the field and pass on important life lessons. Also, environments that support the discussion of issues that may be sensitive to an underrepresented group are necessary. This may give a chance to address unfair practices. Organizations can show support for a diverse staff by implementing policies supportive of fair opportunities for professional growth and involvement to underrepresented groups. Finally, a supportive and encouraging environment may influence a woman's confidence. Hence, her decision to be involved in a sport profession may be determined by her and not by barriers faced.

### Summary

The literature documented the underrepresentation of women in sport. For over 30 years gender representation was traced in intercollegiate athletics in the United States. Legal obligations (Title IX) and organizational initiatives such as those of the NCAA and the IOC, however, have been no match to the continuous perpetuation of gender imbalances in this area of sport. This is clearly evidenced by the continuous decline in the number of females in leadership positions such as coaches or athletic directors.

In addition to the study of the number of women in sport organizations is the study of the causes for the discrepancy in representation of women in leadership positions in sport organizations. To this approach is the perplexing situation that women's presence continues to decline albeit the growth in the pool of prospective female student elite athletes (Drago et al., 2005).

Around the world women are a minority in leadership positions in sport organizations as well. Studies offered in the literature review articulate a number of issues that have worked against gender equity in sport organizations and well as strategies to overcome those difficulties and improve the representation of women in leadership positions in sport.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to explore the representation of women in leadership roles within NCAA intercollegiate sport in Puerto Rico. The issue was investigated through the use of in-depth interviews of female head coaches and male athletic directors. Causes for underrepresentation, if any, of women in these positions were examined. Strategies that may be useful to improving the representation of women in leadership position in sport were identified. Methods utilized in this study are presented under the following headings: (a) Selection of the Research Methodology, (b) Participant Selection, (c) Instruments, (d) Data Collection, (e) Data Analysis, and (f) Validation of the Findings.

#### Selection of the Research Methodology

Qualitative research designs are commonly used to explore and understand the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2008). This type of research emphasizes the detail and depth of a phenomenon in the social realm (Goodwin & Horowitz, 2002). Qualitative research allows the researcher to obtain a rich description of a phenomenon by capturing the participant's point of view (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Based upon the purpose of this study, the researcher chose a qualitative research design to study female representation in leadership positions in intercollegiate sport in Puerto Rico.

Factors involved in the representation of females in leadership positions in intercollegiate sport in Puerto Rico have yet to be identified. Due to the lack of research regarding the population under study and the purpose of this research, a phenomenological research approach was determined to be an effective and appropriate way to grasp the meaning of the gathered data (Creswell, 2008). Within qualitative methodology there are various approaches.

Narrative, ethnography, case studies, grounded theory, and phenomenology are some of the approaches used to conduct qualitative research. (Creswell, 2008). For the purpose of this study phenomenology was chosen as an appropriate qualitative research approach. When applying a phenomenological approach, it is the researcher's intent to make sense of the particular phenomenon utilizing the participant's experience. This strategy seeks to explore the perception of individuals in a particular population and develop a detailed view of the meaning of a phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003).

Phenomenology as a research approach has been explained by various authors in similar, yet distinctive ways (Creswell, 2008; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2001). A key concept of phenomenology is intersubjectivity, understanding that participants' experiences have been influenced by those around them (Husserl, 1982). For the purpose of this study the researcher's intent is to describe subjective experiences of participants.

Moustakas (1994) presents several ideas in relation to the participant's shared experiences and the scientific process of a phenomenological methodology. First, the researcher must study the shared experience as a whole until its essence is achieved. To identify the essence of the experience, the researcher must search for meaning within the

data. Shared experiences of participants are the primary evidences of themes that emerged from this data.

Similar to Moustakas' approach (1994), Patton (2001) explains that phenomenological analysis seeks to grasp and elucidate the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of a phenomenon for a person or a group of people. In this study the primary investigator (PI) wanted to understand how female head coaches and male athletic directors perceived the representation of women in leadership positions in NCAA intercollegiate sport in Puerto Rico.

#### Selection of Participants

Although the representation of women in administrative roles in sport is of concern and has been constantly under study in the United States, there is a lack of research concerning this issue in Puerto Rico. To study the phenomenon previously mentioned, the PI obtained approval from the Texas Woman's University Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to the selection of participants. Purposeful sampling was used to identify candidates to participate in this study since the intent of the research was to study a phenomenon through the eyes of a specific population. Purposeful sampling is used when a person or people is/are information rich (Creswell, 2008; Patton, 2001).

According to the criteria to be eligible to participate in this study, the person had to be an athletic director (male or female) or female head coach in an institution of higher education in Puerto Rico and a member of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). The researcher searched the NCAA's website to identify institutions of higher education that were members of NCAA in Puerto Rico. From the NCAA's website a list

of college/universities that are members of this organization was obtained. After identifying these institutions (four Division II schools), the researcher examined each university's website in search for names and contact information of female head coaches and athletic directors regardless of gender. The PI sought to interview the whole population ( $N = 10$ ) of eligible participants, six female head coaches, and four male athletic directors representing a total of four institutions.

To invite potential candidates to participate in the study, the PI made initial contact through a phone call. The purpose of the phone call was to explain the nature of the study and to invite them to participate. During the phone call, participants were informed of why they were selected to participate in the study. The PI explained to them that there is a dearth of research regarding the representation of females in leadership positions in intercollegiate sports in Puerto Rico and their participation would help increase the body of knowledge in the field.

All ten candidates agreed to participate during the initial contact. A second phone call was made approximately 3 weeks after the initial contact. During this call a time and place was chosen to conduct the interview. All arrangements were made based on the needs, availability, and desired location of the participant.

### Instruments

Qualitative research leans toward exploration and inductive logic (Patton, 2001). To explore the issue under study, the researcher used two instruments: open-ended interview questions and a personal data sheet.

Questions for the open-ended interview were developed to address the purpose of the study. The intention of the open-ended question format was to allow for expansion of responses by participants. To ensure content validity of the interview questions and demographic data sheet, these documents were reviewed and approved by the dissertation committee, and two professionals in the field of Sport Management. The interview protocol consisted of seven broad questions of which six had specific follow-up questions (See Appendixes G and F). After approval by the committee, a pilot study was conducted by the PI with one female athletic director whose information was not included in the study. The purpose of the pilot study was to assure the effectiveness of the proposed interview questions and to reword where need be. No changes to the interview protocol or data sheet were deemed necessary.

To obtain demographic information from participants, interviewees were asked to fill out a personal data sheet. The data sheet requested information regarding age, gender, ethnicity, and marital status. Professional information such as educational level, job title, and years in the current position was also requested (See Appendixes E and F). Lastly, participants were asked to indicate if they had previously worked under a female coach or athletic director (male or female) during their time in high school or college as well as the nature of participants' past involvement in sport (e.g., participated in professional sport). Identifiable information such as names and places of current and previous employment were not included on the questionnaire. All data were coded with an identification number to protect the confidentiality of participants.

## Data Collection

Prior to conducting interviews, all participants completed a written informed consent form, written in Spanish, confirming their knowledge of the study, purpose, process, possible risk, and possible benefits involved before taking part in the study. The purpose of the study and voluntary participation information were explained in the consent form and verbally explained to the participants. The consent form reiterated to the participants that their participation was voluntary and they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. Also, participants were told that to protect their identity, names or numbers that may identify them, would not be used either on the data sheet or throughout the writing of the results. Once written consent was given, the PI conducted the interview at the participant's location of choice. Interviews lasted approximately 1hr. Locations for the interviews ranged from offices to sporting facilities at their place of employment.

The data collection began with the completion of the personal data sheet and was followed by the interview. The interview was conducted in the participant's preferred language (Spanish). During the interview, participants were given the opportunity to expand on their responses offering any detail or additional information they felt comfortable sharing. Interviews consisted of in-depth questions concerning experiences, perceived barriers, and future expectations regarding women performing in leadership positions in collegiate sport. In the case of a question not being answered, the researcher followed with a probe or rephrased the question to readdress it. In the event that a

participant offered information to new issues, the researcher validated the information by inviting the participants to expand on the event and experience.

All interviews were audio taped using a digital recorder in order to ensure accuracy and validity of the answers. Also, during interviews, the PI took field notes of comments made by the participants, and described their body language. These field notes were used to identify nonverbal expressions that could not be captured in the transcripts. In addition to nonverbal expressions, comments or phrases were recorded.

Once each interview was completed, the PI first transcribed and later translated interviews from the Spanish to the English language. To ensure accuracy of translations, two of the interviews were randomly selected and translated back to the Spanish language by an external translator and were compared with the original transcriptions to ensure accuracy in translation. Translations by the PI were deemed accurate.

### Data Analysis

Interview questions were used to give direction to the study in obtaining shared experiences from participants relevant to the purpose of the study (Moustakas, 1994). Although this study used specific research questions to guide the interview, the data collected were analyzed to find the themes reflected from experiences of the participants.

Four steps of the phenomenological process proposed by Patton (2001) for analyzing data were used. These steps are: a) epoch, b) phenomenological reduction, c) organization of data into clusters, and d) structural analysis.

The first step, epoch, involves reporting results without judgment. The second step, phenomenological reduction, involves identify the data in pure form (also known as

bracketing). The third step, organization of data involves gathering repetitive data together. The last step, structural analysis, requires the researcher to analyze the individual data and synthesize it into themes that identify the experience of the group as a whole.

Utilizing the data gathered from interviews, the researcher sought to identify common themes among participants. The data gathered from each participant were treated with the same value, and then organized into emerging theme groups. Once the data were organized by themes, the researcher made a structural description representing the essence of the lived experiences of the group under study. Analyzing the data in a different form adds to the rigor of the findings in the study (Creswell, 2008).

In addition, an external reviewer participated in the study with the purpose of providing an outsider's perspective of what the data represented. The external reviewer and the researcher independently analyzed the interview transcripts to identify themes. Subsequently, the external reviewer and the researcher discussed differences and similarities in their independent analysis and reached consensus. The other researcher was a faculty member at an institution of higher education. The external reviewer is a published qualitative researcher. Both the PI and the external reviewer have previous experience conducting qualitative research.

#### Validation of the Findings

It is important to acknowledge that qualitative data is unique to a particular situation (Patton, 2001). Therefore, when considering the validation of qualitative data it should be done with the understanding that reality is constructed by each individual and

should be interpreted instead of measured (Angen, 2000). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003), researchers need to confirm through various qualitative mechanisms the validity of the findings. These include, but are not limited to: triangulation, clarifying the bias the researcher brings to the study, presenting negative cases that run counter to the themes, using peer debriefing, and using an external auditor to review the entire project (Creswell, 2008).

To further ensure trustworthiness of the current data and test for consistency of the data, the PI utilized two forms of triangulation. The first form was the triangulation of multiple data sources. Triangulation of sources was performed through the use of two data sources: (a) themes that emerged when analyzing interviews, and (b) field notes taken throughout interviews to document body language that might indicate strong feelings the interviewee may have expressed. The second contribution to the verification and validation of the analysis was analyst triangulation utilizing the external auditor's analysis. This process is frequently recommended when conducting qualitative research (Creswell, 2008). The two analyses were compared first individually, and then with both researchers together. Each researcher identified themes of each transcript following Patton's recommendations. Then a meeting was arranged for researchers to discuss findings. If there was a disagreement specific to themes, each researcher explained her rationale points and discussions continued until consensus was reached.

As with any qualitative study, the researcher is part of the research process. The PI made a conscious effort to be aware of personal prejudices and refrained from judgment or personal assumptions regarding the phenomenon under study. It is important

to note that the ethnicity, gender, and past experiences of the PI may influence the objectivity of the study. The PI is a Hispanic female and has formal education in the field of Sport Management. It is equally important, however, to state that the ethnicity, gender, and past experience of the PI may also have been a positive factor in allowing the participants to feel more comfortable and open in sharing their stories. The researcher also spoke the participants' language (Spanish), thus facilitating follow-up questions.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to explore the representation of women in leadership roles within NCAA collegiate sport in Puerto Rico. Specifically, the investigator sought answers to four research questions: 1) What is the current status of gender representation in leadership roles in NCAA collegiate athletics in Puerto Rico?, 2) What are barriers that may influence female representation in leadership roles within NCAA collegiate athletics in Puerto Rico?, 3) What are the perceived benefits of having women in leadership roles in NCAA collegiate athletics?, and 4) What is the perceived future of women in leadership roles in NCAA collegiate athletics in Puerto Rico?

This chapter will present the descriptive data of participants and qualitative findings derived through themes that emerged from interviews with participants. The information in this chapter is presented in the following order: a) descriptive information of the participants, and b) identified themes.

#### Demographic Data

Four athletic departments of colleges/universities met the selected criteria for participation. Interviews were conducted with female coaches ( $n = 6$ ) and male athletic directors (AD) ( $n = 4$ ) of athletic departments members of the NCAA Division II. Although all participants were of Hispanic descent, some identified themselves as “white” in reference to their skin color. Their ages ranged from the 31 to 40 year old and

over 50 years of age. All participants were high school athletes, and all but one participant were student athletes in college. With the exception of the one coach who had a female coach in high school, all participants had male coaches in high school and college. Five coaches and one athletic director had been professional athletes. Two male participants indicated having 1 to 5 years in their current position while only one female indicated 1 to 5 years in their current position. Three of 10 participants (two coaches and one AD) had at least 15 years of experience in their present positions. Further information regarding participants is available in Tables 1 and 2.

#### Current Status of Females in Leadership Positions in Sport in Puerto Rico

According to the information obtained by the researcher through personal visits and the website of each athletic department, the status of women in leadership positions in athletic departments seems to be lower in Puerto Rico than in the U.S. At the time of the study, there were 61 male head coaches, 12 male assistant coaches, 8 female head coaches, and no female assistant coach in the athletic departments studied. Overall female head coaches occupied 13.11% of the positions and none of the 12 assistant coach positions. In non-NCAA sports such as dance and cheerleading, females occupy 12.5% of head coaching positions and no assistant coaching positions. This percentage is lower than those of the U.S. which was reported to be 20.6% (Acosta & Carpenter, 2008). To take a closer look at female coaching in Puerto Rico, women coach 1.92% of male teams and 25% of women's teams. In the United States these measures translate to 2.5% and 42%, respectively (Acosta & Carpenter, 2008).

Table 1

*Participants' Demographics*

Participant	Position	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Education	Years in Position
1	Coach	F	41-50	D	Bachelor's	5-10
2	Coach	F	41-50	S	Master's	15 plus
3	Coach	F	51 +	M	Master's-ABD	15 plus
5	Coach	F	31-40	S	Bachelor's	5-10
9	Coach	F	31-40	M	Bachelor's +	1-5
10	Coach	F	31-40	M	3 Years of college	5
4	AD	M	41-50	M	Master's	5-10
6	AD	M	--	M	Bachelor's	1-5
7	AD	M	51+	--	Bachelor's	15 plus
8	AD	M	41-50	M	Master's	1-5

*Note.* D=Divorce; S=Single; M=Married; AD=Athletic Director

Table 2

*Participants' Athletic Involvement and their Coach and Athletic Director by Gender*

Participant	Participant Information			Participant Information			
	During High school			During College			
	Athlete	Coach	AD	Athlete	Coach	AD	Professional
	at	Gender	Gender	at	Gender	Gender	Athlete
	School			College			
1	Yes	Female	Female	Yes	Male	Male	Yes
2	Yes	Male	Male	Yes	Male	Male	No
3	Yes	Male	No AD	Yes	Both	Male	Yes
5	Yes	Male	Male	Yes	Male	Male	Yes
9	Yes	Male	Male	Yes	Male	Male	Yes
10	Yes	Male	Male	Yes	Male	Male	Yes
4	Yes	Male	Male	Yes	Male	Male	Yes
6	Yes	Male	Male	No	--	Male	No
7	Yes	Male	Male	Yes	Male	Male	No
8	Yes	Male	Male	Yes	Male	Male	No

## Identified Themes

Eight major themes emerged from interviews with six women coaches and four male athletic directors. Four major themes (with subthemes) addressed why there are not more women in leadership positions in intercollegiate athletics in Puerto Rico. Four themes (with subthemes) reflected on factors that may contributed to increasing the number of women involved in athletic departments in colleges and universities in Puerto Rico in the near future. A summary of the analysis of the data according to themes and subthemes is presented in Figure 1.

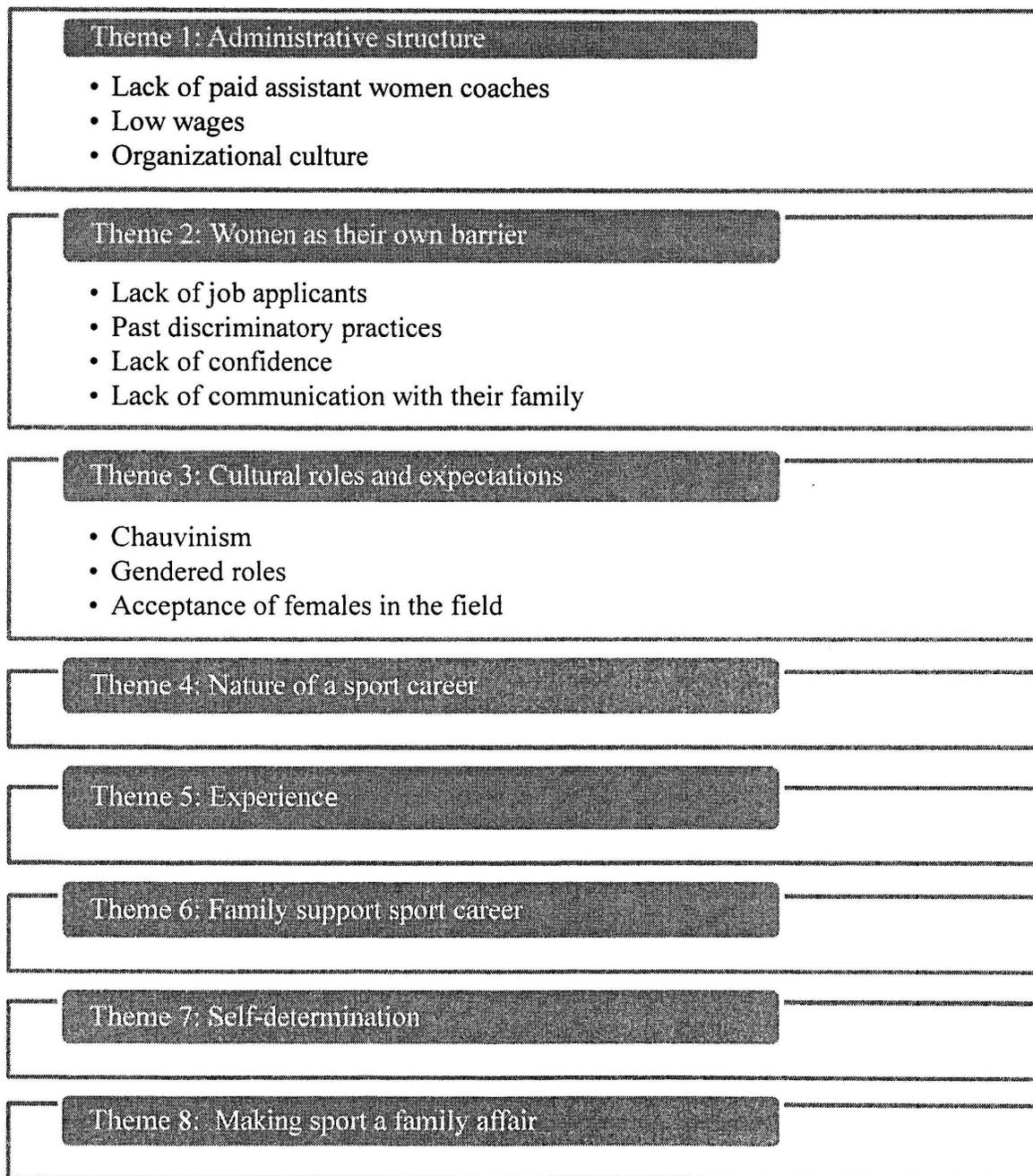


Figure 1. Identified Themes.

## *Barriers Affecting Female Representation in Leadership Positions*

### *Administrative Structure*

Barriers caused by administrative structures are those issues controlled by the administration of either the university or the athletic department itself which make it difficult for women to attain a leadership position such as a coach or athletic director. Subthemes specific to the administrative structure are discussed under the following headings: a) lack of paid assistant women coaches, b) low wages, and c) organizational culture. These subthemes reveal the different areas that have made it difficult for women to reach a leadership position in sport.

*Lack of paid assistant women coaches.* The lack of support on behalf of the administration in the form of offering paid assistant coaching positions has limited the growth of females in the field as new coaches as perceived by some female coaches. When asked what in their opinion was contributing to the low number of women in leadership positions in sport, three out of six participating coaches referenced the lack of opportunities for young athletes to be assistant coaches. It is important to state that athletic directors did not mention the lack of assistant positions as a contributor to the current representation of women as head coaches. Two ADs recently (before data collection) placed females in roles of assistant coaches.

Coaches emphasized that assistant coach experience was critical for eventually becoming a head coach. But if an assistant coaching position is not available, then there will not be experienced women to hire as a head coach in the future. One coach referred to an assistant position as “the way to grow” in the coaching field. Although it served as

an opportunity for growth, it would be short lived due to financial needs and demands of real life. One coach shared her experience in trying to get money to hire an assistant coach this way:

Right now I am a head coach...if I had that person [assistant coach] maybe in 3 or 4 years I would let her take my place. But the university does not offer those opportunities for them to get polished. Then if they [assistant coach] could work at a school and then come to work for three more hours and getting paid because you cannot work for free. That is what happens in this profession. Everyone wants you to work for free. And you cannot. People have to live. People have families. People have needs. But if you give that person the opportunity to assist you, that would open a lot of doors that would entice women, because she is doing something, she feels needed, and she is gaining for herself. I have had many assistants but they last 6 months. They cannot do this their whole life when they need to earn a salary to be able to live.

Some coaches expressed that at one point in time they worked for free. Three of six coaches interviewed did work for free before being hired as a head coach. They viewed this as an opportunity to develop professionally, show their coaching potential, and be involved in what they like to do. One coach related how after graduating and working as a coach in the community, she started coaching the team from the college from which she graduated for free. She mentioned that it was important to showcase what you can do as a coach, even if it means doing it for free:

If you want to be a coach you have to have persistence. I never saw myself as a coach as a student in college. I did see myself involved in sport. But a situation happened with the team and they lost their coach. So, I started to see a team that had the potential to win and they are losing because they could not get it together. So I took over the team. The university was not going to pay me, but I was going to coach them. This happened half way through the semester but I still managed to lead them to winning the season. The following year I took the team to the finals. So I submitted my resume, went through the hiring process and I qualified and got the job, with pay.

Failure to create paid assistant coaching positions not only limits the opportunity for professional growth and exposure but it also limits mentorship opportunities between experienced coaches and potentially future coaches and leaders in the field. One coach expressed her desire to mentor others in order to help aspiring women enter the coaching field. She stated,

If I could have an assistant coach, I could mentor her... It would be ideal to have an assistant, I could mentor and help her grow and mature...the opportunity to be trained and see if she really likes it. But if they want to do that they have to do it for free because here they do not pay assistants.

*Low wages.* Another administrative structure barrier was that of low wages. With one exception, none of the coaches interviewed were hired full-time by the athletic department. Coaching positions were part-time as these women worked full-time in other positions (e.g., administrative positions, taught at the university, coached outside the

university). According to one coach, “It is easier for the university to hire someone who is already an employee and just give them an extra stipend.” This way the athletic department does not have to fund a full salary. A common difficulty expressed by five of six coaches participating in the study is the poor pay received for coaching. As one commented, “It is poor pay for your time.” Another supported the issue by expressing the following comment, “With what I am paid here, I can only pay my car note.”

Discriminatory wages for females in comparison to males was also voiced by 7 of 10 participants. One said, “It does not matter how you put it, many times women are not paid the same as men.” The reality of this barrier was reflected by an AD’s comment:

Even though they had the same preparation, women tended to be paid less because they are women. Of course that has improved significantly over time because of the rules which make everyone get paid by their preparation and experience, not by their gender.

*Organizational culture.* The third theme specific to administrative structure was the organizational culture. The organizational culture of an athletic department influences the decision making practices, and was particularly referenced by five of six female coaches when sharing aspects regarding decisions related to gender. Furthermore, participants tended to refer to the reasoning of “conducting business the way it has always been done” (“uso y costumbre”) as a barrier to changing and/or improving opportunities in the athletic department and the work environment. This practice limited women in their administrative responsibilities within the athletic department. This mind set (resistance to change) as expressed by participants allowed for those in higher

positions to continue their practice regardless of information being offered. As one female coach indicated,

Everyone here knows that I speak my mind. If I see something or if something needs to be said I say it. But the reality is that changes do not happen because here [athletic department]... things are done the way they have always been done...when I question something and suggest something new or different I am reminded that “this is the way things are done here.”

This “conducting business the way it has always been done” appeared to reinforce the practice of recruiting males for coaching in Puerto Rico. The traditional presence of men occupying most of the high-profile leadership positions within the university setting in Puerto Rico has created a barrier for women. Males in this study did not perceive the culture of the athletic department as a barrier to women. A participating female coach commented, “Women are occupying a number of important positions even within this campus. It has just taken longer for it to translate in the athletic department.” One male AD specifically added:

As long as the barriers come from the administrators, which are generally men, there will continue to be a narrow path for women. Right now there are female provosts and some female colleagues have recently become athletic directors, but there are difficulties in terms of the hierarchy which are mostly men and they are the ones that make certain decisions... Now, there has been growth in terms of females [as coaches or athletic directors]. In the last 10 years there has been rapid

growth of female presence. Ten years ago their presence would not be so obvious whether it be in an administrative office or in an athletic facility.

Participants also shared barriers females have experienced in sport outside the university setting. Eight of 10 participants are or were involved with national teams and/or Olympic sports. One AD acknowledged the lack of necessary opportunities for women to develop as leaders in sport. He said,

I believe there is a need, and it applies to the Olympic committee, recreation, and sports, and others. For a while now, women have not been getting the tools they need to become coaches or to have positions of leadership.

Two female coaches indicated they experienced pressure to not voice their opinions when they felt things were not being done the way they should be done, even in sport environments outside the university environment. One said, "When I question certain things their response is 'that is the way it has always been done'...If you speak of what is important to you, you are labeled a trouble maker."

An additional aspect discussed by female coaches as part of barriers imposed by organizational structure outside the college/university setting was the lack of financial support for women in leadership roles. Three of four coaches involved in sport at the time of the interviews shared difficulties to obtain financial support from the federation of their sport in order to improve their coaching skills. This lack of support limited women's ability to move up the hierarchy within their sport outside the university setting. One coach recounted,

When you are a woman it is a little more difficult to get support. For example, in Puerto Rico there are only two women who have a [sport] academy. The [sport] federation every year sends six or seven coaches to the United States or Latin America to take courses in coaching because that is critical to the development of players at the professional level. This year there are seven trainings and I requested for six of the trainings and did not get any. Men went the whole year to the trainings. So, I called and told them, “Look, there are only two women in all of Puerto Rico, give us a break.” They told me that I could go but I had to pay for it myself. The men got their travel, lodging, and training paid for. And that is one of the things that have been most difficult for me. I am already certified as a coach but in a regular level. I want to raise my level of training to the level of the International [sport]Federation... For this you have to travel. It’s not available in Puerto Rico. You have to deal with the federation and like I said, the ones that get to go are men. This May, I am going to the Dominican Republic to do Level I and paying for the whole thing myself. Last year they sent three men to Colombia to take the course.

An additional comment that reinforced the lack of women in leadership roles in sport outside the university in Puerto Rico was made by one female coach:

I am not the first female to coach a professional team but we have been few. But, I have been the one to last the longest. A year and a half ago another female started as a coach and they took her out half way through the season. It is important to point out that the league has ten women’s teams, nine of them are

coached by men, one by a woman, me. And the only reason I was offered the job was because the person they wanted to hire turned down the offer.

Participants shared their opinions in terms of how the administrative structure imposed a barrier for them to succeed; however, administrative structure was not the only barrier that affected their participation. Participants also perceived that women act as their own barrier by not applying for jobs either because they do not feel confident in their skill or because of negative past experience.

#### *Women as Their Own Barrier*

The second theme identified was women as their own barrier. All participants expressed that women themselves were a factor in the low representation of women in leadership roles in sport in Puerto Rico. This theme is supported under the following headings: a) lack of job applicants, b) past discriminatory practices, c) lack of confidence, and d) lack of communication with family.

*Lack of job applicants.* There appeared to be consensus among the ADs in regard to the lack of applications by women for coaching or administrative positions in university athletic programs. All participating ADs (males) expressed that women generally do not apply for coaching positions or the few that do apply are not qualified for positions; therefore, they have difficulty hiring a more gender-equitable staff. Athletic directors expressed pressure from the university to comply with the NCAA as reasons to hire women. An AD said, “Here at the university I have been told to find more women so that we can comply with gender equity. But, where are they? I know it is important. I prefer to have a woman coach the women’s teams.”

Another AD added,

I know we need more women. To comply with the NCAA I need to hire more women. I hired one recently because we thought she would do a good job. We have another girl as an assistant coach in order to have more women. I coach a female team and I know it is necessary to have more women but there are not any.

On the other hand, four of six female coaches expressed that even though the common opinion is that there are not qualified women to hire, participants in the current study believed that there are, they just have to be found. A coach justified that there is a supply of qualified women but they need to be sought:

An initiative would be to recruit teachers from the physical education department, athletes from the professional league, professional players that are living in Puerto Rico... Interest is particular to each person. But if one looks for them they might say 'yes.' There are many female athletes at least in my sport that played in the Panamerican and Central American games who decided to be mothers, have a family. If you are going to offer them a job as a coach at a university which is part-time, I do not think they will say 'no.' One has to go out there and find them.

*Past discriminatory practices.* Two ADs mentioned past experiences as a reason for women staying away from coaching. Both coaches and ADs shared their frustration with the fact that many women are athletes in college but few pursue sport as a career. The apparent disinterest on behalf of women toward a career in sport was identified by athletic directors as related to negative past experiences such as discriminatory salaries and unfair opportunities in attaining a leadership position. Throughout the interviews it

was evident that because of past discriminatory opportunities, today women stay away from applying for these positions in Puerto Rico. This thought was clearly expressed by one AD:

What happens is that women have seen that it is hard to attain these positions and they are staying away and working at other jobs. The experience we have had when we interview for these positions is we do not interview women because they do not come to be interviewed. We have seen the same thing in the department of physical education which is purely academic. So, apparently there is a lack of female candidates at this level because other lines of work have allowed them to earn a good amount of money and have economic stability. But they have not followed the steps necessary in the sport field...we have not had the amount of applicants as we expected...the experience that if they [women] try to get a permanent position they will face resistance, is maybe what caused the lack of females in these jobs today.

*Lack of confidence.* Five coaches thought women's lack of confidence served as a barrier to achieving their career goals. These participants expressed that many times women's lack of self-confidence kept them from applying for a leadership position. One coach remarked that women tended to be too dependent on men [their spouse] to make their decisions instead of making decisions about what they want to do. Five of six female participants stated that women make barriers for themselves. One woman clearly voiced this situation by saying,

Opportunities do not present themselves very easily... Women want it too easy...they do not fight for a position...they do not believe in themselves. They believe they are not skilled enough and go find other careers... What I want to say is that patrons [employers] look more for men and I think that us women are at fault many times because we are not aware of the movements around us concerning women... There are a bunch of things that have been done for women and nobody knows about it. I found out because I got into all the gender equity things with Title IX.

*Lack of communication with their family.* Another issue to women's achievement of career goals in sport was their lack of communication with their family. The importance of an ongoing communication with the immediate and extended family regarding future goals and ways in which they could be supportive was shared by participants.

A coach expressed the importance of having a clear communication with spouses/partners and immediate and extended family about their professional goals to successfully carry out their job:

Coaching is a career that requires the support of those around you. It has difficult hours and it is also very intense, it drains you. A person that is going to pursue coaching must be clear with themselves regarding the personal and professional goals they want to achieve... the person must communicate with immediate and extended family the goals they want to achieve.

Another coach shared how she and her husband made adjustments regarding their professional careers and how they would raise their children:

One of the reasons for which women are not more involved in sport in Puerto Rico is because it consumes so much time, not because we do not have the skill. When you have a family, especially children... I cut out everything else because I had my children. Second, if you are married, you need someone that totally supports you. There is no way of doing it if your husband or the person with you does not support you, especially if you have children...I would leave here [university] after I taught my classes at 3:00, 3:30 and thank God that my children went to school right there [points to a school near the university]. I would go up watch one of my children's games at 5:00, then come back down to be here to practice with my team and then I would go back up... if you have a husband it has to be shared... My husband has been working in the same place for 23 years...my husband knows more about that job than his boss. But what happens? A long time ago my husband decided not to relocate every two years. He made a decision that he gets home at 6:30 because there are 3 children that need attention and have to be taken to sport practices. And today I have an engineer, a doctor, and a professional athlete. Maybe if we had not done everything we did, we would not have had this result. Because it is impossible. A person that does not see their children...it is impossible. A person that gets home at 8:00 or 9:00 at night...at that time the children are already sleeping. And I still have not taken them to

practice. He [husband] does not regret it and neither do I because we got the results we wanted.

### *Cultural Roles and Expectations*

The third theme that emerged from the interviews was cultural roles and expectations. This theme is discussed under the headings: a) chauvinism, b) gender roles, and c) acceptance of females in the field. As expressed by participants, in Puerto Rico, culture seemed to work against the progression of women in sports.

*Chauvinism.* Chauvinism (machismo) was mentioned by all participants when explaining reasons for the lack of representation of females in leadership positions in sport. When asked their opinion about reasons for the low number of women as coaches or athletic directors, one coach replied,

Chauvinism, Puerto Rico has a chauvinist society. Sport is not something attractive for women. Puerto Rico has been a chauvinist society. From the time you are born you are the one that is going to have children. The wife of the one that goes out.

Furthermore, one coach expanded on this topic stating:

Chauvinism, I believe that this is a matter of culture. As I said before, women who are in college and are good athletes, for whatever reason they do not stay in touch with the sports. But job opportunities are so few. Right now, I know only one that is a woman volleyball coach, in a professional league that pays relatively well, maybe not for living but it pays. And the majority of these students graduates and do not play anymore, they dedicate themselves very little to the

professional sports. They get married, get another vision, and devote themselves to being a mother and back away from sports. And therefore there are not many women in sport. Perhaps society pushes them to that. In my case, for example, that I coached volleyball for so many years. I could count with one hand the ex-players that you know that can be good coaches because they are intelligent, understand the game, communicate well, they are leaders. There are so few that remain in that area. Perhaps they are studying accounting as professionals and do not see physical education or sports as a way of earning money or don't have the opportunity to coach. And that has happened a lot. That the same system closes the doors to them.

One AD's comment supported the influence of chauvinism on the involvement of women as leaders in sport in Puerto Rico. He said, "Women do not tend to see themselves involved in sport after they graduate... Careers like accounting and the likes are more attractive for girls."

*Gendered roles.* In addition to chauvinism, all participants identified gendered roles held by their culture to perpetuate a barrier to achieving a leadership position in sport for women. This can occur by pressure from society and/or family. The historical understanding that sport is a place for men has become a barrier for women to attain a career in sport because it is not seen as appropriate by Puerto Rican society. One AD made the following statement: "The sport field is historically a man's domain. It is going to take time for that to change." It became apparent that the roles culture imposed on women impacted female receptiveness to the possibility of a career in sport. As one

female coach explained, "Mothers are the ones that take care of the children, does homework with them, when the children are at home, so are they... not the fathers." Some participants shared their personal experiences with their family in relation to pursuing a career in sport. A coach recalled,

When I announced in my house that I would study physical education in the 1970's, their thought was that I would waste my life in a career like that...My in-laws were against my style of life [coach]. I had too many encounters with my in-laws because they never agreed with my position...or the way I think, nor my way of thinking...but my husband and I understood that it was our life, our children and our decision, not theirs.

In addition to family pressures, six participants expressed social pressures regarding what is appropriate for how a mother or wife should be. A participant made the following statement, "Girls coach until they have children then they stop. It takes time from you and requires sacrifice. Many times if women want a career in sport they do not get married." Participants expressed the influence family pressures have on girls that may want to be coaches or be involved with sport as part of their careers from a very early age on through adulthood. One participant explained, "The multiple sides/levels of a woman make it difficult to pursue a career in sport, fulfilling job, home, family; 'we play, we retire, we go back to our husbands.'" An AD expanded on this thought:

Remember that women are generally more giving...I'm not saying that (laughs) women should stay at home, no. But generally speaking, women tend to be more

responsible with things related to the home. Typically, she is the one whose attention is to the family, the children, she does homework with the children, even helps the husband with different problems and is much more giving with the administrative phase within the home. If you place a woman in an administrative position you are sacrificing their responsibility related with the home.

*Acceptance of women in sport.* Four female coaches shared difficulties they faced within the sport environment regarding their acceptance by other male colleagues. The acceptance of women in leadership positions by their male colleagues in sport has not been one that is easily achieved. These coaches expressed difficulties they experienced in earning respect and proving their skill and knowledge concerning sport. One said, “Men are the majority in this field and they treat you like you know less because you are a woman.” Another coach shared difficulties in having her opinion and ideas be taken seriously by her colleagues. She explained:

There are situations when at coaches’ meetings, you always find yourself with ten male coaches and one female coach, for your idea to be heard you have to... [does not finish sentence]. Maybe if a man says it, because he said it, it was heard. But if you [a woman] say it you have to give background, facts, baseline, everything for your idea to be heard.

Female coaches seem to be seen as a last resort in terms of hiring. Throughout the interviews three coaches said they were hired when the team found itself in a tight spot, without a coach, or if someone before them (in these cases a male coach) rejected

the job offer. Some participants shared that they were offered the job because there was no one else available. One woman explained,

At the professional level, I only got the job because the person they wanted [a male coach] rejected the offer. Then they came to me and offered me the position. The league has 10 teams and only one has a female coach, me.

Women also experienced difficulties in attaining opportunities within the athletic department in terms of tension between female and male coaches. One coach explained:

They were looking for a coach and no one could assume the responsibility but me. The current coach was retiring and they did not have anyone else... they gave me the position and I was successful [male team]. Later I was forced to quit the men's team because of political rivalries so I just coached the girls' team.

Two other coaches offered further experiences regarding rivalry and/or jealousy by gender among colleagues in the sport environment, "It is not well received when a women outperforms a man." Interestingly, athletic directors saw jealousy from males towards females in regard to women ascending to leadership positions in sport. One AD expressed it this way:

I think there is still some jealousy because even though women have demonstrated that they can perform well and have advanced a lot...there are those [men] who think that maybe they [women] cannot have a complete mastery of an administrative position, maybe in the decision making, planning, or other things that involve an administrative position.

### *Nature of a Sport Career*

The next theme that emerged from the interviews brought to light the nature of the sport field as an obstacle for women to achieve a leadership position such as a coach or athletic director in university athletics. Eight participants identified the nature and requirements of these positions such as scheduling, time constraints, and long hours as a coach or being an athletic director bring additional conflict to the barriers already mentioned. The sport field (coach/athletic director) was described by all four ADs and one coach as not being family friendly and more difficult for women due to family responsibilities: One AD shared his experience:

The position of athletic director brings a lot of sacrifice and you cannot spend as much time with your family as you would like. Things that are affected are personal vacation, weekends, spending time with your family, and having time to rest for myself. So in that aspect the relationship between my time and free time for the family is affected.

Another athletic director shared that his job consumes so much time that he had to cut everything else out. Similarly, a coach shared the schedule strain that comes with coaching, "I leave at 8:00 in the morning and do not get back till 8:00 at night. In season I do not get back till 1:00 a.m. when we have a game." Other coaches shared that although coaching was very demanding and often required long and late night hours it was not a barrier because they have programmed their schedule, prioritized all their responsibilities, and organized themselves in order to do what they want to do.

### *Strategies for Overcoming Barriers*

The previous four themes discussed related to barriers women encounter in attaining a leadership position in sport in Puerto Rico. The following four themes presented emerged from the interviews. These highlight strategies that facilitated the success of participants, both coaches and ADs, in their careers in sport. Even though participants faced different constraints, several factors allowed them to pursue their goals. These themes were: experience, family support/communication, self-determination, and making sport a family affair.

#### *Experience*

A fifth theme emerged from the interviews regarding what helped coaches and ADs attain the position they have today. Participants shared that experience was best acquired by getting involved and attaining as much experience as possible. An AD mentioned, “Experiences in the sport field outside the NCAA/university setting (professional and international competitive environment) helped me get to where I am today.”

Eight participants were former athletes at the college in which they now coach or where they are ADs. As an AD said, “I have a very strong identification with the university because I graduated from here...I have a lot of pride in being part of the university [the mascot].” Leadership positions, especially that of athletic director, is a high profile position. One AD explained how having a prior affiliation with the university was helpful,

Well, since the beginning, historically in private and public universities...in the University of Puerto Rico system that role [Athletic Director] was always framed for a person that had an institutional identification and all were men. Women were not given the opportunity. That has started to change... throughout the island women have developed in professional roles very capably...and I understand that female participation as coaches or administrators of sport will keep increasing...

#### *Family Support/Communication*

An additional strategy strongly emphasized by all coaches was communication and support from the immediate family. It seemed important to participants for there to be clear communication with their immediate family concerning goals they wanted to achieve and necessary adjustments to be made. A coach explained:

You have to ask your family to support you so that the culture that surrounds you is in agreement. Because one thing is what you put on paper and what you want to do for you and another is how that fits into your environment...this will make the people around you open their minds, give you space or help you achieve what you want to achieve.

Communication with the family increases family support which can alleviate much personal difficulties of a job as an athletic director or coach. A coach shared that the immediate family (spouse) provided support with scheduling, home responsibilities, and taking care of children, allowing her flexibility to fulfill her coaching duties while knowing that her children were taken care.

### *Self-Determination*

When a woman decides to pursue a career in sport she must be ready to endure all difficulties and discriminations that come her way. The person must be clear with themselves regarding personal and professional goals she wants to achieve. Five female coaches shared that particularly females must be aware of difficulties associated with attaining a leadership position in sport. One coach worded this thought with the following statement: “Women have to dare to do what they want to do and understand that they have the capacity to reach any level.” Another added, “Women have to stop being so dependent on men...and pursue their goals.” According to coaches and ADs, women have to be honest with themselves and be clear concerning career aspirations. They suggested to write out all responsibilities and list them by priority. This helped the person get organized and know what things they have to sacrifice in order to attain what is at the top of the list.

Coaches said organization and perseverance is key to being successful. In fact, all agree that women have had to sacrifice a lot to have a career in sport. This is particularly true in the sport environment outside the university setting (professional and/or Olympic) as well. A coach shared how her self-determination allowed her to achieve success in her sport without the support of the federation:

The people who take the presidency of the sport federations have no values. They work wrongfully and with a lot of dishonesty. When I dare speak out about what is going on, they do not want you there and they marginalize you...but I will fight them my whole life...I tell them, ‘I am competing for you and you are suppose to

look out for my interest...I go almost a month without eating to make my weight, compete, and bring you a medal , you are given \$40 - 50,000 thousand dollars for our preparation and you tell me there is no money for a uniform?' ...When I stir up conflict then they leave me a year without competing...I went to two World Games and placed fifth both times, almost got the medal. During that time I was working two jobs to survive and I was exhausted. I just could not do any better. Then I was preparing to go for the third time and that is when I got a full-time athlete salary. With that help I could train like I wanted to train and be able to rest. I went to the World games again and placed third.

### *Making Sport a Family Affair*

The final strategy for a woman to have a successful career in sport, as suggested by participants (two ADs and two coaches) was to make their job a family affair. An AD suggested involving the family whenever possible in different aspects of their job. Another AD suggested making the jobs, whenever possible, a family affair by: "... taking the family with you on Saturdays which is when full day competitions take place. Stop to eat in different places along the way, they watch the competition and we can enjoy it together." The same participant further suggested:

What I believe is that the universities should create some activities to integrate the family. So that our family can understand our job... Activities for the family can be done so that there is sharing between families, employees, students. Because it is very difficult especially if you have a wife that works.

A coach shared how she was successful in balancing her family, profession, and her training:

Well, in my case, it has not been an issue. But what happens is that we as ladies need to take care of the home. But you also have to establish priorities. I have found the strategies of getting up early in the morning, at 5:00 a.m., praying because I am a Christian, and then make dinner for the evening... so that when we get home... after everyone has exercised, the food is ready. The best strategy is to get the whole family involved in sport. Then everyone is accustomed to being in the same environment as an athlete or as a coach. This is my case, it's what I have done and it has worked. On days we don't have practice... I keep the house in order to avoid problems.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

A Summary of the Study, a Summary of the Findings and their Implications, Conclusions and Suggestions for Future Research are presented in this chapter. The Findings will be discussed in light of the current literature. Suggestions for future research will be made in light of findings that emerged from the study and the perceived need regarding the underrepresentation of women and leadership positions in sport in Puerto Rico.

#### Summary of the Study

The purpose of the current study was to explore the representation of women in leadership roles within intercollegiate sport in Puerto Rico. Causes for underrepresentation, if any, of women in these positions were examined. Strategies that may be useful to improving the representation of women in leadership positions in sport were identified. The following factors were areas of focus in the investigation: the current status of gender representation in leadership roles, barriers that may influence female representation in leadership roles, perceived benefits of having women in leadership roles, and the perceived future of women in leadership roles in intercollegiate athletics in Puerto Rico.

A review of the literature was conducted to unveil previous investigations similar to the present study. Before discussing results of the current study , an overview of the

higher education system in Puerto Rico is offered. The researcher first sought to assess the current status of higher education and intercollegiate athletics in Puerto Rico. This information was obtained through websites of pertinent organizations. Additionally, this information was obtained through the one-on-one interviews with participants. It is important to understand the intercollegiate environment under study before seeking to understand perceived barriers of those working in the system. This information may help put in perspective issues to be presented.

The current study serves to support existing research regarding the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in sport. It also contributes to and expands the literature in terms of an under-studied population. Furthermore, the current study brings to light contributors to female underrepresentation and contributors to women achieving leadership positions in sport. Feminist work includes assessments of women's lives and experiences, investigation of social movements and policy and organizational issues (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). The use of Feminist Theory as the lens for the current study allowed for the researcher to obtain data from participants' experiences regarding practices from working in a leadership position in sport. The researcher sought to understand the issue from the participants' point of view.

As the nature of Feminist Theory, this set the stage for other research, other action, and policy. The data that emerged from the current study included barriers, strategies, benefits of women and future of women as leaders in sport were not passive. According to Feminist Theory, the dominant group perpetuates their power protecting the privilege's privilege (Denzin & Lincoln , 2003). Participants in the current study shared

their experiences including how this power prevents them from achieving leadership positions in sports.

Patriarchal beliefs emerged as a persistent difficulty to female underrepresentation in different ways. Socially accepted patriarchal beliefs in the population under study emerged as women being expected to be consumed with raising the children, and being a wife. Benefits of having females in a leadership positions was underestimated by an athletic director in the current study associating females with feminine traits. Feminist Theory proposes that masculinity is perceived as more powerful than femininity. Therefore associating women only with feminine traits may suggest they are not equipped to assume a position of power. Consequently women may be marginalized and prevented from assuming certain roles and positions.

Participants in the current study shared they had not benefited from programs, workshops and/or initiatives regarding gender equity because they were unaware of the existence of these. Consequently, their access to beneficial information and opportunities for growth and was limited. Equal access and equal opportunity is the solution to put female oppression to rest (Birrell, 1984). Furthermore, women's opportunities to achieving a leadership position in sport appeared to be constrained in a number of ways: limited access to experiences that serve to build a resume and be more marketable, and mentorship from experience females in the field among others.

Furthermore, as is the basis of Feminist Theory, it is the hope that these results serve to raise consciousness, empower females, and open the eyes of those in powers to value the multiple benefits that females can bring to the different aspects of the field of

sport. This dissertation offers a number of areas which need further study to address female underrepresentation in sport. The current dissertation also suggests courses of action that may serve to improve gender equity in sport.

*Current Status of Higher Education and Intercollegiate Athletics in Puerto Rico*

Puerto Rico has approximately 52 institutions of Higher Education. The three largest systems of higher education are the University of Puerto Rico with 11 campuses, the Interamerican University with 9 campuses, and the Ana G. Mendez university system with 3 educational institutions. Each of the Ana G. Mendez main campuses has satellite campuses. In addition to providing academic opportunities, these institutions enhance their curriculum by providing athletic opportunities to their students. Universities in Puerto Rico have the opportunity to compete in two athletic organizations, the Interuniversity Athletic League (L.A.I.) and the NCAA. However, not all institutions compete in both leagues.

All campus members of the LAI compete throughout the year in different events such as basketball, volleyball, swimming, baseball, among others. The most popular, visible, and given the most mass media attention event is track and field held every year in a championship meet called "Las Justas." The L.A.I. is just over 100 year old, yet its popularity and level of competition has never faulted. Although the L.A.I. has become part of college sport culture, the NCAA has gathered interest on the island. According to the NCAA website, in addition to being members of the L.A.I., four higher education institutions from the UPR system have decided to join the NCAA Division II: Bayamón, Cayey, Rio Piedras, and Mayagüez.

### *Current Status of Females in Leadership Positions in Sport in Puerto Rico*

It is interesting to note that the evolution of women in leadership positions in intercollegiate sport in Puerto Rico has been different to that of the U.S. Before the enactment of Title IX, the majority of women's teams in the U.S. were coached by female coaches. Since Title IX, which requires equal resources for females in educational settings, more career opportunities became available (Drago et al., 2005; Jacobson, 2001). However, women's teams have become more attractive to male coaches in terms of salaries (Acosta & Carpenter, 1992; Cunningham, 2007).

The decline in proportion of females coaching women's team is considered a critical issue in the study of athletics and a disappointing effect of Title IX (Washington & Karen, 2001). Unlike the U.S. where the involvement of women as coaches and/or athletic directors in intercollegiate sport has decreased (Acosta & Carpenter, 2006), in Puerto Rico women's involvement in sport seems to experience some growth. According to participants in this study, just a decade ago, women in sport leadership positions were virtually invisible. This is not to say they did not exist. Today, however, these women are occupying more positions and playing a more visible role within sport as coordinators, representatives, and other positions with a voice in addition to their role as a coach. It is important to note that there are currently two female athletic directors in other institutions of higher education in Puerto Rico. These women did not participate in the study because their athletic departments were not members of the NCAA. As is the intent of this research, a number of studies have examined the low representation of women in sport in

different organizations with different perspectives (Carpenter & Acosta, 2006; Drago et al., 2005; Miller et al., 2007; Sartore & Cunningham, 2007).

Acosta and Carpenter (2008) studied female participation in sport as athletes or occupying other roles within athletic department members of the NCAA. Furthermore, The Institute for Diversity in Sport developed a report card exposing gender and racial representation in university sport, as well as professional sports such as baseball, basketball, football, soccer, etc. ([www.tidesport.org](http://www.tidesport.org)). Finally, a number of studies have looked into sport federations in different countries to examine women's participation in these organizations to assess the representation by gender (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007; Cui, 2007; Pfister & Radtke, 2006), and/or by culture/ethnicity (Walseth, 2006). These studies have focused on the representation of women in sport and related issues.

### Summary of the Findings

#### *Barriers Affecting Female Representation in Leadership Positions*

Several factors have contributed to maintaining the disparity by gender in leadership positions in sport in Puerto Rico. Themes that emerged from the present study regarding barriers were administrative structure, lack of responsibilities, lack of coaching opportunities, low wages, lack of credentials, lack of financial support, women as their own barrier, social pressures, and the nature of a career in sport.

#### *Administrative Structure*

The administrative structure of an organization can serve to maintain the status quo or can work to promote equality. As was the case of participants of this study, and past studies, barriers pertaining to the administrative structure within sport organizations

perpetuated the underrepresentation of women attaining positions of leadership (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007; Pfister, 2006). Participants in the current study identified the following as barriers related to the organizational structure: lack of financial support for assistant coaching positions for females, low wages, lack of opportunities, and conducting business the way it has always been done. Similar barriers were identified in the literature (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008; Hovden, 1999; Willis, 2005). Willis (2005) identified contributors to the decline of female coaches such as sexual discrimination and an unfriendly environment for women of color and lesbians among other things. The culture of the organization influences decision making practices related to gender and other inequities. Issues mentioned above contribute to a situation where the affected group lacked experiences necessary to entering a sport organization and, as a result, do not have a chance to achieve a leadership position in sport organizations.

Pertinent to participants of this study, the organizational culture of “conducting business the way it has always been done” (*uso y costumbre*) seemed to be a barrier that hindered change. It was stated that most organizations are created for men by men, based on male experience and therefore, women are at a disadvantage (Meyerson & Fletcher, 2000). Similar to other studies, the voicing of change by women in the present study is shunned with the excuse of upholding traditions (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2007).

Hovden (1999) found that women in Norway experienced a similar sense of powerlessness in sport organizations in their country as they were not empowered to raise and articulate interest and needs as women. Therefore, Muslim Norwegian women lacked

the ability to initiate changes within the organization. According to Hovden, in hegemonic groups the power to define situations and goals are taken for granted. Efforts of change are resisted and alternative practices are often seen as threatening. It seems that the practice of “uso y custumbre” has reinforced a hemogenic environment in Puerto Rico. Women in the current study expressed the need to show strong evidence and information for their opinion to be taken seriously.

In addition, women in the present study expressed their frustration regarding the athletic department’s resistance to change. This situation is similar to the Clegg, Hardy, and Nord (1996) explanation of how hegemony works. Knowledge produced by the dominant group takes on the status of common sense. The women in the current study are not part of the dominant group and what they brought to the table is often not taken into consideration.

Acceptance of women in leadership positions by their male colleagues, or even athletes, is not easily achieved (Drago et al., 2005). Women in the current study experienced difficulties in earning respect and proving their skill and knowledge concerning sport. The simple perception of coaching being a man’s job or role often becomes a barrier for women. In the present study, female coaches indicated that the strong voice in the field of sport in Puerto Rico is male; and therefore, they believed they have to prove themselves at a much quicker pace than the men. This was also true when the women coaches brought issues to the table for discussion. Findings of the present study are similar to those of Claringbould and Knopper (2008) in which women expressed that men on the board reacted negatively when women brought "women's

issues" to the table. Not only are women's voices not heard but they are also limited in performing the task they are assigned thus impinging their ability to succeed.

### *Lack of Responsibilities*

Another form of limiting a people from climbing the hierarchy ladder within an organization is by limiting the type of responsibilities they assume. In the current study, only one female worked full-time with the athletic department as coach and coordinator of a sport. The rest were part-time coaches. Therefore, their primary responsibility was to the organization or department for which they worked. This limited their opportunity to ascend the organizational ladder of the athletic department. O'Brien and Janssen (2005) found in their study that women continue to be relegated to support roles in administration versus leadership roles (e.g., assistant dean or acting chair or dean), which limits their autonomy both in decision making and in power. In Chinese sport organizations, women were assigned to less powerful positions (Cui, 2007). Consequently their mobility throughout the organization is limited and so are opportunities for positions to power and success such as extraordinary activities, visibility and relevance.

### *Lack of Coaching Opportunities*

Not allowing time for a person to demonstrate their coaching skills and abilities may limit their growth. In the present study, participants indicated that in the few opportunities given to women to coach a professional team, the moment the team started losing she would be replaced. A participant shared how a female colleague was fired from a league before her first season was over because she was not winning. This

situation could suggest that females are held to a higher performance standard than men in terms of coaching. West et al. (2001) reported that females were assigned to coach at the beginners' level. When the athlete moved to a higher level of training, female coaches then "lost" their athletes to male coaches. Thus taking away any opportunity for females to coach at higher/elite levels.

### *Low Wages*

According to findings of the current study, another contributing factor to the lack of opportunities for females as assistant coaches or any other step towards occupying a leadership position in sport is low wages women are paid. Low wages was an issue mentioned by some participants in the current study, but expressed in different ways. Participants of the current study saw low wages for women as something that was frustrating, not supposed to be taking place, but a practice that would never change. It was identified as a barrier, and as one participant said, "it is something that is true, not right, but it is just the way it has always been." Low wages was identified as another difficulty to recruiting females. Equitable wages has been a recommendation to improving the imbalance of occupancy of leadership positions by gender for a number of decades (Pastore, 1991), and as emerged in the present study continues to be an issue today. Although, according to participants in the current study, it is something that seems to have improved over time, yet the numbers are still not equitable.

### *Lack of Credentials*

Another way in which a group can be limited in their professional growth and ascension in the hierarchy ladder of an organization is through the limitation to access of

preparation programs that may allow them to take their skills and certifications to a higher level. Participants in the current study, both men (ADs) and women (coach) had about the same educational background and experience. The participant with the highest level of education was a woman who reached the ABD stage of her doctoral program. The participant with the lowest level of education was also a woman with three years of undergraduate work. The rest of the participants' education levels (both men and women) ranged between an undergraduate degree and a master's degree. Two female participants mentioned the importance of obtaining additional coaching certifications. Further yet, one female participant expressed her desire in a higher level of coaching certification in order to be more marketable and coach higher level athletes.

Jacobson (2001) identified the lack of background on behalf of women as a reason for the underrepresentation of women as head coaches. Furthermore, Pfister (2006) indicated that coaching credentials are similar in importance as organizational policies for employing female coaches. A strategy to overcome this barrier may be coaching certifications. Certifications prepare candidates for a job and may legitimately qualify a candidate for a job regardless of who they know or do not know (Pastore, 1991). However, low wages females receive in addition to the lack of financial support from the administrative structure, does not allow females to obtain necessary certifications to move ahead in their career.

#### *Lack of Financial Support*

Sport federations sometimes limit financial support that would benefit female coach's access to certifications. Three female participants in the present study

experienced barriers to their professional development. Their sport federation administering funds refused to support workshops and seminars that would raise and certify the level of training while funding men. It is important to note that findings in the current study revealed that in some sport federations where the majority of coaches are males, funding for females for professional growth is nonexistent. It brings to question the process of deciding who to fund for professional growth seminars, workshops, and certifications. It also brings to question the sport federation's compromise, if any, to equal opportunity. Barriers related to withholding financial support for professional growth in the field may limit the discriminated group in a number of different ways.

Not being able to attain a higher level of training and certification limits her opportunity to develop elite athletes. Consequently, this limits the opportunity for ascending status and growth in the international federation of the sport. This practice resulted in the same professional limitation as women who were limited to only training entry level athletes and then passed them on to male coaches (West et al., 2001).

Consequently, access to certain perks like compensation, salary increases, or the delegation of new responsibilities will be limited if not nonexistent. The individual's ability to move up the hierarchy may have vanished and his/her voice will not be heard when important issues are brought to the table where decision making takes place (Sartore & Cunningham, 2007). This perhaps explains the urgency manifested by participants in the present study who requested financial support to be certified at higher levels of coaching. They perceived certifications to help keep updated with new strategies

and techniques. Consequently, their coaching skills may be enhanced and as a result their athletes' performance may improve.

### *Women as Their own Barrier*

Administrative structure was not the only barrier that affected women's participation as leaders in sport in Puerto Rico. It became evident that women could become their own barrier to attaining leadership positions in sport organizations. Barriers that emerged from the current study were: women's lack of applying for pertinent jobs, allowing past discriminatory practices to jade their coaching perception and therefore staying away, lack of communication with family, and lack of confidence.

It was the preference of the ADs in the current study to have a woman coach a female team. However, women were not hired because they did not apply for the position. According to ADs, the few that do apply are often not qualified for the position which made it more difficult to hire a more gender-equitable staff. It was found that when compared to their male counterparts, female assistant coaches expressed fewer aspirations toward a head coaching position than men (Sagas et al., 2005). According to results of the present study, a reason for the low number of women applicants may be due to the lack of confidence women have in their abilities.

*Lack of confidence.* Results of the current study highlight women's lack of confidence as a barrier to their ascension as a leader in sport. These women tended to disqualify themselves for the job before applying because of their lack of self-confidence. Similar to women in Puerto Rico, Muslim women in Norway felt they were responsible for the next generation of female athletes, but they lacked perseverance and commitment

to the field of sport. Men, on the other hand, are perceived to have higher levels of self-confidence and ambition (Hovden, 2000). It is important to note that self-confidence was identified by participants in Hovden's study as necessary to attain a leadership position in sport. In fact, the author reported that one of the reasons women hesitated to assume on a coaching role was their own feelings of insufficient qualifications. This lack of confidence may also impede their ability to share their thoughts and sport aspirations with those around them.

*Poor communication.* Communication emerged as a barrier to women in their achievement of career goals in sport. Specifically, the lack of communication with their family emerged as a barrier to participants in the current study. Results demonstrated that the immediate family could become a barrier if women do not have clear communication regarding future goals or could serve as a benefit to women when it comes to offering support with family roles and responsibilities.

Lack of communication also appeared to be a barrier for Muslim women in Norway. Hovden, (2000) found that Muslim women in Norway tended to be reserved in expressing how they contributed to an executive board. This lack of communication limited the information others receive regarding the achievement of women thus limiting their opportunities to be hired or promoted. Just as past experiences seems to have jaded women in the current study into staying away from the sport field, their lack of confidence to communicate their achievements and failure to establish clear and open communication with support systems like their family has turned to a barrier instead of a strategy.

### *Social Pressure*

Social expectations' regarding what is appropriate for a mother or a wife supports the discrepancy of women and sport. In reflection of the Sport Illustrated example offered below, it seems that society tends to applaud girls when they abandon their sport to get married or at the most have children. A very visible example of this is Chris Evert Lloyd's decision to leave her sport of tennis to become a full-time wife. This was so esteemed by society that she appeared on the cover of *Sport Illustrated* magazine with text on the cover stating "I'm going to be a full-time wife" (Sport Illustrated, August 28, 1989).

Culture served to support the underrepresentation of females in leadership positions in sport, through gender roles and expectations. Specific to Puerto Rico is the cultural barrier of chauvinism known as "machismo" in Latin American countries. As reiterated by all participants in this study, Puerto Rico's culture does not view sport as something attractive or proper for women. Ideals in terms of what are appropriate or esteemed roles for women do not include sport.

In a study conducted in the United Kingdom, participants revealed their suitability as coaches were questioned because of the assumption of women's lack of physical and mental strength, which are essential qualities for a coach (West et al., 2001). In the same study, authors mentioned that women's access to coaching is deterred by their position in society regarding family and domestic concerns. They were perceived by their colleagues as mothers and homemakers.

Gendered roles held by culture perpetuate a barrier to achieving a leadership position in sport for women. As is the case of Muslim women in Norway, their ethnic identity worked as a constraint to sport participation since doing sport was not a respectable feminine activity (Walseth, 2006). This constraint (gender role) resulted from pressure from society and/or family. In other cultures like the Chinese, it is more important for women to find a good husband rather than pursuing a graduate degree (Cui, 2007). Chinese culture then discourages what may help a Chinese woman climb the hierarchy in a sport organization such as to socialize after work. In regards to gender roles imposed by culture, West et al. (2001) found that the perception of coaching as a masculine role is reinforced through the belief that an individual's athletic ability is indicative of their competence as a coach. Likewise, some participants encountered a difficult time with their families because of their professional aspirations and what their family thought she should do as a wife and mother.

#### *Nature of a Career in Sport*

Demands on a coach's time left little opportunity for other activities or relationships with people. Participants in the current study shared that scheduling, time constraints, long hours, and the family-unfriendly nature of coaching and athletic administrative positions were difficulties they encountered with their jobs. This apparently affected the representation of females in leadership positions in athletics for women in Puerto Rico and also in the United States. Drago et al. (2005) found that some girls who were athletes did not aspire a career in sport. These offered the crazy life and hectic schedules a coach has as the reason for their lack of interest. It appeared that

extreme workloads pertinent to coaching and athletic administration is particularly responsible for the decline of women in these positions. Just as important as identifying barriers that have kept women from leadership positions are strategies which have facilitated equal access to leadership positions in sport.

### *Strategies for Overcoming Barriers*

The intent of the second research question of the present study was to identify barriers women encounter to achieving a leadership position in sport. All barriers that emerged from the study along with barriers offered throughout the literature were discussed above. Although not the focus of the study, several factors and/or strategies that facilitate women to achieving a leadership position in sport emerged. These may be helpful in overcoming barriers women face to a leadership position in sport. These strategies are: laws and policy, administrative support, family support, and sport as a family affair.

### *Laws and Policy*

Title IX of the Education Amendment Act of 1972 and the NCAA reinforcement of equal opportunity for everyone (NCAA, 2008, p 23-25) are probably responsible for having the most influence in increasing female athlete's participation in sport in the academic environment in Puerto Rico. In the current study, it was not until athletic departments joined the NCAA and were faced with having to comply with policies of gender equity that serious attention was given to the existing gender disparity in sport in institutions of higher education. As various participants in the study explained, the NCAA is one of the causes for quick and intense attention placed on making athletic

departments more gender equitable. This is an example of the importance of policies in order to support what was determined as beneficial to society. It is important to note that these changes cannot occur without administrative support.

### *Administrative Support*

Administrative support by way of creating and allocating funds for assistant coaching positions is absolutely necessary for changes to occur. Paid assistant coaching positions were suggested as a strategy to eliminate barriers women face in assuming a leadership position in sport. This strategy is linked to the lack of financial support for women as assistant coaches that were identified as barriers by participants in the current study.

Many times administrative support was mentioned as not available in Puerto Rico; therefore, women in the current study attributed their attainment of a leadership position to being available in a moment of need, often time they were offered the position they continued to hold. Some participants mentioned they offered to coach for free before they were hired to coach. Another female coach was offered a coaching position only after all men who were offered the job first declined. When labor is in short supply or when there is a demanding need, groups underrepresented in those fields are used to fill the gap (Welch & Sigelman, 2007). Nevertheless, in Puerto Rico women are still seen to be willing to fill these unpaid positions in order to acquire experience and be involved in what they enjoy.

### *Experience*

The position of assistant coach was another contributor to assist in obtaining experience and professional growth for women in leadership positions in sport because it lends itself to mentorship and network development. Authors identified mentorship based upon gender specific needs important to the growth of the individual (O'Brien & Janssen, 2005). Obtaining an assistant coaching position was imperative because it allows for the introduction and access to others in high places and gaining experience, consequently networking increases. If females are serious about coaching as a career path in Puerto Rico they must work to become an assistant coach.

Some coaches chose to work for free which placed them in a position to be considered for head coaching position. Coaching without pay along with their accomplishments as athletes allowed some women to strengthen their resume in order to be competitive and have a better chance at being hired with pay. If opportunities to obtain experience and grow in the field are not available to women, they will continue to be overlooked when leadership positions become available.

### *Self-Determination*

Self-determination to achieving professional goals emerged in the current study as crucial to survival in athletics. Results of the present study revealed women to be willing to persevere through difficulties they encountered while seeking a leadership position in sport. In fact, all participants in the current study agreed that women have sacrificed a lot to have a career in sport. Findings of Pfister and Radtke (2009) are in agreement with

those of the current study which revealed that women have to put forth great effort to achieve the coaching position they want.

### *Family Support*

The literature identified family commitments and responsibilities as causes for women not entering or leaving their jobs as coaches or ADs (Jacobson, 2001; Willis, 2005). Similar findings were identified in the current study. Puerto Rican women used their family as a support system in adjusting family responsibilities. Participants were able to do this because of the clear and constant communication with their family. Effective communication was a strategy used to turn what could be a barrier into a benefit. It seemed important for women to have clear communication with their immediate family concerning goals they want to achieve and necessary adjustments. Family communication and how it could work as a barrier or benefit to women who desire to have a career in sport and climb the hierarchy ladder was voiced by participants in this study.

### *Making a Sport Career Family Friendly*

The nature of the job of a coach or AD was identified as a barrier in this study. Strategies that were presented throughout the literature were to make careers more welcoming and flexible to family commitments (Drago et al., 2005) and were suggestions that were voiced by participants in the present study. Similarly, results of the current study suggested that in order to make their job work in their favor (e.g., coaching, athletic administration) women should involve the family whenever possible in different aspects

of their job such as weekend trips, games, or even have gatherings for the families of coaches and ADs.

### *Benefits of Having Women as Leaders in Sport*

Benefits of having women in leadership positions in sport were perceived by ADs as mostly stereotypical. Women were perceived as being more organized than men; a skill that is important for administrative duties. Regarding the coaching aspect, one AD in the current study preferred for women to coach women's team because "who better to understand them than one of their own". Interestingly, one AD acknowledged that the success of the women's team has brought recognition to him and the department.

The women in the current study perceived themselves as important because they could help and mentor young girls who aspired to have a career in sport. One female participant in the study saw herself as the mother of the sport team. She listened to athletes' problems beyond the sport and gave them advice, something she valued just as much as their physical training. It was also mentioned that just because they do things differently than men does not mean that what they are doing is less professional. As a female coach in the current study said, "I coach different than men, but my team has beat teams coached by men."

Benefits that women bring to the sport environment have been identified throughout the literature. Having women on the board of sport federations gives the opportunity to ungender the sport governance environment (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008), and gives the opportunity for sensitive issues related to women to be put on the table for discussion (Hovden, 2000). Findings of Sagas et al. (2005) demonstrated that

having a woman in a leadership position such as directing athletics may result in more hiring of female coaches than if it was just men in the leadership positions. Furthermore, Drago et al. (2005) identified the value of mentorship from a female coach to her female athletes.

### *Future of Women in Leadership Roles*

Women in leadership positions in Puerto Rico is a change that has taken time to bring about, but has progressed rather quickly. The current presence of more women in leadership positions throughout different areas of the university is expected to have a positive influence on the growth of women in the athletic department. This is evidenced in a participant's comment that "Women are occupying a number of important positions even within this campus. It has just taken longer for it to translate in the athletic department." This expectation differs from other studies because it has been stated that gender equity in coaching has declined when other professions have experienced considerable gains (Drago et al., 2005).

The future of women as leaders in intercollegiate sport in Puerto Rico seems to be one that will embrace women for several reasons: a) the sport performance of female athletes has improved over the past few years and has been acknowledged by many; b) a small but persistent number of new female coaches have taken the challenge to be in the sport field regardless of the difficulties and their accomplishments have gotten some press; and c) athletic departments have joined the NCAA. This has put pressure on the athletic department to make their program gender equitable.

When compared to the U.S. and the changes that have occurred since the enactment of Title IX in 1972, Puerto Rico seems to be on a faster track to achieving gender equity in sport than the U.S. Although it took longer for Puerto Rico to start its move toward gender equity the move toward an equitable athletic department in terms of gender should occur at a faster pace. Without male support however, the shift towards change will be slow.

### Implications

Based on the analysis of the data and interpretation of the findings of this study, the following implications seem justified with respect to women's role in athletics in Puerto Rico:

1. The increase of women in other high profile positions of leadership within the higher education setting may set the stage for women in the athletic department. As a result, female presence may be more evident in positions of leadership in intercollegiate athletics.
2. Support from those in power within the higher education institution, such as the AD and the president of the college, is crucial for changes and further diversity to take place. Those in high profile positions have the power to create policies and set the tone for the organization.
3. The communicated opinion that a career in sport is not appropriate for women and that women do not have the preparation or enough skill/experience to work and be successful as a coach has excused the gender disparity that exists in intercollegiate athletics in Puerto Rico.

4. Women interested in coaching or directing athletics must be determined to persevere through the difficulties that present themselves and be willing to make sacrifices which will include finances and personal time.
5. A support system that includes the immediate family appears to be imperative to have a balanced and successful career in sport. Communication and clear expectations are imperative to the effectiveness of the support system.
6. Role modeling and mentorship is significant for the growth of professionals in the field. Coaches/ADs must be positive role models for their athletes and not communicate a difficult lifestyle as a result of coaching/athletic directing. Experienced coaches/ADs must mentor new coaches/ADs to help them navigate through the learning curves of the field.
7. Women in the field must do a better job at marketing their skill and successes. The common reason offered for gender disparity is the lack of talented female availability. Therefore, women must make themselves visible and available and seek out opportunities. This will not only open doors for them but will change the idea that there are not enough women or that they cannot do the job.

### Conclusion

There is an undeniable gender gap in leadership regarding intercollegiate sport in Puerto Rico. Culture and traditional practices play a significant role in perpetuating gender discrepancy. There seem to be signs of a paradigm shift in different areas of the Puerto Rican culture regarding gender and positions of leadership. Sport, although slow

in joining the shift, is starting to experience some change. Women, though few, through their performance and occupancy of positions of leadership have personified a role model of determination, strength, and confidence.

#### Suggestions for Future Research

The current study assessed the status of females as leaders in intercollegiate sport in Puerto Rico, barriers they faced in attaining a leadership role, perceived benefits of women as leaders, and the future of women as leaders in intercollegiate sport in Puerto Rico.

The issue of women as underrepresented leaders in sport may benefit from assessing the greater population. It would be useful to compare and contrast women in leadership positions in NCAA athletic departments with those in non NCAA athletic departments to verify differences or similarities in practices of gender equity with and without the influence of NCAA policies.

Additional research is needed to explore the perception of possible candidates to obtain leadership positions. Great benefits may be drawn from investigating the interest and experiences of high school and college athletes and Physical Education majors regarding their future involvement in sport. Understanding their interest and experiences may bring awareness to those in power and the sport population as a whole regarding decisions and practices that may help ameliorate the gender discrepancy in the sport environment.

To further study the generalization of the results of the current study, the information gathered should be used to develop a combination of qualitative and

quantitative longitudinal studies to further analyze the barriers the participants encounter, the strategies that helped them be successful, the benefits women bring to the athletic department, and the future of women as leaders in sport.

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APPENDIX A

Copy of English Version of Consent Form

**Texas Woman's University**  
**Consent to Participate in Research Study**

Title: Exploring the Representation of Women in Leadership Roles within Collegiate Sports in Puerto Rico

Investigators:

Primary Investigator: Luisa Velez, M.A.

Doctoral student in Sport Management

Faculty Advisor: Bettye Myers, Ph.D. (940) 898-2575

You are being asked to take part in a research study for a dissertation addressing the Representation of Women in Leadership Roles within Collegiate Sports in Puerto Rico. Simply, we want to know what has been your experience in regards to obtaining and sustaining a leadership role within collegiate sports in Puerto Rico. The total time commitment will not exceed 1 hour and 15 minutes. It will be a one-on-one interview in which discussion will be prompted. The interviews will be audio taped to ensure validity and accuracy of transcriptions.

**Possible Risks**

Confidentiality

There is a risk of loss of confidentiality. **Confidentiality will be protected to the extent that is allowed by law.** The risk will be addressed in the following ways. A transcription of the interviews will be made. The transcription will be made by the Principal Investigator (PI). The transcripts of the interviews will be coded so that you are not identified. The names of the participants will not be used in presentations/publications. The transcriptions will be available only to researchers involved in this study. The tape will be accessible only to the PI and faculty advisor and will be shredded immediately after completion of the transcription. Until that time, the tape and transcription will be stored in a locked file in Pioneer Hall 208A (Chairperson of Department of Kinesiology). The transcripts will be kept for four years and then shredded.

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Participant Initials

Page 1 of 3

### Embarrassment or Emotional Discomfort

There is a risk of embarrassment. The following steps will be taken to minimize risk. The interview leader (Principal Investigator) will make every effort to ensure you are comfortable during the process. At any point in time, you are free to terminate participation in the interview. You are free not to answer any question or react to any statement that may cause embarrassment. You are free to leave the interview at any time.

### Coercion

There is a risk that you may feel “coerced” into participating. Your participation in this study is voluntary.

### Fatigue

There is a risk that you may feel “fatigue” during the interview. Breaks will be allowed as requested.

### Benefits

The following are potential benefits. You will be given an abstract of the findings. A complete copy of the article/presentation will be provided, at your request. Your information may contribute to the knowledge base in Sport Management as it relates to the opportunities of women as leaders in the field.

### Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal

Your participation in the study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or discontinue participation at any time.

*The researchers will try to prevent any problem that could happen because of this research. You should let the researchers know at once if there is a problem and they will help you. However, TWU does not provide medical services or financial assistance for injuries that might happen because you are taking part in this research. You will be given a copy of this signed and dated consent form to keep.*

---

Participant Initials

Page 2 of 3

If you have further questions regarding the research study you may contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at (940) 898-3378.

**Please check one of the following:**

The interview will be taped to ensure accuracy.

Yes, I agree to be audio taped and understand that the audio tape will be transcribed into written form.

No, I do not agree to be audio taped. But I wish to participate in this study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Every participant will be given an abstract of the study, if desired. Please provide an address to which this abstract should be sent:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate in the space provided if you would like a copy of any publication of the research.

APPENDIX B

Copy of Spanish Version of Consent Form

**Texas Woman's University**  
**Consentimiento de participación en un estudio investigativo**

Título: Explorando la representación de féminas en roles de liderazgo en los deportes universitarios/colegiales en Puerto Rico.

Investigadores:

Investigador Principal: Luisa Velez, M.A

Estudiante doctoral en "Sport Management"

Consejero de Facultad: Bettye Myers, Ph.D. (940) 898-2575

Se está solicitando su colaboración al participar en un estudio investigativo relacionado a la representación de féminas en roles de liderazgo en los deportes universitarios en Puerto Rico. Simplemente, deseamos saber su experiencia en obtener y mantener un rol de liderazgo en los deportes universitario en Puerto Rico. El tiempo que conllevará el completar el estudio no será más de 1 hora y 15 minutos. El estudio se llevara a cabo por medio de una entrevista. La misma será grabada en "audio cassette" para asegurar validez y certeza de las transcripciones.

**Posibles riesgos**

Confidencialidad

Existe un riesgo de pérdida de confidencialidad. **La confidencialidad será protegida hasta lo máximo permitido por ley.** El riesgo será atendido de la siguiente manera: se realizará una transcripción de la grabación por el investigador principal. Se asignarán códigos a cada transcripción para evitar la identificación de los participantes. Los nombres de los participantes no serán usados en presentaciones ni publicaciones. Solamente el investigador principal y el profesor consejero tendrán acceso a las transcripciones y grabaciones. La grabación (cassette) será destruida inmediatamente después de completar la transcripción. Hasta que llegue ese tiempo, la grabación (cassette) y la transcripción serán guardados en un archivo bajo llave en "*Pioneer Hall*" 208A (Oficina del Director del Departamento de Kinesiología). La transcripción será guardada por cuatro años y luego será destruida.

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Iniciales del Participante

Página 1 de 3

### Desconcierto/ Vergüenza

Existe un posible riesgo de vergüenza. Los siguientes pasos serán tomados para minimizar/evitar tal riesgo. El investigador principal hará todo lo posible para asegurar que los participantes se sientan cómodos durante el proceso. En cualquier momento durante el estudio el participante podrá terminar su participación en la entrevista. El participante no estará obligado a contestar cualquier pregunta que le pueda cuasar vergüenza. El participante podrá abandonar la entrevista en cualquier momento.

### Coerción/Obligación

Existe el riesgo de que los participantes se sientan obligados a participar. Los participantes serán asegurados de forma verbal y por escrito que su participación es totalmente voluntaria.

### Fatiga

Durante el estudio se tomarán pausas a petición del participante.

### Beneficios

Existen ciertos beneficios para aquellas personas que participen en este estudio. Una copia del manuscrito/prestación será provista a petición de los participantes. Al participar en el estudio los participantes contribuirán al campo de administración/gerencia deportiva o "Sport Management", particularmente en el área de la baja representación de féminas en roles de liderazgo.

### Participación voluntaria/ Retirarse del estudio

Su participación en este estudio es totalmente voluntaria. Usted puede escoger el no participar en el estudio o discontinuar su participación en el estudio en cualquier momento.

*Los investigadores harán todo lo posible por prevenir cualquier problema que pudiera ocurrir a causa de este estudio. Deberá notificar a los investigadores de inmediato si existe algún problema y ellos le ayudarán. De cualquier manera TWU no provee servicios médicos o asistencia económica por lesiones/daños que puedan ocurrir por participar de esta investigación. Se le dará una copia de esta forma de consentimiento firmada y con fecha.*

---

Iniciales del Participante

Página 2 de 3

Para recibir información adicional acerca de este estudio favor contactar a “The Office of Research and Sponsored Programs” al (940) 898-3378.

**Por favor seleccione una de las siguientes opciones:**

La entrevista será gravada para garantizar certeza.

Si, estoy de acuerdo a ser grabado/a y entiendo que la grabación será pasada de forma escrita.

No, no estoy de acuerdo a ser audio grabado/a. Pero desearía participar en este estudio.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Firma del Participante

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fecha

Se les entregará a todos los participantes un resumen del estudio, si así lo desean. Favor de proveer una dirección en la que este resumen puede ser enviado:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Favor indicar si usted desea una copia de alguna publicación que se realice en base a esta investigación.

APPENDIX C

Copy of English Letter of Invitation

January 4, 2008

Mr./Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_  
Address

Dear Coach / Athletic administrator,

Thank you for showing interest in the research study entitled: Exploring the Representation of Women in Leadership Roles within Collegiate Sport in Puerto Rico. As explained to you through our previous conversation via telephone the purpose of this study is to explore the under-representation of women in leadership roles within collegiate sport in Puerto Rico from the point of view of female head coaches and athletic directors. Through the study we would like to explore causes for under-representation, if any, of women in these positions and strategies that may be useful in the future.

Your participation in this study will help increase the body of knowledge in sport management and may help ameliorate this issue. Your time commitment will be no more than 1 hour 15 minutes. I would like to thank you in advance for your consideration.

If you would like any additional information please contact me at 940-465-4746 or via email at [velezluisa@gmail.com](mailto:velezluisa@gmail.com).

Sincerely,

Luisa Velez  
Doctoral Student, Kinesiology  
Texas Woman's University

APPENDIX D

Copy of Spanish Letter of Invitation

4 de Enero del 2008

Señor \_\_\_\_\_  
Dirección

Estimada/o Entrenadora / Director Atlético/a,

Muchas gracias por mostrar interés en tomar parte en el estudio titulado: Explorando la representación de féminas en posiciones de liderazgo en deportes colegiales en Puerto Rico. Como se le explicó anteriormente en nuestra conversación telefónica, el propósito de esta investigación es explorar la baja representación de féminas en posiciones de liderazgo en Puerto Rico desde el punto de vista de mujeres entrenadores y directores atléticos. A través de este estudio deseamos explorar las causas para la baja representación de féminas, si alguna, en estas posiciones e identificar estrategias que puedan ser beneficiosas para el futuro.

Su participación en este estudio contribuirá a aumentar el conocimiento en el área de administración deportiva y podría contribuir a encontrar soluciones para la baja representación de féminas en estas posiciones. Su tiempo de compromiso para este estudio no será más de 1 hora y 15 minutos. Deseo agradecerle por adelantado su consideración al respecto. De necesitar información adicional, por favor comuníquese conmigo al 940-465-4746 o via correo electrónico a: [velezluisa@gmail.com](mailto:velezluisa@gmail.com).

Attentamente,

Luisa Velez  
Estudiante Doctoral, Departamento Kinesiología

APPENDIX E

Copy of English Version of the Demographic Questionnaire

## Demographic Questionnaire

ID# \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle the item that best describes you.

**1. Gender:** Male    Female

**2. Ethnicity:** Anglo    Black    Asian    European    Hispanic/Latino  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Family status:** Married                      Single                      Separated/Divorced  
Ages of children, if any: Infant/toddler    Preschool    School aged                      Over  
18yrs.

**4. Your age:**  
21-30 years old    41-50 years old  
31-40 years old    over 51 years old

**5. Job title:** Athletic director    Head coach

**6. Years in current position?**  
1-5 years    10-15 years  
5-10 years    over 15 years

**7. Please indicate your level of education:** Bachelor's degree    Bachelor's degree  
+ Master's degree    Master's degree +    Doctoral degree  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Please mark the options that best describe your past involvement in sports. Mark all that apply.**

Athlete in high school \_\_\_\_\_  
My coach was \_\_\_ Female \_\_\_ Male  
My athletic director was \_\_\_ Female \_\_\_ Male

Athlete in college \_\_\_\_\_  
My coach was \_\_\_ Female \_\_\_ Male  
My athletic director was \_\_\_ Female \_\_\_ Male

Do you/have you played professional sports? \_\_\_yes\_\_\_no

APPENDIX F

Copy of Spanish Version of the Demographic Questionnaire

## Cuestionario Demográfico

ID# \_\_\_\_\_

Favor circular las opciones que mejor lo/la describan

**1. Género:** Masculino      Femenino

**2. Etnicidad:** Blanco      Negro      Asiático      Europeo      Hispano/Latino/a  
Otro: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Estatus familiar:** Casado/a      Soltero/a      Separado/a/ Divorciada/o  
Edad de hijos: Infante/ "toddler"      Pre-escolar      Edad escolar      Sobre 18 años

**4. Su edad:**

21-30 años

41-50 años

31-40 años

más de 51 años

**5. Título de su posición:** Director/a atlético      Entrenadora

**6. Años ejerciendo su posición:**

1-5 años

10-15 años

5-10 años

más de 15 años

**7. El nivel de educación adquirido:** Bachillerato      Bachillerato +      Maestría  
Maestría +      Doctorado      Otro: \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Marque la opción que mejor describa su experiencia en los deportes. Marque todas las que apliquen.**

Atleta en escuela superior \_\_\_\_\_

Mi entrenador/a fue \_\_\_\_ Femenino \_\_\_\_ Masculino

Mi director/a atlético fue \_\_\_\_ Femenino \_\_\_\_ Masculino

Atleta en la universidad \_\_\_\_\_

Mi entrenador/a fue \_\_\_\_ Femenino \_\_\_\_ Masculino

Mi director/a atlético fue \_\_\_\_ Femenino \_\_\_\_ Masculino

¿Participó en deportes profesionales? \_\_\_\_ Si \_\_\_\_ No

APPENDIX G

Copy of English Version of the Interview Questions

### Interview Questions:

1. What opportunities have you had to move up the ranks within intercollegiate athletics?
  - What has been most valuable to you about being a head coach/athletic director?
2. In your opinion what has made it possible for you to have your current position?
3. Why do you think there are so few women as head coaches and athletic directors in Puerto Rico?
  - What issues do you think may prevent women from becoming a head coach or athletic director in Puerto Rico?
  - How has your role as coach/athlete affected your other commitments?
4. Are there any strategies that you think would help others in your position meet both personal and professional commitments?
5. What do you like most about your job?
  - How do you think you are perceived in your department?
  - Who/what motivates you to stay in athletics?
6. What initiatives have you seen in your institution with respect to sport management/administrative positions?
  - How would you evaluate their effectiveness?
  - *To athletic directors only:*

“As an athletic director, what initiatives have you taken to increase female representation in sport administrative positions in your department? If so, what are they? If not, are there any you would like to implement?”

7. Is there anything else you wished I had asked you that you would like to share your thoughts regarding women and intercollegiate athletics in Puerto Rico?

APPENDIX H

Copy of Spanish Version of the Interview Questions

### Preguntas para la Entrevista:

1. ¿Qué oportunidades ha tenido para subir los rangos en deportes colegiales/universitarios?
  - ¿Cuál ha sido su mayor valor en ser entrenadora o directora/o atlética/o?
2. En su opinión qué ha hecho posible el que tengas la posición que tienes hoy?
3. ¿Por qué crees que hay tan pocas féminas como entrenadoras o directoras atléticas en Puerto Rico?
  - ¿Qué situaciones pueden prevenir el que las féminas sean entrenadoras o directoras atléticas en Puerto Rico?
  - ¿De que forma tu trabajo como entrenadora o directora atlética afecta tus otros compromisos?
4. ¿Qué estrategias tú crees que ayudarían a otros en tu posición cumplir con los compromisos personales tanto como profesionales?
5. ¿Qué es lo más que te gusta de tu trabajo?
  - ¿Cómo crees que te perciben en tu departamento?
  - ¿Qué o quién te motiva a quedarte en el departamento atlético?
6. ¿Qué iniciativas has visto en tu institución con respecto a posiciones de administración deportiva?
  - ¿Cómo evaluarías su efectividad?
  - *Para directores atléticos solamente:*

Como director/a atlético ¿Qué iniciativa haz tomado para aumentar la representación de féminas en posiciones de liderazgo en su departamento atlético? Si es así, ¿cuales son? De no ser así ¿existe algo que le gustaría implementar?

7. ¿Existe algo que hubieras deseado compartir referente a féminas y deportes colegiales/universitarios en Puerto Rico?