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Taryn Price
Oklahoma State University

Rudy Dunlap
Middle Tennessee State University

Jackie Eller
Middle Tennessee State University

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The current study examines the ways black women perceive their identity to influence their experiences as leaders in Intercollegiate Athletics (ICA) administration. Consistently recognized as a hegemonic masculine institution, ICA' structure and culture has been noted to limit the upward mobility minority women. The current study sought to examine the ways black women perceive their intersectionality to influence their experience as leaders in ICA. Intersectionality, a theoretical perspective elucidates the ways in which black women's identity negotiation is shaped by identity's confluence. Qualitative interviews from ten black women executive sport leaders at Division I National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) institutions were conducted for analysis of this cultural phenomena. Findings from the study support the use of intersectionality as an analytical framework in context of ICA for black women, and highlights the necessity for counteracting hegemonic influences that continue to limit the advancement of women and racial minorities in sport.

There is a disproportionate number of white men in senior leadership positions of intercollegiate athletics (ICA) in the United States compared to the number of women and women sport participants (Lapchick & Baker, 2016). Further, a startling small proportion of racial minorities and women advance beyond student-athlete participation into ICA's leadership (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). Based on the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) Division I leadership hierarchy, white men dominate the Athletic Director (AD) positions in Division I programs, followed by white women, black men, and lastly, black women (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2016). Whites comprise 87.5 percent of Athletic Director positions and blacks only 8.6 percent. Additionally, the only gender specific position in ICA, the Senior Woman Administrator (SWA), is predominately occupied by white women at 83.1 percent, followed by black women at 9.4 percent (Lapchick & Baker, 2016).

These percentages change drastically when evaluating headline collegiate athletic programs, such as football and men and women's basketball, where black athletes respectively represent 53.4 percent, 55.6 percent, and 47.3 percent of rosters (Lapchick & Baker, 2016). Given that student-athletes in these so-called headline sports are recognized to be the most prominent candidates for coaching and leadership positions (Cunningham & Sagas, 2002), it is disturbing that a small proportion of racial minorities and women advance beyond student-athlete participation into ICA leadership positions (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014). Specifically, the consistent underrepresentation of black women in sport leadership positions is alarming. Black women stand to accrue the same benefits from athletic participation; however, ever-present gender and racial inequalities influence their experiences as student-athletes (Bruening, 2005; Bruening, Armstrong, & Pastore, 2005), and sport leaders in collegiate sport (Carter-Francique & Flowers, 2013; McDowell & Cunningham, 2009; Walker & Melton, 2015).

The disproportionality of white men in leadership has been attributed to several dominant ideologies that are pervasive in prominent social institutions in the United States (Coakley, 2004; McDonald, 2005; Messner, 1989). Intercollegiate athletics reproduces many hegemonic discourses surrounding race, gender, and sexuality that substantiates white privilege, male superiority, and heterosexuality (Anderson, 2009; Melton & Cunningham, 2014; Smith & Hattery, 2011). Attempting to address this problem, sport scholars tended to highlight single constructs of identity, including gender (Burton, 2015; Messner, 1988; Whisenant, Pedersen, & Obenour, 2002), race (Cunningham, 2010; King, 2005; Smith & Hattery, 2011), and sexuality (Cunningham, Sartore-Baldwin, & McCullough, 2010; Sartore-Baldwin & Cunningham, 2009). The concern with these exclusive conceptualizations of identity is that they overlook the multidimensional nature of identity—termed intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991).

Explorations of single facets of identity focus on certain groups at the exclusion of others. Examinations of gender overwhelmingly center on white women and investigations of race dominantly reference the experiences of black men (Collins, 2000; Hooks, 1981). The shortcoming of these approaches are highlighted by the nuanced nature of black women's experience—individuals who can never take their gendered, racial, or any other facet of identity for granted. Sport scholars have started to assess the intersectional influences of black women's identity on experience and perception—ranging from student-athletes to sport administrators (Bruening, 2005; Bruening et al., 2005; Carter-Francique & Flowers, 2013; McDowell & Carter-Francique, 2017; Walker & Melton, 2015). Bruening et al. (2005) and Carter-Francique and

Richardson (2015) sought to understand black female collegiate student-athlete's experience based on their intersectionality to include gender and race's confluence, while Walker and Melton (2015) examined women coaches' intersectionality, extending our understanding of race, gender, and sexuality. More recently, McDowell and Carter-Francique (2017) implemented intersectionality theory to investigate the nuanced experiences of black women Athletic Directors. A prominent thread among these studies highlights the necessity for understanding black women's experiences beyond a unidimensional interpretation for analysis. Framing black women's underrepresentation in leadership as either being a racial, gender, or sexuality issue perpetuates the misinterpretation of identity's influence on black women's experience.

At predominantly white institutions (PWI), white women and white men dominantly serve in leadership; and at Division I Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), African-American men observe a 9:1 presence in the Athletic Director position over black women (National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2016). At PWI's, black women's underrepresentation in leadership is relegated to their marginalized race and gender. At HBCU's, black women's underrepresentation is attributed to the dominant ideology of leadership's male prerogative (Eagly, Wood, & Diekman, 2000; McDowell & Carter-Francique, 2017). The marginalized nature of black women's identity forces them to negotiate their intersectionality when seeking leadership positions, unfamiliar to their counterparts (McDowell & Cunningham, 2009; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). The current study examines the ways black women perceive their intersectionality to influence their experience as NCAA Division I executive sport leaders against the backdrop of ICA's hegemonic culture, and challenges the homogenous nature of women's experience within the confines of ICA.

Literature Review

According to Connell (2008), sport in America emerged in the 19th century as a means for upper-middle class, Protestant, boys to build character and leadership skills that could transfer into the workplace. The qualities developed and displayed through sport participation were deemed as good, "manly" qualities, such as aggression and dominance, resorted to its labeling as a gendered institution in favor of men's participation for maturation and power (Messner, 1989). Thereby, reinforcing its presence as a hegemonic masculine institution, sport culture generates criticism of women's expression of 'masculine' qualities and presence in sport (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Messner, 1989; Whisenant et al., 2002). Moreover, sport serves as a conspicuous site of a gendered power struggle based on stereotypical gender differences (Connell, 1995) that leaves women inferiorly positioned to men.

Sport's formalization in higher education (e.g. ICA) continues to mirror ideological assumptions of gender, race, and sexuality that reflect aspects of its historical existence (Cunningham et al., 2010; Wells & Kerwin, 2016). Within the larger culture of sport in the United States, ICA stands out as a prominent institution and standard bearer of sport culture (Frey & Eitzen, 1991). In particular, intercollegiate athletics has continued to develop a reputation for perpetuating a gender hierarchy that privileges men over women (Burton, 2015). ICA and its many athletic programs showcase and privilege hegemonically masculine characteristics of stoicism, physical aggression, and bravado, which limits the upward mobility of women (Burton, 2015; Walker & Sartore-Baldwin, 2013; Whisenant et al., 2002). Turning attention to sport's administration, the culture of sport leadership lends itself to these same pervasive qualities.

Dichotomized gender roles have been ascribed to men and women leaders as being agentic or communal, respectively. The consistent gender role stereotype has limited women from being accepted into executive leadership position, which is best explained by role congruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Role congruity theory stems from social role theory, which contends that gender affords expectations in roles for men and women based on qualities and behavioral tendencies stereotypically ascribed to each gendered social group (Eagly et al., 2000). Women are ascribed communal qualities where feminized adjectives, such as being interpersonal, nurturing, helpful, and gentle are identified to characterize their behavior. In contrast, men are ascribed agentic qualities to reflect masculine stereotypical behaviors that they 'should' possess, such as being assertive, demanding, aggressive, and dominant (Eagly, 1987). Recognizing the influence of these stereotypical associations, Eagly and Karau (2002) developed role congruity theory to examine the congruence of gender roles and other roles, such as leadership. Schein (1975) identified agentic qualities to better align with those of leadership, thus supporting men's acceptance into leadership.

Sport scholars adopted role congruity theory when examining the underrepresentation of men and women in sport administration. Examining gender typing roles of sport administrators, Burton, Barr, Fink, and Bruening (2009) observed that certain tasks were identified as either being masculine or feminine subroles, where masculine subroles were more commonly associated with the Athletic Director position. This finding was identified to serve as a disadvantage for women, and contributes to the perpetuation of ICA as a hegemonic masculine institution. Similarly, Burton, Grappendorf, and Henderson (2011) found that even when no significant differences were observed on masculine ratings between male and female candidates for various sport administrative positions, females were less likely to be offered athletic director positions. While these findings are alarming, Livingston, Rosette, and Washington (2012) observed conflicting results when examining black women's leadership experiences. Based on their findings, they discussed the importance of considering the intersectional influence of gender and race on ascribed leadership qualities to understand black women's experience. They found that as white women may be penalized for expressing agentic qualities, black women were not, but still experienced greater limitations for upward mobility. To understand this phenomena, Rosette, Leonardelli, and Phillips (2008) highlighted that not only does leadership afford gendered implications, but also racial implications, in favor of whites.

Examining race's impact on job applicants in sport leadership, Steward and Cunningham (2015) found that when whites perceived a strong racial identity (e.g., photographs), racial minorities were viewed less favorably for career consideration. In the same vein, McDowell, Cunningham, and Singer (2009) observed a clustering of racial minorities' over-representation in academic support positions, such as life skill coordinators and academic supervisors, but still underrepresented in executive leadership positions. Academic support positions symbolize a relevant comparison to role congruity theory's inferior positioning due to its stereotypically ascribed communal qualities. Whites and racial minorities often seek to advance in these positions, but racial minorities were identified to experience greater limitations in advancement due to oppressive, racialized hiring practices (McDowell et al., 2009). As such, black women's positioning within these oppressive organizational structures, requires a relational understanding of identity's impact on experience that leaves them underrepresented sport leaders (McDowell & Carter-Francique, 2017).

In congruence with role congruity theory, scholars recognize the importance of examining identity's intersectional influences that leaves minority women even more

disadvantaged in sport (McDowell & Carter-Francique, 2017). To examine these concerns, gender based theoretical assumptions, which assume race neutrality (Rosser-Mims, 2010), fall short when examining black women's intersectionality. For black women, an affinity for male leadership and a racial inferiority provides greater limitations to their upward mobility (Armstrong, 2007; Jean-Marie, Williams, & Sherman, 2009; McDowell & Carter-Francique, 2017; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010). To better understand this phenomena, there is an emergence of scholarship that seeks to understand the impact black women's intersectionality has on their experiences as leaders in sport's ideological terrain (Armstrong, 2007; Bruening, 2005; Carter-Francique & Flowers, 2013; McDowell & Francique, 2017; Walker & Melton, 2015).

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a conceptual framework premised on the idea that difference implicates subordination (Baca-Zinn & Dill, 1994). Rooted in black feminist scholarship, intersectionality, a term coined by Crenshaw (1991), called attention to black women's omission from debate surrounding women's equality, which primarily focused on white women, and racial parity, commonly centered on black men. According to Hooks (1984):

> No other group in America has had their identity socialized out of existence as have black women. We are rarely recognized as a group separate and distinct from black men, or a part of the larger group 'women' in this culture. (p.7)

While a fairly new term, it is a seasoned concept that was first documented by black women pioneers, Maria Stewart and Sojourner Truth, who contended the pitfalls of black women. There efforts denounced traditional notions of race and gender that created distinctions in their experiences from white women and black men (Dill & Zambrana, 2009). As well-educated, white women are primarily concerned with the oppressive nature surrounding sexism and black men regarding racism (Hooks, 1984), intersectionality examines the multidimensional interconnections of identity that compel power relations. Intersectionality includes, but are not limited to gender, race, sexuality, and social class (Crenshaw, 1991). Collins (2000) asserted that the overlapping and intersectional interaction of identity envelops as a "matrix of domination", which leaves underrepresented social groups marginalized (p. 299).

Intersectionality theory enables a *simultaneous* examination of identity's social construction among marginalized people or identity groups within various oppressive social institutions. An exclusive facet dissection attempting to understand degrees of oppression, will result in error, as each facet of identity serves an oppressive function mediating experience best understood by an intersectional framework (Settles, 2006). Intersectionality creates distance from an additive understanding of each identity construct's influence on experience, which commonly summates oppressive forces based on gender (e.g., gender plus race) (Shields, 2008; Yuval-Davis, 2011). In the case for black women, being 'woman' and 'nonwhite', are mutually exclusive identity constructs based on an interrelated nature of power (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). In turn, intersectionality assists in the understanding of differences between and within social groups (Crenshaw, 1991) and counteracts notions of homogeneity between and within social groups (Jordan-Zachery, 2007). As a result, there are many truths in experience between and within social groups.

Recognized as a critical approach, intersectionality serves as a necessary tool in analyzing various oppressive cultural nuances in sport when examining black women's perceptions (Bowleg, 2008; Carter-Francique & Flowers, 2013; McDowell & Carter-Francique, 2017). The paradigmatic nature of intersectionality can help diagnose the harmful social realities that result from identity construct's social hierarchy (Collins, 2000). Unique to other approaches, intersectionality provides a framework that not only confronts interrelated constructions of identity, but also liberates those same constraints, while serving as a source for strength (Armstrong, 2007; Collins, 2000; Jordan-Zachery, 2007). Black women observe different experiences in the workplace and often times base their experiences as a leader on their identity's multidimensionality (Parker & Ogilvie, 1996). The current study examines the manner in which ten black women executive (e.g., Director of Compliance, Director of Marketing, etc.) sport leaders perceive their overt intersectionality to influence their leadership experiences in context of ICA's NCAA Division I universities.

Methodology

To focus on the nuanced nature of black women's experiences in context of ICA NCAA Division I administration, semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted to elicit the participants' lived experiences. This qualitative approach was accompanied by an inductive data analysis to enhance understanding of black women's intersectionality on experience as executive sport leaders (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2012; Crenshaw, 1991).

Context & Participants

The context of the current study was essential to consider as ICA is situated within the confines of higher education. Separated by the NCAA into Divisions I-III, Division I is the most visible and revenue productive entity that harbors a culture of power, dominance, and superiority in every aspect (Whisenant et al., 2002). Central to the premise of examining the hegemonic constraints of ICA's culture, black women executive leaders in Division I (non-HBCU institutions) institutions were exclusively invited for participation. After compiling a list of institutions and contacting all observed NCAA Division I black women leaders serving in executive leadership positions ranging from the South to the Southeast region from their institution's sport administration page, a total of ten women agreed to participate. Most of the women were identified by their photos after reviewing their University's athletic administration directory or by the author's awareness of the participant's identity.

In the initial phase of recruitment, introductory emails were sent to previously identified administrators. The women were asked to participate in the study and informed of their selection for participation based on their black woman status. A follow-up e-mail was administered two weeks later requesting participation. These methods lead to the confirmation of seven participants. To increase participation rates snowball sampling methods ensued. At the conclusion of interviews conducted with the seven confirmed participants, the interviewer asked if they were willing to identify and contact other black women that may be willing to participate. In response to this effort three more women were identified, contacted by the researcher, and confirmed for participation in the study. Each participant, at the time of the study served as an executive sport administrator. Executive administrators were identified as a desired participant based on their heightened ability to produce change within a collegiate program. Participant

demographics included five Senior Woman Administrator, one Director of Compliance, three Directors of Academic Advising, and one Director of Fundraising. All participants oversaw both male and female student-athletes, head coaching staff, and other executive staff members. Of the ten participants, only three were former student-athletes that transitioned into ICA's administration. Lastly, participants' years of experience serving in an athletic administrator role ranged from one to twenty-five years.

Data Generation

The study employed a qualitative semi-structured interview process that ranged from 45 minutes to an hour. Central to the premise of a qualitative interview, participants were prompted by a set of questions, but were given conversational latitude to interject their own topics. Sample questions included inquiry into social structures observed within ICA, perceived strengths and weaknesses of their black woman status, and personal understanding of identity's influence on experience within athletics. For example, "Can you please describe how social structures may limit your upward mobility in athletics?", "In what ways do you feel your identity has influenced your experience in athletic administration?", and "What would it be like if a black woman were in charge of ICA?". To ensure credibility of questions, a panel of two leisure and sport management scholars and one sociology scholar with a specialty in qualitative research approved the ordering and intent of the interview's guiding questions.

At the induction of each interview, the primary researcher reviewed a list of subjective assumptions that needed attention in order to maintain a nimble mind regarding related discussion. In such cases, assumptions rooted in preconceived notions of black women's oppressive experiences, stereotypes of their experiences within the workplace, as leaders, and allotted time to reflect on their ability to maintain an open mind to participant responses. After each interview, the researcher would briefly consider additional questions that were observed to be a potential common point of discussion for the next participant. For example, further inquiry into oppressive and progressive social interactions and distinctions in experience based on gender and race's confluence were expanded upon in subsequent interviews. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for further analysis within a week.

Data Analysis

According to Dillard (2000), language resurrected by interpretation entails "transforming particular ways of knowing and producing knowledge" (p. 662). With this in mind, analysis was conducted to examine the representation of participants' experiences, and transform them by identifying relationships and themes from the data (Wolcott, 1994). Before analyses began, member checks were conducted by the researcher to enhance trustworthiness and rigor of method (Maxwell, 1992). Each participant was supplied with their transcribed interview and provided an opportunity to clarify supplied responses. Once member checks were completed, to further increase trustworthiness during phases of coding, independent analyses by the authors were conducted. An interviewer triangulation approach was implemented to assess the reliability of the resulting generated themes (Denzin, 1978). As described by Mejijer, Verloop, and Beijaard (2002) an intersubjective interpretation was taken during analysis where two authors conducted independent analyses and met after each phase of coding to assess their results. This approach allowed reflection to bias and error in analyses that could be reformed or re-analyzed

for future phases of coding (Denzin, 1978). Constant comparisons were employed to assess consistencies and departures in codes during each phase before continuing to the next phase of coding (Charmaz, 2003).

Reading line by line, an inductive analysis of each transcript the primary investigator identified phrases and keywords that related to the premise of the study. This initial, open phase of coding, allowed the researcher to maintain the data's fundamental qualities (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2012). This phase of coding led to the creation of nearly 850 codes. Next, relevant open codes were collapsed into related focused codes. This phase of focused coding facilitated the creation of conceptual memos that generated the formation of conceptual themes (Creswell, 2009). Nearly 55 thematic codes were identified to represent the participant's response. A constant comparison of generated codes during open and focused phases of coding led the researchers to compare frequencies of codes. During the last phase of the analytic process, the researchers explored implications of their identified themes based on relevant theoretical and conceptual debates of intersectionality as an accurate conceptual framework. In result, two major themes were inductively identified to represent prominent themes from the interviews. The multidimensional influence of black women's identity were captured by themes, "It's a she, and she's black" and "I'm two things different". Below, findings regarding black women's perception of their intersectionality to have on experience within ICA's administration are detailed.

Results and Discussion

The current study examines the ways black women perceive their intersectionality to influence their experience as sport leaders against the backdrop of ICA's hegemonic culture, and challenges the homogenous nature of women's experience within the confines of ICA. The participants' accounts provide a greater understanding of the dynamism and complexity their intersectionality has on experience as sport leaders. Most participants described praise from athletic directors for their intersectionality due to their ability to provide representation within their administration. To support this perception, progressive depictions of their gender *and* race's confluent composition were provided.

Amber, a SWA, stated that when athletic administrators are sought out to discuss certain issues on campus, she feels that she is specifically summoned "to get us representation from athletics, a woman, and a minority." Her perception reflects how their intersectionality can be dissected into representative demographics that are dually underrepresented, but needed in sport leadership. Even though they are not able to separate aspects of their identity, many participants noted that their race and gender were sometimes observed to be in addition to one another. In result, their ability to provide representation from two distinct social groups, being a woman and a racial minority, was deemed complementary to perceptions of ICA's affinity for diversity (Singer & Cunningham, 2011). To that point, Toni, a Director of Academic Advising, stated:

> I think, that in a male dominated profession, being an African American female, one [way] or [an]other, it didn't matter, it has thrusted me [upward]. They want a different perspective, more of something else than themselves at the table. I've been able to give that to them.

Toni's statement reflects the perception that her identity is anchored to an underrepresented social group in sport leadership. This statement echoed those of other participants who felt they provided a unique contribution to discussion and realized greater opportunities for upward mobility. The social positioning afforded to black women's intersectionality often refers to the oppressive nature identity has on experience (Collins, 2000). However, in the current study, many of the women reflected on the heightened exposure their intersectionality afforded. Not fitting in, but standing out, in this case, served as a beneficial response to their presence in ICA's administration. Dominantly comprised of white men, white women, and black men, participants felt that their presence afforded meaningful contributions.

Consistent with the notion that intersectionality can assist with social mobility, many of the women reflected on the ways that organizational members have responded to their presence as executive leaders in ICA. Stephanie, a Director of External Operations, discussed how supportive interactions with her AD greatly affected her perception of her career in ICA:

> As a whole, how I view it, it is run by white males. Actually my boss, that's one of the things we have talked and had lots of conversations about. How this is a white male dominate business and you are an African-American female that brings so much to the table.

Continuing to highlight the representative nature of black women in sport leadership, Stephanie's comments allude to the recognition that her uniqueness could be a great asset to ICA's leadership. Her comment shares that her overt identity and ability to contribute to ICA's leadership has the potential to stand out in a positive manner. Describing the support she received from her 'white male boss' increased her confidence in pursuing opportunities for advancement in ICA.

Stephanie's response calls attention to the influence of black women's intersectionality in sport leadership. There are three criteria that are considered when black women enter leadership positions: ability to contribute to the organization, their woman status, and their racial identity. Men and women alike are expected to provide leadership to their sport organization, but for black women, there identity disrupts the monotonous observance in ICA's leadership. In this case, intersectionality is highlighted as a favorable component; however, the additional vetting of black women's intersectionality is unmatched by their white, male counterparts (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010).

Toni and Stephanie's statements demonstrate how black women serve as outliers to the dominant demographic of ICA leadership calling attention to the 'outsider' role black women presume within ICA (Bruening, 2005; Collins, 1986). They serve within ICA's leadership but their intersectionality mismatches the homogenous demographic of leadership. Racial and gender ideologies have been recognized to place barriers on 'outsiders' through the perpetuation of social hierarchies (Collins, 2000).

Discussion surrounding black women's influence among student-athletes was dually noted. While interacting with student-athletes, they recounted numerous times where they were asked to assist male and female, minority student-athletes. Kim, a SWA, discussed how student-athletes were appreciative of seeing a black woman in a prominent leadership position that was different from traditional ICA leaders. She explained:

> When they're in a meeting, it's no longer just a white male telling them what to do. There is now a black female up there, in the athletic department as well as staff. That is empowering to [them to] see that this organization will hire a black leader. This is our second in command. It's a she and she's black!

The women felt that their presence provided balance to the normal presence of whites, men was essential. Related to dichotomized categories of gender and race, the women suggested that their intersectionality provided parity in representation within their administrations. Not only does their presence provide 'representation' of an underrepresented group, but they now were observed as a role model to student-athletes, which was believed to not only be beneficial, but paramount. Hope, a Senior Associate Athletic Director/SWA, suggested that the presence of a black woman in ICA is essential to the leadership of ICA's most visible, revenue producing sport, football. She stated:

> Having a black female oversee football. Well out of the 105 [players], 90 of them are black and they probably look at her, they'll probably pay more attention to [a black women] and they're viewing her as a mother figure or sister figure that they don't get the same from an administrator or white male.

Hope's comment, explicitly noting that football rosters are primarily comprised of black student-athletes, highlights the importance black women's ability to impress 'motherly' and 'sisterly' qualities that could be useful given ICA's demographical makeup. Such findings support the relevance and extension of social role theory for black women where women's stereotyped communal nature has been understood to perpetuate harmful stereotypes (Eagly & Karau, 2002). In the workplace, racialized and gendered stereotypes highlight the acceptance of black women in subservient roles within a dominant social institution reliant on the acceptance of her providers, while their contributions are taken for granted (Bell & Nkomo, 2001; Omolade, 1994; Reynolds-Dobbs, Thomas, & Harrison, 2008).

And as women are often positioned in supportive roles (Burton et al., 2009, 2011), role congruity theory sheds insight into how this can serve as a greater limitation to black women's advancement in athletics—rooted in the social roles of gender, to now include race. Many black women complicate the tenets of role congruity theory and suggest the need for an alternative approach. The positioning of black women serving in masculinized role, overseeing men's sports, requires a different paradigmatic examination of black women's intersectionality within ICA's hegemonically masculine terrain (McDowell & Carter-Francique, 2017).

As an example, recounting an instance when she was requested to assist with a group of incoming male student-athletes by an administrator, Tamara, a SWA, recollected her introduction to ICA's administration:

> This particular year, they were bringing in two local kids, black kids, who were academically at risk. People were having an uproar about them. The Athletic Director said "Listen, I want you to work with them." At first it was just Men's basketball team, and [he said] "I think these kids need to see somebody who, went through the program, you know, someone who understands their experience."

Tamara's testimony indicates that for black women, their black woman identity may also cast them as a role model for black men. Even though there is great benefit in this institutional practice, such actions are far from empowering for black women in ICA. The exclusive call for racial minorities to deal with racial minorities can be understood as an instrumental use of participants' identities that insulates more senior administrators (e.g., AD) from having to confront sociocultural tensions within their athletic programs. Many women stated that their identity allowed them to bring "more of something else than [white males] at the table," but on the other hand they recognize that their representative function in ICA allowed them to endure a 'cultural taxation' (Padilla, 1994). 'Cultural taxation' is manifested when members from underrepresented populations are positioned out of good will to serve as a representative example of upward mobility. In turn, they are often called upon to provide insight on cultural issues of diversity and connect personally with racial minorities. However, in such cases, the responsibility of personal development and connection placed on black women removes this expectation from other executive leaders.

Tamara's comments reflected the manner in which her identity as a person of color was seen as an important tool by a white, male administrator for relating to student-athletes. The exclusive call for racial minorities to 'deal' with racial minorities ignites concerns of the lack of value associated with diversity in ICA beyond gendered constraints and further highlights the need for a re-evaluation of diversity in executive leadership positions. Notably, none of the women stated that they were asked to speak with white male or female student-athletes when they were in trouble or having academic or social issues.

Supported by the current study's findings, representation within the athletic administration generates an outlet for more underrepresented social groups to seek more leadership roles (Borland & Bruening, 2010; McDowell & Carter-Francique, 2017; Walker & Melton, 2015). The participants acknowledged that their intersectionality assisted them in their leadership role, allowing them to offer a unique perspective to the organizational structure of ICA, and serve as role models to student-athletes. However, just as accounts of their intersectionality were recognized as a benefit, the women also expressed how ideological associations of their identity created barriers and limitations that distinguish their experience from white men, white women and black men.

'I'm two things different'

The participants also highlighted ways in which their identity can create a degree of dissonance from the dominant white, male culture in ICA. Black women must negotiate a means for survival in the dominant society, where racism and sexism is deeply embedded within dominant social institutions (Bell & Nkomo, 1998). To armor themselves, black women must negotiate their presence in the workplace, such as athletics, by either conforming to societal standards mediated by white culture, or attempt to enmesh their cultural manifestations into their leadership positions (Armstrong, 2007; Parker & Ogilvie, 1996). The dilemma of 'fitting in' is only experienced by non-whites, as people of color in leadership are constantly questioned and challenged (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Reflections showed that the women felt the separation between themselves and those consistently in power was rooted in their intersectionality. In order to overcome these oppressive limitations, they must negotiate their identity (McDowell & Cunningham, 2009).

Explaining the consistent trend of leadership within an ICA conferences' leadership, Tamara notes, "I remember three black women and then all white men and a few white women. And it's always like that, it seems to always feel that way." To extend this point, Laura and Heather, both Directors of Academic Advising added:

> I think when [black women] come to places when you say that you're the AD you know eyebrows kind of raise, you get 'oh wow, you're in this type of position'. I think, again, how I mentioned before about how to carry yourself across the board no matter what type of school that you're at, you have to think that for black women you have to have the 'extra'.

Their statement supports the notion of the peculiarity when observing a black woman in a prominent sport leadership position. Many of the women stated that there is a particular way that black women need to carry themselves whether enter leadership or interact with colleagues. Their reference to having something "extra" implies the need to be more effective, more efficient, and esteemed in order to be a successful black woman leader (Rosette & Livingston, 2012).

Wanting to adapt and 'fit in', the women noted that they took extra steps unseen by their counterparts. To maintain their conformity the women shared their susceptibility to self-regulating behaviors. For example, the women felt a greater degree of scrutiny based on their hairstyle, hand motions, and language than was given to white men, white women, and black men. For example, Amber, a SWA shared:

> You can see my hair is natural, I don't perm my hair. Not a lot of people were doing that in 1995, then again at [University]. I started wearing two strand twists and my boss left and I was like 'Oop' let me perm my hair because I might have to look for a job. But this time around I was in my 40's and I don't care, but I had to explain to people what they were about to see because there was this feeling that I need to make people comfortable with it. So when [a white person] in the department decides to color their hair or get a new haircut they don't make announcements, they're not concerned how people are going to respond if they get highlights.

Concerns of their appearance's effect on the way they would be perceived was a sentiment many of the women shared. To make other members of the administration 'comfortable' they felt it necessary to spoil the element of surprise that their coworkers would exhibit when seeing their new appearance, in this instance, a hairstyle. The interesting point was their acknowledgement of the lack of concern or effort provided by their counterparts when they altered their appearance. This finding calls attention to the ideological implications of black women's intersectionality, where aspects of their identity can be segmented to create distance. Their experience exposed them to ideological implications of white privilege (King & Springwood, 2001). To fit in, people of color often conform to white norms and alter their language and demeanor, especially in the workplace (Payne & Suddler, 2014). White men and women would not have to announce a change in appearance, however for black women to adapt to their environment, they felt it necessary. Hesitations and desire to 'fit in' were also observed regarding speech. Lisa, a Director of Compliance, recalls times where:

I think that black women are [and even] I've been told I'm brash, loud. And, I think, instead of you know a white woman would be labeled as direct, forceful, more complimentary words than brash, loud, you know.

Comparing her experiences to other women, Lisa felt that even when the same speech is given, white women's approach is ingested more favorably (Bell, Meyerson, Nkomo, & Scully, 2003). Once again, Lisa's comment calls into question unjust social practices that were felt to create a distinction between black and white women. As numerous theories tend to homogenize the experience of various social groups, black women consistently shared social interactions that were perceived to perpetuate a social hierarchy that privileged white women over black women. Such social practices are harmful and reinforce the need to generate awareness of oppressive social interactions that leave black women feeling isolated and powerless. Describing her understanding of how ICA's leadership culture views her, Amber, a SWA, proclaimed:

[I]t's a bit different because, again if the majority of the people in the room are white males, I'm two things different from them as opposed to the white females in the room. White female is a more of a known entity to him than I am. Because his mother is a white female, his sister, generally speaking. Not only am I not male, I'm also not white.

Amber continued to account for her own experience entering into a new position that led her from the North to the South region. During her initial interview, she recalled feeling the need to emphasize her "straight forward" behavior that she understood to be off-putting to some men—a sentiment felt by many of the participants. Unlike the interactions that some women and men may experience, she believed her intersectionality would be perceived more negatively, given ICA's masculine culture. This sentiment is supported by Livingston, Rosette, and Washington (2012) finding that black women's intersectionality is often the reasoning for discriminatory practices stemming from the confluence of their gender and race. Comprised of a double minority status, they have a greater potential to fall victim to both racial and gender ideologies, often times unaware of which identity construct is 'at fault' (Collins, 2000). Reflections similar to the one provided by Stephanie bring further attention to hegemonic manifestations in ICA. As women, black women are vulnerable to experience the same gender based stereotypical assumptions that undermine their acceptance into leadership (Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010), but their intersectionality forces them to negotiate their differences simultaneously (McDowell & Cunningham, 2009). In result, the women believed that their intersectionality, more than isolated confrontations of gender or race's implications, were deemed to be more relevant to their emergence into leadership (McDowell & Carter-Francique, 2017). In all, their statements suggest that an individual's identity is referenced to the standard of white, hegemonic masculinity—the closer one is to that norm, the better.

The primary leadership position in NCAA's Division I leadership structures is the AD, which is dominantly filled by white men. Supported by statements regarding a racial and gender hierarchy, the women claimed that distance created by a racial and gender hierarchy can place limitations on black women's upward mobility more so than for white women and black men. Additionally, when explaining the manifestations of a gender and racial hierarchy, Tamara, a former student-athlete, recounted an interaction she had with her institution's AD after having obtained her Master's degree. Over the course of her exit interview, she realized that he (a white male) perceived her to only be successful after entering into a career of coaching. She recalled:

He said, "Well have you thought about coaching?" It sort of, it was interesting to me that that was the first thing he asked me. It wasn't that the question itself [that] offended me, it wasn't that the coach piece offended me, but he really didn't think there was anything else. He actually said to me "black women actually do well in coaching" and then he said "you'll probably never be the head coach, but you could do really well in this.

As an overt account of sexism and racism, Tamara's interaction captures the complexity of black women's intersectionality in ICA. Explicitly being told that she would be limited due to her intersectionality illustrates the degree to which a white, hegemonically masculine culture influences the institution of ICA. Tamara decided not to seek a career in coaching, but the discriminatory sentiment provided by her AD was a powerful reminder of the constraints her intersectionality may impose. Similar to other black women, she could not decipher if the opportunity for a coaching career was based on her gender, race, but rather a common oppressive function of her intersectionality's social positioning. To combat these oppressive social interactions, and use their experience as a source of strength, many of the women shared their desire to exceed expectations and gain acceptance among their peers.

Continuing to highlight the dissonance sometimes observed among women, for black women, Hope detailed how race and sexuality also provide contention. She explained:

And this only happened one time where [a] coach basically said they did not want me to oversee [student-athletes]. I felt that it was because I was black, because she had a student-athlete on her team who was black and she ran her off. And then she had another who was biracial who was having issues. It is very interesting because the person she wanted to oversee her is a white male, heterosexual, 4 kids, been married for 40 years and it's funny.

She later explained that the coach was a bisexual, white woman, and her preference for a white, heterosexual male prompting her concerns of a social hierarchy regarding leadership preferences (Rosette et al., 2008). As a white woman, potentially being overseen by a black woman, contradicted the hierarchical order of identity. Masculinity is superior to femininity and whiteness is superior to blackness and heterosexuality over homosexuality (Collins, 2000). Even though the current study did not examine intersectional accounts beyond race and gender, these findings support Walker and Melton's (2015) study which included the effects of women and minority women's intersectionality regarding race, gender, and sexuality. Even when overseeing a white women who possessed a marginalized identity, the white woman's social status was perceived to accentuate her dominant social positioning to stifle the power of a black woman in leadership.

In response to future career goals, only two of the women shared interest in pursuing the Athletic Director position. The other eight women had either served as an Athletic Director or preferred to enter other areas of sport leadership. A common reflection or point of concern was provided by Sanaa, a SWA, who expressed that for black women as Athletic Director:

I think the job necessarily, the job doesn't change. Maybe it's the support and the resources to do the job would change. I think right now, we as [an] African-American, or minority women, we're called minorities for a reason. I think that we have to continue to

build our resources, whether that's human, fiscal, capacity to build, facilities so that we can make sure that the same opportunities are presented.

Sanaa's statement was reflective of many of the women's intuitions regarding the promotion of black women in dominant leadership positions in ICA. The women felt that they would have to deal with the normal constraints and allowances of the AD position, but their intersectionality would force them to deal with even more personal scrutiny rooted in hierarchical social orders. All of the women stated that the demands of the job do not change, yet they all felt their intersectionality would make them more susceptible to public and private scrutiny. For example, not only would boosters and stakeholders question their presence, but their colleagues would challenge their decisions more often. Regarding the AD position, Hope declared "[Men] get these opportunities because it's built for them".

Declaring that a position is built for men provides a major barrier to the advancement of women (Eagly & Karau, 2002). The reference to men points to any man's affinity for leadership; however white women also benefit from their hierarchical social status over black women (Bell et al., 2010). As such, being black and nonwhite forces black women to be 'two things different' from the norm, and requires a creative leadership style that reinforces their approval for leadership unlike other social groups (Armstrong, 2007; Jean-Marie et al., 2009).

Conclusion

Intersectionality proved a relevant theory to examine black women's experience when examining oppressive ideological manifestations based on identity's influence. Qualitative reflections of black women's perception of their intersectionality's influence on experience to support its theoretical contributions among sport scholars were examined (Carter-Francique & Flowers, 2013). Black women not only negotiate the confluence of sexism and racism, as their emergence into leadership roles contradicts notions of leadership's historic white, male preserve (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Parker & Ogilvie, 1996). Black women's presence can be guised as an appreciation of differences and value of diversity. However, black women must be cautious of an oppressive organizational structure that lauds their uniqueness like a prized fixture, but is not reflected by their opportunities for career advancement or input in decision making that allow for upward mobility. Implications of identity's intersectional influence forces minority women to interpret and experience a 'double jeopardy' that obscures a specific target of oppression to either one of their identity sources (King, 1988); such forms of oppression can only be examined through intersectionality's experiential lens (Crenshaw, 1991).

Aligned with findings from McDowell and Carter-Francique's (2017) scholarship, the current study shows how within ICA leadership, black women's intersectionality incites them to filter the impact of their intersectionality as a benefit or barrier to their acceptance—in spite of their level of organizational leadership—unobserved by their counterparts (Collins, 2000). Results from examinations of black women's experience predominantly reveal concerns of sexism, racial discrimination, marginalization, isolation, and how they must contextually negotiate their identity as sport leaders (Abney, 1988, 1991; Armstrong, 2007; McDowell, 2008; McDowell & Carter-Francique, 2017; McDowell & Cunningham, 2009; Walker & Melton, 2015). Black women's underrepresentation in executive leadership positions in ICA is directly related to its acceptance of hegemonic masculinity and white privilege (Collins, 2000). Black women find themselves stagnant within ICA at a greater rate, when compared to white women

and black men. The organizational culture of ICA will continue to marginalize black women, until society's unjust social orders are challenged and made visible by those in power.

Considering sport's positioning as an inclusive, progressive social institution, the current studies' results raise concern of its meritocratic functioning. Underlying ideological factors that privilege particular social groups are ever-present within ICA's organizational structure. The marginalization of black women or any identity category within ICA is not only unethical, but harmful to the very virtues that sport purports to impart on its participants and the larger society. Without addressing such practices, ICA fails to fulfill their potential as an important developmental institution within American society. Findings from the current study seek to challenge progressive scholars and athletic administrators to call attention to organizational and cultural practices that overtly and covertly construct intercollegiate sport as a bastion of white, masculine, heterosexual privilege. As administrations show greater support for diversity in their employment practices, there is a greater opportunity for more minority student-athletes to feel comfortable transitioning into ICA's administration (Walker & Melton, 2015). Implementing intersectionality as a critical framework to explore the nuanced perceptions of experience among white women and other women of color enriches the understanding of experience among ICA's leadership that is necessary for institutional change.

Limitations and Future Research

Limitations were observed by the complex nature of the current study. Due to the small sample size, the results from the study cannot be generalized to all black women in sport leadership. It is important to note that not all black women's experience can be described monolithically. Second, due to the exclusive sampling of black women, the results were not able to capture and compare distinct nuances in experience from other social groups (i.e., white women). Additional research is needed to enhance understanding of intersectionality as a relevant framework to examine black women's experience in ICA as sport leaders and participants. Most of the research concerning intersectionality and identity focuses on its oppressive social function on black women. In doing so, white women and men sport leaders' perspective on matters of race are left unchallenged (Shields, 2008).

Future research efforts should extend examinations of the ways white women and men view race and gender within ICA's organizational culture (Walker & Melton, 2015). Qualitative research efforts offer a voice to its participants. Intentionally examining the ways white women and men view social issues surrounding race and gender is imperative as they more prominently serve as executive leaders in ICA's administration. Their insight on these complex issues are imperative to understand and will offer a comparable reference when considering experiential differences and similarities between black and white sport leaders. Also, future research efforts should employ ethnographic examinations of ICA's organizational culture in regards to its formal and informal social practices. Ideological manifestations exhibited in formal and informal interactions are subtle, contextual, and may require extensive immersion in ICA's culture to adequately understand. Ranging from formal examinations of organizational structures and policies (i.e. formal parameters of SWA position) to informal social interactions among colleagues, scholars have an ability to illuminate unjust cultural practices that are deeply embedded and perpetuated within ICA.

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