Female College Athletes' Perceptions of Leadership in College Sport: A Gendered
Approach

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandfather, Art Lindberg. While he exemplified so many virtues and instilled many life lessons as grandparents often do, two important values he passionately modeled and passed on to me were education and the importance of living a healthy active lifestyle. I know he was proud of me when I started this journey, and though we lost him along the way and he didn't get see me finish, his memory helped guide me through the final stages when I felt there was no end in sight— and I know his blue eyes are shining down with pride.

Abstract

The social institution of sport and the field of leadership share many connections including deeply embedded gender stereotypes, assumptions, and ideologies. For example, college sport features a gendered history controlled by men and steeped in dominant masculinity. This domination continues today, despite the fact that women are participating in college athletics at record levels (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012). Leadership also has a gendered past where common conceptions of leadership are linked to forms of masculinity (e.g., heroic individualism, authority, and assertiveness) and men are (more often) perceived to be good leaders (Eagly, 2007; Fletcher, 2004; Hovden, 2000). Leadership is socially constructed and embedded in a context where history and assumptions matter (Osborn et al., 2002), and female college athletes' understandings of sport leadership might be manifested based on their experiences of gendered stereotypes and assumptions.

The purpose of this study therefore, was to explore how female college athletes come to understand leadership in a context dominated by men and certain forms of masculinity. This is important given the popular notion that 'sport builds leaders', yet the number of women holding leadership in college sport has failed dramatically to keep pace with the increase in women's college sport participation. Social constructivism (Crotty, 1998; Wright et al., 2010) and gendered social processes (Acker, 1992; Ely & Meyerson, 2000) provided the framework for this study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 23 female athletes participating in six team sports at the NCAA Division I level. Using an interview guide participants were asked to define leadership in sport,

identify specific situations in sport where leadership occurred, and to reflect on the relevancy of gender in sport leadership. Data analysis involved first engaging in initial and axial data coding to develop categories, properties and dimensions of leadership. Next using the literature, thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006) was used to identify, analyze, and report themes in terms of leadership perceptions and the gendered nature of participants' understandings of leadership.

Results were reported based on two core leadership categories: peer and coach leadership. Female college athletes' perceptions of leadership included three leadership themes including leader-focused behaviors and attributes, outcomes, and various styles and approaches, which were embedded in the context. Peer leadership consisted mostly of traditionally masculine leadership themes, while coach leadership included both feminine and traditionally masculine leadership themes. Gendered leadership narratives, images, attributes, and expectations were also identified and discussed. This study contributed to the gender relations and leadership literature and has practical application for sport practitioners and coaches.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

Women and Leadership in Sport

The passage of Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972 was, in no small part, instrumental in increasing participation opportunities for girls and women in high school and college sport. In fact girls and women are participating in high school and college sport at record levels (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012, National Federation of State High School Associations [NFHS], 2013). In college sport, there are approximately 200,000 women participating today compared to the pre-Title IX figure of around 16,000 in 1970 (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012). Girls and women are thus reaping many benefits of their sport involvement. For example, in addition to the obvious physical benefits, it remains a popular belief in United States society that sport participation offers an ideal platform to enhance personal characteristics and develop important life skills (Coakley, 2008). Leadership is one such vital skill and we are continually reminded of the leadership lessons that can be gleaned via sport participation (e.g., Hanold, 2011; Janssen, 2003; Westerbeek & Smith, 2005; Wooden & Jamison, 2005).

Given the popular notion that sport participation develops leadership skills teamed with the dramatic increase in women's college sport participation rates since the passage of Title IX, it would seem to follow that the number of women holding leadership positions in college sport would also experience a representational increase. After all, an important antecedent to coaching and sport leadership positions is participation in college

athletics (Everhart & Chelladurai, 1998; Grappendorf, Lough & Griffin, 2004; Lough & Grappendorf, 2007). However, since the passage of Title IX, women have not fared as well in sport leadership positions such as coaching and sport administration, and women have continued to lose leadership opportunities in college sport (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012, LaVoi, 2013, 2014).

While some of the gender equality goals of Title IX are being realized in the increase in sport participation rates of girls and women in sport, a considerable gender gap persists in leadership positions in college sport, and the decline of women in leadership positions in college sport is well documented (e.g., Acosta & Carpenter, 2012; LaVoi, 2013, 2014). This indicates that while sport has opened its doors to female participants via gender equity policies, such policies have done "little to change the dominance of masculinities that are deeply and historically entrenched in sport" (Shaw & Frisby, 2006, p. 484). The social institution of sport is traditionally considered a man's domain; created by men for men (Anderson, 2009; Hargreaves, 1994; Messner, 2002, 2009). Sport, therefore, has a long history steeped in masculine values and ideologies including aggressiveness, domination, physicality, and power.

Masculine traits and ideologies are similarly linked to leadership beliefs and assumptions in sport. Kane (2001) reminds us of sport's gendered history and where it fell short related to leadership:

The history of sport is replete with anecdotes regarding one of its most important outcomes: that is, sport builds leaders. It is important to remember; however, that sport has another history. Sport didn't build leaders in any generic or universal

sense. Sport built *male* leaders … When it comes to one of sport's greatest

hallmarks—preparing our nation's leaders—a rather significant component

appears to be missing; that of preparing half of the population to occupy positions

of leadership in one of this country's most influential and all-pervasive

institutions. (pp. 115, 117)

In order to better understand why the gender disparity in sport leadership exists, it is

important to explore the beliefs and assumptions surrounding leadership in the context of

sport. Madsen (2010) argued that "the combination of the masculine nature of athletics

and the masculine assumptions of leadership make athletic careers extremely difficult for

women to successfully negotiate" (p. 3). Therefore, exploring female college athletes'

constructions of leadership and the gendered assumptions, beliefs, and ideologies

associated with leadership in the context of college sport may provide some explanatory

power into why so few women rise through the ranks of college sports to become head

coaches and athletic directors.

Social constructivism assumes that individuals construct knowledge based on

their experiences and interpretations of those experiences in a specific socio-historic

context (Crotty, 1998; Wright, Grenier, Seaman, 2010). Leadership and gender are both

inherently social products and influenced by socio-cultural factors. Leadership is a social

process, constructed and embedded in a context where history, assumptions, and

meanings matter (Osborn, Hunt, & Jauch, 2002). Gender is similarly positioned as one

set of social relations where notions and assumptions of what it means to be a man or a

woman, masculine or feminine are constructed, expressed and reproduced through

complex social processes (Acker, 1992, 1999; Ely & Meyerson, 2000). Thus, social

constructivism represents a useful approach in exploring the perceptions, constructions,

and meanings of leadership and gender in the context of sport.

The Context of Sport and Intercollegiate Athletics

Sport is a social institution similar in importance and scope to other social

institutions such as the military, our political system, families, and the educational system

(Coakley, 2008; Messner & Bozada-Deas, 2009). The broader social institution of sport

includes several different settings for sport participation and sport management including

community and recreational sport, youth sport, interscholastic athletics, intercollegiate

athletics, professional sport, international sport (Pedersen, Parks, Quarterman, &

Thibault, 2011). In my study, I recognize intercollegiate athletics or college sport as

specific sport context within the broader context of sport as a social institution. Given

that my research focused on participants in the specific context of intercollegiate

athletics, I included a review of leadership and gender within intercollegiate athletics. I

also refer to the broader context of sport at times, and recognize that participants have

likely drawn on their various experiences in other sport settings such as community

recreation, youth sport, and interscholastic athletics in constructing leadership in

intercollegiate athletics.

As a social institution, sport and its various settings are important sites for the

maintenance and reproduction of male domination and female subordination (Messner,

2007, 2009; Messner & Bozada-Deas, 2009; Shaw & Frisby, 2006). Basic values and

ideologies such as aggression, toughness, and competitiveness strengthen and support

masculinity, while a range of practices and social processes in sport organizations

reinforce and reproduce a culture that privileges certain forms of masculinities (Knoppers

& Antonissen, 2005, 2008; Shaw, 2006 Shaw & Frisby, 2006). Leadership and its

associated skills, practices, and traits represents a social process in sport that contributes

to the reproduction of a culture that privileges masculinity while marginalizing femininity

(Brown & Light, 2012; Hanold, 2011; Hovden, 2000, 2010). Fine (2009) contends that

the male ideology of leadership is visible in two critical ways including the lack of

representation of women in leadership positions and the construction of leadership as

consisting of masculine traits and characteristics. Both critical aspects of leadership

identified by Fine are prevalent in sport and intercollegiate athletics and warrant further

examination.

Leadership and Gender in the Context of Sport and Intercollegiate Athletics

Sport leadership positions (i.e., coaching and administrative) are both

quantitatively dominated by men, and conceptually linked to dominant forms of

masculinities (Anderson, 2009; Hovden, 2000, 2010; Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2005,

2008; Shaw, 2001, 2006; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003). For example, sport scholars estimate

that women represent between 14-20 percent of coaches at the youth sport level (LaVoi,

2009; Messner, 2009; Messner & Bozada-Deas, 2009), and approximately 17-20 percent

at the high school level (LaVoi, 2008; LaVoi & Kamphoff, 2013). In college sport, male

coaches represent nearly 80 percent of head coaches overall and hold the majority (i.e.,

57.1%) of head coaching positions of women's college teams (Acosta & Carpenter,

2012). The statistics are similar for administrative leadership positions within

intercollegiate athletics where men represent 79.7 percent of athletic directors across all

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) divisional affiliations (Acosta &

Carpenter, 2012). At the highest levels of the intercollegiate athletics (i.e., NCAA

Division I) men hold nearly 90 percent of athletic director positions (Acosta & Carpenter,

2012)

      A masculine ethic is also ubiquitous to leadership and notions of what it means to

be a good leader in the sport context. For example, scholars in sport have examined

gender stereotypes associated with coaching (Drago, Hennighausen, Rogers, Vescio, &

Stauffer, 2005; Fasting & Pfister, 2000; Frey, Czech, Kent, & Johnson, 2006; Rhode &

Walker, 2008; Theberge, 1993) and the administration and management of sport

organizations and programs (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008; Hovden, 2000, 2010;

Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2005, 2008; Shaw, 2006, Shaw & Hoeber, 2003). The gender

stereotypes revealed in these examinations suggest that certain socially constructed

masculine values and characteristics in sport leadership are preferred to those values

socially ascribed as feminine (Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008; Drago et al., 2005;

Fasting & Pfister, 2000; Hovden, 2000, 2010; Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2005, 2008;

Rhode & Walker, 2008; Shaw, 2006, Shaw & Hoeber, 2003). In coaching, for example,

Drago et al. (2005) reported that female college athletes preferred a coach who was able

to command respect, was authoritarian and professional, and kept their personal lives

private in the context of intercollegiate athletics. Similarly, in Frey et al.'s (2006) study,

eight out of twelve female college athletes expressed explicit preferences for male

coaches based on the perception that men possessed greater sport knowledge and were

better able to enforce discipline and garner respect. These sport leadership traits and

characteristics aligned with coaching are widely associated with men and masculinities in

the United States and other western cultures (Collinson & Hearn, 1996).

In contrast, the leadership traits and characteristics that are socially ascribed as

"feminine" such as nurturing, relational, and emotional (Fletcher, 1999, 2004) are not as

highly valued in sport leadership and coaching by female college athletes (Drago et al.,

2005; Frey et al, 2006). For example, Drago et al. (2005) found that female college

athletes wanted a female coach as part of the coaching staff, but they did not want them

as head coaches—instead, they "looked to female coaches, usually assistants, to provide

emotional labor for the team, and to balance out the 'maleness' of the head coach" (p.

32). Also noteworthy to Drago and colleagues study was what they referred to as the

"conundrum of gender" facing female coaches. When female coaches provided emotional

support and developed personal relationships with their players—something that they

were expected to do based on their gender and associated gender stereotypes—they were

subsequently not as respected as disciplinarians and were often resented when they

displayed authoritarian leadership behaviors (Drago et al., 2005). The tensions between

the emotional supportive qualities expected in women leaders and the authoritarian,

masculine qualities expected of sport leaders and coaches places women coaches in a

"conundrum of gender".

Exploring Female College Athletes' Constructions of Leadership in Sport

The underrepresentation of female leaders at all levels of sport teamed with

dominant masculine traits and characteristics persistently embedded in sport leadership

provide an important backdrop for understanding female college athletes' perceptions of leadership in sport. The absence of female leaders in the sport experiences of female athletes may impact how they come to understand and interpret leadership in the context of sport. For example, Rhode and Walker (2008) contend "the lack of female role models in coaching and athletic leadership sends a disturbing message to female athletes about their own likely professional opportunities" (p. 14). The lack of female leaders and role models and perhaps how female athletes internalize the scarcity of female sport leaders in their own sport experiences may be influential to female athletes' professional goals and aspirations to work as leaders within a variety of sport contexts.

Female college athletes, whose sport experiences have been dominated not only by male leaders, but also masculine notions of what is ideal leadership, may come to understand leadership as a gendered social process in the context of sport. Social processes are gendered in the extent to which they are symbolically defined, described, and evaluated in terms of masculinities and femininities (Acker, 1992; Ely & Meyerson, 2000). Distinctions between socially constructed notions of masculine and feminine, male and female, and or men and women often lead to the privileging of men and certain forms of masculinities over women and certain forms of femininities (Acker, 1990, 1992; Britton & Logan, 2008; Ely & Meyerson, 2000). Gendered social processes reproduce assumptions regarding leadership in sport—for example, the assumption and underlying ideology that suggests men are more qualified and competent leaders in sport.

Purpose

While it is clear that male dominance remains prevalent and masculine leadership characteristics and values persist within sport, it is unclear how the many female athletes participating in intercollegiate athletics come to understand leadership in this male dominated and masculine context. Women's leadership experiences remain marginalized and excluded in masculine oriented cultures (Elliott & Stead, 2008), and focusing on the leadership experiences of female athletes can promote broader understandings of leadership in sport. A gap in the academic literature also exists in examining leadership in sport as a gendered social process. The gendered approach to leadership can assist in critically examining sport leadership and its potential role in maintaining gender relations in sport. Therefore, the purpose of my study was to explore how female college athletes socially construct leadership in sport, and to understand how their leadership constructions may be gendered in a context that is widely associated with men and privileges certain forms of masculinities while marginalizing femininities. This topic represented a valuable and yet understudied area of research. In order to accomplish this purpose, interviews were conducted to explore female college athletes' constructions, perceptions, and experiences of leadership in sport and the relevancy of gender. The following research questions guided the nature and scope of the study.

Research Questions

1. What are female college athletes' perceptions of leadership within intercollegiate athletics?

2. How do female college athletes' experiences in sport inform their constructions of leadership within intercollegiate athletics?

3. If, and in what ways are female college athletes' constructions of leadership within intercollegiate athletics gendered?

Rationale and Contribution

Focus on Female College Athletes

This research was valuable and needed for several reasons. First, there were several gaps in the sport literature regarding female college athletes' perceptions of leadership and how their sport experiences influenced their beliefs about leadership and the relevancy of gender. Focusing on female college athletes' can provide practical knowledge and empirical insights regarding their leadership experiences and constructions.

For example, past research has examined factors influencing the low representation of women in sport leadership by focusing on women currently holding sport leadership positions (e.g., Bruening & Dixon, 2007, 2008; Dixon & Bruening, 2007; Kamphoff, 2010). College playing experience is an important antecedent to obtaining college coaching and sport leadership positions (Everhart & Chelladurai, 1998; Grappendorf et al., 2004; Lough & Grappendorf, 2007), and Drago et al. (2005) contend that many of young women are not pursuing or obtaining leadership positions in sport. Thus the focus on female college athletes was also important because they represent a considerable talent pool of potential female leaders in sport with perhaps the most promise to increase women's representation in a profession and field in desperate need of

gender diversity. Female college athletes' perceptions of leadership are an important piece to understanding the underrepresentation of women in sport puzzle, and can provide useful knowledge to practitioners in the coaching and mentoring of female college athletes.

Ross and Shinew (2008) suggested that research should examine the perceptions, meanings, and experiences of women in college sport while asking why dominant attitudes support difference and oppression. My research answered Ross and Shinew's call by introducing the leadership experiences of female college athletes, as well as their interpretations of those experiences within the gendered social institution of sport. While recent examinations in sport included female college athletes' leadership perceptions (e.g., Holmes, McNeil, & Adorna, 2010; Holmes, McNeil, Adorna, & Procaccino, 2008), historically female college athletes are underrepresented in the sport literature and their experiences are largely untold. Although it was not a primary goal of my research, it fulfilled a feminist objective by focusing on and giving voice to an underrepresented group.

Finally, the results of this study provided empirical worth by highlighting the various sport leadership conceptions valued by female college athletes. Such knowledge can serve sport practitioners and coaches and be useful in the development of both female athlete and coach leadership development programs within intercollegiate athletics. Providing understandings of women's leadership experiences, practices, and constructions in sport also answers Elliot and Stead's (2008) call for a greater focus on women's experiences of leadership in a wide range of sectors. Elliot and Stead suggested

that highlighting women's leadership experiences in a variety of settings contributes new insights and broader sociological understandings of leadership with a focused attention to the social structures in which women interpret their leadership experiences. Leadership is constructed and practiced differently in sport organizations compared to other management contexts (Kihl, Leberman, & Schull, 2010; Scott, 1999), and given the masculine history and culture of sport, how women interpret leadership in sport can contribute to broader sociological understandings of leadership and gender.

Examining Leadership as a Gendered Social Process

This research was also significant in filling a gap in the literature by examining leadership as a gendered social process in the context of sport. To this end, my research added to our theoretical understandings of gender relations in sport—that is how meanings of gender operate to create, sustain, and sometimes challenge the dominant gender order (Acker, 1992, Ely & Meyerson, 2000). While researchers have previously shown that female athletes may develop gender stereotypes and subsequent preferences for male coaches based in part on lack of experiences with female coaches (Drago et al., 2005; Fasting & Pfister, 2000; Rhode & Walker, 2008), this research provided further insights into how gendered ideals, assumptions, and narratives associated with leadership develop and persist in the context of sport.

This research was also valuable in highlighting the complexity of gender relations and the multiple ways in which gender is expressed in sport leadership. The multiple articulations of gender is an important aspect in this research as Ashcraft (2009) suggests avoiding binary approaches to gender research, which can erroneously position all men

and masculinities as more powerful than all women and femininities. Multiple understandings of gender relations in sport leadership also make it possible to identify alternate conceptions of leadership in the sport context, which can be used to challenge dominant beliefs and values (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Shaw, 2006, Shaw & Frisby, 2006), in this case, associated with sport leadership.

Context Specific Focus and Qualitative Methods

Finally, Osborn et al. (2002) argued the importance of context to conceptions of leadership as context specific patterns, assumptions and history matter. It is paramount to leadership examinations to consider context—especially in the sport context—arguably one of the most gendered of social institutions (Anderson, 2009; Coakly 2008; Messner, 2007, 2009; Whisenant, Pedersen & Obenour, 2002). Qualitative methods are the best means for understanding not only the nuances and multiple conceptions of leadership (Allevesson & Deetz, 2000; Gilstrap, 2007), but also for understanding the complexities of gender (Acker, 1992, Poggio, 2006). This research will answer the calls for: (1) more context specific qualitative research examining the social construction of leadership in various sport settings (Kihl et al., 2010), and (2) the influence of gender and participation in team sports on perceptions of leadership (Holmes et al., 2010).

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Summary

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In this chapter, I provided an introduction to my research by highlighting the background of the problem, the purpose and research questions, and the rational and significance of the study. In *Chapter Two,* I provided the conceptual framework for the study including a review of the topical research, and the theoretical perspectives that

underpin the research. In *Chapter Three,* I highlighted the methodology for the research.

Next, I presented and discussed the findings of the research in *Chapters Four* and *Five*.

Finally, in *Chapter Six,* I drew conclusions from the discussion and analysis of the

previous two chapters, highlighted the contribution of my research, discussed the

limitations of this study, and provided directions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Ravitch and Riggan (2012) contend a conceptual framework is developed via a literature review and includes both topical research and theoretical frameworks. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter was twofold. First, I provided a review of the leadership, gender, and sport literature relevant to the current study. Second, I highlighted the theoretical frameworks underpinning the analysis of the social construction of leadership and the meanings of gender in female college athletes' leadership constructions.

A Review of Topical Research

Common conceptions of leadership are linked to men and certain forms of masculinities. For example, traditional leadership approaches center on the heroic individual, agentic and authoritarian leaders, and aggressive command and control leadership styles (Eagly, 2007; Fletcher, 2004). While both women and men can display the traits associated with traditional leadership, they are socially constructed as masculine and more often ascribed to men (Fletcher, 2004). More recently, the field of leadership has experienced an ideological shift in how scholars conceptualize and study leadership (Alevesson & Deetz, 2000; Gilstrap, 2007; Yukl, 2012). What emerged from this shift includes contemporary leadership approaches and models which are more relational, collaborative, and inclusive, and less heroic or individualistic (Fletcher, 2004; Pearce & Conger, 2003; Yukl, 2012). In contrast to the traditional leadership approaches featuring socially constructed masculine practices, the new contemporary leadership models

feature socially constructed feminine practices (e.g., relational practices, empathy, and collaboration). (Eagly, 2007; Fletcher, 2004; Hanold, 2011). Here again, both men and women can display the traits and characteristics associated with contemporary leadership, however the traits themselves are socially constructed as feminine and more widely ascribed to women (Fletcher, 2004). Despite this shift from traditional to contemporary leadership, Fletcher (2004) contends that the everyday narratives about leadership and associated practices remain stuck in images of heroic individualism. This is exceptionally the case in sport with society's focus on the sport hero and the successful coach who is often perceived as an authoritarian leader. As such, it has been proposed that leadership in sport remains stuck in outdated leadership practices (Drago, et al., 2005; Hanold, 2011). In the following review, I synthesized the literature associated with traditional and contemporary leadership, leadership and gender, and leadership and gender in sport.

Traditional Leadership Approaches

The first formal leadership theories (i.e., "great man" and trait theories) were underpinned by the assumption that some individuals simply possessed leadership personalities and were born with mental and physical traits and characteristics such as height, good looks, and intelligence, which made them natural leaders (Van Seters & Field, 1990; Yukl, 2012). Power and influence theories of leadership included examinations of leader effectiveness in terms of the sources of power and how it was used to influence subordinates (e.g., French & Raven, 1959). Behavioral leadership theorists (e.g., Bass, 1960; McGregor, 1960) focused on what leaders do and the various behaviors that leaders enact suggesting that leadership is a learned skill. Fiedler (1964)

introduced contingent leadership, which furthered leadership theory by recognizing additional situational factors rather than simply focusing on the leader and or subordinates. The contingent approach was underpinned by the assumption that there is no single best way to lead, but instead that the leader's style should be selected based on a variety of situational factors (Fiedler, 1964; Yukl, 2012).

Four critiques of traditional leadership approaches were critical to this research. First, traditional leadership models maintain a leader-centered focus while neglecting its social and collective nature (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Bryman, Stephens, & Campo, 1996; Gergen, 2009; Meindl, 1995; Smircich & Morgan, 1982). Gergen (2009) contends "that to say anything about the leader as a single human being is to miss the process of the relationship responsible for the very idea of the leader" (p. 149). Second, traditional leadership examinations remain grounded in positivistic quantitative methods (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000; Bryman et al., 1996; Gergen, 2009; Gilstrap, 2007; Meindl, 1995). Alvesson and Deetz (2000) argue that positivistic quantitative methods (e.g., surveys and questionnaires) are limited in discovering the nuances and ambiguities associated with leadership, social relations, and work tasks because they often utilize simplified and narrowly defined concepts and artificial settings. As a result, they have largely lost their usefulness to further develop the field. (Alvesson & Deetz, 2000

Third, traditional leadership models neglect the importance of context to the leadership process (Bryman et al., 1996; Osborn et al., 2002). Contextual factors such as the people, structure, culture, history, goals, and objectives while often neglected, are important aspects of leadership because the social process of leadership emerges from

these various and important aspects (Gergen, 2009; Porter & McLaughlin, 2006). Finally,

traits associated with traditional leadership approaches are gendered—they more

frequently resemble characteristics associated with men and certain forms of

masculinities (Eagly, 2007; Fletcher, 2004; Hanold, 2011; Hovden, 2000; 2010). Despite

increasing numbers of women in leadership positions across a variety of sectors,

leadership continues to be described as masculine (Fine, 2009). Elliott and Stead (2008)

argue that because much of the literature is developed by men and focused on male

managers, it is not surprising that "the leadership literature adopts masculinity as the

norm" (p. 159). The absence of women and their leadership experiences "has profoundly

affected theorizing about leadership" because leadership and masculinity are often

positioned as synonymous (Fine, 2009, p. 182).

Leadership as a Social Process

What emerged from critiques of leader-centered, quantitative approaches was a

shift in the way researchers think about and study leadership (Bryman, 1992; Gilstrap,

2007; Pearce & Conger, 2003; Yukl, 2012). Rather than viewing leadership as the traits

and characteristics of individuals at the top of a group or organization, more recent

research (e.g., Drath, 2001; Kihl et al., 2010; Ospina & Schall, 2005; Schall, Ospina,

Godsoe, & Dodge, 2004; Sinclair, 2005) emphasized leadership as a social construction.

Burns (1978) was one of the first to conceptualize leadership as a relational and collective

process in contrast to the traditional view of leadership as the heroic actions of

individuals in highly regarded positions. Consequently, Burns' seminal work resulted in

the emergence of several models that are less individualistic and focus more on the

relational and social aspects of leadership (Pearce & Conger, 2003; Yukl, 2012) including

transformational (Bass, 1985), charismatic (Bryman, 1992), and visionary (Bennis &

Nanus, 1985). These new approaches to the study of leadership are commonly called

'new leadership' (Bryman, 1992) or 'postheroic leadership' (Fletcher, 2004). In this

review, they will be referred to as contemporary leadership. Leadership through a social

constructivist lens is learned and constructed through a relational and collective social

process between the leaders and the led, influenced by past experiences, and occurs in

and through the social interactions among groups of people in a specific context (Drath,

2001; Opsina & Schall, 2005; Sinclair, 2005; Smirich & Morgan, 1982). As a social

construct, leadership is more about the experiences of individual group members as they

interact with others in a specific context and attempt to interpret or make sense of

leadership and less about the traits and behaviors of individual leaders in positions of

authority (Gergen, 2009; Schall et al., 2004; Smircich & Morgan, 1982). Gergen (2009)

argued, "leadership is not the task of a specific individual. Rather it emerges from the

way people carry out relationships—the very ordinary way in which we treat each other"

(p. 149). Thus, many individuals are involved in the process of leadership, and it is vital

to examine the multiple perspectives and meanings of leadership and recognize that there

are different paths to understanding and interpreting leadership (Kihl et al., 2010).

The alternate conceptualization of leadership as a social process informs how

researchers study leadership resulting in a small but important shift in leadership inquiry.

A methodological implication of this shift involves the increased use of interpretive

qualitative designs (e.g., Gilstrap, 2007; Bresnen, 1995; Bryman et al., 1996; Meindl,

1995). Conger (1998) contends that quantitative methods are insufficient to capture the complexity of leadership characteristics including its dynamic nature, symbolic component, and multi-level involvement. As a result, the use of qualitative methodological designs in leadership research has increased over the past 20 years (Bryman, 2004). My research also featured a qualitative design as it was proposed that qualitative research was better suited to capture the complex and dynamic nature of the leadership process, the contextual influences, and the nuanced interpretations of the leadership phenomenon (Alevesson & Deetz, 2000; Bresnen, 1995; Bryman et al., 1996; Gilstrap, 2007).

Leadership and context. While traditional leadership studies have neglected the importance of context, a social process perspective of leadership presents a greater opportunity to focus on the specific context in which the process of leadership takes place. Osborn et al., (2002) "…argued that leadership is embedded in the context. It is socially constructed in and from a context where patterns over time must be considered and where history matters" (p. 798). Indeed, the sport context is unique compared to other leadership and management contexts.

First, there are several special features of sport that influence how sport organizations are managed and led (Hoye et al., 2008; Smith & Stewart, 2010; Stewart & Smith, 1999). Second, and perhaps more important to this research is that, as a social institution, sport features a long and rich history dominated by men and dominant forms of masculinities (e.g., aggressiveness, physicality, and power) that continues to exist today at all levels of sport (Anderson, 2009; Messner, 2007, 2009). Intercollegiate

athletics is one sport setting where its unique features (e.g., various stakeholders, governance and organizational structures, organizational culture, financial structures) influence the way it is managed and led (Hoye et al., 2008; Staurowsky & Abney, 2011). Moreover, intercollegiate athletics is a sport setting where leadership positions remain not only quantitatively dominated by men (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012; LaVoi, 2013, 2014), but also conceptually dominated by certain forms of masculinities (Schull, Shaw, & Kihl, 2013; Walker & Sartore-Baldwin, 2013; Whisenant et al., 2002). Therefore, a context specific examination of leadership within the intercollegiate athletics setting was important to further understand how common conceptions of leadership are influenced by the dominant masculine ideals in the context of intercollegiate athletics.

Leadership and gender. Gender is also implicated in the shift from traditional leadership to viewing leadership as a social process constructed in and through social interactions (Fletcher, 2004). Traditional leadership practices and styles are conceived of in terms of masculine traits and ideals (e.g., authoritative, agentic, command and control), and are therefore more often linked to men. Similarly, the contemporary social process approach to leadership features feminine leadership practices and styles (e.g., egalitarian, collective, relational), and are thus more often linked to women (Eagly, 2007; Fletcher, 1999, 2004; Sinclair, 2005).

The shift from socially ascribed masculine to feminine leadership has given rise to a body of literature commonly referred to as the "female leadership advantage" (Eagly, 2007; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Helgesen, 1995; Rosette & Tost, 2010). The female leadership advantage presumably places women at an advantage in leadership because

they are more likely to display the feminine traits aligned with contemporary leadership (Eagly, 2007; Fletcher, 2004). However, traditional leadership styles persist along with the gendered leadership stereotypes associated with them. For example, leaders are often perceived to display agentic qualities more so than communal qualities, and thus men more often resemble natural leaders (Powell, Butterfield, & Parent, 2002; Eagly, 2007). As such, the female leadership advantage is often unrealized and female leaders instead face a double bind between leadership and gender stereotypes described as:

> Tensions between the communal qualities that people prefer in women and the predominantly agent qualities they expect in leaders produces cross-pressures on female leaders. They often experience disapproval for their more masculine behaviors, such as asserting clear-cut authority over others, as well as for their more feminine behaviors, such as being especially supportive of others. Given such cross-pressures, finding an appropriate and effective leadership style is challenging, as many female leaders acknowledge. (Eagly, 2007, p. 4)

The double bind may be more magnified for women in male dominated organizations and occupations such as sport administrators and coaches. For example, female sport leaders may be penalized for not acting in traditionally feminine ways when they do display those perceived necessary masculine leadership skills such as being assertive and authoritative, or they may be assessed the status of 'deviant males' if they do not comply with perceived masculine traits (Hovden, 2010). Shaw and Hoeber (2003) captured this contradiction in their study examining gendered discourses in sport organizations aptly titled, *"A strong man is direct and a direct women is a bitch."* In their

examination Shaw and Hoeber found that overt masculinities were essential to success in senior management positions in sport organizations. However, women who expressed masculinities too openly may be "excluded from senior management because they were perceived to be 'bitchy'" (p. 368).

Sport represents an area where dominant masculine ideals, values, and characteristics associated with leadership are perhaps more deeply embedded and persistent than any other arena (Hovden, 2000; 2010; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003). While sport settings and organizations often reproduce traditional gender roles and male privilege (Anderson, 2009; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Walker & Sartore-Baldwin, 2013), women in sport continue to be marginalized and underrepresented in leadership positions (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012; Whisenant et al., 2002). Therefore, sport provides a rich context to examine the intersection of leadership and gender.

Leadership in Intercollegiate Athletics

This review of the leadership literature within intercollegiate athletics is synthesized with the traditional and contemporary leadership and the critical aspects (i.e., leader-focused versus social process, quantitative versus qualitative methods, context specific examinations, and gendered leadership ideals) highlighted previously in this chapter. Leadership studies within intercollegiate athletics typically follow two main streams including leadership within intercollegiate athletic teams (e.g., Beam, Serwatka, & Wilson, 2004; Chelladurai, 1984, Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980; Dupuis, Bloom, and Loughead, 2006; Holmes et al., 2008; Holmes et al., 2010; Loughead & Hardy, 2005; Miller, 2003; Swalley, 2004) and the administration and leadership of intercollegiate

athletic departments (e.g., Doherty, 1997; Doherty & Danylchuk, 1996; Kent &

Chelladurai, 2001; Kihl et al., 2010; Quaterman, 1998; Scott, 1999). The sport

psychology literature is also a site for a wealth of research focused on leader behaviors,

athlete preferences, motivation, and coach-player relationships (e.g., Charbonneau,

Barling, & Kelloway, 2001; Jowett & Chaundy, 2004; Price & Wiese, 2011). However,

my research was focused on the social construction of leadership and gender in the

context of intercollegiate athletes. This review is therefore situated in the intercollegiate

athletic literature and included sociological examinations of leadership, and gender.

Leadership within athletic teams. Similar to traditional leadership literature,

much of the leadership research within intercollegiate athletic teams maintains a leader-

centered focus, employs positivistic research methods, and neglects the importance of

context in leadership inquiry (Kihl et al., 2010). For example, researchers within

intercollegiate athletic teams (e.g., Beam et al., 2004; Chelladurai, 1984; Chelladurai &

Saleh, 1980; Riemer & Chelladurai, 1995) employed leader-centered approaches by

focusing on the traits, characteristics, and actions of the coach. The general findings

indicated that the most common dimensions impacting athletes' satisfaction with

leadership behaviors of their coaches were training and instruction as well as providing

positive feedback (Chellaudrai, 1984; Riemer & Chelladurai, 1995).

While these studies centered on coaches' leadership behaviors, more recently

scholars have included examinations of student-athletes' leadership behaviors (e.g.,

Dupuis et al., 2006; Holmes et al., 2008; Holmes et al., 2010; Loughead & Hardy, 2005).

Loughead and Hardy (2005) reported that peer leaders were perceived to display more

social support, positive feedback, and democratic behaviors compared to coaches. Additionally, Dupis et al. (2006) highlighted three categories of peer leader behavior including interpersonal characteristics, verbal interactions, and task behaviors. In these more recent examinations, researchers have included student-athlete leader behaviors, furthering understandings and highlighting distinct leadership practices and behaviors within intercollegiate athletic teams. However, a leader-centered approach has persisted based on the focus on team captains who are considered positional leaders within their respective teams.

Female college athletes perceptions of leadership have also been somewhat neglected within the intercollegiate athletic team literature. Beam et al. (2004) examined gender differences in athletes' preferences for leadership and found that female college athletes in closed sports (i.e., team sports) gave higher ratings to democratic behaviors in coaching compared to their male peers. However, Beam et al.'s study again used a leader-centered approach by focusing on coaches' behaviors and left some uncertainty as to how and why this reported gender difference exists. Swalley (2004) examined female student-athletes' self-reported leadership abilities and behaviors; however, her research employed positivistic, quantitative methods. Indeed, the majority of leadership literature within intercollegiate athletic teams (Beam et al. 2004; Chelladurai, 1984; Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980; Dupuis et al., 2006; Holmes et al., 2008; Loughead & Hardy, 2005; Riemer & Chelladurai, 1995) utilized positivistic methodologies, which Gergen (2009) contends are unable to capture the complexities of the leadership process that is grounded in the experiences of those involved and context specific.

More recently, researchers have used qualitative and mixed methods to examine college athletes' perceptions of leadership. Holmes et al.'s (2008) mixed methods study examined peer leadership and found that male athletes preferred more autocratic leadership behavior in their peer leaders compared to female athletes. Their approach was useful in revealing perceptions of desirable peer leadership qualities. For example, while both male and female athletes believed peer leaders should work hard and set an example, male athletes placed more emphasis on performance and work ethic and female athletes place more emphasis on being vocal and providing encouragement (Holmes et al., 2008). Holmes et al. (2010) qualitative study examined male and female college athletes' perceptions of leadership revealing three common themes: communication, behavior, and personal characteristics. Holmes and colleagues' (2008, 2010) research helped to reveal gender differences in the leadership perceptions of male and female college athletes, and they suggest future research to examine the influence of gender in perceptions of leadership. Furthermore, the examinations contributed to our understanding of leadership within the unique context of intercollegiate athletic teams. For example, in a team sport setting, task and relationship focused aspects of peer leadership are important and influenced by other leader characteristics such as class year, gender, and competition level (Holmes et al., 2008).

Leadership in intercollegiate athletic administration. Researchers in intercollegiate athletic administration have utilized contemporary leadership approaches, especially transformational leadership (Bass, 1985). For example, sport management scholars have examined the impact of transformational leadership on organizational

effectiveness (London & Boucher, 2000), organizational culture (Weese, 1995), and employee satisfaction with leadership (Doherty & Danylchuk, 1996). Doherty and Danylchuk reported that the leadership profiles of college athletic directors were more closely aligned with transformational leadership rather than transactional leadership. Although contemporary leadership perspectives recognize leadership as an influence process and the corresponding relational aspect involved in the process, to date many of the studies within intercollegiate athletic administration continue to maintain a leader-centered focus highlighting heroic individual conceptions of leadership rather than postheroic collaborative leadership. Additionally, researchers continue to employ quantitative methods.

While examinations that include leadership as a social construction are represented well in the organization and management literature (e.g., Drath, 2001; Ospina & Schall, 2005; Schall et al., 2004; Sinclair, 2005; Smirich & Morgan, 1982), the constructivist approach to leadership is not as well represented in the sport management literature. In one of the few examinations in the context of intercollegiate athletics, Kihl et al. (2010) examined multiple stakeholders' (i.e., administrators, boosters, coaches, staff, student-athletes) constructions of leadership within an intercollegiate athletic department during organizational change. The context of organizational change was influential to how participants constructed leadership. For example, perceived instability as a result of a large-scale organizational change resulted in multiple leadership approaches (i.e., transformational, shared, and followership) and highlighted a range of leadership attributes (e.g., empowerment, lead by example, integrity), which were

instrumental to promote change. Participants' perceptions of leadership were also

embedded in the context of intercollegiate athletics and reflected several unique features

including the culture, goals, and tasks of the intercollegiate athletic department under

examination as well as the variety of internal and external stakeholders and their roles

related to the leadership change process (Kihl et al., 2010). This research was successful

in highlighting the importance of considering stakeholders' perceptions of leadership in

specific contexts, and can be extended to include a narrow focus on female college

athletes' experiences and subsequent interpretations of leadership and the relevancy of

gender. Such a focus could further our understandings of leadership and gender relations

in sport by exploring the construction and persistence of masculine leadership ideologies

in the context of intercollegiate athletics.

Leadership, gender, and intercollegiate athletics. The underrepresentation of

women in leadership positions within intercollegiate athletics is a popular topic in the

sport management literature (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012; LaVoi, 2013, 2014; Walker &

Sartore-Baldwin, 2013). One area of focus for sport and gender scholars is the

examination of barriers and constraints unique to female leaders in college athletics, and

researchers used a variety of approaches including an individual perspective (i.e., micro-

level) (e.g., Sagas & Cunningham, 2004; Sagas, Cunningham & Ashley, 2000; Knoppers,

1992) as well as structural perspective (i.e., macro-level) (e.g., Bruening & Dixon, 2008;

Drago et al., 2005; Kamphoff, 2010; Lough & Grappendorf, 2007; Rhode & Walker,

2008; Welch & Sigelman, 2007). There is also an increase in scholarship employing a

gender relations approach in sport organizations (e.g., Hovden, 2000, 2010; Knoppers &

Anthonissen, 2008; Shaw, 2001, 2006; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Schull et al., 2013),
however this approach is limited within intercollegiate athletics.

Scholars employing the individual approach, focused on individual female leaders
in college sport (Cunningham & Sagas, 2008). For example, Sagas et al. (2000) found
that female assistant coaches displayed less intent to become head coaches compared to
their male counterparts. Sagas and Cunningham (2004) reported gender differences in
determinants to career success among intercollegiate athletic directors. More specifically,
Sagas and Cunningham found that social capital was more influential for men than it was
for women in athletic administration promotion, and female administrators possessed less
human capital compared to their male counterparts, which in part explains women's low
representation in athletic administration. Importantly, women's lack of skills is often
assumed in male-dominated fields such as sports. For example, Shaw and Hoeber (2003)
reported that female leaders in sport often felt they had to prove themselves in situations
where male managers assumed that they were not equipped for positions in sport.
However, the individual micro-level examinations are often criticized for adopting a
'blame the victim' perspective in explaining the underrepresentation of women
(Cunningham & Sagas, 2008; Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Shaw & Frisby, 2006).

Using the structural (i.e., macro-level) approach, scholars draw attention to
structural barriers that constrain women's advancement in sport leadership and result in
gender-based inequalities (Cunningham & Sagas, 2008). Common barriers and
constraints identified unique to women in college sport include low pay, inadequate
child-care options, and conflicts between work and family (Bruening & Dixon, 2008;

Drago et al., 2005; Kamphoff, 2010; Lough & Grappendorf, 2007; Rhode & Walker, 2008; Welch & Sigelman, 2007). For example, Lough and Grappendorf (2007) reported that 10.7 percent of female sport administrators surveyed identified family responsibilities as a limiting factor when contemplating a vertical career move, while Drago et al. (2005) found that female coaches believed men had greater latitude in tending to family demands compared to female coaches. The coaches in Drago et al.'s study referred to this as the "daddy privilege" in the workplace (p. 18).

While scholars using individual and structural approaches contribute to important policy changes and help elucidated the "what" and "where" of women's subordinate status in intercollegiate athletics, both approaches are criticized for their limited ability to "change the dominance of masculinities that are deeply entrenched in sport" (Shaw & Frisby, 2006, p. 484). More recently, using a gender relations approach, scholars have examined gender as an organizing principle and how socially constructed ideas of masculine and feminine are expressed within specific organizational contexts (Acker, 1992, Britton, 2003; Ely & Meyerson, 2000). The gender relations approach provides sport and gender scholars a means to examine "how" and "why" gender inequalities are created and reproduced via deeply held assumptions and beliefs about sport, leadership, and gender (Shaw & Frisby, 2006).

For example, researchers in sport examined masculine discourses associated with sport management (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2005, 2008), how gendered discourses shape employment roles in sport organizations (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003), the construction of gender relations in sport organizations (Shaw, 2001), and how organizational and

social processes contribute to gender relations (Kihl, Shaw, & Schull, 2013; Shaw, 2006; Schull et al., 2013). Additionally, Hovden (2000, 2010) used a gender relations approach to analyze leadership selection discourses and practices in a Norwegian sport organization, as well as the gendered discourses associated with female leadership in sport. In general, researchers suggest that gendering occurs on many levels in sport organizations including narratives and practices associated with leadership selection and employment searches (Hovden, 2000; Schull et al., 2013), sport employment roles (Shaw, 2006; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003), and the images and work of male and female sport leaders (Hovden, 2010; Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2005, 2008). These gendered practices and narrative result in the privileging of men and associated masculinities in sport organizations.

The application of a gender relations approach has enhanced understandings of the associated complexities and dynamic nature of gender in a variety of international sport organizations (e.g., Hovden, 2000, 2010; Shaw, 2006). Noting a few exceptions (Burton, Grapendorf, & Henderson, 2011; Kihl et al., 2013; Schull et al., 2013) the gender relations approach is scarce within the context of intercollegiate athletics. In these college sport settings, researchers examined how gendered assumptions influenced perceptions of male and female candidates for sport administrative positions (Burton et al., 2011; Schull et al., 2013) and explored a merger as a gendered social process (Kihl et al., 2013; Schull et al., 2013), revealing intercollegiate athletics as a site where masculine dominance and ideologies is maintained and reproduced. However, to date the

application of a gender relations approach within intercollegiate athletic teams—

specifically women's intercollegiate athletic teams—is absent.

Topical Research Gaps

Based on this topical review, there is a need to expand the literature on leadership,

gender, and sport in two broad, yet interrelated areas. First, there is a need to examine

female college athletes' experiences and interpretations of their experiences related to

both leadership and gender in sport. Very recently, scholars focused on the perspectives

of female leaders in sport including executive members of sport (Pfister & Radtke, 2009),

top-level female coaches (Shaw & Allen, 2009), and female sport leaders within

community and elite sectors of the Australian sport system (Brown & Light, 2012).

However, representations of female athletes' experiences in general remain very scarce in

the sport literature, and female athletes' experiences related to leadership and gender

appear strikingly neglected. This is a critical oversight as Madsen (2010) argued that by

focusing only on women already employed as leaders in sport, we are missing a large

pool of qualified candidates who are an important piece of the puzzle.

Second, there is a need to examine the process of leadership as gendered in the

context of sport. In contemporary leadership models, leadership is presented as a

collective social process dependent on the actions of many group members across all

levels of the organization (Fletcher, 2004; Sinclair, 2005; Yukl, 2012). Gender is also

presented as a complex set of social relations through which categories of masculine and

feminine are created and given meaning (Acker, 1990; 1992; Britton & Logan, 2008; Ely

& Meyerson, 2000). Therefore, Fletcher (2004) contends that it is important to examine

leadership as a gendered social process rather than to assume that leadership is gender neutral. The sport context also plays an important role in examining gendered aspects of leadership, as leadership and gender are both social constructions, influenced by assumptions and beliefs in an specific socio-historic context (Briton & Logan, 2008; Gergen, 2009).

While Hovden (2000, 2010) introduced leadership in terms of gendered social processes in the sport context, there is room for extension. For example in her 2000 study, she focused on the formal and informal practices involved in the selection of sport leaders and did not analyze the process of leadership itself. In other words, her focus was solely on the gendered leader criterion that emerged for potential candidates within sport organizations, and did not examine how leadership was interpreted among individual members of groups. The perspective of female college athletes remains neglected. Therefore, exploring female college athletes' constructions of leadership in the sport context dominated by masculine ideals and examining the relevancy of gender in female college athletes' leadership constructions offered a rich setting and topic exploration. In the next section, I reviewed the theoretical frameworks that underpinned my research.

Theoretical Framework

Social constructivism (Crotty, 1998; Daly, 2007; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Phillips, 1995; Wright et al., 2010) and gendered social processes (Acker, 1992, 1999; Britton & Logan, 2008; Ely & Meyerson, 2000) provided the theoretical underpinnings for my research. While traditional leadership models position leadership as power bestowed upon a few leaders at the top (Yukl, 2012), a more recent shift in leadership models

emphasize leadership as a social process which occurs in and through social interactions (Fletcher, 2004; Opsina & Schall, 2001; Sinclair, 2005). Gender is also conceptualized as a social product and research has increasingly centered on gendered social processes and how the "patterning of difference and domination through distinctions between women and men is integral to many societal processes" (Acker, 1992, p. 565). Thus, both leadership and gender are inherently social and influenced by contextual and socio-cultural factors.

A guiding principle of this research was that individual beliefs about leadership and the relevancy of gender in leadership perceptions are learned in a social context and informed by past experiences. Thus, a social constructivist lens can lead to more informed and sophisticated constructions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) of leadership and the relevancy of gender by highlighting female college athletes' leadership constructions and experiences in a context dominated by men and masculinities. Additionally, the gendered social processes framework (Acker, 1992; Ely & Meyerson, 2000) offers an analytical lens to assess gendered processes that may be associated with leadership perceptions.

Constructivism

Based in relativism, constructivist inquiry assumes that the social world needs to be understood differently than the physical world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Lincoln, 1985). An epistemological implication of a constructivist approach is that "concepts like 'knowledge' and 'truth' are not seen as absolute or fixed, but are believed to be shaped by both subjective and social factors" (Wright et al., 2010, p. 204). In other words, knowledge is continually changing, and constructivist researchers, therefore are more

concerned with how individuals come to understand certain concepts in a specific socio-

historic context (Crotty, 1998; Daly, 2007; Wright et al., 2010). There are two important

assumptions underpinning social constructivism relevant to my research. First,

individuals develop subjective meanings based upon their experiences and interpretations

of those experiences as they engage in the world they are interpreting (Crotty, 1998;

Wright, et al., 2010). Second, knowledge accumulation occurs through the valuation of

multiple perspectives and participant realities, which adds to our understanding of the

phenomenon under examination (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Constructivism is widely utilized within the social science literature and the term

is the subject of much ambiguity due in part to the complexity of the various forms of

constructivism (Crotty, 1998; Daly, 2007). While there are many classifications or

subgroups within the constructivist approach, constructivist theories tend to fall within

three distinct groups: 1) cognitive or individual constructivism; 2) social constructivism;

and 3) social constructionism. While my research applied the social constructivists

approach, it was reflective of some of the ambiguity between approaches. Thus a brief

discussion and delineation of the three constructivists subgroups was warranted.

Cognitive constructivism. Cognitive constructivism is influenced primarily by

the development theory of psychologist Jean Piaget who focused on knowledge

construction within the individual learner (Phillips, 1995). Cognitive constructivism is

concerned with how the individual learner takes abstract concepts and makes sense or

assigns meaning to them by interpreting his or her experiences (Wright et al., 2010). It is

the individual's interpretations that guide or become models for understanding certain

concepts. A key assumption within cognitive constructivism is that the individual can be isolated from social influences and their biases, interests, and other social traits can be removed (Phillips, 1995). While my research was concerned with how individual female athletes interpret their leadership experiences, a key aspect included how individual knowledge was constructed within a specific social context. Cognitive constructivism was therefore not the suitable approach because it was not plausible to isolate individual participants from the social context under examination. Alternatively, social constructivism recognizes that the social context plays an important part in how an individual constructs knowledge and offered a better fit for my study.

Social constructivism. The early social constructivist theorist, Vygotsky (1978) argued that learning occurs in a social context and was not simply an individual process. Influenced by the work of Vygotsky, Rogoff (1995) suggests that adult learning occurs at three levels of interaction including the personal (i.e., individual cognition), interpersonal (i.e., communication and interaction), and the community (i.e., shared assumptions and values). Rogoff's social constructivist approach recognizes that knowledge construction is a complex and interconnected process between individual meaning, shared and group meaning, as well as the communication and language that culturally defines knowledge constructed within a social context (Vygotsky, 1978). In other words, individuals understanding of abstract concepts are influenced by their own individual experiences and interpretations, by common beliefs in a particular social context, and by how those beliefs and interpretations influence the way social actors communicate with each other around a particular phenomenon or concept.

Recognizing the connections between individual, interpersonal, and social interaction was important for understanding how female college athletes come to understand leadership and the importance of gender. For example, as Rogoff's (1995) theory suggests, a female athlete's past experiences in another athletic or interpersonal context will influence how she constructs meaning in the current context. Social constructivism also acknowledges that social interactions and language are powerful tools in shaping beliefs in a social context (Vygotsky, 1978; Wright et al., 2010), including beliefs about leadership and gender. Finally, while social constructivism is focused on the individual, knowledge construction is not approached as an individual mental process because it cannot be separated from many social dimensions including socio-cultural processes (Wright et al, 2010). Socio-cultural influences important to the construction of leadership in sport include the competition level and setting, the high task-focused orientation of sport, individuals' past sport experiences, as well as leader focused attributes such as communication, sport skill/competence, and class/age (Dupuis et al., 2006; Holmes et al., 2008, 2010; Price & Weiss, 2011). It is for these reasons that social constructivism grounded this study.

Social constructionism. Social constructionism is based primarily on a sociological perspective of knowledge construction (Gergen, 2009). While social constructionism is commonly confused with social constructivism and the terms are often used interchangeably in the social science literature, the distinction between the two terms lies in the individual construction of meaning in a social environment (i.e., social constructivism) versus the collective meaning making process for communities or groups

(i.e., social constructionism) (Crotty, 1998; Daly, 2007; Patton, 2002). Social

constructionists focus on the normative social and relational aspects of knowledge

construction within an institution or community and how certain ways of thinking

become common knowledge, institutionalized, and communicated within the group's

culture (Crotty. 1998; Daly, 2007; Gergen, 2009). In sport for example, a social

constructionist approach would explore how a particular sport organization or sport

group's collective norms and shared assumptions shape the group's leadership culture

and how this is communicated among members. Methodologically, it would be important

to conduct case study research and focus group interviews with the team/group members

to understand the collective meaning of leadership within a specific sport team or

organization. On the contrary, social constructivists focus on the unique experiences of

individuals and how they come to understand leadership based on several interactive

forces including their own interpretations, shared norms and assumptions, and collective

language.

Although social constructionism and social constructivism can be delineated in

theory, clear distinctions in research practice are more ambiguous based on the

challenges of isolating the individual from relational and interactive social forces (Crotty,

1998; Wright et al., 2010). Here again, my research reflected some of this ambiguity—

leadership and gender were both defined as social processes and are therefore inherently

relational and based on interactions. However, my research focused on how individual

female athletes construct meanings of leadership and the importance of gender based on

interpretations of their experiences in a social, athletic context, and was therefore informed by the work of social constructivism.

Gendered Social Processes

A gendered social process approach stems from Acker's (1990, 1992) theory of gendered organizations. Drawing on the work of previous gender scholars (e.g., Connell, 1987; Scott, 1986), Acker (1990) developed her theory in "an attempt to find new avenues into the dense and complicated problem of explaining the extraordinary persistence through history and across societies of the subordination of women" (p. 145). Integral to a gendered social process approach is the conceptualization of gender. Ely and Meyerson (2000), for example define gender as "a complex set of social relations enacted across a range of social practices that exist both within and outside of formal organizations" (p. 113). Social practices and processes that create distinctions and differentiations between men/masculinities and women/femininities and produce knowledge and ideologies around socially constructed meanings of gender—that is what it means to be male/masculine, and what it means to be female/feminine—are considered gendered (Acker, 1992; Britton, 2000; Britton & Logan, 2008; Ely & Meyerson, 2000). The construction of difference rarely results in parity, and it is thus the dichotomizing gendered process of distinguishing between masculine and feminine or between men and women that leads to inequality, bias, and discrimination.

Examining the ways individuals assign, understand, and express meanings to a variety of processes may provide insight into how and why gender biases and inequalities are reproduced and gender binaries maintained (Acker, 1992; Ely & Meyerson, 2000).

Acker and others (i.e., Britton, 2003; Ely & Meyerson, 2000; Meyerson & Kolb, 2000)

identify several categories of gendered social processes ranging from formal policies and

procedures to everyday informal practices and interactions. A four-part conceptualization

of gendered social processes (Acker, 1992; Ely & Meyerson, 2000) was used to frame the

analysis of gendered leadership: 1) formal and informal practices, norms, and patterns of

work; 2) narratives, language, images, and other symbolic expressions; 3) informal

patterns of social interactions; and 4) gender appropriate behaviors, personas, and

identities.

   Formal and informal practices. Formal and informal practices, norms, and

patterns of work may segregate, exclude, or construct gender hierarchies in groups and

organizations (Acker, 1992). For example, Shaw (2006) examined gendered social

processes including informal organizational networks, which revealed the reproduction of

gender inequalities in sport management settings. In Shaw's study, informal networks,

specifically old boys' and old girls' networks held considerable decision making power in

the organizations under examination, while access to these powerful networks for

organizational members who were considered outsiders was difficult to obtain. In one

organization, the gendered old boys' network ensured that women had limited access and

influence within the organization, while in another organization, the gendered old girls'

network was influential in excluding some men from powerful positions. Shaw's research

was effective in highlighting how gendered practices such as informal networks impact

gender relations in sport organizations by creating discriminatory practices based along

lines of gender.

Narratives, images, and other symbolic expressions. Gendered narratives, language, and other symbolic expressions sustain dominant cultural images of social institutions, organizations, and occupations by creating and reproducing gendered ideologies (Acker, 1992, Britton, 2003; Ely & Meyerson, 2000). These ideologies or forms of consciousness often go unrecognized and unquestioned and become part of the tapestry of social life (Britton & Logan, 2008; Ely & Meyerson, 2000). In the sport literature, gendered ideologies include masculine superiority and dominance in coaching (Drago et al., 2005; Fielding-Lloyd, 2008; Messner, 2009, Messner & Bozada-Deas, 2009) as well as gendered narratives and images associated with sport leadership and management positions (Hovden, 2000, 2010; Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2005, 2008; Pfister & Radtke, 2009; Schull et al., 2013; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003; Sibson, 2010). Gendered narratives and images are very pervasive in traditional leadership conceptions that emphasize the heroic individual leader and associated masculine traits and characteristics (Fletcher, 1999, 2004; Hovden, 2000, 2010; Yukl, 2012), and this particular theoretical construct, therefore was very useful in examining gendered aspects of leadership.

Hovden (2000, 2010) examined the images, ideologies, and narratives that contributed to the gendering of sport leadership in Norwegian sport organizations. In Hovden's (2000) study, she found that leadership selection included images of heroic corporate leadership and "heavyweight" qualifications that included sport experience, extensive political and business contacts, and competence in financial management and strategic planning. The qualifications, while seemingly gender-neutral, were more

consistent "with a middle-aged male manager most likely interested in high-performance sport" (Hovden, p. 27). In a similar examination, Schull et al., (2013) found that gendered political processes in the search for an athletic director resulted in gendered images and candidate criteria inherently linked to male candidates.

Sport is embedded in a culture of hyper masculinity (Anderson, 2009) and researchers have focused on the presence of masculine leadership images in sport (e.g., Hovden, 2000; Schull et al., 2013). Hovden's (2010) study was therefore noteworthy in her focus on the construction of female leadership and associated images. Interestingly, Hovden found that female sport leaders were portrayed in terms of their deviations and deficits from traditionally masculine—or what Hovden referred to as androcentric—leadership discourses. The types of arguments framing the images included female leaders are less inclined to make tough decisions, are less competitive and ambitious, and lack competence and experience (Hovden, 2010). Collectively, the images of female sport leadership establish masculine ideals as the norm while characterizing feminine and female behavior negatively or as not appropriate for a sport setting.

Social interactions. The gendered constructions of leadership may also be assessed from an interactional level. Fletcher (2004) contends that the social interactions that make up leadership become opportunities to also "do gender" by either enacting masculine or feminine behaviors. Gendered interactions may take many forms such as the use of humor (Shaw, 2006) or organizational politics (Schull et al., 2013). In Shaw's study, she observed the use of humor in comments made about gender equity during board meetings, which were also often controlled by men. Shaw explains that the use of humor

in the settings she observed served to undermine gender equity and became part of

dominant ideals within the sport organizations. Furthermore, the "I'm just joking" tone

that accompanied comments about women and gender equity operated preemptively to

silence those who would challenge this type of humor, because it is difficult to challenge

opinions expressed in humor (Shaw, 2006). It was also used to minimize the serious

nature of what underlies the humor—sexism.

Gender appropriate behaviors and identities. Finally, gender appropriate

behaviors, personas, and identities represent another level to analyze gendered

constructions of leadership. Fletcher (2004) contends that as individuals interpret their

leadership experiences, they may construct and internalize gender-appropriate behaviors

and gendered expectations, which are congruent with the particular organizational

context (Acker, 1999). In sport, researchers have revealed perceived gendered

expectations associated with sport leadership such as memberships on sport boards

(Claringbould & Knoppers, 2008), expectations associated with male and female coaches

(Drago et al., 2005; Fasting & Pfister, 2000; Frey et al., 2006), and the ways male senior

managers in sport describe their work and craft their identities (Knoppers & Antonissen,

2008).

In one example, Knoppers and Anthonissen (2008) found that male sport managers

used gendered discourses to present their work in ways that created heroic masculine

forms of leadership. Participant discourses of instrumentality, including "toughness",

"availability", and "impression management", reinforced a gendered culture that tended

to exclude outsiders, including women and minorities from sport management positions.

Furthermore, participants relied on "discourses of relationality" (Knoppers &

Anthonissen, 2008, p. 97) with implicit paterno-authoritarian overtones to help craft their

identities as heroic individual leaders. For example, many men in Knoppers and

Anthonissen's study claimed to engage in informal leadership practices that espouse a

relational or "people orientation" (p. 98). However, the paterno-authoritative overtones

(e.g., protective nature of authority) allowed the participants to establish themselves as in

control or in charge of subordinates (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008).

The four-part gendered social process framework (Acker, 1992, 1999; Britton,

2003; Ely & Meyerson, 2000) was useful in examining how and why gender inequality is

reproduced in sport leadership constructions. Additionally, Meyerson and Kolb (2000)

extend Acker's (1992, 1999) theoretical framework by illuminating gendered social

processes as sites to resist dominant ideals. The same gendered processes that reproduce

gender inequalities, once identified, can serve as potential sites for experimentation,

redefinition and resistance (Meyerson & Kolb, 2000). Shaw (2006) underscores the need

to more prevalently feature and promote resistance and reflexivity by organizations and

group members in the sport management literature, and Britton (2000) suggests

incorporating a focus on the gendering processes at the individual and interactional

levels. While research has included a variety of stakeholders in sport organizations (e.g.,

board members, coaches, sport managers, athletic boosters, and volunteers) there is a

dearth of gender research focused on female college athletes' constructions of leadership

within the sport context. Highlighting female athletes' individual perceptions of

leadership can serve to challenge and disrupt or reify and reinforce gendered leadership

ideals in the context of sport by revealing how individual female athletes actively reshape, redefine, or reproduce the work of leadership.

Summary

Gendered assumptions associated with leadership—particularly leadership in the context of sport—remain strong and largely unchallenged (Hovden, 2000, 2010; Shaw & Frisby, 2006; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003). Additionally, men hold the majority of leadership positions within intercollegiate athletics (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012), and changing the gender imbalance seems a lofty goal. Gender and sport scholars are instrumental in shedding light on the barriers and constraints that contribute to the underrepresentation of women in sport leadership positions; however, the individual and structural approaches often applied may be inadequate in disrupting the deeply embedded values and the "imbalance of power in the social relations between men and women" (Ely & Meyerson, 2000, p. 113). Where the previous approaches fall short in bringing about change, a social constructivist approach teamed with a gendered social process framework (Acker, 1992, Ely & Meyerson, 2000) can push further to reveal deeply embedded ideologies and beliefs in the sport context and how they operate to keep women in the margins and locked out of sport leadership positions. Utilizing the gendered social process framework, it is imperative to examine the constructions and beliefs of female college athletes within the context of sport. While researchers have examined the experiences of female coaches (e.g., Bruening & Dixon, 2008; Shaw & Allen, 2009), and reasons female coaches decide to leave their positions (e.g., Kamphoff, 2010), neglecting the experiences of female athletes, arguably the biggest pool of potential female leaders is sport, is an oversight.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to present the methodology that was used to guide my study. First, I highlighted the research design including a description of qualitative research, the philosophical approach, and the strategy of inquiry. Second, I discussed the use of qualitative interviews and an interview guide along with my role as the researcher. Next, I highlighted participant selection, sampling procedures, data generation procedures, and techniques for data analysis. Finally, I presented a discussion of trustworthiness in qualitative research.

Research Design

The choice of research methodology must be reflective of the philosophical and theoretical framework that underpins the study (Creswell, 2007). The purpose of this research was to understand how female college athletes' socially construct leadership in the context of intercollegiate athletics and to examine the relevancy of gender in their leadership constructions. In order to meet those objectives, a qualitative research design was pursued. The philosophical assumptions underpinning the research were characterized by a social constructivists worldview (Creswell, 2007). The strategy of inquiry featured a narrative approach and utilized semi-structured qualitative interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is interpretive, and the goal of qualitative research is not to "prove" something to be true or false, but rather to glean greater understandings of the

topic under examination (Patton, 2002). The focus is on the spoken and written word

rather than statistical analysis. For example, qualitative researchers collect and report

thick, rich, and nuanced descriptions of participants' experiences and interpretations

while quantitative researchers report statistically significant correlations between

variables (Creswell, 2014). Additionally, qualitative research is particularly useful when

investigators seek to understand the context or setting in which experiences occur

(Creswell, 2007, 2014).

A qualitative research design was selected because of the suitability in

discovering, conveying, and interpreting, the multiplicity of socially constructed realities

of the participants (Daly, 2007). Such a design enabled the capturing of individuals'

subjective experiences and perceptions much more effectively than quantitative research.

The participants' first-hand accounts provided depth, detail, and rich information

(Bogdan & Biklen, 2003) to the research by focusing on individual subjective

experiences and how each participant came to understand the process of leadership and

the importance of gender within the specific context of sport. A qualitative approach

enabled an exploration of the leadership phenomenon in its multiple forms and its

multiple perspectives (Bresnen, 1995). Knowledge gained added to our understandings of

leadership by focusing on female athletes' experiences and interpretations of their

experiences in the context of intercollegiate athletics—a topic that has been understudied.

A qualitative design was also import to understanding the saliency of gender in

female college athletes' leadership constructions. Like leadership, gender has been

presented as a socially constructed process (Acker, 1992). Gendering occurs through the

differentiation between forms and expressions of masculinities and femininities that often

create a pervasive hierarchical order privileging men and certain masculine ideals (Acker,

1990, 1992; Britton & Logan, 2008; Ely & Meyerson, 2000). In order to understand how

gender is reproduced and or sometimes challenged in both group and organizational

processes, such as leadership, Acker (1992) and Poggio (2006) suggest the use of

qualitative research. Gendered processes are fluid and complex and certain qualitative

methods such as narrative inquiry and thematic analysis are better able to "grasp the

processual and interactive dimension of gendering" (Poggio, 2006, p. 229) by collecting

and analyzing first-hand accounts of participants experiences with the phenomenon under

study.

Social Constructivism

Social constructivism represents the epistemological beliefs underpinning this

research. An exploration of female college athletics' socially constructed meanings of

leadership within the context of intercollegiate athletics is dependent upon individuals'

perceptions and interpretations of their experiences. Social constructivism falls into the

interpretive paradigm (Creswell, 2007) and is focused on the individual and how they

interpret their experiences in a specific socio-culturally informed environment (Crotty,

1998; Phillips, 1995; Wright et al., 2010). Individuals construct meanings as they engage

in the world they are interpreting and the knowledge gleaned from individuals and their

experiences is subjective, unique, and interpretive in nature (Crotty, 1998; Guba &

Lincoln, 1994). The major sources of data include what people say about their

experiences, their perceptions, and their interpretations of their experiences (Daly, 2007).

Researchers adopting a social constructivist worldview seek to communicate how others interpret their experiences and are attuned to the specific contexts in which people experience certain phenomena. Social constructivism features an inductive research approach where theory and patterns of meaning are generated and discovered during the research process (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002).

The use of open-ended questions allowed the female athletes to express their beliefs and interpretations of their experiences related to leadership and gender in the sport context. The participants' perceptions and beliefs were unique, subjective, and influenced by their distinctive experiences in sport. Given that constructivism seeks to uncover how individuals perceive knowledge and truth rather than discovering an absolute truth (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 2000), highlighting female athletes' perspectives and interpretations of leadership and relevancy of gender provided a better understanding of their experiences in sport.

Narrative Inquiry

Social constructivists rely on dialogue and researchers request first-hand accounts of the participants' stories in the narrative tradition (Daly, 2007). An assumption of narrative inquiry is that people construct their realities by narrating their stories (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Therefore, narrative inquiry involves collecting participants' stories in order to understand their interpretations of their experiences and actions within the world. Researchers using narrative inquiry seek to understand why people think, act, and learn as they do in a specific context, which will promote an understanding of our fundamental beliefs and attitudes (Chase, 2005). Once participants tell their stories, the

narratives are analyzed and retold in a manner that will make sense to the reader

(Liamputtong, 2009). Narrative inquiry also recognizes that context makes a difference

and is always present (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), which is an important feature for

exploring the importance of both the broader social institution of sport as well the more

specific sport context of intercollegiate athletics.

Narrative inquiry is consistent with the constructivist approach as both are

focused on the individual (Crotty, 1998), and therefore, this research employed aspects of

narrative inquiry. To meet the aims of this research, it was necessary to solicit first-hand

accounts and interpretations from female college athletes about how their experiences in

sport shaped their beliefs about leadership within intercollegiate athletics and the

relevancy of gender to their leadership constructions. The use of narratives was effective

in capturing the interactive social practices and processual aspects of leadership (Gilstrap,

2007) and meanings of gender (Poggio, 2006). Participant narratives were examined for

the presence of gendered themes (e.g., masculine authoritative styles and feminine

relational practices) in leadership constructions. Narrative inquiry further served a

valuable purpose in this research in its aim to understand sociological aspects of groups

and specific contexts through the participants' lived experiences (Marshall & Rossman,

2011).

Qualitative Interviews

Qualitative interviews are based in conversation and interview participants are

viewed as meaning makers in the research process (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Interview

methods vary and are often described in terms of a range between structured and

unstructured interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Structured interviews feature previously conceived topics and specific questions while unstructured interviews provide the participant the power to determine the direction and content of the interview (Bogden & Bilken, 1998).

Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggest the use of conversational guides when conducting qualitative research. A conversational guide provides an outline for the interview, main questions to be asked, and suggestions for probing questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The conversational guide, also referred to as an interview guide, provide a "framework within which the interviewer would develop questions, sequence those questions, and make decisions about which information to pursue in greater depth" (Patton, 2002, p. 344).

Using an interview guide, qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted. A semi-structured format was selected in order to provide the freedom to explore multiple perspectives while still obtaining consistent data on focused topics (Patton, 2002). Additionally, the semi-structured format facilitated the conversational nature of the qualitative interview while maintaining the focus of the research questions (Rubin & Rubin, 200).

Interview guide. I developed an interview guide (Appendix A) to facilitate data generation. The interview guide enabled a focused interview around the central research questions, while also allowing me the flexibility to pursue clarification and detail in the participants' individual responses. Pilot testing was conducted on the interview guide prior to data collection to access its suitability.

The interview guide included three types of questions: 1) background and demographic questions; 2) opinion and value questions; and 3) experience and behavior questions (Patton, 2002). Background and demographic questions were included to help locate the participant in relation to other people (Patton, 2002) and were appropriate considering this research included a wide range of participants. More specifically, background and demographic questions provided information on the participants including their class/years experience on current team, whether they were a captain on their current team, previous experiences in sport, and experiences with male and female coaches. Opinion and value questions sought to understand the cognitive and interpretive processes of various individuals (Patton, 2002). Opinion and value questions were appropriate for a constructivist approach and were valuable in examining how female college athletes understood and interpreted the leadership process. For example, the question *"Based on your experiences in sport, what does leadership mean to you?"* allowed each participant to define leadership in relation to their own experiences in sport. The question *"How important is gender to leadership in sport?"* similarly allowed participants to state their views on the relevancy of gender in leadership and generated a wide range of responses.

Finally, experience and behavior questions sought "elicit behaviors, experiences, actions, and activities that would have been observable had the observer been present" (Patton, 2002, p. 351). While the focus of my research was not on observed behavior, the participants' descriptions and interpretations of their experiences, behaviors, and activities associated with leadership were vital. Thus, the use of behavior and experience

questions were compatible with the constructivist approach and narrative design employed to generate rich descriptions of the participants' subjective experiences with leadership. For example, the question *"Can you describe a specific situation on your current team where you believe leadership took place?"* generated detail regarding participants' observations and interpretations of the process of leadership in sport as well as specific behaviors, actions, and involvement. Collectively, the questions developed assisted in elucidating the leadership process and to examine gendered constructions of leadership through the eyes of female college athletes.

Pilot testing. Pilot testing of the interview guide served many functions and was conducted prior to the data collection. Most importantly, pilot testing of the interview guide assessed the adequacy of the research instrument (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). The process of piloting the interview guide was also useful in assessing the degree of researcher bias (Creswell, 2007). Finally, conducting a pilot test of the interview guide provided implications for the overall design and feasibility of the research, recruiting and sampling procedures, and proposed data analysis (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001).

I interviewed two female college athletes who met the selection criteria. The pilot participants were selected based on access, convenience, and geographic proximity (Creswell, 2007). The pilot interviews were digitally recorded and detailed notes were taken to supplement the interview. Following van Teijlingen and Hundley's (2001) suggestion, I considered several factors when evaluating the interview guide. First, I assessed how well the interview guide was able to draw out a range of responses from participants. Given that the pilot study included only two participants, this aspect was

difficult to assess. However, in comparing the responses from the two participants, I believed the questions were sufficiently open-ended to draw out a range of responses based on the participants varied experiences in sport.

I also considered the responses in relation to the information sought, and I assessed the length of the interviews and if all questions were answered. The pilot interviews were shorter than anticipated (i.e., 22-32 minutes), which prompted me to add more probing and follow up questions to the interview guide. The additional questions also had implications in improving the information sought from the interviews. For example, in the broad question *"Can you describe a specific situation on your current team where you believe leadership took place",* I inserted two additional probing questions: 1) *"Specifically, what happened in that situation?;* and 2) *"Who was involved?".* In another example, I added one final question to the interview guide after my pilot study was conducted. The question *"Is there anything else about your perceptions of leadership in sport that you wanted to share?"* provided the participants the opportunity to reflect on and share their perceptions of leadership that perhaps did not emerge in the interview questions. The question was also effective in bringing closure to the interviews.

Finally, through the evaluation process, I also identified ambiguous questions in the interview guide and provided clarification (van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). For example, my first question in the pilot study (i.e., *"What does leadership mean to you? Please explain."*) was too broad in scope, and as such, was ambiguous. That specific question was changed to *"Based on your experiences in sport, what does leadership*

mean to you? Please explain." This clarification helped to situate the participants'

reflection and responses within the context of sport, which was too simplistically implied

before the clarification.

Sampling

Patton (2002) defines purposeful sampling as the selection of information rich

cases for examination because they provide useful insight regarding the phenomenon

under study. Purposefully selecting participants assists the qualitative researcher to best

understand and illuminate the phenomenon rather than provide empirical generalizations

regarding a specific population (Creswell, 2014; Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Patton,

2002). Purposeful sampling was used in this research to select a range of participants that

can provide insight and illumination about female athletes' leadership constructions in

the context of intercollegiate athletics. Two purposeful sampling methods were employed

including criterion and maximum variation sampling (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Criterion Sampling

Purposeful criterion sampling was useful in identifying potential participants

(Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). Three criteria were established for

participation in this study. First, research participants were female college athletes

currently participating at the NCAA Division I level or who recently (i.e., within three to

six months) completed their athletic eligibility. Female athletes who recently completed

their athletic eligibility were included because it was proposed that they would have a

great deal of leadership experiences in sport to draw upon and to share. A three to six

month timeframe was selected for athletes recently completing their eligibility because it

was vital that their experiences were fresh in their minds so they were able to adequately reflect on their experiences.

Second, all participants must have completed at least one year of eligibility in college athletics. Put another way, participants must have been in their sophomore, junior, or senior year of eligibility in college athletics. First-year female athletes (i.e., freshmen) lack leadership experience at the college level—such experience was a key element in this research.

Third, all participants must have competed in team sports such as volleyball, basketball, hockey, softball, soccer, and rowing. Leadership has been presented as a social process occurring in and through social interactions and is dependent upon both the leaders and followers. Compared to individual sports, team sport participants spend a greater amount of time together training for their sport (Drago et al., 2005). Team sport participants also spend more time being directed by their coach (Helsen, Starkes, & Hodges, 1998) and are more accustomed to autocratic coaching styles (Terry & Howe, 1984). Understanding the experiences of individual sport athletes, while valuable, did not inform my research based on the perceived differences in how leadership is carried out within team versus individual sports.

Maximum Variation Sampling

Maximum variation sampling involves the purposive selection of a wide range of cases along one or more dimensions (Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Patton, 2002). This sampling strategy was used to select participants who were representative of NCAA Division I female college athletes along two dimensions including female athletes who:

(1) participate in a variety of team sports (e.g., volleyball, basketball, softball, soccer, ice hockey, rowing); and (2) are in their sophomore, junior, or senior year of athletic eligibility. Exploring a wide range of cases along the two dimensions enabled a discovery of the complexity of views in the social construction of leadership as well as identification of common themes. Maximum variation sampling assured a high probability of gaining a rich mixture of information—another ideal condition of qualitative research (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

Data Generation Procedures

Participant Recruitment and Selection

I followed a three-step process for participant recruitment and selection. First, gatekeepers were contacted via email to gain access to the target population. Three sport specific categories of gatekeepers were used in this research: (1) head coaches of women's intercollegiate athletic teams; (2) athletic administrators (i.e., athletic directors, Senior Woman Administrators); and (3) athletic staff members (i.e., athletic academic counselors). Gatekeepers were sent a standardized letter via electronic mail outlining the research proposal (Appendix B). The goal of this letter was to inform the gatekeepers of the research agenda and to elicit access to volunteer participants within their respective teams and athletic programs. Second, once potential participants were identified, I sent a participant recruitment letter (Appendix D) via email to determine if the identified female athletes were interested in participating in the research and if they met the established criteria for participation. Third, interviews were scheduled with female college athletes who met the requirements of the study. Participant selection continued until reaching a

point of redundancy and saturation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

The highlighted sampling techniques and recruitment procedures resulted in a sample

size of 23 participants. Patton (2002) states,

> There are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry. Sample size depends on
> what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what's at stake, what will be
> useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and
> resources. (p. 244)

Participants

All participants were NCAA Division I student-athletes attending a large mid-

western research institution. The 23 participants represented a range of cases along the

two maximum variation dimensions. More specifically, participants represented six team

sports including basketball (4), ice hockey, (4), rowing (5), soccer (5), softball (2), and

volleyball (3). Participants were also representative of three intercollegiate athletic

eligibility levels: sophomores (5), juniors (10), and seniors (8). Table 1 provides further

information on the participants.

Table 1: Participants

Current College Sport	Pseudonym	Year of Eligibility *Captain	Gender of Current Head Coach	Other Sport Experiences
Basketball	Amy	Junior	Female	Track Soccer
Basketball	Carley	Junior	Female	Volleyball Softball
Basketball	Mindy	Senior*	Female	Volleyball
Basketball	Stephanie	Junior	Female	Volleyball Tennis Track
Ice Hockey	Angie	Junior	Male	Soccer Lacrosse
Ice Hockey	Julie	Senior	Male	Soccer
Ice Hockey	Kay	Junior	Male	Soccer Softball
Ice Hockey	Lindsey	Senior	Male	Golf Cross Country (running)
Rowing	Beth	Senior*	Female	Volleyball Basketball Softball
Rowing	Dana	Sophomore	Female	Basketball Soccer Softball
Rowing	Erin	Senior*	Female	Swimming Softball Cross Country (skiing)
Rowing	Jen	Sophomore	Female	Volleyball Basketball Track
Rowing	Jess	Sophomore	Female	Basketball
Soccer	Allie	Junior	Female	Track
Soccer	Emily	Junior	Female	Basketball
Soccer	Katie	Sophomore	Female	Basketball Track
Soccer	Jill	Senior*	Female	Basketball
Soccer	Nicole	Senior	Female	Gymnastics Track
Softball	Liz	Senior*	Female	Volleyball Basketball
Softball	Shelly	Junior	Female	Soccer
Volleyball	Andrea	Junior	Male	Basketball Softball Track
Volleyball	Kelly	Sophomore	Male	Basketball Softball
Volleyball	Sarah	Junior*	Male	Basketball Cross Country (running) Track Soccer

Participant Interviews

       The primary source of data generation was in-depth semi-structured interviews with female college athletes to solicit their perceptions and interpretations of leadership within the context of intercollegiate athletics. Participant interviews were conducted over one calendar year, beginning in January 2011 and concluding in December 2011. Conducting interviews over a one-year period allowed me to be sensitive to the competition schedules' of the participants and enabled a broad representation of team sports as potential participants were recruited before or after their respective competition seasons. The interviews were scheduled via email and were subsequently conducted in person at a location convenient to the participants. For example, all interview were conducted on the university's campus and included locations such as athletic and recreation facilities, conference rooms, and my office. Effort was given to ensure that the location of the interview was scheduled in a quiet location conducive to an audio-recorded interview.

       Informed consent was obtained at the time of the interviews indicating that the participants understood that their participation in the study was voluntary and confidential. Once informed consent was obtained, the researcher used the interview guide to enable focused interviews around the central research questions. All participant interviews ranged in length from 35 to 60 minutes, and a digital voice recorder was used to capture the interviews verbatim. Each participant was interviewed once, and follow-up questions were sent to the participants via email to clarify information when needed. The interview process was repeated with each participant until responses became repetitive

and broad enough in scope to ensure saturation and sufficiency was achieved (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Field Notes

Secondary data sources were collected in the form of field notes to supplement the examination. Bogdan and Bilken (2003) define field notes as written records of what the researcher observed, heard, saw, or thought while collecting information and reflecting on a qualitative study. In this research, field notes were kept in two forms. First, detailed field notes were recorded during the participant interviews. Second, reflective research notes were maintained throughout the research process.

Interview notes. Recording field notes during the interviews served a variety of functions. First, the notes helped to develop new questions during the interview based on the participants' unique experiences. For example, when a participant indicated that her father was influential to her beliefs about sport leadership, this information was noted and a follow up question was later inserted into the interview. Second, field notes provided a method of recording information not captured in the interview such as facial expressions, body language, and the interview style and setting. Third, following Patton's (2002) suggestion, early insights were gleaned by reviewing the notes before the interview transcriptions were completed. Finally, recording field notes during the interview served as a back-up to the digital recording in the event that a malfunction occurred or when portions of the recording were inaudible.

Reflective research notes. Finally, reflective notes were recorded throughout the research process. The reflective research notes were used in three capacities. First, they

teamed with the field notes to supplement the interviews. A journal entry was recorded

after each interview was completed allowing the researcher to reflect on the nuances of

each respective interview and to maintain a log of the data collection schedule. Second,

additional journal entries occurred throughout the data collection and data analysis

processes and provided an outlet for me to reflect on and describe my experiences,

feelings, expectations, assumptions, and biases about the research project. Finally, a

methodological log in the research notes recorded methodological decisions and rationale

throughout the research process (Lincoln, 1985). For example, further elaboration and

clarification of the methodological decisions associated with theme emergence were

recorded and resulted in the development of a code map that further delineated the

emergence of themes as well as the rationale behind coding decisions. The research

journal made the data and methodological decisions more transparent and provided a

means to strengthen the rigor or trustworthiness of the research project (Anfara, Brown,

& Mangione, 2002; Lincoln, 1985).

Data Analysis

The primary purpose of data analysis is to bring order, structure, and meaning to

data; however, the process of data analysis is eclectic and there is not one "best" way to

analyze qualitative data (Anfara et al., 2002; Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002). The data

analysis consisted of three primary steps: 1) organizing and preparing the data; 2)

reducing data into categories and themes via coding techniques; and 3) representing data

for discussion (Creswell, 2007). I used inductive coding procedures (Patton, 2002)

including thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Liamputtong, 2009; Marshall &

Rossman, 2011) and constant comparative techniques (Creswell, 2007; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Thorne, 2000).

Although thematic analysis is similar to grounded theory, it is important to note that thematic analysis does not include theory generation (Liamputtong, 2009). Similarly, constant comparative techniques are well suited for grounded theory; however, other methodologies such as thematic analysis are informed by constant comparative techniques to develop interpretive knowledge rather than generate theory (Thorne, 2000). Thematic analysis and constant comparative techniques can serve to organize and describe data in rich detail, interpret various aspects of the phenomenon under study, and communicate qualitative research to a broader audience (Boyatzis, 1998).

I selected thematic analysis because I did not seek to generate a theory of leadership in sport or a theory regarding how gender is embedded in sport leadership. Rather, I sought to identify and interpret implicit and explicit ideas within the data that could be linked to larger theoretical constructs related to leadership and gender in the context of sport. For example, once I identified *father figure leadership*, I was able to interpret the gendered nature of the *paterno-authoritative* narratives associated with it first by connecting it to Collinson and Hearn's (2008) theoretical construct of paterno-authoritative leadership discourses; and second, by drawing on and connecting my findings with Knoppers and Antonissen's (2005, 2008) previous research of male sport managers in Dutch national sport organizations. Linking my interpretations to previous research and larger theoretical constructs also aided in conveying the results to a broader

audience by easily communicating my interpretations to other researchers who use

various methods (Boyatzis, 1998).

Data Preparation and Organization

The first step in the data analysis was to systematically organize and prepare the

data. To this end, I transcribed each audio-recorded interview verbatim into written form.

Field notes recorded during the interviews and the reflective research notes were also

transferred to type written form. The completion of these tasks simultaneously enabled an

initial review of the data. Once each interview was transcribed, the participants were

asked to member check (Creswell, 2007; Guba & Lincoln, 1994) the transcriptions for

accuracy. The interview transcriptions were then prepared and downloaded into the

qualitative software program HyperRESEARCH (Hesse-Biber, Dupuis, & Kinder, 1991)

enabling the easy retrieval, isolation, and management of data groups.

Once the data were organized for analysis, I familiarized myself with generated

data by reading through all of the prepared data documents. This allowed me to obtain a

familiarity and general sense of the information collected and accomplished a degree of

emersion within the data (Creswell, 2014). During this initial reading of the data, I also

began to develop initial codes and themes by recording memos in the margins of the text

and by highlighting certain interview passages (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002).

Categorizing interview passages assisted in giving meaning to large portions of data and

made data more manageable entering the data coding and interpretation stage (Anfara et

al., 2002; Liamputtong, 2009; Patton, 2002). For example, the two main categories of

leadership (i.e., peer and coach) became clear very early. Large portions of interview data

that represented peer or coach leadership were highlighted in the transcripts. In addition, I

recorded my initial reactions and ideas in the margins of the transcribed documents,

which contributed to the development of gendered themes (i.e., father figure leaders,

autocratic styles, and hierarchical leadership conceptions).

Coding

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) contend that a key element in the analysis and

interpretation of interview narratives is the ability to take the personal accounts,

experiences, and perceptions of the participants and connect them to other personal

accounts and larger social issues. In order to accomplish this goal, the participant

interviews were coded and analyzed: 1) individually to discover the complexity and

multiplicity within the participants' singular voices (Chase, 2005); and 2) collectively to

identify common themes across the interviews (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Coding is defined as the development of concepts originating from data, and it

involves interacting with data utilizing analytical techniques (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Two types of coding were used in this research including open coding and axial coding.

The analytical techniques employed include thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun &

Clarke, 2006; Liamputtong, 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 2011) and constant comparative

techniques (Creswell, 2007; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Thorne, 2000).

Open coding. Open coding provided a means of sorting descriptive information

by assigning tags, labels or categories to data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Initially,

independent codes were developed for each of the participants' interviews, and these

codes identified a feature of the data that I found interesting and relevant related to the

research questions (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006). The process of initial open coding resulted in a plethora of in vivo codes. In vivo codes referred to using the actual words of participants to name concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). For example, when generating initial codes related to coach leadership, I coded concepts using the participants' own words such as *compassionate, role model, cares for us, level-headed, and bully,* etc. After initial open coding of each interview, the number of codes was reduced by collapsing common codes into broader categories and sub-categories.

During open coding, concepts were also delineated in terms of their properties and dimensions. Properties referred to characteristics that define concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). For example, communication was a concept or sub-category of peer leadership. Three properties characterizing communication were developed in open coding included *accountability, motivation,* and *liaison*. These sub-categories resulted from in vivo codes such as *call out teammates, stepped up/fired up,* and *mediator*. Dimensions referred to variations of properties (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) and provided contextual variations. For example, accountability communication occurred primarily in practice settings, while motivation communication occurred primarily in game or competition situations. Open coding resulted in two core categories, six sub-categories, and several properties and contextual dimensions associated with sport leadership.

Axial coding. Axial coding involved pinpointing relationships between concepts/categories (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Axial coding was used to further develop categories and themes. One important theme presented in this research was gendered leadership images including *father figure leadership* and *like a friend leadership*. The

concept of *empathy* was also highlighted as an important feature to participants'

perceptions of coach leadership. Axial coding was instrumental in not only connecting

the concept of *empathy* to both leadership images, but also to revealing the gendered

nature of *empathy*. For example, *empathy* in *father figure leadership* took the form of

paternalistic understanding of female participants and the valuation of male coaches'

experiences as fathers. In contrast, young age and recent playing experience were vital to

the perception of *empathy* in like a *friend leadership*. Thus, axial coding resulted in the

initial integration of categories, sub-categories, and properties with the various themes

organized around leadership and gender.

Thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was utilized to identify common patterns

of meaning and perceptions of leadership and gender across the participants' narratives

(Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006). While the categories, properties, and

dimensions of leadership were inductively derived within data through the coding

process, a conceptual framework integrating styles of leadership and meanings of gender

within various styles was useful for organizing themes that related to broader theoretical

constructs (Boyatzis, 1998). Integrating the work of several gender and leadership

scholars (e.g., Eagly, 2007; Fletcher, 2004; Hovden, 2000; 2010) broad leadership

themes, each rife with gender implications were developed from the leadership

categories. For example, Hovden and Fletcher posit that *heroic individualism* associated

with leadership is gendered because the traits and characteristics (e.g., assertive, agency,

autocratic) associated with it are socially constructed as masculine. Similarly, *relational*

leadership practices (e.g., interpersonal, egalitarian, and collaborative) are socially

constructed as feminine (Eagly, 2007; Fletcher, 2004).

I also drew from existing theoretical constructs of gendered social processes and

gendered themes (Acker, 1992, 1999; Britton & Logan, 2008; Ely & Meyerson, 2000) to

interpret and analyze the relevancy of gender within leadership constructions. Ely and

Meyerson's (2000) dichotomized gendered themes became very useful in this stage. For

example, participants' constructions of coach leadership included naturalized gender

differences between their male and female coaches. Female coaches were often naturally

linked to *emotionality,* while male coaches were naturally linked to *rationality.* The

various leadership and gendered themes were discussed relative to the literature that

shaped the conceptual framework. Thematic analysis Axial resulted in several broad

leadership themes including leader-focused behaviors and traits, leadership outcomes,

and various leadership styles and approaches. Thematic analysis also resulted in gendered

leadership themes including gendered images and narratives, attributes, and peer

leadership constructions. The leadership themes were integrated and discussed in relation

to the conceptual framework that integrated styles of leadership and meanings of gender.

While the stages of data analysis can be distinguished their descriptions, in

practice the data analysis stages are more representative of a concurrent flow of activity

(Miles & Huberman, 2013; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The text associated with the various

categories and themes were continually reviewed and refined as commonalities and

differences across interviews were pursued. Consequently, a significant amount of time

was devoted to data analysis and interpretation including coding, comparing, writing memos, and developing diagrams to aid in representing data.

Researcher's Role and Ethical Considerations

The researcher is the key instrument in the qualitative research process (Creswell, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Therefore, it was critical that I reflected on my role as the researcher and potential issues that arose throughout the research process. Marshall and Rossman (2011) recommend reflecting on the technical and interpersonal considerations associated with the researcher's role in qualitative research. Technical considerations include situating the self, negotiating entry, and efficient use of resources (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Interpersonal consideration includes establishing trust and relations as well as displaying sensitivity to issues of reciprocity and ethics (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Technical and interpersonal considerations can be distinguished in their descriptions; however, there is notable overlap between these considerations (Marshall & Rossman, 2011) as demonstrated in the following discussion of these issues.

Situating Self

Situating the self involves thinking about one's own role in organizing and completing qualitative research and was an important technical consideration intertwined with interpersonal considerations such as establishing trust and relations (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Patton, 2002). There are many ways to think about and reflect on one's own role in qualitative research. For example, as a qualitative researcher I thought about how involved I became in the lives of the participants, how much information I disclosed

to the participants about the study, how much time I spent in the field setting, and the length of the study (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Patton, 2002).

My role in this research was to ask questions that facilitate an understanding of female college athletes' perceptions and experiences with leadership and the relevancy of gender. In addition, I learned from the participants and facilitated conversations to glean thick, rich, and nuanced descriptions of the participants' experiences. These roles were achieved via my direct involvement in the research process as a conversational partner in the interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). To fulfill my role as a conversational partner, I actively listened, learned, and asked questions about the participants' experiences. For example, one participant had recently completed her senior year of competition when I interviewed her. She described a strained relationship with her coach, where she perceived that her coach did not want her to be a leader on her team. For the participant, this was a very personal experience, and I believe she even felt a little cautious about sharing her experience with me because I may view her as "a player who's just complaining". In this interview and others like it, I assured the participant that I was not judging her, and that I was grateful for her sharing her experience as it was obvious that it influenced her leadership beliefs.

My presence in the participants' lives was minimally intrusive, which could have presented a challenge in building trust and relationships while concurrently collecting data (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). To minimize this potential challenge, I offered much transparency in my own identity and research purpose before beginning the interviews. For example, at the beginning of each interview, I identified myself as a former college

athlete and former college coach, which was instrumental in building trust with the participants by establishing a shared or common background (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Following Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggestion, I provided full disclosure of the research purpose and displayed a genuine interest in hearing the participants' stories by engaging in active listening skills (e.g., maintaining eye contact, repeating/clarifying, and emphasizing the uniqueness of each participant) (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).. Such approaches were important to position myself as open, honest, fair, and accepting and helped to demonstrate my honesty and authenticity. My purpose in selecting minimally intrusive data collection methods was based on my understanding of the target population. NCAA Division I college student-athletes are very busy individuals with rigorous training and academic schedules, and it was important to be sensitive to the participants by disrupting their schedules as little as possible. An awareness of the participants' busy schedules was also beneficial in developing trust, and to demonstrate my awareness, I scheduled interviews during participants' respective off-seasons (i.e., when they were not competing). In addition, some interviews were scheduled during academic breaks, such as the break between fall and spring semesters or during the summer months.

It was unavoidable that I brought my own subjective experiences to this process of knowledge creation. "In the research process, there is acknowledgement that the way we come to understand the reality of participants involves a process of co-construction insofar as there is an interplay between the meanings of the researcher and the meanings of the participant" (Daly, 2007, p. 32). Therefore, it was vital that I maintained a

conscience awareness of my own biases. My primary bias was that I formerly served as the head coach for women's intercollegiate softball teams at two separate NCAA Division III institutions. I was also a four-year participant in intercollegiate athletics. I therefore entered the study with pre-existing opinions and beliefs about leadership and female college athletes.

As a constructivist researcher I recognized that my interpretations of participants' perceptions might have been influenced by my own experiences. Given that I was a conversational partner in the interviews, it is also possible that I could have unintentionally influenced participants' perceptions of leadership and gender or inhibited them from openly reflecting and sharing their experiences and perceptions. While I recognize these potential biases and influences, I believe that my interpretations are representative of the participants' unique experiences and perceptions that they shared during the interviews.

Negotiating Entry

An ideal condition for qualitative research is having access to the target population (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Negotiating entry was an important technical consideration that required knowledge of the settings and populations targeted and a strong understanding of participants concerns. Gaining access to participants in this research was achieved by first seeking the approval of various gatekeepers. Gatekeepers are used in qualitative research to assist the researcher in gaining access and trust within organizations (Creswell, 2014). Three sport specific categories of gatekeepers were used in this research: (1) head coaches of multiple female intercollegiate athletic teams; (2)

athletic administrators (i.e., athletic directors, Senior Woman Administrators); and (3)

athletic staff members (i.e., athletic academic counselors). While I used my own

professional and personal networks to contact head coaches and athletic directors, most

of my contacts came via newly established networks due to the fact that my professional

networks primarily included members of NCAA Division II and III.

Reciprocity

Marshall and Rossman (2011) contend that the qualitative researcher should also

be sensitive to reciprocity issues. For example, in qualitative research, participants give

of themselves and their time to the project when they agree to be interviewed.

Researchers should in turn be sensitive to this and make efforts to reciprocate in some

way (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). My ability to compensate participants was confined by

my limited resources as a graduate student and NCAA eligibility rules, and thus required

creativity in developing a plan for reciprocity. NCAA student-athletes may not be

recruited for a study and provided payment for their participation based on their status as

student-athletes. Therefore, I was very cognizant to verbally express my appreciation and

gratitude for their participation, and I offer participants compensation in the form of my

time, support, or feedback. For example, following the interviews I thanked the

participants for their time and stated, *"Please contact me if I can provide any assistance

or support as you develop your team leadership skills."* In addition, I followed up with

each participant after the interviews via electronic mail to reiterate my gratitude for her

insights and perceptions shared during the interview.

Ethics

Finally, qualitative researchers must demonstrate an acute awareness to ethical consideration surrounding the project. Ethical considerations can be generic (e.g. informed consent and confidentiality) as well as situation-specific (e.g. interviewing vulnerable populations) (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). All participants in this research were treated in compliance with the approval of University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the ethical guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA). Approval was granted in November of 2010 and subsequently, data generation procedures commenced in January of 2011. While no risks were identified with participation in this study, two considerations were highlighted.

The first area of concern was maintaining participants' anonymity. To address this concern, steps were taken to ensure confidentiality of the participants in the research. First, all participants were assigned a pseudonyms. Second, pseudonyms were also used any time the participants referred to their teammates or coaches using first or last names or referred to their respective universities/institutions or opponents by name. Prior to conducting data collection, I recognized the challenges associated with masking the participants' specific sports. For example, sport specific topics such as "batting practice" (softball) and "free kicks" (soccer), and sport positions such as "setter" (volleyball) and "shooting guard" (basketball) were vital to the participants' leadership narratives, and therefore could not efficiently be masked. All participants were informed that certain aspects of their sports may be revealed in the research, and participants were then given the opportunity to withdraw from the study at that time.

Obtaining informed consent was a second consideration. The informed consent (Appendix C) included the following elements: (1) voluntary participation and the right to withdraw from the study at anytime; (2) clearly stated purpose of the study; (3) the procedures of the study; (4) the benefits and rights of the participants including confidentiality rights; and (5) signature form for both the participants and the researcher (Creswell, 2014). Additionally, it was clearly stated in the informed consent that participants would be provided with an executive summary of the research upon completion of the study.

<div align="center">**Trustworthiness**</div>

Critics claim that the result of qualitative research is "fiction, not science, and that these researchers have no way to verify their truth statements" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 8). This criticism has come primarily from quantitatively oriented scholars evaluating qualitative research against positivist criteria of validity, reliability, and objectivity (Anfara et al, 2002). Qualitative and quantitative paradigms make different knowledge claims and should therefore be measured according to different standards (Lincoln, 1985). To address the trustworthiness of naturalistic inquiry, Lincoln (1985) suggests using four criteria in qualitative research: credibility; transferability; dependability; and confirmability. In the following paragraphs, techniques used to establish trustworthiness and reduce the likelihood of misinformation in this research are discussed.

Credibility

Credibility is an alternative to the conventional internal validity (Anfara et al, 2002; Lincoln, 1985). There are numerous strategies to address credibility in qualitative

research. Following Creswell's (2007) recommendation, two techniques were employed

including member checks and peer debriefing. The most important technique in

establishing credibility is member checking or soliciting participant feedback (Johnson &

Christensen, 2004; Lincoln, 1985). Member checking is a process that involves sharing

the inquirers interpretations of the participant's constructions to determine the accuracy

of the data and findings thereby eliminating miscommunication (Johnson & Christensen,

2004; Lincoln, 1985). Member checks helped to ensure that the reconstructions of the

participants' multiple realities are adequately represented in the research (Lincoln, 1985).

Member checks will take place throughout the data generation and analysis process. On-

the-spot member checks included probing and follow up questions along with

paraphrasing of responses provided by participants to ensure accuracy of their statements.

Additionally, research participants were asked to member check each interview after it is

transcribed to confirm accuracy. This not only provided the participants the opportunity

to corroborate their statements and positions relative to the interpretations, but also to

volunteer any additional information.

Peer debriefing is the process of soliciting feedback from disinterested and

uninvolved peers (peer reviewer) to aid in establishing credibility (Creswell, 2007;

Lincoln, 1985). Peer debriefing meetings took place periodically throughout the data

generation and data analysis process. Prior to these meetings, written documents were

prepared for the peer reviewer that addressed various aspects of the research including

categories and themes emerging from data, interpretations of the data, and

methodological issues. The primary aim of the debriefing meetings was for the peer

reviewer to serve as "devils advocate" by asking hard questions and to keep the researcher honest to preconceived biases (Johnson & Christensen, 2004; Lincoln, 1985). The outside perspective that the peer reviewer brought to the meetings was most valuable. Documentation of the meetings was recorded and included in the research journal.

Transferability

Transferability in qualitative research is very different compared to establishing external validity in quantitative studies (Lincoln, 1985). External validity is concerned with establishing generalizations across groups (Creswell, 2014). Neither generalizability nor transferability was a goal of this research. Lincoln (1985) contends, "transferability inferences cannot be made by an investigator who knows only the sending context" (p. 297). The responsibility of the qualitative researcher is then to initiate transferability by providing thick, rich and nuanced descriptions of the historical time and context explored for those that seek to examine the transferability in a new or receiving context (Lincoln, 1985). The thick and rich descriptions provided in this research may enable future researchers to contemplate and judge the transferability of the findings to other settings (Lincoln, 1985).

Dependability

Dependability or consistency in qualitative research is analogous to the conventional term reliability (Creswell, 2007). To establish dependability, Lincoln (1985) suggests implementing an inquiry audit, which can be accomplished by allowing an external reviewer or consultant to examine the process and the product of the research to

assess its accuracy. To establish dependability in this research, an external reviewer with

no connection to the study examined the process by which the first hand accounts of the

participants were taken. The external reviewer examined the interview guide and the

transcripts of both the initial pilot study and the larger study. This review process

reinforced the dependability of the inquiry (Lincoln, 1985). In other words, this step

strengthened the study by verifying that the interview guide fits well or is appropriate to

the purpose of the research. Secondly, the external reviewer examined the product to

ensure that the representations were accurate. This step also addressed the confirmability

of the research.

Confirmability

Lincoln (1985) suggests the term confirmability as an alternative criterion to the

conventional term objectivity. The second step in the external audit (i.e. product audit)

strengthened the confirmability of this qualitative research. After reviewing the process

of the inquiry and determining it to be reliable, the external reviewer examined the

product of the inquiry. This involved examining whether or not the findings,

interpretations, and conclusions were supported by the data (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln,

1985). To enable a proper external audit, it was vital to maintain an audit trail of relevant

records (i.e. raw data; data analysis notes, summaries, and themes; process notes; and

reflective notes) (Lincoln, 1985).

Summary

In this chapter, I presented the methodology used to guide this study, which

included a qualitative research design and featured a social constructivist philosophical

approach. Consistent with a constructivist approach, narrative inquiry and qualitative interviews were used to solicit first-hand accounts and interpretations from the participants. I also provided an overview of the sampling techniques (i.e., criterion and maximum variation sampling) and data generation procedures. Data analysis included open and axial coding, constant comparative techniques, and thematic analysis. Finally, I concluded this chapter with a discussion of my role as the researcher, ethical considerations, and trustworthiness in qualitative research.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Female College Athletes' Leadership Constructions

Results for the first and second research questions are reported in this chapter. To address the first research question, female college athletes' perceptions of leadership in the context of college sport were examined and discussed. How participants' broad experiences in sport shaped their leadership perceptions and beliefs were also explored. During the interviews, participants were asked to reflect on the meaning they give to leadership based on their experiences in sport and to describe and reflect on specific situations in sport where they believed leadership took place. Participants were also asked to discuss what or who they perceived to be influential in shaping their leadership beliefs. Interviews sought to elicit vivid detail about leadership including what occurred, who was involved, and why participants believed the specific situations described were considered leadership in the sport context.

Results showed female athletes' perceptions of leadership in the sport context consisted of two core categories including peer and coach leadership. Perceptions of peer and coach leadership reflected three leadership themes: 1) leader-focused behaviors/attributes; 2) leadership outcomes; and 3) various leadership styles and theoretical approaches. Peer leadership behaviors and attributes resulted in team and task oriented outcomes and reflected mostly traditional leadership styles and approaches, which were reflective of masculine leadership. Coach leadership behaviors and attributes resulted in interpersonal relationships and player development outcomes and reflected

both traditional and contemporary leadership styles and approaches. Figure 1 provides an overview of the results. This chapter is presented in two sections including peer and coach leadership. The core leadership categories are further conceptualized via a delineation of their respective properties and contextual dimensions and included a discussion of relevant leadership themes.

Peer Leadership

Peer leadership was defined as leader-focused behaviors and attributes centered primarily on team tasks such as meeting team goals and improving team performance. Peer leadership was enacted exclusively by participants and or participants' teammates and was frequently conceived of as a positional attribute (i.e., based on one's position as captain or a senior). Perceptions of peer leadership behaviors and attributes encompassed three sub-categories including communication, example, and social. Leadership styles and approaches that emerged from peer leadership constructions included autocratic, top down, and transactional styles, which were constructed in traditionally masculine terms. Table 2 provides an overview of peer leadership. In the following section, peer leadership is further conceptualized in the following section, and data extracts representing the properties and contextual dimensions characterizing peer leadership are provided. Discussion of the emergent leadership themes follows the presentation of each peer leadership sub-category.

Figure 1: Sport Leadership Core Categories and Themes

Core Category 1: Peer	Sport Leadership Themes	Core Category 2: Coach
Communication Example Social	Leader Focused Behaviors and Traits	Individual Consideration Open Communication Leader Attributes
Task Oriented Team Performance	Outcomes	Interpersonal Relations Individual Performance Task Oriented
Traditional Autocratic Transactional Top Down Heroic Individualism Some Relational Mostly Masculine	Styles and Approaches	Post-heroic Relational Transformational Egalitarian Heroic Individualism Both Feminine and Masculine

Table 2: Peer Leadership Behaviors/Attributes, Outcomes, and Styles and Approaches

Behaviors/Attributes	Outcomes	Styles and Approaches
Communication: • Accountability • Motivation • Liaison	Task/Team Oriented	Top down Autocratic Heroic Individualism
Example: • Modeling • Self-accountability	Task/Team Oriented	Top down Heroic Individualism
Social: • Interpersonal relationships • Support • Team cohesion	Interpersonal Relationships	Relational Egalitarian

Communication Leadership

Communication was a leader-focused behavior, which referred to the ability to be

vocal and to verbally interact with teammates and coaches. Communication leadership

occurred primarily within the sport context (i.e., practice and game situations).

Perceptions of peer communication centered on voicing team expectations and goals and

the outcomes of communication were characterized as task orientated and related to the

overall success in meeting team expectations and goals. Three leader-focused properties

further characterized communication in peer leadership including accountability,

motivation, and liaison. Variations or dimensions of communication included monologue

or one-way communication (e.g., to convey a pre-game message to teammates) and

dialogue or exchange communication (e.g., a back and forth discussion of team goals).

Participants reinforced the importance of communication to peer leadership within the

sport context and their respective intercollegiate teams.

Accountability. Accountability consisted of monologue or one-way communication and referred to a leader's ability to hold her teammates accountable to certain team standards, expectations, and rules (e.g., displaying hard work during practice, wearing team practice uniforms, or following team rules) through verbal communication. Accountability occurred primarily in team practice situations and was enacted by team captains. Accountability was therefore positional (i.e., based on one's position as a captain) and characterized as top down and hierarchical.

The following quotes demonstrated more specifically what and how participants hold each other accountable to team expectations and goals:

If somebody's not working hard in the gym, calling them out … we're supposed to wear sweatshirts and sweatpants every time we [lift] … one day, one of the girls decided she didn't want to wear them, so just calling her out and making sure she understood she has to wear it and it's not our decision, but just doing it for the better of the team, and don't complain about it. (Andrea)

If you do something wrong, expect your teammate to call you out on it, or if you're not playing hard, expect your teammate to call you out on it … holding each other accountable is huge because they [coaches] can't—I mean, it's not their job to tell us to work hard. It should be our teammate's job. (Angie)

Andrea and Angie were two of many participants who used the phrase "call[ing] you out" when discussing leadership and accountability, which helps to demonstrate the "how" of accountability. If players did not follow team rules (e.g., wearing practice uniform) or were not "working hard in the gym" or "playing hard", they would be called out, which is

to say they would be confronted and perhaps reprimanded verbally (i.e., "called out") about their behavior, actions or inactions. In addition, as Angie indicated, accountability was an expectation among teammates and was perceived to occur independent of coaches.

These examples highlight accountability in practice settings, which provides a contextual dimension of leadership in sport. First, the practice setting itself is a unique aspect of sport compared to other organizational and leadership settings. The effort and work ethic put forward by team members in practice will impact the overall goals and performance of the team, and is vital to overall success. Second, team members in sport spend a disproportionate amount of time training for a short competition (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980). It is not surprising that peer leadership takes place in practice and training settings, given that is where the majority of a team's time together is spent.

While participants believed that all team members were expected to hold one another accountable, they also expressed the belief that team captains, in particular, possessed the responsibility of holding teammates accountable. This belief also stemmed from their coaches as one participant responded:

> They [coaches] expect the captains to speak up in practice when there's not
> enough energy or it's kind of our [captain's] job to hold each other accountable
> and call people out. (Mindy)

The perception that coaches expected captains to "speak up" indicates the positional nature of accountability. The positional aspect of accountability was evident as several

participants, who served as their respective teams captains, reflected on the leadership they were expected to provide for their teams. For example, one team captain stated:

> I was expected to be able to call people out and fix things that were going wrong … We had a couple of really stupid fouls in dangerous spots on the field where it could have cost us a goal or two and then after the game we were walking back off to the bench and I said something to the team like, 'We need to be smart about fouling and giving up these free kicks'. (Jill)

In Jill's interpretation of leadership, accountability consisted of a one-way exchange that extended to addressing her team as a whole in game situations.

Holding teammates accountable via communication (e.g., "calling them out") was identified as a very important aspect of peer leadership, and in relation to the leadership literature, was constructed as a predominantly masculine leadership approach. Accountability featured leadership values such as autocratic or authoritarian communication, assertiveness, and 'power over' others, which are linked to forms of dominant masculinity (Eagly, 2007; Fletcher, 2004). Autocratic and 'power over' leadership behaviors are considered outdated and have lost credibility in today's organizations where workers prefer more egalitarian and collaborative leadership practices (Eagly, 2007; Sinclair, 2005). Previous researchers have argued that outdated autocratic practices persist in sport leadership positions including coaching and administration (e.g., Drago et al, 2005; Hanold, 2011; Knoppers & Antonissen, 2005, 2008). My research therefore confirms the existence of persistently embedded autocratic

leadership behaviors in sport, and extends the previous findings to include peer

leadership behaviors and practices in the context of women's intercollegiate team sport.

However, the women in this study did not perceive these leadership behaviors as

outdated. Instead, they identified accountability as an important behavior in leadership

and see their female peers who hold teammates accountable via vocal communication as

effective leaders in sport. Sport is a setting where contributions of individuals are merged

into and reflected in the total team effort (Chelladurai, 1984), and lack of effort among

individual players must be "called out". The expectation in the context of sport that

female leaders should be more vocal, and "call teammates out" is a departure from much

of the organizational leadership and gender research where female leaders are often

perceived and/or expected to be more sensitive, empathetic, and focused on relational

aspects rather than group tasks (Eagly, 2007; Fletcher, 2004). The expectation that female

leaders in sport display vocal and autocratic leadership behaviors is an important finding

that contradicts and challenges our socially constructed notions of gender and leadership

within the sport context, and helps to demonstrate the complexity and dynamic nature of

gender (Ashcraft, 2009). For example, it challenges gender binary logic that positions all

women leaders as empathetic and sensitive to relationships and all men leaders as

autocratic and aggressive.

Although challenging stereotypes associated with leadership and gender was an

important finding, we cannot deny that women who display non-traditionally feminine

leadership styles such as those described here, often face criticism and greater challenges

to their ability as leaders particularly in male dominated positions, organizations, and

cultures (Eagly, 2007; Fletcher, 2004) such as the context of sport (Shaw & Hoeber, 2003). So while accountability may be seen as an important leadership behavior and valued within the sport team context, whether it is a leadership behavior that will transfer and have value in other organizational settings for young women entering the work force is uncertain. Here again, the current research highlighted how leadership enacted by women in sport is different from other organizational contexts, where women are expected to demonstrate relational leadership practices (Eagly, 2007; Fletcher, 1999, 2004). Sport is often viewed as being important to leadership development, and it is widely assumed and accepted that leadership skills developed via athletic participation is a valuable asset for former athletes in their careers (Gould & Carson, 2008; Holt, 2008; Knoppers, 2011). However, given the more recent shift in organizational leadership approaches that espouse more collaborative, egalitarian, and relational practices, the more masculinized traditional leadership behavior cultured in the context of sport could prove to be problematic for young women entering the work world.

In addition, accountability highlighted the relative importance of context to perceptions of leadership (Ford et al., 2005; Osborn et al., 2002). While the social institution of sport is historically entrenched in dominant forms of masculinity and often synonymous with men, women's intercollegiate sport teams represent a context where team members are all female. So while the context of women's intercollegiate athletics is feminized due to the increase in female participants, it continues to glorify and value masculine leadership behaviors and attributes, such as autocratic communication.

Motivation. Motivation was a second property characterizing communication leadership and consisted of monologue or one-way communication by perceived leaders intended to motivate or inspire teammates to perform in game situations. Several dimensions further characterized motivational communication leadership including that it was perceived to occur almost exclusively in game situations, was enacted by individuals and small groups, and was perceived to be displayed more often by team captains and seniors. Perceptions of motivational communication leadership included the belief that individual teammates could motivate their entire team to play better during a competition. For example, this participant stated:

> Cassie's a very vocal leader, she's one of our assistant captains [and] in this one game, we were down to a team we should not be down to in the first period … [Cassie] just really rallied our team together and just got us all going. We still lost, but we did a lot better in the next two periods and that's just one example … if things aren't going well, she just knows what to say. (Julie)

In Julie's account of leadership, one individual (i.e., team captain) "knew what to say" to motivate her team at a pivotal moment in the game. Small groups of leaders also displayed motivational communication at pivotal moments. For Carley, a crucial moment for leadership occurred as pre-game motivation. Carley recalled, "Our captains will just step up, and before we go out on the court, they will say a few words". Motivational communication also occurred at pivotal moment in the end of the game:

> [The seniors] stepped up in a time … when everyone was mentally fatigued and they could probably sense that … and they stepped up and they got the team fired

up like it was a new game, like we had just rested for a whole day and they just

got that spark in everyone and made everyone want to play even more." (Allie)

Motivational communication leadership also consisted of one-way communication where

a perceived peer leader communicated individually with a teammate during a game to

inspire performance. For example, Stephanie stated:

[team captain] grabbed me and was like, 'Steph, this is you – you can do it! You

rock the paint, just go in there and do your thing!' And I ended up scoring a layup

which put us ahead by one … When other people tell you that they believe in you,

it makes you feel so much more empowered.

Participant accounts indicated that motivational communication leadership from

teammates united their team (i.e., "rallied team"), enthused energy to perform (i.e., "got

them fired up"), and/or instilled confidence in them (i.e., "they believe in you") and

inspired them which subsequently improved team play and individual performances. The

outcomes of motivational communication were thus explicitly task orientated and related

to team performance. The examples provided above demonstrated that participants

perceived leadership during specific and important game situations (e.g., when teams

were losing, pre-game, end of the game fatigue, game winning plays). Providing

motivational inspiration by persuading group members to believe in and attain the

groups' mission and goals is one aspect of transformation leadership (Bass, 1985; Burke

& Collins, 2001). In sport settings, it is not uncommon for athletes to provide motivation

and direction to their teammates (Dupis et al., 2006). However, in Holmes et al.'s (2010)

examination of intercollegiate student-athletes' perceptions of team leaders, they found

that only male athletes identified the ability to motivate as an important aspect of communication. While it is known that being vocal is important to female athletes (Holmes et al., 2008; Holmes et al., 2010), my study extended previous research by recognizing that female athletes perceived motivational communication to be an important leadership attribute necessary to be effective and successful in the context of sport.

Participant accounts of motivational communication leadership also indicated the positional nature of leadership in the context of sport. Team captains, based upon their positions as captains, are more frequently perceived to engage in nearly all forms of motivational communication leadership. Participants also believed that seniors were more likely than underclassmen (i.e., freshmen and sophomores) to engage in motivational communication leadership pointing to the hierarchical or seniority based (i.e., "top down") nature of leadership in the context of sport. Captains are considered formal team leaders due to their official designation or appointment by either the coaches or the group (Dupis et al., 2006; Loughead et al, 2006), so it is certainly expected for captains to be affiliated with perceptions of leadership. Formally appointed leaders in organizational settings are also strongly linked to perceptions of leadership (Northouse, 2012; Yukl, 2012). The hierarchical or seniority based nature of leadership, while not uncommon in the context of sport (Loughead et al., 2006; Price & Weiss, 2010) provides a subtle point of departure from today's organizational leadership that promotes collaborative and 'bottom up' styles of leadership (Fletcher, 2004; Sinclair, 2005). For example, sport teams are one of the few settings where members are identified and classified by their

respective years of experience. This is particularly the case in educational based sport

programs including high school and college sport where participants are classified

according to year in school (i.e., freshmen, sophomore, junior, senior).

In addition motivational communication almost exclusively occurred in game

situations, which was interesting given that accountability communication was perceived

to occur more often in practice settings. Again, this highlights the impact of context to

sport leadership. Team practice situations require specific leadership behaviors such as

holding teammates accountable to certain behaviors and team expectations, while game

situations require more motivational communication skills. Both accountability and

motivation are related to task outcomes such as meeting team goals and therefore have

implications for team performance and success. This finding is unique to the context of

sport teams. While some traditional organizational settings that feature a high task

orientation may also require situational leadership styles, practice and performance

settings are unique to the sport context.

Liaison. Liaison communication leadership was defined as vocal interactions

intended to facilitate greater understanding between the players on a team and the

coaching staff. Liaison communication encompassed two-way communication channels

(i.e., coach to player and player to coach) and included a representational peer element,

which meant that team leaders were expected to represent their peers/teammates when

communicating with coaches. Liaison communication included conveying and

interpreting team and individual player information (e.g., team expectations and goals,

player attitudes and fatigue, individual player concerns) from coaches to players as well as from players to coach. For example, Sarah stated:

> Our coaches are very big on the communication of coach to captain, captain to team … and one of the things [coaches] talked about was, how it's so important that the captains have good communication, not only with the players, but with the coaches as well. And they [captains] are kind of like the messengers.

Emphasizing the necessity of effective communication skills, Andrea perceived that her teammate engaged in leadership when she clarified important points from her coaches to her teammates after a team meeting in which they discussed team expectations and goals:

> After one of our [team] meetings, one of the girls stopped us and more or less just broke it down further. I think that was a good form of leadership. I think she really made sure that we were on the same page and got the same thing from the meeting—like what [coaches] wanted portrayed to us, because I think people were kind of on different pages. (Andrea)

Liaison communication was also expressed from player to coach, again most often, via captains. Participants believed their coaches would consult captains or leaders on their teams to assess attitudes within the team, player fatigue during training and practice session, and to understand team climate. One participant reflected on liaison communication within her team:

> [The coaches] would come to us for [understanding], 'How's the team doing? Are they tired this week? Do girls need some time off?' We [seniors] were their [coaches] go-to, kind of in between player and coach soundboard. (Liz)

Finally, liaison communication from player to coach also included a representational element. In other words, certain players—again usually captains—were expected to represent the concerns and interest of their teammates to their coaches. Mindy highlighted how her teammates consulted her and her co-captains as a way to voice a concern to a coach:

> When your teammates come to you with an issue they've had with a coach … it's kind of our job to be that liaison between our team and the coach. We've kind of had to bring issues to [the coaches] attention … That was some of the leadership that we did as captains with coaches." (Mindy)

Similarly, Liz stated, "The team could go to [senior leaders] if they were afraid to go to the coaches or if they were afraid—afraid to bring things up. They could go to their peers."

Previous researchers suggested that leaders serving as a liaison between coaching staff and players are placed in the unique position of being a member of both the team and the coaching staff (e.g., Loughead et al, 2006; Mosher, 1979). The current study extended Loughead et al's and Mosher's findings by providing more vivid details about how liaison leadership is displayed within women's intercollegiate team sports. For example, liaison leadership includes clarifying information from coaches (i.e., Andrea), providing team information to coaches (e.g., attitudes, fatigue), acting as a "soundboard" (i.e., Liz), and representing the interests of players with coaches (i.e., Mindy). Liaison communication represented important leadership behaviors and emphasizes differences unique to sport not observed in other organizational contexts.

Findings also showed that players who engaged in liaison communication were most often captains and seniors because of the inherent connection to the coaching staff. Loughead et al. (2006) previously found that formal leaders were more likely to be perceived as team leaders. My study not only confirmed Loughead et al.'s findings, but also extended their findings to include senior leaders in team sports. Thus, liaison communication is characterized as positional and seniority based leadership (i.e., top down). While the positional nature of leadership is a long-standing feature of traditional leadership (Northouse, 2012; Yukl, 2012), it is less relevant in new leadership models because the focus has shifted to collective and relational nature of leadership (i.e., power with) and focuses less on positional authority (i.e., power over) (Fletcher, 2004). The dominant representation of positional leadership suggests the stifling of emergent informal leadership roles in the sport context. Gaining leadership experience and emerging as an informal leader in task oriented groups are important to leadership development. Therefore, the finding that emergent informal leadership may be stifled or suppressed in the sport context is problematic to leadership development. Carli and Eagly (1999) found that women in mixed-sex work task oriented groups were found to be at a disadvantage compared to their male peers related to emergent leadership. In my study, I found that younger and less experienced female athletes in same-sex task oriented groups were at a disadvantage in displaying emergent leadership, and thus extended Carli and Eagly's findings to the context of women's intercollegiate athletic teams.

Example Leadership

Serving as an example was the second sub-category of peer leadership and referred to serving as a team role model by displaying exemplar behaviors in terms of meeting team standards and expectations (e.g., work ethic, attitude, sport performance and execution, and self-discipline). The outcomes of example leadership were also characterized as task orientated because its focus on team standards and expectations were related to the overall success of participants' respective teams. Example leadership occurred more often within the team sport setting (i.e., practice and competition); however, some participants also referred to example leadership outside of the sport setting. For example, some participants perceived that making sound decisions such as attending class regularly, or avoiding the use of alcohol was an important attribute to example leadership outside of the sport context. Such decisions, while outside of the sport setting, still have implications for meeting team goals and overall team success. Student-athletes who do not attend class regularly could be ruled ineligible and unable to compete with their team. Similarly, the use of alcohol could have negative effects on athletes' training and performances.

Participants believed that example leadership and the associated leader-focused behaviors were influential within their respective teams because they provided ideal standards for which to strive, would positively influence team outcomes, and were thus perceived as leadership. Two properties further characterized example leadership including modeling and self-accountability. Leadership styles and approaches that were represented in example leadership included performative leadership and heroic

individualism, which are frequently socially ascribed to dominant masculinity (Hovden,

2000; Fletcher, 2004). These leadership styles and approaches will be further discussed

following the presentation of the descriptive data.

Modeling. Modeling referred to leader-focused behaviors and attributes that

demonstrated expected team standards (e.g., work ethic, positive attitude, and

enthusiasm). Participants' accounts of example leadership indicated that the associated

behaviors assisted in setting team standards, demonstrated good decision making out of

sport, and encouraged teammates to emulate the behaviors. Erin, for example, described

leadership as "Showing up to practice early, and being ready, and a lot of it is motivation,

too—just being positive and giving it your all during workouts." Erin's account of

modeling included being responsible and professional (i.e., "showing up to practice

early") as well as demonstrating a positive attitude and motivation.

While any team member could perform modeling, many participants perceived

that modeling was especially expected of captains:

It's important to lead and show what you want for your team to be successful …

we expect certain things from [captains] and that shows us what we need to do, so

they kind of set the bar as to what we should and should not do on and off the

court … I think it's very important to set the standards and make sure people

follow them. (Carley)

They [captains] lead by example with how they carry themselves in practice, and I

think that's huge, because your younger kids are going to feed off that. Even off

the court as well, if they're doing the right things, making the right decisions …

it's really important because other people are going to be influenced by that.

(Mindy)

Both Carley and Mindy perceived that modeling took place both in everyday practice settings as well as outside of the sport context (e.g., "off the court"). Carley indicated that once team standards and behaviors are established, they serve to encourage followership and conformity by "setting the bar as to what we should and should not do …". Mindy believed that team members—particularly younger players—would "feed off" of and be influenced by example leadership, and thus more likely to follow the model provided.

Lindsey and Liz further highlighted how modeling expected behaviors, such as attitude and effort, could influence other younger team members, which indicated the perception that modeling was more likely displayed by older athletes (i.e., hierarchical):

I think the main thing was just showing up everyday and bringing the right attitude and the right effort, and hoping that your team sees it and follows suit … A lot of the younger players were watching what I was doing … it was good to know that what I was bringing to the ice everyday mattered and hopefully made a difference for some of the players. (Lindsey)

If they see us [seniors] pushing and working hard, that's going to hopefully trickle down through the team, and [they will] be like, 'Well [seniors] are working hard, they're going to [practice] extra … we should go [practice] with them'. (Liz)

Here again, we see modeling leadership in everyday practice settings.

Finally, modeling included in game situations where leadership was displayed via high-level sport execution and performance:

[Kari] stepped up … we were struggling in a game and she usually can hit very

well and she gets a hit and it's just contagious and so we start getting back in the

game … we do a 180 and think of the possibility that we can win … just sparking

that …being able to get a hit and make it contagious and getting us that 'want'

again to win, getting us motivated. (Shelly)

Shelly's account of her teammate "stepping up" best captures the performance dimension

of example leadership. More specifically how the "contagious" nature of this modeling

behavior inspired team members to follow suit and to play or perform at a heightened

level, and was thus perceived as leadership based on the influential nature of the

performance, and ultimately, team outcome and success.

Serving as a role model and displaying a strong work ethic have been previously

identified as important leadership attributes within athletic team (Holmes et al., 2010;

Holmes et al., 2008). The results from my research, while not surprising, extended the

previous research by providing more nuanced interpretations of modeling leadership in

the context of women's intercollegiate sport. For example, participants perceived that

modeling and example leadership were important to establish standards to be followed by

younger players (e.g., Erin, Carley, Mindy). Example leadership via modeling behaviors

therefore, has a very strong task orientation that is concerned with the success of the

group in meeting goals and establishing certain standards.

It is also important to note the positional and hierarchical nature of modeling

example leadership. Mindy and Carley believed that captains were more often expected

to display example leadership via modeling behaviors, which would then be influential to

the "younger players". Liz believed that hard work by seniors would "trickle down through the team", which vividly highlights the hierarchical nature of modeling behaviors within the context of women's intercollegiate sport. While the top down style of leadership continues to lose traction in today's workforce (Hanold, 2011; Sinclair, 2005; Yukl, 2012), the high task orientation nature of sport requires strict standards of behaviors and thus fosters hierarchical leadership where age and previous sport experience are important prerequisites. The participants' constructions of example leadership, specifically modeling, are embedded within the sport context as they reflect unique dimensions of sport. For example, modeling was important to set team standards and influence younger players, it was performed by captains and seniors, and included motivational athletic performances.

Self-accountability. Self-accountability included leader-focused behaviors and attributes and specifically referred to displaying self-discipline by meeting, and in many cases, exceeding expected team behaviors (e.g., hard work, positive attitude). Self-accountability was a key element that contributed to being perceived as a team leader. Participants believed that to develop leadership credibility and to be seen as a role model and leader in the team sport context, it was important for individuals to display self-accountability. For example, Sarah stated:

> I feel like as a leader you have to personally hold yourself accountable to be able to hold everyone else accountable as well … I think that's a big thing about being a leader, is being willing to hold yourself accountable so then that is reflective upon everyone else.

It is also important to note that self-accountability was connected to accountability communication. More specifically, participants believed that a peer leader first needed to be an example and to display self-accountability in team standards before she could hold teammates accountable via communication. Another participant stated:

> You have to hold yourself accountable before you can begin to hold other people accountable, like your teammates. That's what I'm working on right now. If I want to be able to hold the younger kids accountable for trying their hardest during workouts, I have to be busting my butt a hundred percent of the time too, before I can begin to even say anything to them … because if you try to tell somebody to do something and you're not doing it yourself, it's like a double standard and it kind of makes them question your leadership. (Stephanie)

Both Sarah and Stephanie's comments demonstrate the connection between self-accountability and communication accountability; however, Stephanie provides further insight to underscore the hypocritical perception of peer leadership lacking in self-accountability. In other words, her leadership would be "questioned" if she told teammates to do something that she was not doing herself.

Displaying self-accountability and taking responsibility for one's own actions is an important aspect of leadership in team sport settings and supports existing literature (Dupis et al, 2006; Holmes et al., 2010; Loughead & Hardy, 2005). A more novel finding in my study is the connection between self-accountability and vocal accountability. This connection is an important finding as it suggests that example leadership—more specifically—self-accountability is an antecedent to communication leadership in the

context of women's intercollegiate team sports. The participants in this study perceived that one must first display self-accountability (e.g., self-discipline) before holding teammates accountable via communication leadership or their credibility as team leaders would be at risk. While peer leadership within athletic teams is strongly linked to team captains (Loughead et al., 2006), practitioners and coaches can emphasize example leadership more with younger or less experienced players to develop their leadership skills in the sport context.

Social Leadership

Social leadership was the third sub-category of peer leadership and was also the least prevalent type of peer leadership discussed by participants. Social leadership referred to the interpersonal leadership skills of individual players. Departing from a task orientation focused on the overall team success, the outcomes of social leadership were instead more concerned with developing interpersonal relationships with peers by focusing on individual team members' needs as well as enhancing team harmony. Social leadership consisted of three properties including interpersonal relationships, support, and team cohesion. For example, Beth described an important aspect of her leadership within her team as "I try to keep a relationship with every [teammate], too. I try to find something special about everybody that I can connect with, and it's not even about rowing." In Beth's account, she highlighted the interpersonal nature of the relationships with teammates, and the importance of "connecting" with her teammates on a personal level.

Paying attention to the individual needs of teammates was also an important component of social leadership. One participant discussed being supportive and wanting to be her teammates' friend:

> There's that fine line between not coaching someone, but supporting them, too, and knowing the difference between—I still want to be these girl's friend. I don't want to be a dictator. I don't want that at all. [So] just understanding that, and keeping that relationship. (Sarah)

Sarah's comment indicated a more egalitarian interpersonal relationship (i.e., "I want to be these girl's friend") with her teammates that included offering support. It is also interesting that Sarah contrasted support and friendship to coaching or "be[ing] a dictator", and indicated the perception that the latter would not be ideal for developing interpersonal relationships with her teammates.

Finally, social leadership included enhancing team cohesion or harmony. For example, Andrea described her leadership as "I'm more the leader when it comes to keeping the team together and cohesive—I like being that glue." Like Andrea, other participants recognized the collective or cohesive nature of social leadership within their teams:

> Being able to bring the team together … being able to, keep the team cohesiveness together through the good times and the bad times, and just, I would definitely say a leader is somebody that any of the other players can go to for, I guess, whether problems with hockey or school." (Julie)

Participant accounts of social leadership indicated that it occurs both within the team sport context (e.g., Andrea, Sarah) and off the field or out of sport contexts (e.g., Beth and Julie).

An important aspect of peer leadership is the ability to provide support and to understand group and individual needs (Holmes et al., 2008; Loughead & Hardy, 2005). Therefore, it is somewhat surprising that female participants in this study discussed social leadership less frequently than communication and example leadership, particularly considering the contention that women often value social and relational leadership skills (Eagly & Karau, 1991; Eagly, 2007). In a team sport context, Holmes et al. (2008) found that being sensitive and having good interpersonal skills were more important to female athletes compared to male athletes in their study. This research extended Holmes et al.'s findings by clarifying that while social leadership was identified as an aspect of peer leadership, it was less commonly discussed than communication and example leadership. The lesser emphasis on social leadership in my study is likely due to the context of team sport, which values and requires more autocratic and task oriented leadership styles (Loughead et al, 2006).

However, while less prevalent than communication and example leadership, social leadership was noteworthy in that more participants perceived their own leadership in terms of more relational, interpersonal and supportive leadership narratives. In other words, it appeared as though many participants strived toward the more social and relational leadership within their respective teams. This finding is important for two reasons. First, it demonstrates the relevance of a more relational and feminine leadership

approach in sport, and answered the calls to highlight such leadership constructions in sport (Brown & Light, 2012; Hanold, 2011). Second, Stead and Elliott (2009) found that women's leadership operates on many levels and emerges from relationships. Thus the importance of relationships in peer leadership and the resultant collaborative leadership constructions of the participants in this study extended Stead and Elliott's finding to include women's leadership in the context of college sport teams.

Peer Leadership Summary

The leader-focused behaviors and attributes associated with communication and example leadership, were largely centered on task aspects of leadership (i.e., leader focused behaviors and traits were important to team performance and fulfillment of team goals), and primarily took place in practice and game settings. The sport context is important as it points to task behavior completion and achievement of goals, for which transactional leadership is more conducive (Eagly, 2007; Peachy & Burton, 2011; Yukl, 2012). Interpersonal leadership was concerned more with social cohesion and developing relationships with teammates. For these, the context of sport and task outcome was less important compared to the relational leadership process.

The findings demonstrate that female college athletes construct peer leadership in the context of sport by drawing primarily on traditionally masculine styles, traits, and practices. The participants constructed leadership in more traditionally masculine terms as being expected leadership in the context of sport. That is, they believed they were expected to hold each other accountable by " calling out teammates", and to set standards by modeling expected behaviors and being an example. Coaches certainly play an

important role in establishing general team and leadership expectations (Bucci, Bloom, Loughead, & Caron, 2012; Loughead & Hardy, 2005). It is then possible that the masculine leadership expectations could be due to the dominance of male leaders in the coaching ranks (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012; LaVoi, 2013, 2014), and subsequently, the dominance of male leadership values and ideologies that are perhaps more often expressed by male coaches. While scholars (e.g., Hanold, 2011; Scott, 1999) suggest that outdated leadership practices and styles persist in the context of sport, Drago et al. (2005) more specifically identified coaching as a site where outdated leadership practices remain firmly embedded. The findings of this study confirmed previous research including the notion that outdated leadership practices persist in sport, and extended this to included peer leadership among female college athletes.

While participants widely perceived leadership in the sport context in terms of masculine values and characteristics, when they described their own leadership, it often manifested in more feminine terms, such as being focused on interpersonal relationships, providing support and being a friend. Thus, it appeared that female athletes negotiated their leadership based on balancing coach expectations and developing relationships with their teammates. Another possibility is that women in sport leadership draw on both masculine and feminine styles, and the team sport context is perhaps more conducive to the masculine styles and practices. For example, the context of intercollegiate sport features class and seniority based systems—players are referred to by their class in school (e.g., freshman, sophomore, junior, senior) or in terms of years of experience (e.g., first year, second year, etc. or rooking and veteran).

Coach Leadership

The second core category, coach leadership, was defined as leader-focused behaviors and attributes centered primarily on developing interpersonal relationships with individual athletes, which participants believed was important to improving their athletic talents and skills. Another important aspect of coach leadership was the identification of specific leader attributes including idealized traits and relevant experiences in sport. Such leader attributes contributed to coaches' leadership qualifications and provided them with legitimacy in their coaching position. Coach leadership was enacted exclusively by head and assistant coaches and was therefore positional, and by nature, hierarchical. Participants perceptions of coach leadership consisted of three sub-categories: 1) interpersonal leadership; 2) open communication; and 3) personal leader attributes. Leadership styles and approaches that emerged in the constructions of coach leadership included relational and egalitarian practices, transformational leadership, and heroic individualism, representing both feminine and traditionally masculine approaches. Table 3 provides an overview of coach leadership. To further conceptualize coach leadership, the properties and contextual dimensions characterizing coach leadership are presented in the next section. Vivid data extracts are utilized to illustrate important aspects of coach leadership. Discussion of the emergent leadership themes follows the presentation of each coach leadership sub-category.

Table 3: Coach Leadership Behaviors/Attributes, Outcomes, and Styles and Approaches

Behaviors/Attributes	Outcomes	Styles and Approaches
Individualized Consideration: • Sport training and instruction • Personal relations	Improved individual performance and effort Interpersonal relationships, Care, trust,	Transformational, Relational
Open Communication: • Approachable • Empathy	Interpersonal Relations	Relational, Egalitarian
Personal leader attributes: • Sport Capital • Agency • Idealized traits	Leader qualifications and characteristics	Heroic Individualism

Individualized Consideration

Individualized consideration is one aspect of transformational leadership (Bass, 1990, Eagly, 2007; Yukl, 2012). Bass defined individualized consideration as the extent to which a leader attends to each follower's needs and concerns, offers support, and facilitates open communication. In adopting this definition for this study, I position individualized consideration as the extent to which coaches attended to the needs and concerns of individual athletes, demonstrated care and support, and fostered open communication. Individualized consideration occurred within the sport setting, such as game and practice situations as well as outside the sport setting. In this study, individual consideration had implications for leadership outcomes in terms of developing interpersonal relationships with individual athletes, cultivating trust, demonstrating care, and the subsequent ability and effectiveness of a coach to lead individuals within teams. Two properties further characterized individualized consideration: 1) sport training and instruction; and 2) developing personal relationships.

Sport training and instruction. Sport training and instruction referred to the extent to which a coach provided individual or one-on-one coaching in the sport setting. Individualized training and instruction occurred in team practice settings, one-on-one practices settings, game situations, and individual player meetings. As a result of individual sport training and instruction, participants perceived that their coaches cared for and respected them as individuals. Participants also believed that the sport training and instructions was vital to their individual athletic development. These reasons combined demonstrated why individual sport training and instruction was considered an important property of individualized consideration.

Individualized sport training and instruction occurred at various times in and around team practice settings and was therefore embedded in the sport context. For example:

> She does a lot more individual coaching. She'll talk to you after practice, she'll talk to you before, she'll talk to you during the water break, [and] she'll come over and say something to you in your ear. (Jill)

Angie provided an account of a one-on-one pre-game practice session with her assistant coach:

> She said, 'If you want to go [to an early pre-game practice], I'll go. I'll work with you [on] whatever you want to do', and so we were out there for at least an hour just doing one-on-one stuff, just different drills … it really showed that she cared about me individually not just the team winning. (Angie)

Angie indicated that individualized training made her feel that her assistant coach "cared about me individually", and highlighted how Angie valued individual attention along side of task-oriented leadership (i.e., "team winning").

Another aspect of sport training and instruction was the extent to which leaders (i.e., coaches) were aware of differences between athletes. Awareness of individual differences was important in the sport setting to provide feedback and individual treatment that would be effectively received based upon this knowledge. For example, Julie explained, "She knows little things about each player. Whether she can, at certain times, she can yell at them and certain times she can encourage them." Another participant further elaborated:

> She understood the importance of trying to get to know her players, and treating them all differently and [knowing] how they tick, instead of treating everybody the same. (Mindy)

Providing individualized feedback based on the knowledge of individual differences was important to participants because, as Mindy indicated, when a coach knows "how they tick", it sets the athlete apart from other players because they were treated individually.

Awareness of differences between athletes was also perceived to be instrumental to athletes' work ethic and effort in sport settings and points to coach leaders authenticity in demonstrating care and developing relationships with their players:

> [Coaches] should take the time to know us on an individual basis and actually get to know us, not just have it be a fake relationship … It just makes the whole

experience more meaningful and you want to work harder for them because they

actually care about you. (Stephanie)

While individual training and instruction and awareness of differences were perceived to

be important in sport settings such as practice and competion, aspects of individualized

consideration were also important outside of the athletic context. This was also evident in

the second property, personal relationships.

Personal relationship. Participants' perceptions of coach leadership commonly

consisted of narratives regarding the importance of developing personal relationships

with individual players, which implicated trust and leader effectiveness. For example,

Kelly stated, "if [as a coach] you're more personal with someone, [they'll] obviously

trust you more, and you can lead them more if they trust you." Development of personal

relationships also contributed to making the participants feel like they were cared for as

people and students, not just athletes. Finally, participants indicated that when coach

leaders developed personal relationships with them, they believed they were motivated to

perform at a high level because they were performing for their coach leaders.

For example, Katie stated, "[I think] personal connection is the best way to reach

your athletes." Other participants referred to personal relationships with their coaches:

I think it helps me personally to have a good personable relationship with

someone … I like knowing my coach, knowing they care about me as a person

too, not just a volleyball player, not just somebody that's going to be here for four

years and then gone. (Andrea)

She takes the time to go out to dinner with me and she asks about my family …

that's really important for me from a coach-player standpoint. I don't want to just

be a stat for someone. I don't just want to be a player or someone in a jersey.

(Sarah)

Andrea and Sarah believed that a personal relationship with a coach was important to

help dispel the feeling they were simply commodities to their coaches (e.g., "here for four

years and gone", "just a stat"). Demonstrating care for athletes and their statuses as

students, not just athletes was also important:

He's one of the most caring people I know … the wellbeing of his players, of us,

is as high or higher [than winning], which is pretty amazing for a Division I

coach, I think … he sees the big picture and really cares for us as people and

students too. (Kay)

While personal relationships referred to out of sport settings, participants believed

cultivating personal relationships often had implications within sport settings in terms of

motivation to perform at a high level:

 I felt like I made a personal connection with her, so it just made me want to work

harder for her because I felt like I was actually doing it for her in a sense. When I

make more of a personal bond with the coach, I seem to want to do better."

(Nicole)

The connection between personal relationships and work ethic in the sport setting

is noteworthy and highlights the reciprocal nature or "give-and-take" between coach

leadership and athlete performance in a sport context. Participants indicated that when

coaches developed personal relationships and demonstrated care and concern for them as people and students as well as athletes, they were more motivated to perform for their coach leaders. This highlights the complex nature of individualized consideration—the leader-focused behaviors and attributes are important for developing interpersonal relations with athletes as well as developing athletes individual athletic potential and skills.

The specific behaviors and attributes of individualized consideration, (e.g., focus on developing interpersonal relationships with followers and being keenly aware of followers needs and concerns), were closely aligned with "post-heroic leadership" (Fletcher, 2004). Generally speaking, in our society, the practices and skills associated with post-heroic and transformational leadership are socially constructed as feminine and are (more often) ascribed to women. Enacting post-heroic leadership requires relational skills and the ability to be sensitive and attuned to the needs and concerns of the various group members, which was a recurring theme in the participant interviews. That is, female college athletes wanted their coaches to be more personable with them, to relate to and understand them, and to provide one-on-one coaching and instruction.

The finding that female college athletes valued aspects of transformational and post-heroic leadership in the sport context, and more specifically from their coaches, contributed to the literature in two ways. First, transformational and post-heroic leadership are (more often) associated with women, (Eagly, 2007; Fletcher, 1999, 2004; Helgesen, 1995), which suggested that some women who enact similar leadership practices are well suited to carry out coach leadership. A female leadership advantage has

been proposed in organizational studies (Eagly, 2007; Helgesen, 1995). Peachy and

Burton (2011) have explored the possible existence of a female advantage in sport

leadership—more specifically for intercollegiate athletic directors. While Peachy and

Burton did not find the existence of a female leadership advantage for athletic directors in

intercollegiate sport, my analysis and interpretation proposed the possible existence of a

female leadership advantage for coaches within women's intercollegiate sport teams.

Second, the valuation of relational leadership practices in the sport context is

promising for disrupting gendered stereotypes and assumptions that remain persistently

embedded in the sport context. For example, perceptions of post-heroic and relational

leadership practices were associated with both men and women coaches, and at the same

time, not all women coaches were perceived to enact this leadership style. This helped

break down the gender binary that simplistically positions all women as nurturing and

empathetic leaders, and demonstrated the multiple ways in which gender can play out

(Ashcraft, 2009) in sport leadership.

Open Communication

The second sub-category of coach leadership was open communication, which

referred to the extent to which coach leaders were able to foster an environment where

athletes felt comfortable talking with them. Open communication was characterized by

approachability and empathy. Approachability indicated ease and comfort in accessing

and verbally interacting with a coach leader, and their general availability to female

athletes. For example, in response to what made her coach an ideal leader, Dana stated,

"He was approachable … [he was] easy to talk to." Mindy also responded, "She was

more approachable, so people felt comfortable going to her and she kind of made that known, and it was sincere."

Empathy. Empathy was also important to fostering open communication and referred to the ability of coach leaders to relate to, understand, and to identify with the female athlete participants and their experiences. It was perceived that a coach leader's empathy, or understanding of participants' experiences fostered open communication between the coach and players. For Liz, empathy from her coach promoted an "open door policy" on and off the field: "She could relate to us girls in a way that she would know— she would know how to talk to us on and off the field, and had that open door policy, basically." Another participant responded to what made her coach an ideal leader:

> She knows, and she understands how we're feeling more, and it's easier to
>
> communicate with her if something's really bugging us … she's very
>
> understanding of how our bodies feel or why a drill's not working. (Allie)

Here, the ability to identify with female athletes (i.e., "she understands how we're feeling") leads to the perception of open communication. Finally, Jill's comment suggested that the manner in which her coach communicated with her contributed to feeling respected. "He can approach players individually and explain things and when he tells you, you still feel respected, you're not getting called out or picked on."

The overall leadership styles and approaches associated with open communication were very egalitarian, which referred to a less hierarchical nature of interactions between leaders and followers and is associated with post-heroic leadership (Fletcher, 2004). Gender is also implicated in open communication as empathy, approachability, and

egalitarian practices are (more often) linked to women and certain femininities (Eagly, 2007; Fletcher, 2004; Hanold, 2011). In a sport setting, Fasting and Pfister (2000) found that many elite international female soccer players preferred female coaches because they liked the so-called female style of communication, which was described as understanding and caring. Fasting and Pfister interpreted their results as "mirroring the old-fashioned gender stereotypes where women are nurturing, emotional, while the men are aggressive and rough" (p. 104). In my study, female athlete participants indicated that they also valued open communication styles of leadership from their coaches; however, these styles were not exclusive to female coaches. Participants also valued empathy in their male coaches, and here again, I see that this finding helps to disrupt binary notions of gender in sport leadership. It is also important to note that empathy was also constructed and valued differently between male and female coaches, and was therefore gendered. The gendered nature of empathy is presented and discussed in greater detail in *Chapter Five*.

Personal Leader Attributes

The third sub-category of coach leadership was personal leader attributes, which was defined as leader focused characteristics, traits, and qualification that were individual in nature. In other words, personal attributes were inherently focused on the individual leader, his or her personal and professional qualifications and skills, and his or her performance as a leader. Three properties further characterized personal attributes including sport capital (i.e., playing and/or coaching experience), agency, and idealized traits (e.g., competitive, self-confidence, independence). Personal leader attributes were

strongly linked to heroic individualism and traditional leadership approaches, such as the trait approach (Van Seters & Field, 1990; Northouse, 2012;Yukl, 2012).

Sport capital. Sport capital was defined as possessing knowledge of the specific sport based upon previous coaching and or playing experience. When asked what contributed to ideal leadership among their coaches, participants often referred to their coaches' past playing experiences. Angie, for example, stated, "She used to play and she's a four time [elite competitor]—a phenomenal player." Previous playing experience was perceived to add coaching credibility, as Sarah stated, "She was a great player … she has that behind her backing her up."

Previous coaching experience was also perceived to be important to coach leadership because participants believed leaders with previous coaching experience were knowledgeable in their sport. For example, Stephanie stated, "He's coached for so many years and he just knows a lot of stuff." Previous coaching experience not only demonstrated knowledge of the sport, but also established professionalism as Beth stated, "She knows everything about the sport, she knows what she's doing, she's been around, she's seen it all. This is what she does for a living."

Respect was also an important outcome of sport capital and was related specifically to a coach's knowledge of the sport. When a coach was knowledgeable about a sport, participants indicated that they believed they could respect and trust their coach because it instilled confidence in their abilities as coaches, making it easier to follow their lead and instructions. For example, Lindsey stated:

He knew a lot about both golf and hockey, and so we could talk about both games

for hours—out on the course or at the rink ... I knew he was knowledgeable and I

could respect that … if he told us to do this, this way, we could because we knew

he was—he knew what he was talking about.

Agency. Agency was defined as being in control of subordinates and acting in

their best interests (Carli & Eagly, 1999; Eagly, 2007). In my study, agency included

being in control of the athletes, setting team standards, and enforcing discipline fairly and

consistently within the sport settings including practice and competition. For example,

when asked what made her coach an ideal leader, Andrea responded, "He made sure I

knew he was in control … I have to believe every word he says and just have faith that

what he's doing to change [my sport skills] will turn out for the best."

Participants believed that part of coach leadership was setting high and consistent

standards for them in their sport, which demonstrated agency because the coach leader

was in control of athletes' behaviors in the sport context. For example, Sarah responded,

"She's consistent … she sets high standards for us, she sets very high standards for me,

and she doesn't budge with them." It was also vital for coach leaders to be consistent and

fair in holding players to the same standards. Kelly stated, "He would always hold her

accountable even though she's our best player. She can still get better, too … He

definitely holds people to the same standards." Here again, a coaches enforcement of

consistent standards demonstrates the leaders power and control over the team in general.

Idealized traits. Participants' perceptions of personal leader attributes also

included idealized traits, which referred to an individual's personal traits and

characteristics that made them an ideal leader. Coaches who demonstrated or possessed

certain personal characteristics were more likely to be identified as an "ideal leader".

There were several variations or dimensions of idealized traits including honesty, being a

role model, possessing a passion for the specific sport coached, competiveness, and being

ethical.

For example, when Liz explained why her coach was a good leader, she focused

on honesty. She noted, "She was straight forward with us, and I think that—that tells a lot

about her character again and her honesty." Participants perceived that idealized

individual traits contributed to their coaches' abilities to serve as role models, and was

therefore an important leadership outcome and related to leader effectiveness. Liz

continued, "I think that just the way she carries a program and the way she is, [and] the

role model she is for her girls [i.e., players]."

Passion for the specific sport coached was also perceived to be influential to

coach leadership as Beth stated, "He loved the game. He loved basketball so much … one

of the things about being a leader is just really loving what you're doing, and he

definitely did that." Being ethical was another trait of ideal coach leadership. Kay noted,

"He conducts himself with very high standards and his values and morals are very

important to him and he won't jeopardize those for winning."

While these leader attributes including leader qualifications (i.e., sport capital)

and personal leader characteristics (i.e., agency, and idealized traits) were perceived to be

vital to coach leadership, they are inherently individual and relate more to the perception

of a leader rather than the actual leadership process (Eagly, 2007; Fletcher, 2004). This is

an important finding for two reasons. First, it highlights the continued presence of heroic individualism in perceptions of leadership in the context of women's intercollegiate sport. Heroic individualism and the associated leadership practices (e.g., agency, in control, passion for job) are implicitly linked to masculinity, and as such, masculinity often remains invisible and gender neutral because it matches defining characteristics of leaders and managers (Collinson & Hearn, 1996; Sinclair, 2005). So, while seemingly gender neutral, these leader attributes, qualifications, and traits associated with coach leadership continue to reflect and glorify sport's historically masculine culture.

Second, the finding that leader attributes were an important aspect of coach leadership demonstrated that participants' perceptions of coach leadership were often conflated with the concept of leader in the context of sport. This is not surprising given that much of the sport leadership literature has taken a leader focused approach (e.g., Holmes et al., 2010; Jowett & Chaundry, 2004). In a similar study, Kihl et al. (2010) found that stakeholders' constructions of leadership in the context of intercollegiate athletics contained dual meanings including leader (noun) and effectiveness (verb). Kihl and colleague's research focused on constructions of leadership associated with the administration of athletic departments in the context of organizational change. Therefore, the current study extends Kihl et al.'s research by including constructions of leadership within the context of women's intercollegiate sport teams. That is, perceptions of leadership in the context of women's intercollegiate athletic teams were conflated with perceptions of leader.

Coach Leadership Summary

The results showed that individualized consideration was important to perceptions of coach leadership and impacted sport and personal development of individual players. Individual training and instruction and developing personal relationships were key properties of individualized consideration and were instrumental in developing interpersonal relationship and trust, feeling cared for and respected, and ultimately impacted the work ethic of participants in their respective sports. Open communication was also identified as an important aspect of coach leadership, and similarly was influential and important to developing interpersonal relationships. Finally, participants' accounts also demonstrated that leaders' personal attributes and qualifications including sport capital (i.e., playing and coaching experience), agency, and idealized traits and characteristics were critical aspects of coach leadership and positively influenced leadership effectiveness.

Individualized consideration and communication were similar to "post-heroic leadership" (Fletcher, 2004). Generally speaking, in our society, the practices and skills associated with post-heroic leadership (e.g., relational, empathy, care, egalitarian) are socially constructed as feminine and are (more often) ascribed to women. Personal attributes including possessing sport capital, agency, and idealized traits were identified as important to coach leadership and are more closely aligned with transactional and heroic leadership (Fletcher, 2004; Hovden, 2000, 2010; Yukl, 2012). These styles of leadership reflect features of heroic individualism and dominant masculinity, and are (more often) ascribed to men (Alvesson & Billing, 1997; Fletcher, 2004). Thus, coach

leadership is constructed in in terms of both traditionally feminine and masculine leadership narratives. While the persistence of some outdated leadership styles persisted in the context of sport (Drago et al., 2005; Hanold, 2011) and are associated with the coaching position, I see the findings from my study as promising in terms of challenging dominant forms of masculinity associated with sport leadership. It is also important to note that gendered leadership images and narratives were also present in participants' perceptions of leadership. A more detailed examination and discussion of gendered conceptions, narratives, and images associated with female college athletes perceptions of leadership are presented in *Chapter Five*.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

Constructing Gendered Differences in Sport Leadership

In this chapter, the results of the third research question are reported. More specifically, I explored and discussed how female college athletes' constructions of leadership were gendered in the context of intercollegiate athletics. Participants were asked to discuss their perceptions and beliefs of leadership in sport and to identify and describe coaches from their sport experiences who they believed displayed ideal leadership in sport. Participants were also asked to reflect on the importance of gender to leadership in sport. Thus, both implicit and explicit meanings of gender were pursued in the participants' perceptions and narratives of leadership in sport.

This chapter was organized in three sections. First, gendered narratives, images, and ideologies associated with coach leadership are presented. More specifically paternal and authoritative narratives associated with male coaches were examined, scrutinized, and contrasted to the egalitarian and emotive narratives often associated with female coaches. Second, two specifically gendered attributes associated with coach leadership—sport capital and empathy were outlined and discussed. Finally, gendered narratives and ideologies associated with peer leadership were presented.

Gendered Narratives, Images and Ideologies of Coach Leadership

Gendered constructions emerged from participants' depictions of ideal coach leadership in the context of sport. While participants' descriptions of their sport experiences included male coaches who displayed ideal leadership with paternalistic and

authoritative narratives and ideologies, female coaches who displayed ideal leadership were often described with egalitarian and emotive narratives and ideologies. These gendered ideals resulted in the explicitly gendered images of "father figure" leadership and "like a friend" leadership. Furthermore, participants' perceptions included oppositional positioning and unequal valuing of male and female ideologies associated with leadership. Ely and Meyerson (2000) identified the narratives portraying men and women as fixed and stereotyped opposites as one of three gendered themes, which they referred to as male identity—female identity dichotomy. The oppositional positioning of men and women, or masculine and feminine often operates in concealed manners to "evoke narrow, idealized images of men and women as monolithic categories distinguished by a series of mutually exclusive stereotyped traits" that more often reward masculinities and maleness (p. 126). Images and narratives of gender differences permeate social practices including leadership, and it is vital to recognize, critique, and expose the ways in which gendered differences are constructed in order to disrupt and undermine their effect.

Paternalism, Authority and the Male Coach: "He was like a Father Figure"

  Paternalism. Participants' perceptions of leadership in male coaches centered on paternalistic and authoritarian narratives and associated gendered ideals. Paternalism is an ideology featuring protective characteristics, seemingly open discussions and communication, and taking responsibility for and acting in the best interest of subordinates (Collinson & Hearn, 2001). Authoritarianism is the practice of exercising domination and control over subordinates (Collinson & Hearn, 2001). In this study, the

female athlete participants represent the subordinates. Aspects of both paternalism and authority are captured in Stephanie's description of her assistant male coach:

He's like a father figure … he's coached for so many years and he just knows a lot of stuff … It's just really easy to talk to him, and if he tells you to do something, you really just want to do it because he said so. I guess I just really respect him as a coach … Most of the coaches I've had that are male have kind of been father figures to me—really caring and protective of me on the court and off the court … I know they always have my back. (Stephanie)

The protective and caring nature of leadership was an important delineation and is associated with paternalism. "He had our backs" was a phrase used by participants, which symbolized feeling protected and defended by the father figure. In addition to Stephanie's comment above, Beth stated:

He'd always take care of us … he'd always have our backs. So that in terms of leadership, you could trust him and he'd always take care of you first before any outside source.

The perception that their male coaches would "take care" of the participants indicated the male coaches responsibility for the athletes and included paternalistic overtones, which extended beyond the sport setting as reflected in both Stephanie and Beth's comments. Furthermore, Beth indicated that the protective nature was instrumental in developing trust. Finally, the protective and caring nature of paternalistic leadership was unconditional. For example, Jen commented, "You knew [he'd] do anything for you, and [he'd] always have your best interest in mind."

Leadership associated with male coaches and "father figures" were explicitly underscored with paternalistic narratives (e.g., feeling taken care of and protected). Paternalistic practices are often centered on interpersonal relationships and connection with subordinates (Knoppers & Antonissen, 2008). A focus on interpersonal relationship and developing connection with athletes was a feature of participants' perceptions of leadership in some of their male coaches. For example, Carley characterized this as the ability of her male coach to relate to female athletes, when she stated, "He really knew how to relate to us … and he was just easy to talk to."

Care and relational practices associated with paternalism point to a feminization of leadership practices, which on the surface would allow more women to engage in similar leadership work (Knoppers & Anthonissen, 2008). However, in a sport management setting, Knoppers and Antonissen (2008) found that when male managers add these skills to their leadership repertoires, not only are women no longer needed to contribute these skills, but also men are perceived as heroic and rewarded due to their exceptional people skills and ability to relate to subordinates. To help explain this phenomenon, Collinson and Hearn (1996) contended that paternalistic narratives also feature implicit authoritarian overtones. For example, participants' narratives of feeling protected and taken care of by a father figure leader implicitly indicated a relinquishing of control and suggest what Collinson and Hearn refer to as paterno-authoritative narratives associated with leadership in the context of sport. This finding extends Knoppers and Anthonissen (2005, 2008) examinations of gendered narratives in sport

management settings, and provides some insight into paternalistic narratives in the context of women's intercollegiate athletic teams.

Authoritarianism. In a sport setting, authoritarianism is often described as "My way or the highway" (Knoppers & Antonissen, 2005, p. 128) and is characterized by control. For example, Sarah stated, "He's become more of a father figure to me … his coaching style—he was in charge. It was dictatorship, definitely". In addition, Stephanie's previous comment, "If he tells you to do something, you really just want to do it because he said so" illustrated the concept of authoritarianism very well while also highlighting relevant dimensions including unquestioned obedience (i.e., "because he said so") and respect for the male coaches authority. Carley also stated, "You really respected what he was saying, and he just knew what he was talking about".

The ability to command respect is widely associated with authoritarian leadership practices, particularly those associated with coaching (Drago et al., 2005; Frey, 2006; Hanold, 2011). Authoritative communication was perceived to be an important element in commanding respect for male coaches in this study. For example,

> He demanded respect, and I just kind of like that … he knew what he was talking about and he just demanded respect, and you gave it to him because you had no reason not to, so I think that was more his style. (Erin)

Mindy stated, "As far as on the court, when a man is yelling at you, for some reason, you tend to respect [him] more". These were not isolated perceptions as many participants echoed Erin and Mindy's comments:

I think there is also very much a communication thing too. For whatever reason, I've always responded better to male coaches and I don't know why. It could be the male [coaches] I've had versus the female [coaches], but I think there's a communication part of it too. And that's not to say that females aren't capable—I mean I've had plenty of female coaches who have yelled like the males, gotten on us like the males, but a lot of them are just softer, sort of—or don't yell, or they carry themselves differently. (Kay)

Naturally, I'm not saying females are weak or anything, but it's just like when a man is saying something to you it's definitely more of an authoritative tone than a female, most of the time. (Stephanie)

While not all female athletes thought this way, many perceived their teammates did, as Nicole stated, "I think some [female athletes] are more willing to take criticism from a male, or have a little bit more respect for male coaches."

Authoritarianism is based on gendered ideologies and stereotypes because the behaviors associated with it are often believed to be more appropriate and accepted for men to display (Collinson & Hearn, 2001). Many participants in this research echoed this gendered ideology, the natural links between authoritarianism and male coaches, and gender differences in male and female leadership in sport. Some were more implicit, like Kay and Stephanie's comments above, while others expressed more explicit gendered expectations of their male coaches and authority. For example:

I feel like male coaches are more authoritative. They have a system that you have to buy into and they don't really take crap all that well and so I think—and

women are more lenient … so I just think—I like fairness. I like accountability,

and male coaches are more likely to give you that. (Kelly)

While both men and women can exhibit authoritative behaviors such as communication,

participants' perceptions indicated that male and female leaders were evaluated

differently on authoritarian leadership. This adds to our understanding of what Ely and

Meyerson (2000) referred to as the male—female dichotomy. More specifically in the

context of women's intercollegiate sport, female athletes hold gendered perceptions and

expectations of male and female leadership, and many often view these differences as

natural. That is, male coaches are more authoritarian, while female coaches are "softer"

compared to their male peers, and as we know, "softer" is rarely a flattering trait to

possess in sport.

It is also important to note that perceptions of naturalized gender differences and

expectations that male leaders in sport will be more authoritative play against female

coaches who display those very same authoritative behaviors. For example, Jill reflected

on her female authoritarian head coach and stated, "She was just a hard-ass and yelled a

lot … I think she's different than a lot of women." Women in sport, like Jill's head coach,

when they display traditionally masculine leadership ideals are often assessed as what

Hovden (2010) referred to as 'deviant females' when their behaviors do not conform to

traditionally feminine qualities. While we know the context of sport is replete with deeply

embedded masculine domination and authoritarian ways of leadership (Drago et al.,

2005; Knoppers & Antonissen, 2005, 2008; Rhode & Walker, 2008) and in many cases,

poor leaders, the notion of deviant authoritarian female coaches in the context of

intercollegiate athletics also appears as an unquestioned stereotype. Thus this finding

extends Hovden's work, which was in a sport management setting. The notion that an

authoritarian female coach may be assessed as deviant in the context of women's college

sport provides some insight into the declining number of women in head coaching roles

within intercollegiate sport (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012; LaVoi, 2013, 2014). This may

also provide some insight into the challenges women coaches face in a context dominated

by men and certain forms of masculinities. The reliance on a narrow set of leadership

criteria and a narrow list of individuals who fit those criteria not only suppresses the

broader range of leadership approaches, but will also likely lead to dissatisfaction and

withdrawal of those who do not fit the espoused leadership mold.

Experiences with fathers as coaches. Participants' past experiences shaped their

perceptions related to paternalism, authority, and the male coach. Paternalistic leadership

and father figure images and ideologies were often shaped by experiences with male

coaches, particularly male coaches who were also fathers. More specifically, participants

believed father figures' personal experiences as fathers contributed to their ability to

empathize with them. Empathy was defined in *Chapter Four* as the ability to understand

and relate to athletes, and is further analyzed through a gendered lens in the next section.

For example, one participant indicated:

> He really knew how to relate to us, and I think when coaches have kids, and they
>
> know, especially having girls [i.e., daughters] for a guy [coach] … and he was just
>
> easy to talk to. (Carley)

Similarly, Katie stated, "I don't know if it was because he had two daughters, and he knew how to work with girls, but his chemistry with girls on the team was amazing". Finally, Amy indicated that because her coach was a father, he naturally gravitated to the "fatherly role" related to leadership: "[assistant coach] has three girls and so I think he kind of takes that fatherly role as kind of [his] leadership role."

It is also important to discuss participants' experiences with male coaches who were fathers in youth sports and how those experiences influence their perception of the idealized father figure leadership. For Lindsey, her own father served as her coach growing up:

My dad coached me for—all until I went to high school. I joined the high school team in eighth grade, and so my dad coached me all the way up and taught me how to play … every way I view [leadership] or lead or any of that kind of stems from my dad's view in a way.

Having a coach who was a teammate's father also held some explanatory power for the father figure leader coach, and in developing respect for him:

He [teammate's dad] was our coach all the way through summer ball and high school because he was [teammate's] dad … she's my best friend, so I knew—I could see how much she loved and respected him. (Beth)

Participants' accounts and narratives of "father figure" leadership indicated that experiences as fathers, particularly with daughters of their own, were valued because those experiences aided some male leaders in their ability to understand and relate to girls. It is also important to recognize that while many participants valued men's

experiences as fathers, they rarely mentioned female coaches' experiences as mothers. Tierney (1996) stated that an important consideration to the study of leadership in a specific socio-historic context is "how leadership is defined, who gets involved, and by definition, who gets left out" (p. 376). Thus by omission, experiences of women and more specifically, experiences of mothers were not valued in relation to sport leadership by the participants in this research. In fact, the one female athlete who used the term "mom", used it in a negative and derogatory manner when she said, "Let your kids [i.e., athletes] be kids and let them—you can't try to be their mom at the same time" (Andrea). Andrea's comment stands in stark contrast to the narratives around the father figure leaders who were commended for their ability to display paternalistic traits and goes some length in demonstrating the extent of the gendered biases and stereotypes that women and coaches who are mothers face in the sport context.

The most obvious explanation for the valuation of father figures and lack of mother figures in leadership images is simply the lack of female coaches, and more on point—lack of women coaches who are mothers. It is estimated that women hold less than 20 percent of coaching positions at the youth and high school level (LaVoi, 2008; LaVoi & Kamphoff, 2013; Messner, 2009) and just over 40 percent of head coaching positions in women's intercollegiate athletics (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012). While it is unclear what percentage of these coaches are mothers, it is believed to be proportionally low. Another common explanation for the lack of mothers in coaching and sport leadership roles is that the demands of coaching interfere with family and domestic roles (Bruening & Dixon, 2007, 2008; Dixon & Bruening, 2007; Drago et al., 2005; Rhode &

Walker, 2007). The work/family conflict is a common factor cited when women leave the coaching profession (Kamphoff, 2010). Simply put, few women who are mothers remain in coaching. Instead, women who do stay in the coaching profession remain single, postpone motherhood, or in some cases, opt out of motherhood all together (Kamphoff, 2010).

Drago et al. (2005) found that the female college coaches in their study believed men had greater latitude in tending to family demands compared to their female peers, and they referred to this phenomenon as the "daddy privilege" (p. 18). The findings in this study extend Drago et al.'s "daddy privilege" to perceptions of leadership in male coaches. However, rather than receiving certain privileges because of their status' as fathers, male coaches in my research were privileged based on their experiences as fathers–especially as fathers of daughters. The "privileged father" status would better suit the findings in this research. The culture and structure of sport and demands of coaching, particularly in Division I athletics, are more accommodating to the experiences of men, which is not a novel concept (Bruening & Dixon, 2007, 2008; Dixon & Bruening, 2007; Kamphoff, 2010; Rhode & Walker, 2007; Wilson, 2007). However, the valuation and privileging of male coaches' experiences as fathers and how those experiences relate to positive perceptions of leadership in coaching is gendered and more distinct. This finding becomes even more interesting against the contextual backdrop of college sport that does little to promote the presence of mothers in the ranks of college athletics (Bruening & Dixon, 2007, 2008; Dixon & Bruening, 2007).

For many other participants, like Stephanie it was the predominance of male coaches in her past experiences that were instrumental to shaping her beliefs about authoritarian leadership and the natural connections between authoritarian leadership and male coaches:

> I've had a lot of male coaches all through my life, so I've just kind of adapted to that style of leadership. I've never had a female [head] coach until I came here and it's definitely different. You know, guys are just kind of like, whatever, they don't care about the extra factors of your life. (Stephanie)

Drago et al. (2005) found that female athletes preferred male coaches due to the belief that they were less involved in the personal lives of athletes compared to their female coaching peers. Stephanie's comments also suggests that female coaches interfere or intrude in their players lives, and extends Drago and colleagues' findings to negative leadership perceptions.

Egalitarianism, Emotion and the Female Coach: "She was like a Friend"

Egalitarianism. Participants who described the father figure leader were also asked if they thought of any of their female coaches in similar ways (i.e., as a mother figure). Again, the results overwhelmingly indicated participants rarely thought of their female coaches as mother figures. Instead, participants believed the female coaches who displayed ideal leadership were most often younger female assistants who were frequently described as and compared to being "like a friend".

> We connected on a level where I could just be so comfortable with her and I would say she's maybe not as much a mother figure, but more of a friend. (Jen)

The popular understanding of the term friend implies an interpersonal relationship with a peer, which is consistent with how participants utilized the concept to describe friend leadership. Egalitarianism indicates more mutual relationships and interactions, less hierarchical leadership practices (Fletcher, 2004), compared to the paterno-authoritarian practices of the father figure leader. Jen's 'level of connection' comment indicated egalitarian and equal relations between her and her coach.

A key dimension associated with egalitarian leadership narratives was the perceived younger age of the female coaches fulfilling friend leadership roles. Many participants, for example, perceived the younger age of was related to their leadership practices and the belief that they displayed ideal leadership:

> She used to play and she's a four-time [elite athlete]—a phenomenal player …
> she's young, she's like 27, so she is like that perfect age where she's older than us
> … and we aspire to be like her, we look up to her. (Angie)

> She's kind of younger, and I think she tries to be a leader by connecting with our
> team and to kind of be that person like, 'Hey, I was—just a couple of years ago, I
> was in your shoes'. (Amy)

> [She] is young and you know, she's kind of, she's really cool about things and
> she's been through the program here before as a player so she knows how it is, so
> it's kind of like an older sister kind of thing. (Stephanie)

Angie, Amy, and Stephanie all perceived that their female assistant coaches were able to "connect with" them on an equal level because they were younger compared to their other coaches and because they had previous playing experience. Past playing experience

was defined in *Chapter Four* as sport capital. Given that sport capital was key to friend leadership, female coaches who possessed sport capital were perceived as sport role models to participants and their teammates, as Angie indicated. Amy and Stephanie believed that because their respective female assistant coaches possessed sport capital, they could therefore understand female athletes. The ability to understand and relate to athletes was previously defined as empathy. Thus, friend leadership led to what Fletcher (1999) called empathetic competence based on female assistant coaches past experiences as a female athletes. For example, because a female friend leader was previously "in [our] shoes" (i.e., Amy), she relates to the team, and she understands or "knows how it is" (i.e., Stephanie). Both empathy and sport capital, properties of leadership identified and introduced in *Chapter Four* are further analyzed via a gendered perspective in the next section.

Furthermore, the perceived youth of these female assistant coaches made them closer in age to the participants, and highlighted a peer relationship and associated egalitarian narratives. It is also important to note the gender implications in Stephanie's comparison of friend leadership to "like an older sister", especially when contrasted to the power and authority of the father figure leader inherent in the familial hierarchy. In other words, paterno-authoritative ideology affords more power and authority to the father figure versus a leader thought of as an older sister or friend, and highlights one way that gendered leadership ideology reproduces the status quo and subsequent gender inequalities.

Similar to being younger in age, another key dimension of friend leadership and the associated egalitarian leadership practices, was that the coaches who fulfilled the 'friend leadership' roles were nearly exclusively female assistant coaches. For example, Erin stated, "As the assistant coach she can be more of a friend, I would tell her more than I would tell the head coach." Another participant shared Erin's view:

> I think it's assistant coaches, a little more need to be—there needs to be some gap between the coaches and the team that someone needs to fill to have that personal relationship and have that, where you can confide in the coaches, because if everyone's intimidated by all the coaches, no one's going to communicate and it's just going to be a mess. (Angie)

For Erin and Angie, the assistant coach title was instrumental to their ability to confide in—an important feature of egalitarian relationships and interactions—their respective assistant coaches. This also highlights the unique context of college sport where most women's teams have at least one female assistant coach on staff (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012).

Another key dimension was a more casual relationship with a coach, which was indicative of a more egalitarian relationship or friendship. For example,

> I think it helps that she's our only female coach. I guess she can be in the locker room with us when we're getting ready, or after practice getting dressed, where obviously, the male coaches can't be in there, so it's more—she just hangs out with us more and so, we look at her as the leadership and the coach position. [We] respect her, but at the same time, she's like a friend. (Julie)

Julie's comment, "she just hangs out with us" highlights the more casual relationship between her and her teammates and their female assistant coach. It is also important to note that this particular assistant coach was the only female on staff, and Julie perceived that to be critical to her ability to be "like a friend".

While egalitarian narratives of youth, assistant coaches, and casual interpersonal relationships indicate equal, non-hierarchical, and mutual relationships (Fletcher, 2004) between participants and friend leaders, there is also an underlying gendered theme of emotional labor. Pierce (1995) identified emotional labor as providing emotional support and presenting yourself as open or friendly to others. It is also very important to note that participants explicitly believed it was the female assistant coach's role to fulfill the personal relationship (e.g., Erin, Angie) by providing emotional labor.

The fact that several participants perceived "being a friend" an aspect of leadership specifically with female assistant coaches is problematic from a gender perspective because the ideology justifying the relationship may result in gendered assistant coaching roles and responsibilities. Acosta and Carpenter (2012) report that over 57 percent of assistant coaches of women's intercollegiate athletic teams are female, while only 46.7 percent of women's team had a female head coach. Female assistant coaches represent the largest pool of potential head coaches, and therefore, hold the most promise to improving the gender disparity in coaching. However, when female assistant coaches are called upon to nurture personal relationships, provide emotional labor, and to be "friends" to their female athletes, this may pose a problem for them as they hone their own leadership skills and move into head coaching positions. This is an important

contribution to the literature around the dearth of women in sport leadership and coaching roles (e.g., Acosta & Carpenter, 2012; Drago et al., 2005; Kamphoff, 2012; Rhode & Walker, 2008). More specifically, perhaps there is a lack of congruency between the leadership skills that women develop as assistant coaches and the leadership skills that are expected of them as they move into head coaching roles. The lack of congruence between the leadership skills associated with head and assistant coaches could potentially represent another explanation for women's early exits from the coaching profession.

Male head coaches also play a role in the gendered roles and responsibilities of female assistant coaches in women's intercollegiate athletics. For example, Shelly recalled a statement by a male coach who said, "I don't really care about your personal lives. If you have anything to talk about, you can talk to my [female] assistants". While assigning female assistant coaches' responsibilities associated with emotional labor and personal relationships may be a common practice, it may do more to reproduce dominant gendered ideologies and expectations of men and women in sport leadership roles. This concept is further highlighted in the emotionality of female leaders section of this chapter.

Participants' narratives of coach leadership indicated that female assistant coaches were more often perceived to display ideal leadership compared to female head coaches. These perceptions resulted in the image of a younger female leader who was like a friend and whose experiences as female athletes (i.e., sport capital) were valued due in part to the perception that they could empathize with and understand female athletes. Using the

image of the friend leader, by definition, female head coaches are again omitted from sport leadership, and few participants identified head female coaches as ideal leaders.

The ability of a leader to be a friend and to garner respect seemed to be a luxury afforded to the female assistant coaches. For example, Sarah perceived consistency related to friendship was important for her female head coach, "She's consistent—I think consistency is huge. You can't have someone come in one day and be your best friend, the next day, scream and yell at you. It doesn't work that way". Similarly, Jess reflected on her female head coach:

> She's not afraid to say what she really thinks, and she doesn't try to be everyone's best friend, which if you're going to truly be an effective leader—and this goes with accountability, you can't be everyone's best friend. (Jess)

Sarah and Jess indicated that perceptions of female head coaches are incompatible with friend leadership. Nicole's previous experience also illuminated the lack of congruency between female head coaches and friend leadership in sport:

> She [head coach] wanted to be best friends with people, and that wasn't the same thing. I mean, I liked her and she was very nice and fun, but she didn't hold the standard … and was just very lazy or lackadaisical about some things and that bothered me. It was hard. I was captain of the team, and it was hard for me to set standards for my team when she [coach] didn't really care about it. (Nicole)

Drago et al. (2005) found that trust and closeness between a female coach and her athletes came at a price because closeness interfered with communication in their sport and often resulted in athlete resentment or disrespect toward the female coach. The

present study supports Drago et al.'s findings as no participants perceived or identified their head female coaches as displaying friend leadership, which is not problematic because the role of the head coach clearly does not include being a friend. Instead, female assistant coaches are expected to fulfill gendered roles as friends, athlete role models, and to provide emotional support to their female athletes. From my perspective, it is more problematic that so few participants viewed their head coaches as displaying ideal leadership in sport.

Emotionality. Participants' perceptions of leadership in female coaches included narratives of emotionality and associated gendered ideals. Gender and emotion are distinctly connected within social groups as gender differences are grounded in beliefs about the emotion of each gender, "particularly the way in which emotionality marks female/feminine as different from male/masculine" (Shields et al., 2006, p. 63). Shields et al. (2006) also contended that gendered stereotypes for women related to emotion may be considered both good (e.g., warm; nurturing) and bad (e.g., "too emotional"). Participants' narratives around the leadership of female coaches indicated that participants often perceived female coaches to be "more emotional", and just as Shields and her colleagues suggested, this was expressed in different ways.

Participants expressed the notion of emotionality in female leadership as a "more nurturing" role, which was interpreted as neither good, nor bad—just different. Perceptions of female coaches, femininities, and associated emotions were defined by their oppositional positioning to male coaches, masculinities, and the corresponding lack of emotion or ability to control emotion. For example, Jen perceived that "women have

that more nurturing leadership role, and men are like—it's more of hard leadership role, [and] a woman is more beyond the sport." Some participants believed women were just more naturally inclined to the emotional and nurturing aspects of leadership compared to the dichotomized physical dimension of leadership in sport that male coaches more naturally ascribed to:

> Our [female] coach is more emotionally attached to us, while the boys are more physically—the actual coach-coach, like teaching us [the sport], and the woman is more like the leadership part of it … anything along that more emotional side of it and the boys are more the physical side of it. I mean, it doesn't always have to be that way, but in my past, that's how it's been … [she] is just more the overall team and how we function … chemistry wise. (Kelly)

Here again, gender differences in emotion and coach leadership are naturalized and believed to be inevitable, indicating the presence of gendered narratives and ideology in the context of sport. Ely and Meyerson's (2000) three dichotomized gendered themes included the individualism—collectivism dichotomy. According to Ely and Meyerson, narratives and images portraying heroic individualism and competence, often associated with men and masculinities, are recognized and rewarded to a greater extent than narratives and images portraying relational, collaborative, and collectivism, often associated with women and femininities. Kelly, in her comment, connected emotion and physicality to the individual—collective dichotomy. Her female coach was emotionally attached to the players and her leadership was collective (i.e., "the overall team and how we function"), while the male coaches were more physical and their leadership

represented the individual action of coaching the sport (i.e., "the actual coach"). Kelly's comment was also particularly interesting because the female coach she reflected on was her head coach. However, she perceived the male assistant coaches (i.e., "the boys") to be "the actual coach-coach". Thus the physical and individual aspects of leadership were valued over the emotional and collective aspects.

The presence of gendered roles and stereotypes in coach leadership contributes to the literature in two ways. The First, I see the connection between emotion and collectivism in the perception of women's leadership coupled with the connection between physical and individual expression of men's leadership as an extension of Ely and Meyerson's (2000) gendered themes. In addition, the context of sport was key in revealing these connections, as both are important—the physical dimension of sport has obvious implications for performance and success, while team cohesion (collectivism) is relevant to the overall functioning of the team. While other contexts also boast gendered differences related to physical and emotional aspects of jobs (i.e., Britton, 2003), the sport context is decidedly physical where success and winning are the goals dependent upon a superior physical performance.

Second, the dominant gender order was not only reproduced in the emotion/collective—physical/individual dichotomy, but perhaps more importantly, a woman leader's positional authority over her male subordinates was effectively reduced in the emotion/collective—physical/individual dichotomy. The head female coach was emotionally attached to the team, while the male assistant coaches were the "actual coach-coach". Women often face a "double bind" (Bruening & Dixon, 2008; Eagly,

2007; Fletcher, 2004) when it comes to leadership and associated gendered stereotypes because they are undervalued when they express traditionally feminine traits (e.g., nurturing, too emotional, or soft) and are judged negatively when they express traditionally masculine traits (e.g., authoritarian, rational, hard). The former portion of the double bind is played out in the devaluation of a female leader in sport based on her emotional/collective expression of leadership.

Other participants viewed emotionality and the leadership of female coaches more negatively for being "too emotional". Participants perceived that female coaches expression of emotion in leadership was natural compared to the perceived control of emotion in male coaches.

Female coaches have more of a temper when they lead … females just go up and down … they might be having a good day, bad day, and I think that it's the same for all girls. And then men—they're just more level headed, but they seem intimidating more. (Allie)

For Allie, gender differences in emotion and leadership were natural and characterized as "up and down" (e.g., moody) for female coaches versus "level headed" (i.e., rational) for male coaches. The distinction between having a "temper" (female coach) and being more intimidating (male coach) in expressing leadership in sport was also interesting. Oppositional positioning and unequal valuing of women and men was played out in the perception that women's emotions are always at the surface (i.e., "female coaches have more of a temper") compared to the calm and collected men coaches (i.e., level headed).

Still other participants characterized the emotional expression in leadership as being more sensitive (i.e., "take things personally") to feedback from each other. For example, Stephanie stated, "When you're working with a female [coach], there's so much estrogen, that you both kind of take things personally sometimes." Stephanie's "estrogen" comment also illustrates the perceived natural or biological connections between emotionality and the female coach. It is also important to note that some participants perceived emotionality in themselves and their teammates as well, as they believed that they "take things personally" when a female coach yells at them and displays traditionally authoritative communication styles:

> I've had male [coaches], and I would just let stuff roll off my back—I would listen for the message behind whatever he was saying … [but] with women, I just feel personally attacked if she screams at me … not anymore, but freshmen, sophomore year, it was definitely something I struggled with. (Jill)

First, while Jill struggled with authoritarian leadership and communication from a female coach early in her college career, as she got older, her perceptions changed. Fasting and Pfister (2000) presented similar findings in elite level international soccer players—more specifically, they reported that many elite level international soccer players negative attitudes towards female coaches changed with experience. Thus, the findings in my research contributed to expanding Fasting and Pfister's results to the context of college sport. This is important and indicates that more experience with female coaches can help to break down gendered stereotypes, negative attitudes, and biases

associated with authoritarian leadership and female coaches, just as Jill's experiences did for her.

Second, expressing emotional feelings and related values signals one's authenticity as male/female or masculine/feminine, and is a part of "doing gender" (Shields et al., 2006; West & Zimmerman, 1987) and fulfilling gender appropriate expectations (Acker, 1999). Individuals develop their own identities—including gendered identities—based on past experiences (Deaux, 1993). Participants' sport experiences and interactions between their male and female coaches was a method participants' used to enact their gender in the context of sport. For example, participants fulfilled what they may have believed to be gender appropriate expectations when they "took things personally" or felt "personally attacked" if a female coach yelled at them.

Gendered Coach Leadership Attributes

Sport Capital

Knowledge of the sport and sport playing experiences related to leadership in coaching were also gendered. In their previous comments, Carley and Stephanie illustrated that knowledge of sport was often perceived to be inherent and unquestioned in "father figure" leadership associated with male coaches. For example, Carley stated, "You really respected what he was saying, and he just knew what he was talking about". Similarly, Stephanie shared, "He's coached for so many years and he just knows a lot of stuff." In other words, female athletes' comments and perceptions such as "he just knows a lot about the sport" rarely included playing experience. In fact, Kelly was the only

participant who referred to a male coach and his playing experience as vitally important

to her perception of him as a leader when she stated:

> He used to be very good, he was on the [elite team], so he knows a lot about like
>
> team chemistry. He also knows a lot about coaching too … he's a leader in the
>
> coaching world. (Kelly)

More often, participants cited either coaching experience as sport capital in male coaches,

which Kelly also referred to in her above comment, or their inherent knowledge of the

sport—both of which seem unchallenged. Sport capital, thus, was linked to privileged

masculinity (Connell, 2005). Put another way, knowledge of the sport was inherent and

assumed in male coaches.

On the other hand, participants perceived playing experience as an important

element of "friend leadership" and associated female coaches. Again, participants'

previous comments illustrated the perception that sport capital—specifically playing

experience—was a vital leadership qualification of their female coaches. For example:

> She used to play and she's a four-time [elite athlete]—a phenomenal player.
>
> (Angie)
>
> She was a great player … she has that behind her backing her up. (Sarah)
>
> She obviously has a lot of talent and knowledge of the game. (Julie)

Thus, it appears that participants' perceptions of sport capital associated with leadership

in coaching were evaluated differentially in male and female coaches. While female

athletes believed that playing experience was an important aspect of leadership for their

female coaches, playing experience was virtually a non-issue to leadership for their male coaches.

The perception that playing experience for male coaches is not important in the context of women's intercollegiate sport teams revealed perhaps a new type of privileged masculinity specific to women's college sport. For example, sport playing experience is important for men coaching men's intercollegiate athletic teams (Cunningham & Sagas, 2006); however, in my research, men who did not possess college playing experience were still privileged in coaching positions of women's intercollegiate teams. In other words, men who do not meet standards of masculinity in men's college sport teams are welcomed and achieve masculinity in women's college sport teams. This distinction is important for two reasons. First, Britton (2003) found that in female dominated jobs and organizations, men are often welcomed and lauded for their abilities. The context here is important because while sport and the sport culture are undeniably male dominated, the athletes and participants in women's intercollegiate sport are exclusively women. Therefore extending Britton's findings, the participants (i.e., athletes) often welcomed male coaches in the context of women's college sport and viewed them as valuable regarding sport leadership.

Second, this distinction importantly highlights the fluidity of gender (Ashcraft, 2009) by revealing multiple ways gender and masculinities are played out in sport. Here masculinity in sport was not linked to athletic talent or status as an athlete. However, masculinity was still linked to expertise in sport leadership, which is more problematic. The problem with this finding was that even perceived lesser masculinities (i.e., no

playing experience) in sport were still perceived as privileged or overvalued in a sport

leadership context in women's college sport. That is, male coaches who did not have

intercollegiate playing experiences were still often perceived to be knowledgeable about

the sport and capable, or perhaps, more capable sport leaders, while female coaches

needed playing experience to "back them up". So, while female college athletes may

represent a large pool of potential leaders and coaches in women's sport because they

possess college playing experience, the pool of potential male coaches who do not

possess playing experience is still much larger. While the larger pool of male coaches do

not posses playing experience, they do importantly possess masculinity, which in this

case equates to expertise (Fielding-Lloyd & Mean, 2008).

Empathy

Empathy is defined by the ability to relate to and understand female athletes.

Factors that contributed to the perception of displaying empathy included: being a father

(as highlighted in the *Father Figure* section above), playing experience, and general

experiences related to being a woman. The playing experiences of the female coaches

overall, including the friend leader or older sister were a valued aspect of leadership to

the participants in this research, because those sport experiences facilitated empathy and

understanding. It was perceived that because female coaches played the sport, they would

automatically understand and relate to the current experiences of female athletes. The

female coaches who exemplified the empathy requirement were often cited as ideal

leaders or referred to in other positive manners. For example, these participants shared:

> She actually played, so I think she knows, she understands how were feeling more
> … she's very understanding of how our bodies feel or why a drill's not working.
> (Allie)

> She's been through the program here before as a player, so she knows how it is.
> (Stephanie)

> She's been there, done that, so she knows what happens on a team. (Kelly)

Participants also noted that they expected their female coaches to understand them simply based on their identities as women. However, if female coaches did not exemplify empathy and understanding, female athletes would often scrutinize their leadership skills. For example, this participant stated:

> For some reason, girls are going to take it [getting yelled at] more personally from
> a female coach—I see that tendency … maybe it's because you feel like a female
> coach understands how women are, so you think that the message they're trying
> to get across should be delivered differently, [because] they understand how
> you're probably going to take it. (Mindy)

Mindy went on to explain that empathy was not perceived to be important for male coaches simply based on their experiences as men:

> I just feel like, maybe a male coach—I guess you just don't think a male coach
> knows [how you feel], so they're just doing whatever just to yell at you, and
> you're just … you don't care. (Mindy)

Carley's comment reiterated the perceived differences between male and female coaches related to empathy:

Guys tend to be more, well from my past experiences, they either can relate well

to you or not so well [laughs] when usually, women kind of really—they relate

more to you because they kind of understand what's going on, and they've

obviously been through a lot of the [same] experiences being a woman, whereas

guys, depending on their situation, may not understand as well. (Carley)

Interestingly, some participants perceived that male coaches lack of understanding of

their experiences as female athletes was actually an important feature to their leadership.

I think it's good that we have both male and female coaches … our male coaches

are really good at focusing on the game and on practice, and all that other girly

gossipy crap, they think all of that doesn't matter. It's not a big deal. Whereas us,

as a team and even [our assistant female coach], might think it does matter and it

plays a role into how we play and work together, but then it's good to have

coaches who don't get wrapped up in all that stuff, which is usually male coaches

who don't understand all that, so it's good that they just kind of throw that to the

side. (Julie)

The overall perception of empathy in leadership was based on experiences as a

father, experiences as female athlete, and experiences as a woman. Empathy was also a

natural expectation for female leaders to perform, while the perception existed that male

leaders could be empathic, although, it was not expected of them to be so. This

distinction is important because female college athletes' perceptions and expectations for

empathy were differentially valued among their male and female coaches, which

highlights the gendered nature of empathy related to leadership in sport.

In our society, empathy and the associated relational skills are socially

constructed as feminine (Fletcher, 2004). Both men and women can display empathetic

qualities; however, they are often believed to be more natural for women to display.

Therefore, male coaches who were empathetic and could understand the female

athletes—often due to their experiences as fathers as noted previously in this chapter—

were valorized as leaders. Female coaches perceived to be ideal leaders were similarly

commended for their empathy and ability to understand the participants. However,

because empathy was believed to be an inherent expectation of all female coaches, those

female coaches who did not fulfill the empathy requirement were perceived less

favorably as leaders. In contrast, male coaches who were not empathetic were often given

a free pass simply because, "they just don't know". Finally, while female athletes often

perceive empathy in inherently gendered terms (i.e., women should understand other

women, men do not understand women), their accounts of the father figure leaders helps

to challenge stereotyped notions and binary gender beliefs. Instead, father figure leaders

were empathetic and could understand female athletes—especially if father figure leaders

had daughters of their own.

Gendered Peer Leadership Constructions

Participants' perceptions and constructions of peer leadership in the context of

intercollegiate teams also included gendered narratives and ideologies. As was the case

with narratives about female coaches, some participants' beliefs and constructions about

peer leadership contained stereotypical notions of emotionality and femininity. The

construction of emotionality and femininity associated with peer leadership led to the

accepted and gendered assumption that "leading a team of women is different".

Emotionality and difference are inherently connected and presented and discussed

concurrently. Finally it is important to highlight how some participants demonstrated

resistance to gendered peer leadership constructions.

Emotionality Equals Difference in Leadership

Emotionality associated with peer leadership in the context of women's

intercollegiate teams was expressed most often as being too sensitive (i.e., take things

personal) or as "drama". For example, Jill stated, "Women, and I mean me too, but

women in general just take everything so personally". Kelly reiterated, "I feel females are

just a lot more emotional and stuff [and] will take things the wrong way."

The perceived emotionality of female athletes led to the perception that it was

different to lead a group of women compared to leading a group of men. Sarah's

perspective is worth sharing at length:

> I think it's a heck of a lot harder leading girls than it is guys [laughs]. I honestly
>
> do. I find I can say whatever I want to a guy … but it's different with girls. It's
>
> definitely harder because there's that emotional level, too. You've got to be
>
> conscious of the feelings … it's just harder, I think. There are more obstacles.
>
> And I've talked about this with our assistant coach … he and I have spent some
>
> time talking about leadership as well and he made a comment once, he said: 'I
>
> don't envy you right now … because leading a team of women is way different
>
> than leading a team of guys'. It's just different—I don't know if it's a competitive

aspect—boys are different with competition … I don't know what's different. The biggest thing I can think of is you've just got to be conscious of the feelings part. Similarly, based on a conversation with her boyfriend about team leadership and gender differences, Allie stated:

> They [men] can be so much more mean, and then guys can just turn around and be best friends again. They don't take it personally, but girls would take it personally … I can remember an instance my freshman year. What someone said to me, and I still haven't forgotten it, and I'm still scared of her [laughs] because of what she said. It's just things like that that girls latch onto and don't let go, where guys can take it and leave it.

The gender difference theme (i.e., leading women is different) was common among the study participants. While examining whether there exists a difference in how to lead female athletes is beyond the scope of this research, how that very gender difference was constructed is more relevant.

One problem with the construction of gender difference in sport leadership among female athletes and their peers is that it was women's perceived emotionality that makes it different, and more specifically, more difficult compared to leading male athletes. Hovden (2010) found that images of female leadership were described as a gender difference and that femininity was framed as oppositional and subordinated to masculinity. In some cases, femininity represented a positive difference (e.g., care, empathy, collaboration), while in others female leaders were lacking the necessary leadership skills (e.g., ambition, competitiveness). Regardless, in both cases, leadership

images were measured against masculine standards that were viewed as gender neutral

(Hovden, 2010). In my research, femininity (e.g., emotionality) was framed as making

the negative difference in leadership constructions, and I thus extended Hovden's

findings to include the construction of female sport leadership in the context of women's

intercollegiate teams.

Hovden (2010) also concluded that "men posses the power to define in which

contexts and situations female gender should be conceptualized as a negative or as a

positive difference" (p. 201). Given that men hold the majority of head coaching

positions in women's intercollegiate athletic teams (Acosta & Carpenter, 2012), men may

also be very powerful in conceptualizing female leadership as a positive or negative

difference—evidenced in part within Sarah's above comment. Sarah shared that it was

her male coach who stated, "I don't envy you … leading a team of women is different

that leading a team of guys". Thus, in this research there was evidence to support

Hovden's previous findings that masculinity is seen as the norm, femininity is perceived

as the difference, and men often hold the power to define the gender difference in sport

leadership.

Within the broader context of management, organizational leadership and gender,

much attention and research is given to gender differences in the way women lead (e.g.,

Burke & Collins, 2001; Eagly, 2007; Elliot & Stead, 2008; Helgeson, 1995). Whether or

not a difference exists in how to lead women compared to how you lead men is not as

well represented in management and organizational leadership literature. Although,

perceived differences in how to lead and coach girls/women are more prevalent in sport

and coaching and have been the topic of many "self-help" coaching books (e.g., DiCiccio & Hacker, 2003; LaPrath, 2009). In a content analysis, LaVoi, Becker, and Maxwell (2007) reported that 'coaching girls' books constructed gender differences and ultimately sustained a gender binary by problematizing coaching girls and constructing girls as the "other". LaVoi et al.'s results coupled with similar results in my research demonstrate how the context of sport remains an important setting in reifying and normalizing gender differences, particularly, how girls/women are different and subordinate to boys/men in sport and thus require a different leadership style.

Resisting and Distancing

Finally, while female participants constructions of leadership included gendered narratives and ideologies some participants demonstrated resistance by distancing themselves from gendered leadership assumptions. For example:

> I don't usually like to get involved with the drama … this isn't what I would like to define as my best leadership quality in terms of the situation, but it's [team drama] something that I have had to deal with. (Jill)

While Jill distanced herself from the perceived "drama" present within her team, she admittedly still had to "deal with it" in her role as a team captain. She demonstrated further resistance when she claimed that dealing with drama was not "her best leadership quality". Britton (2003) found that female correctional officers in women's prisons also distanced themselves from emotional labor (e.g., "codling" or "nurturing" emotional prisoners), because such expressions of femininity are not rewarded equally in the workplace. In the context of sport, performing emotional labor (e.g., "dealing with

drama") was also not equally valued as a peer leadership behavior or ability compared to

communication or example leadership, and thus participants like Jill resisted these

expressions of femininity.

It was also noteworthy how Jill reflected on her family upbringing and how that

influenced her—specifically in terms of handling her emotions:

I was not allowed to cry growing up unless someone died or you were really,

really happy. Those were our two rules. So, I wasn't allowed—even if I got hurt

on the field—it was not allowed … That was our family thing, so I came from a

very mentally tough family, and it's kind of been engrained in me, so sometimes I

forget that younger women … they're more sensitive at times. (Jill)

Here again, Jill demonstrated resistance to gendered notions of emotionality in female

athletes because she came from a "mentally tough family" where demonstrating emotion,

specifically, crying, was not allowed.

Sarah also demonstrated resistance to gendered norms associated with

emotionality and femininity by distancing herself from them within practice and

competition settings:

When I'm in a practice setting, I operate a lot more like a guy. You say it, and I

take it in, and we move on. When I'm in a practice setting or a competition

setting, I take emotion completely out of it. (Sarah)

Although Sarah's resists gendered norms associated with sport leadership, it is again

emotionality and its association with femininity that defines the difference from the

masculine norm. Therefore, in some ways Sarah reified gendered assumptions associated

with sport leadership by indicating that she "operates a lot more like a guy … I take emotion completely out of it". Sarah would have been more successful in resisting gendered norms and demonstrating the complexity of gender with the omission of the "like a guy" comment. As such, her comment illustrated that women can express different forms of masculinities, and highlighted the complexity of gender; however, masculinity (i.e., "taking emotion completely out of it") was still the standard.

While certain relational, collective, and empowering (i.e., feminine) aspects of leadership are receiving more attention in the organizational and management literature (e.g., Eagly, 2007; Fletcher, 1999, 2004), much of the leadership literature continues to adopt masculinity as the norm (Elliot & Stead, 2008; Fine, 2009). Male ideology associated with leadership is particularly strong in organizational settings and occupations that remain male dominated (Burton et al., 2011; Irvine & Vermilya, 2010; Heilman, 2001) including sport organizations (Brown & Light, 2012; Hovden, 2000, 2010; Shaw & Hoeber, 2003). Irvine and Vermilya (2010) found that women in the masculinized context of veterinary medicine adopted strategies used previously by male tokens in female dominated jobs and occupations to maintain the status quo and masculine ethic associated with the profession. For example, women in Irvine and Vermilya's study used strategies such as distancing themselves from the feminine to justify their positions and set themselves apart from other women in the profession. It is perhaps not surprising then, that in the context of sport—a setting that is widely considered synonymous with masculinity and dominated by male leaders—that women in sport would frame masculinity as the standard related to leadership, and employ similar

strategies to distance themselves from femininity because it is not as highly rewarded in sport.

Chapter Summary

The broad purpose of this study was to explore female college athletes' constructions of leadership in the context of sport. In this chapter, I specifically examined gendered social processes associated with participants' leadership constructions and how they may support and reproduce gender-based inequality in sport leadership. Gendered leadership constructions were present in narratives, images, and attributes of coach leadership as well as in narratives and ideologies associated with peer leadership.

Participants' constructions of coach leadership included the presence of gendered narratives, images, ideologies, and leader attributes, which favored men and certain forms of masculinities. For example, participants' narratives of ideal coach leadership revealed two distinctly gendered images: the father figure and the friend. Perceptions and accounts of father figure leadership and male coaches included paterno-authoritative narratives, while perceptions and accounts of friend leadership and young female coaches included egalitarian and emotive narratives. Participants' constructions of coach leadership included masculine-feminine dichotomies (Ely & Meyerson, 2000), which are instrumental in producing and maintaining gender-based inequities. For example, the male identity—female identity dichotomy was present in the gendered narratives and constructions that portrayed women leaders as "emotional" compared to the "rational" level headed men coaches. The individualism—collectivism theme was also present as men and associated leadership were portrayed as heroic individuals, while women and

associated leadership was portrayed as collective and relational. Also relevant to these findings was the participants' experiences with male coaches who were fathers compared to the apparent lack of experience with female coaches who were mothers.

I also highlighted sport capital (i.e., past playing and coaching experiences) and empathy as two gendered attributes related to coach leadership. More specifically, sport capital and empathy were evaluated differently in male and female coaches. For example, past playing experience was an important leadership attribute for female coaches in part because it lent credibility to their coaching and leadership skills. Past playing experience also provided female coaches knowledge of the sport and the ability to understand female participants. In contrast, male coaches past coaching experience and inherent knowledge of the sport was sufficient to demonstrate their credibility and highlighted a mechanism through which expertise becomes linked with masculinity in coaching (Fielding-Lloyd & Mean, 2008). Empathy was also differentially valued as leadership attribute. Empathy, or the ability to understand the female participants was an expectation of female coaches, due in large part to their past experiences as female athletes and simply based on their experiences as women. Since this was an expected leadership attribute of female coaches, based on stereotyped notions of femininity, women coaches who did not display empathy were devalued for the inability to relate. On the contrary, male coaches were not expected to demonstrate empathy, and were thus not devalued when they did not display empathetic leadership.

Finally, participants' constructions also included the presence of gendered narratives, ideologies, and identities related to peer leadership. Participants constructed

gender differences in sport leadership based on girls and women's inherent emotionality. Here again, essentialist views of gender (e.g., all girls and women are emotional) in sport reproduce the gender binary and lead to gender-based stereotypes, biases, and expectations of men and women in sport leadership. While many participants shared this view and crafted their own identities around gendered stereotypes of emotion, some participants resisted gendered expectations and distanced themselves from notions of femininity (e.g., drama and emotion). While resistance is important to disrupting gendered social processes, in my research the distancing strategies used by female participants contributed to reproducing the status quo by establishing masculinity as the norm.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Summarizing Female College Athletes Perceptions of Leadership and Gender

in the Context of College Sport

The purpose of this dissertation was to explore female college athletes'

perceptions of leadership in the context of college sport, while also investigating if and to

what extent female athletes constructions of leadership were gendered. Despite the

dramatic increase in girls and women participating in sport, women are underrepresented

in sport leadership positions and continue to lose leadership opportunities in college sport

(Acosta & Carpenter, 2012; LaVoi, 2013, 2014). This is somewhat surprising considering

the popular belief that *sport builds leaders*. Scholars in sport have previously highlighted

and investigated barriers and constraints that women face in leadership positions in

college sport (e.g., Bruening & Dixon, 2007, 2008; Dixon & Bruening, 2007; Drago et

al., 2005; Kamphoff, 2010; Rhode & Walker, 2008), and their research has certainly been

beneficial in understanding the gender disparity in sport leadership. Considering that

much of the previous scholarship focused on women already holding sport leadership

positions in college sport, I wanted to take a different approach to the problem, and chose

to focus on female college athletes. I believed their perceptions of leadership are

important and that they could provide some insight as they represent a large pool of

potential female leaders in college sport; however to date, their perspectives have been

neglected. In order to pursue the purpose of this study, I used a qualitative research

design that was theoretically informed by social constructivism (Crotty, 1998; Wright et al., 2010) and gendered social processes (Acker, 1992, 1999; Ely & Meyerson, 2000).

Leadership Constructions: Core Categories and Leadership Themes

This study found that female college athletes' perceptions of leadership fall into two core categories: Peer Leadership and Coach Leadership. Participant accounts of peer and coach leadership were also embedded in the sport context and reflected unique contextual dimensions of college sport (e.g., practice and competition settings, the role of captains, team goals, expectations, and standards, the academic/athletic classification system). Within the two core categories, there were three themes that were useful in defining and distinguishing peer and coach leadership and relating them to the leadership and gender literature. First, perceptions of both peer and coach leadership were defined in terms of leader-focused behaviors and traits. Peer leadership included communication, serving as an example, and demonstrating some social competence, while coach leadership included individualized consideration, open communication, and specific leader attributes.

The second theme characterized the core categories in terms of leadership outcomes. The importance of peer leadership was based largely on the perception that it would positively influence team performance and success in reaching team goals, and was therefore decidedly task oriented. Coach leadership was perceived to be important because the leader-focused behaviors were instrumental in developing interpersonal relationships. Participants also believed that interpersonal relationships with coaches made them want to "play better" for their coaches, and was thus implicitly task oriented.

That is, interpersonal relationships led to improved individual performances and skills, which would influence overall team performance and success.

Finally, the third theme characterized the core categories in relation to the various styles and approaches of leadership. For this particular theme, I drew on the literature examining gender-specific leadership styles, which I recognize may be seen as an oversimplification (Hovden, 2010). However, following Hovden's lead, this approach can enable an understanding to the construction of gendered leadership images and narratives, and how gendered categories acquire meaning. Peer leadership included mostly traditional styles and approaches (e.g., autocratic, transactional, top down, heroic individualism), which are socially ascribed to men and understood as masculine. Thus peer leadership was framed by male values and norms. Feminine leadership styles and practices (e.g., relational, collaboration) were reflected in a sub-category of peer leadership: social leadership; although, social leadership was less prevalent and more often used to describe participants' individual leadership styles. Constructions of coach leadership were more complex and included both post-heroic (e.g., relational, transformational, egalitarian) and traditional (e.g., heroic individualism, agency) leadership styles and approaches. Coach leadership was therefore framed by both feminine and masculine values and norms.

Constructing Gendered Differences in Sport Leadership

I also presented and discussed three ways in which participants' constructions of leadership were gendered. First, I found that images, narratives, and ideologies associated with coach leadership were gendered. Leadership images consisted of male coaches who

were "father figures" and female coaches who were "like a friend". The leadership

narratives and ideologies associated with father figures centered on paternalism,

authoritarianism, and participants' past experiences with male coaches who were fathers.

The narratives and ideologies associated with "like a friend" leadership centered on

egalitarianism and emotionality. The images of father figure and like a friend leadership

helped to sustain the both the gender order and gender binary in sport by positioning

certain men and dominant forms of masculinities as opposite and more valuable

compared to some women and forms of femininities. Also important to these findings

was that the perceived gender differences were often naturalized or seeming to be

inevitable. For example, the perception existed that women coaches were simply more

emotional compared to the natural rationality displayed by men coaches.

Second, I found that two coach leadership attributes, sport capital and empathy,

were gendered. While sport capital and empathy were perceived to be important

attributes to coach leadership, both attributes were evaluated differently in men and

women coaches. This differential evaluation led to the privileging of men and certain

forms of masculinities in sport capital (e.g., inherent knowledge of the sport; past

coaching experiences). The empathy attribute led to stereotypical gendered expectations

for both men and women coaches, and yet provided more latitude to men coaches

regarding the expression of empathy.

Third, I found naturalized or essentialist views of gender difference in

constructions of peer leadership. Participants shared the perception that women in sport

were often "more emotional" and "would take things more personally" compared to their

male peers. This gender difference presented challenges in leadership for participants and their peers, and as such, some participants adjusted their leadership styles. Finally, some participants used resistance strategies to distance themselves from femininity; however, masculinity and associated values and norms were still framed as the standard for which to strive for in sport leadership.

Theoretical Contribution to the Literature

Gender Relations

The major theoretical contribution of my study is to the gender relations literature. Within the broader context of organizational gender relations, my study extended Acker's (1990, 1992, 1999) and Ely and Meyerson's (2000) gendered frameworks by examining and assessing leadership from the level of images, narratives, and ideologies. My research also contributed to Ely and Meyerson's gendered themes by providing nuanced details of how gendered dichotomies such as "male identity—female identity" and the "individualism—collectivism" dichotomies (p. 119) operate to create naturalized and unequal gender differences in constructions of sport leadership. The context specific focus of sport also answers gender scholars (e.g., Acker, 1992; Ashcraft, 2009; Britton & Logan, 2008; Poggio, 2006) call to highlight the complexity of gender across different organizational and institutional contexts, and contributed to the gender scholarship with a focus on various settings such as prisons (Britton, 2003), veterinary medicine (Irvine & Vermillya, 2008), factory workers (Meyerson & Kolb, 2000), and law firms (Pierce, 1998).

The gendered social process approach assisted in critically examining sport leadership and provided evidence to suggest that leadership is gendered in the context of college sport. Examining participants' construction of leadership via the gendered lens contributed to our understandings of gender relations in sport and to the gendered social process work of Hovden (2000), Kihl et al. (2013), Knoppers (2010), Knoppers and Antonissen (2005, 2008), Schull et al. (2013), Shaw (2001, 2006), and Shaw and Hoeber (2003) by including leadership as a gendered construction in the context of sport. More specifically I highlighted specific ways in which meanings of masculinity/male and femininity/female permeated notions of sport leadership and served to maintain the status quo privileging men and certain forms of masculinities. These findings provided greater insights into gender relations in college sport, and by identifying gendered leadership narrative and attributes, we can begin to dismantle them, leading to improved gender equality. The paterno-authoritative narratives and ideologies revealed in my analysis provided details to how certain forms of masculinities are valued compared to egalitarian-emotive narratives and ideologies, and contributed further to Knoppers and Antonissen's work examining paterno-authoritative narratives of men board members and administrators in sport organizations. The inclusion of female college athletes in the context of college sport also contributed to the work of Hovden (2010), Brown and Light (2012), and Pfister and Radtke (2009), which explored women's leadership experiences in national sport contexts (i.e., Norway, Australia, and Denmark, respectively).

A final gender relations contribution were the specific findings that helped to demonstrate the complexity and multiplicities of gender, and challenged binary thinking

about gender in sport leadership. In cautioning against a binary gender approach, Ashcraft (2009) argued that "relentless interrogation—along the lines of *which* women and *which* men?—is a promising start" (p. 321). In my research, I have exposed specific men (i.e., fathers, men lacking playing experience) and specific women (i.e., young assistant coaches, former college players) who were evaluated differently related to leadership attributes such as empathy and possessing sport capital. Also, important was the identification of specific women who were missing from the participants' leadership constructions—mothers or 'mother figures'. My research, therefore also contributed to the work of Bruening and Dixon (2007, 2008), Dixon and Bruening (2007), and Leberman and Palmer (2009).

Leadership Literature

A second theoretical contribution was within the broader context of the leadership literature. Many leadership scholars (e.g., Alevesson & Deetz, 2000; Bryman et al., 1996; Fletcher, 2004; Gergen, 2009; Gilstrap, 2007; Meindl, 1995; Sinclair, 2005) argued that in order to better understand leadership as a social process and the multiple subjective meanings of leadership, researches must include qualitative methods. To this end, my study contributed to the qualitative leadership literature by providing vivid details and nuanced description of leadership constructions. Here again, this led to a context-specific focus of leadership in sport and answered similar calls from scholars (Bryman et al., 1996; Ford et al., 2005; Osborn et al., 2002; Porter & McLaughlin, 2006) to keep a keen eye on how specific socio-historic contexts influence leadership constructions.

My research also contributed nuanced descriptions and thus greater understanding of leadership in sport, adding to the sport leadership literature. For example, quantitative researchers have identified and tested the importance of communication skills to sport leadership (e.g., Beam et al., 2004; Dupuis et al., 2006; Holmes et al., 2008; Loughead & Hardy, 2005; Loughead et al., 2006). In my study, I reported on communication as a sub-category of peer leadership, and the specific properties (e.g., accountability, motivation, liaison) and contextual dimensions (e.g., practice settings, pre-game talks, competitions, team meetings) further elaborated communication and why it is important to sport leadership.

My research also contributed to the sparse body of literature examining women's leadership experiences in a variety of socio-historic contexts. Focusing on female college athletes' perception and experiences of leadership in sport therefore answers Elliott and Stead's (2008) call for more "critical studies that illuminate women's leadership experiences and practices" that emerge from their social contexts (p. 166). Sport is a unique context for the exploration of female athletes' leadership experiences as dominant forms of masculinity remain persistent. The women in this study drew on both traditionally masculine (e.g., individualistic, task-oriented) and feminine (e.g., social, collective) leadership styles. However, this is perhaps less about masculinity/femininity and more about the context of team sport, where success is greatly driven by achievement of tasks and working as collective group in order to achieve team goals.

Empirical Contribution and Practical Implications

There were also several results that contributed to the empirical literature and had

practical implications. First, participants' perceptions of leadership seemed to be

influenced by the lack of female leaders and role models in sport. The prevalence of

father figures, male coaches, and young female assistant coaches stood in stark contrast

to the absence of female head coaches and mother figures identified by participants in

their perceptions and experiences of ideal coach leadership. Why are young female

assistant coaches valued for their leadership skills while female head coaches are not, and

similarly, why are father figures valued while mother figures are invisible? While the

lack of females in sport leadership positions is problematic, it is not novel. The practical

implication is that we need more women serving as role models in sport leadership

positions—this also is not a novel concept, but warrants repeating.

The delineation of coach leadership in terms of valued behaviors and attributes

was noteworthy. For example, behaviors that were associated with idealized coach

leadership included individualized consideration. Strongly favored by the participants

was a coach's ability to foster interpersonal relationships with his or her players. Ideal

coach leadership was also defined by what participants did not want: "to be just a stat" or

"a number on a jersey". Coaches and sport practitioners can benefit from the knowledge

and awareness of these and other leadership behaviors and beliefs valued by female

athletes. For example, incorporating such behaviors and skills into their own leadership

repertoire could improve their leadership effectiveness. Coaching development programs

should also focus on leadership skills as an aspect of coaching, and highlight the importance of "relationship building" as opposed to the commodification of athletes.

There were several aspects of peer leadership of empirical and practical worth. For example, participants' widely perceived the work of peer leadership to be positional as it was often affiliated with captains and or seniors. Many participants also shared the observation that their coaches outlined certain leadership expectations for captains and seniors. Along the same line, I found that emergent leadership seemed to be stifled based on the belief that leadership was positional. The finding that linked self-accountability to accountability in communication was also noteworthy in that participants perceived self-accountability as a precursor to communication. Armed with this knowledge and awareness of peer leadership, coaches and practitioners can create and improve athlete leadership development programs within their teams. Such programs should include a focus on emergent leadership, leadership for underclass athletes (i.e., freshmen, sophomores, juniors), and should value the various ways in which leadership can be displayed.

Also valuable to coaches and practitioners is the notion that female participants' may internalize and act out gender appropriate leadership behaviors based on stereotypes and assumptions. Coaches' roles in preventing (and enabling) this process are important. So while it may still be a point of debate as to whether men and women, and boys and girls, should be coached differently, coaches' words and actions are powerful. For example, if I said to my female athletes "why can't you be more like guys?" or "coaching girls is just different", I am placing gendered assumptions in their head and setting a

standard—a standard where men and masculinity are the norm and women and femininity represent the difference, and the difference equals a deficit.

Limitations

While the results of my study make several contributions to the literature, I must note a number of caveats. First, my personal bias cannot be accounted for in the collection and analysis of the qualitative data including the development of codes, categories, and themes. While I attempted to bracket my opinions and biases, it would be misleading to state that this study was completely objective and free of bias. My own past experiences as a college athlete, college softball coach, and my two years as an associate athletic director may have influence my interpretations of leadership and the relevancy of gender and must be acknowledged.

Another important caveat is that the results of this study were reflective of the experience and perceptions of the 23 participants and do not necessarily reflect the experiences and beliefs of other female college athletes. More specifically, this study may be unique to Division I female athletes participating in team sports (e.g., basketball, volleyball, softball, soccer, hockey, rowing), and may not reflect other specific populations such as Division II and III athletes, individual sport athletes, or high school athletes. This study is therefore limited in its ability to generalize findings to other sport settings.

Finally, the social construction of knowledge is a dynamic and complex process (Crotty, 1998, Gergen, 2009; Wright et al., 2010). Therefore, the recognition that leadership and gender are both social constructions poses some limitations in replicating

this study. For example, the perceptions and constructions gleaned in this study may usefully serve to provide insights via a framed glimpse of leadership and gender in a specific socio-historic context and one moment in time. As views on leadership and gender in sport (hopefully) continue to evolve over time, researchers must continue to focus on the social construction of leadership and gender.

Future Research

I see several areas for further research. First, in subsequent studies scholars should continue to examine gender relations in college sport—a site where discrimination and underrepresentation of women in leadership positions persist. I believe the findings of gendered leadership images, narratives, and attributes associated with coach leadership in my research suggested the need to explore gendered experiences of coaches more broadly. Such research should include both female and male coaches serving as head and assistant coaches. For example, there may be different gender dynamics at play with a female head coach/male assistant coach compared to a coaching staff consisting of a male head coach/female assistant coach, and such variations are vital to explore. While the combinations of head and assistant coaches of various genders are more prevalent within women's intercollegiate athletic teams, there are some men's intercollegiate teams where women serve as head or assistant coaches. The gendered experiences and perceptions of these women coaches and the men coaches serving alongside them are valuable and represent an important and understudied setting. Similarly, researchers should conduct a study exploring the gendered experience of male and female coaches at the high school sport level.

Second, researchers in the future should maintain a focus on female college athletes' perceptions of leadership. For example, the inclusion of female student athletes who participate in individual sports (e.g., swimming and diving, track and field, tennis, golf, gymnastics) could enrich the sport leadership literature. While scholars recognize that differences exist in leading team versus individual athletes (Helsen et al., 1998; Terry & Howe, 1984), there has been little qualitative exploration of individual team sport athletes' leadership beliefs and perceptions. This study could also be extended to include Division II and III athletes in team and/or individual sports.

Third, scholars should follow female college athletes as they conclude their athletic careers and enter the workforce. This is important given the popular belief that sport participation develops leadership skills. Subsequently, exploring how former female college athletes understand the contribution of their sport experiences to their leadership skills in a variety of work settings could contribute to greater understanding of the novel belief that sport develops leaders. Research questions could include if and how: leadership skills learned in sport are useful in work settings; participants' perceptions of leadership have changed; and participants have adapted their leadership skills to match expectation in the context of their work environment.

Finally, researchers should examine the ongoing process of leadership over the course of a season. More specifically, such an examination could investigate participants' perceptions of leadership and whether they change over the course of the season. This could provide more empirical insights that would aid coaches in navigating leadership development throughout the course of a season, and further highlight the sport context.

Additionally, given that my research focused on individual athletes' and their perceptions

and featured a constructivist approach, a constructionists approach examining leadership

perceptions within members of the same teams could potentially generate more details

into the social construction of leadership within teams. This could include a multiple case

study design and focus group interviews.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Guide

Introduction:

Protocol
☐ Introduce yourself
☐ Discuss the purpose of the study
☐ Provide consent form; obtain signatures
☐ Provide structure of the interview
☐ Ask if they have any questions

Background Information:

Current Sport: _____

College: _____

Year: ☐ Freshman ☐ Sophomore ☐ Junior ☐ Senior

Captain: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Current Coach: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Assistant Coaches: ☐ Male ☐ Female

Previous sport experiences and coaches:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Female College Athletes' Interpretations of Leadership and Gender:

Based on your experiences in sport, what does leadership mean to you? Please explain.

> What experiences and/or who from your sport experiences have influenced your beliefs about leadership in sport? How?

> Have your beliefs about leadership changed throughout your athletic career? If so, please explain how?

Please describe a specific example from your experiences in sport that involved leadership?

> Who was involved? What happened?

> Why do you consider this leadership?

> Do you think these experiences influenced your beliefs about leadership? How?

Can you describe another situation in sport where you believed leadership took place?

> (Same probes as above)

Of your previous coaches, who would consider an ideal leader? (Clarify: not the best coach you've had, but the best leader)

> What makes him/her an ideal leader? Why is that important?

> Can you describe a specific example where this coach displayed ideal leadership?

What do your coaches teach you and your teammates about leadership? Please explain.

> Can you describe expected leadership behavior on your team? Why do you think this is important?

How important do you think gender is to leadership in sport? (Clarify: related to teammates) Please explain.

> Do you think you face any challenges in sport leadership based on your gender? Explain.

> Any experiences with leadership in sport where you perceived gender was important? (Clarify: for you or your teammates)

How important do you think gender is to leadership in sport? (Clarify: related to coaching) Please explain.

> Are your expectations different for male and female leaders? If so, how?

> Any experiences with leadership in sport where you perceived gender was important? (Clarify: for your coaches)

How do you describe the interaction or communication between leaders and followers?

> Is this different with your male coaches compared to your female coaches? If so, please explain.

Is there anything else about your experiences and views on leadership in sport that you wanted to share?

APPENDIX B

Recruitment Letter (Gatekeepers)

Female College Athletes' Social Constructions of Leadership in the Context of
Intercollegiate Athletics: A Gendered Examination.

Dear Coach/Administrator/Athletics Staff,

My name is Vicki Schull and I am a Ph.D. student at the University of Minnesota and I
am completing my dissertation research under the supervision of my advisers, Dr. Lisa
Kihl and Dr. Mary Jo Kane. I am contacting you to request your assistance in recruiting
potential participants in my study. Potential research participants must be female
intercollegiate athletes who are currently competing in a team sport at the Division I
level. The information below details the purpose of the study and how you might be able
to help.

Background Information:
There are three goals of this study. The first purpose is to understand female
intercollegiate athletes' perceptions of leadership in the context of sport. Second is to
understand how female college athletes' sport participation experiences influence their
beliefs about leadership. Finally, the relevancy of gender in female athletes' beliefs and
perceptions of leadership will be examined.

How You Can Help:
If you are willing to assist me in recruiting participants for my study, you may do so by
providing me with the names and email addresses of the female athletes who are
currently participating on your team. I will then contact those female athletes directly via
email to determine if they agree to participate in my study. If potential participants do not
reply to my initial email within one week, I will send one follow-up email. If potential
participants do not reply to the follow-up email, I will assume that they are not interested
in participating in my study and I will not contact them again.

I can provide you with further details of my study upon request. Thank you for you
assistance and consideration.

Sincerely,

Vicki D. Schull, Ph. D. Student
University of Minnesota, School of Kinesiology
1900 University Ave. SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455
608-234-1774 (cell)
schu1850@umn.edu

APPENDIX C

Recruitment Letter (Student-Athlete)

Female College Athletes' Social Constructions of Leadership in the Context of
Intercollegiate Athletics: A Gendered Examination.

Dear Female Student-Athlete,

My name is Vicki Schull and I am a Ph.D. student at the University of Minnesota and I
am completing my dissertation research under the supervision of my advisers, Dr. Lisa
Kihl and Dr. Mary Jo Kane in the School of Kinesiology.

You are invited to be a participant in my dissertation research examining how female
intercollegiate athletes' participation experiences in sport shape their beliefs about
leadership in general and more specifically related to gender in the context of
intercollegiate athletics. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a
female college athlete participating in a team sport (e.g. volleyball, soccer, basketball,
hockey, softball, rowing) at the Division I level. The information below details the
purpose of the study and how you might be able to help.

Background Information:
The purpose is to understand female intercollegiate athletes' perceptions of leadership in
the context of sport, how their sport experiences shape those perceptions, and the
relevancy of gender to their leadership beliefs.

Participation/Procedures:
Your time commitment for participation would be would be approximately 35-60
minutes and would consist of an interview. Questions will include demographic and
background information on your experiences in organized athletics, your perceptions and
beliefs about leadership in sport, your experiences with leadership in sport, and
perceptions of gender as it relates to leadership in sport. The interview will be transcribed
and you will have the opportunity to verify the transcript.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:
There are no physical or psychological risks associated with participating in this study.
As a participant in this study, you will receive no significant benefits for your
participation. However, the information you provide to the study will assist sport scholars
and practitioners (i.e. athletic administrators, coaches) in understanding how female
college athletes perceive leadership in sport. Once the study has been completed, you will
receive an executive summary.

Confidentiality:

Confidentiality is guaranteed, as the names of the study participants will be assigned pseudonyms when results are reported. The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota or with your current institution. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts/Questions:

Please contact me at the phone number or email listed below if you are interested in participating in my dissertation research. We can set up an interview date, time, and location that would be most convenient for you and your schedule. I can provide you with further details of my study upon request.

Thank you for you assistance and consideration.

Sincerely,

Vicki D. Schull, Ph. D. Student
University of Minnesota
School of Kinesiology
211 Cooke Hall
1900 University Ave. SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455
608-234-1774 (cell)
schu1850@umn.edu

APPENDIX D

Participant Consent Form

Female College Athletes' Social Constructions of Leadership in the Context of Intercollegiate Athletics: A Gendered Examination.

You are invited to be in a research study examining how female intercollegiate athletes' participation experiences in sport shape their beliefs about leadership in general and more specifically related to gender in the context of intercollegiate athletics. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a female college athlete participating in a team sport. I ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by:
Vicki D. Schull, M.S. (Ph.D. Student), School of Kinesiology, University of Minnesota

Background Information:
There are three goals of this study. The first purpose is to understand female intercollegiate athletes' perceptions of leadership in the context of sport. Second is to understand how female college athletes' experiences influence their beliefs about leadership. Finally, the relevancy of gender in female athletes' beliefs and perceptions of leadership will be examined.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following:
Participate in a personal audio-taped interview with Vicki Schull that will last approximately 45-65 minutes. Questions will include demographic and background information on your experiences in organized athletics, your perceptions and beliefs about leadership in sport, your experiences with leadership in sport, and perceptions of gender as it relates to leadership in sport. The interview will be transcribed and you will have the opportunity to verify the transcript.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:
There are no physical or psychological risks associated with participating in this study. As a participant in this study, you will receive no significant benefits for your participation. However, the information you provide to the study will assist sport scholars and practitioners (i.e. athletic administrators, coaches) in understanding how female college athletes perceive leadership in sport. Once the study has been completed, you will receive an executive summary.

Confidentiality:
Confidentiality is guaranteed, as the names of the study participants will be assigned pseudonyms when results are reported. The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report I might publish, I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University of Minnesota or with your current institution. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:
The researcher conducting this study is Vicki D. Schull. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact me, or my adviser:

Vicki D. Schull, Ph.D. Student   Lisa A. Kihl, Ph.D. (Adviser)
School of Kinesiology   School of Kinesiology
University of Minnesota   University of Minnesota
211 Cooke Hall   219 Cooke Hall
1900 University Ave. SE   1900 University Ave. SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455   Minneapolis, MN 55455
608-234-1774 (cell)   612-264-3150
schu1850@umn.edu   lkihl@umn.edu

If you have any question or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; 612-625-1650.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____Date: _____