Seriously Integrating Women into Sport Leadership Positions

*M. Menier, University of Massachusetts Amherst*

This paper seeks to address the dearth of women in sport leadership positions by calling for theoretical redefinition. It begins by examining the current state of women in the sport industry and emphasizing the power and importance of the sport industry. The paper also seeks to preserve theoretical distance between leadership as conflated with hierarchical positions and leadership as experienced and viewed within organizations. The topic of leadership as a behavior, structure and process is explored while considering the role of women in sports organizations. Further considerations addressed include the possible impact of the increasing emphasis on sport science and sport analytics and an alternative view of Kanter’s (1977) homosocial reproduction. Previous research on behavioral and structural barriers to women are discussed before a new process-based model is for integration is introduced. The model relates the leadership processes and experiences of socialization, communication, and utilization to the desired individual leaders outcomes of acceptance, presence, and influence. The paper calls for sport organizations to enact environments with procedural and distributive justice for all persons and makes suggestions for future research using both qualitative and quantitative methods.