Charting Their Own Course: Using Life Maps of Gay Male Sport Employees to Identify and Explain Their Career Paths in the Sport Industry

Jeffrey D. MacCharles University of Massachusetts Amherst
E. Nicole Melton (Advisor), University of Massachusetts Amherst

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The purpose of this study was to examine the career paths of gay male sport employees in order to understand more about the reasons behind their choice of career, their career trajectory, and the role of their identity in shaping their life course and influencing their career paths in such a hypermasculine, heteronormative environment. Analysis of the data indicated that entry into the sport industry for gay males is not often preceded by formalized sport-related education; however, the likelihood of advancement in their careers is strong. Additionally, although all of the participants stated that they did not express their sexual identity upon entering the industry, over time it typically became more evident. Several participants also suggested that their sexual identity was an asset to their careers in sport, and that the existence of an LGBT professional network was beneficial to their development. Theoretical and practical implications are also discussed.