Consequences of Homophobia Within Intercollegiate Athletics

The Tucker Table
April 30, 2010
The Issue

CONSEQUENCES

heterosexism

heteronormativity

homophobia
Framing with Family: Examining Online Coaching Biographies for Heteronormative and Heterosexist Narratives

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Relevant Literature

- Griffin (1998)
  *Strong Women, Deep Closets*

  *Trailblazing: America's First Opening Gay High School Coach*

- Hardin & Whiteside (2009)
  *The Rene Portland Case: New Homophobia and Heterosexism in Women's Sports Coverage*
• **Pilot Study**
  – *Big Ten Conferences (n = 226 coaches)*

• **National Study**
  – *Six Division I Conferences (n = 1213 coaches)*
  – *Six Division III Conferences (n = 689 coaches)*

**1,902 ONLINE COACHING BIOGRAPHIES WERE CODED**
Results From Pilot Study

Female Coaches:
- 63% (n=40)

Male Coaches:
- 37% (n=23)

Total:
- 72% (n=163)

- 17% (n=28) female coaches
- 83% (n=135) male coaches

- No mention of significant other
- Opposite-sex wife/husband
- Opposite-sex partner
- Same-sex partner
- Opposite-sex fiancé
- Same-sex fiancé
Discussion

• Virtual absence of non-heterosexual orientations
• Relationship between sex of coach and heteronormative frames
• Divisional differences in content in online coaching biographies.
Future Research

- Representations of coaches in the media
- Gatekeeping mechanisms of intercollegiate athletic websites
- Institutional policies & power structures
“Any kind of conversation is good rather than silence.”
-Pat Griffin (2005)
Speaking Out: Lesbian coaches on heterosexism and the decline of college women coaches

Amy Sandler, Ph.D.
Prior to the implementation of Title IX, in 1972, women led 90 percent of collegiate women’s teams (Carpenter & Acosta, 2010). Today...

Female student athletes are at an all-time high

Female coaches just .02% above the all-time low
# Relevant Literature

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>References</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homologous Reproduction:</td>
<td>e.g., Kanter, 1977; Sagas, Cunningham, &amp; Teed, 2006; Stangl &amp; Kane, 1991</td>
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<td>• Dominants reproduce themselves</td>
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<td>Work-Family Conflict</td>
<td>Dixon &amp; Bruening, 2007</td>
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<td>• Male-dominated workplace</td>
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<td>• Home responsibilities</td>
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<td>• Social expectations of women as mothers</td>
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<td>Discrimination and Stereotyping</td>
<td>e.g., Griffin, 1992; Griffin, 1998; Hasbrook et. al; Inglis, Danylchuck, &amp; Pastore, 1996; Knoppers et. al, 1991; Lowery &amp; Lovett, 1997; Lovett, Lowery, &amp; Lopiano, 1991; NCAA, 1989; Sweeney, 2004</td>
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<td>• Sex bias in hiring</td>
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<td>• Sex-role conflict</td>
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<td>• Salary inequity</td>
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<td>• Lesbian label</td>
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Method

• Qualitative

• Criteria
  – Current / former NCAA division one female head coaches who do not identify as heterosexual

• Interview Questions
  – Perceptions
  – Social/outside of work functions
  – Recruiting
  – Hiring Process/es
  – Career Intentions
Collective Portrait

Participants cover the Northeast, Northwest, South, Mid-Atlantic, Southwest, and Midwestern regions

38 Conference titles
39 NCAA tournament appearances
10 NCAA Elite Eight appearances
2 NCAA Final Four appearances
1 NCAA Final appearance
2 National Championships
Theme One: Coaches Perceptions of the Role of Heterosexism in the Decline

- Participants believe that heterosexism plays a role in the decline of collegiate women coaches.
- Subthemes:
  - Preference for Male Coaches
  - Preference for Married Women Coaches
  - Heterosexism is Difficult to Prove
Theme Two: Impact of Heterosexism on Lesbian Coaches’ Upward Mobility

- Location restrictions based on desire to live in a location where they would feel comfortable being themselves and/or visible with their female partner
Heterosexism in Women’s Collegiate Sport

ENVIRONMENT
- Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell
- Questioning the Gay Issue/Problem
- Negative Recruiting
- Predominately Men

ACTIONS
- Asking Assistant Coaches to Hide their Sexual Orientation
- Compensational Behavior
- Head Coaches Hiding
- Lesbian Coaches Marrying Men

FEELINGS
- Relationship Stress
- Alienation
- Hypocritical
Future Research should explore...

1. Lesbian, and perhaps all women coaches’ experiences working under the heteronormative and male dominant structure of college sport.
2. Collegiate women coaches’ perceptions of sexism in their work environments.
3. The experiences of NCAA division one, two, and three female coaches to see how the coaches’ experiences differ between divisions.
4. “Out” college coaches
5. Why men coach women and the experiences that led them to pursue coaching collegiate women’s sport.
Implications for Policy

• Inconsistency between NCAA principle of non-discrimination and NCAA bylaw 13.1.2.

• NCAA Self Study: Asks for structures in place and inclusive programs/policies for student-athletes of all sexual orientations. It should expand to include coaches and athletic administrators.
Key Take Home

- Heterosexism does play a role in the continued decline
- Continued advocacy for congruency between policy and practice at the NCAA level and amongst membership.