5H Miriam Merrill, Temple University
"The Ceiling is Concrete: African American Women in Athletic Administration"

The most current Racial and Gender Report Card indicates the percentage of African-Americans in the Athletics Director role is only 8 percent (Lapchick, Fox, Guiao, & Simpson, 2015). African American women are not represented in this percentage, which seemingly suggests access is denied. This roadblock is termed the concrete ceiling, instead of glass ceiling, because women of color experience racism and sexism as advancement barriers (Crenshaw, 1989). The purpose of this presentation is to disseminate research examining African American women administrators’ perceptions of the current climate intercollegiate athletic administration with a particular focus on: a) barriers that hinder representation of women of color in Athletic Director positions at National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Football Bowl Subdivision and Football Championship Subdivision institutions; and b) the psychological and emotional experiences African American athletic administrators report as a result of their experiences. Fifteen African-American senior-level athletic administrators were surveyed and six interviewed with results concluding African American women in senior-level administration reporting: (a) access to opportunities, (b) disadvantages as a result of being an African American woman, and (c) being steered into specific positions were challenges to their professional growth.

5H Jacqueline McDowell, George Mason University & Joyce Olushola, Arkansas State University
“Analyzing African-American Female Athletic Directors’ Experiences: An Organizational Miasma Approach”

African-American women comprise less than 2 percent of collegiate Athletic Directors (AD). This percentage has remained fairly constant despite ongoing social efforts to increase diversity in athletic leadership positions. Research points to prejudice and discrimination as the root causes for the stagnation in African-American women’s representation as ADs. Underpinning this discrimination is a culture that may subconsciously foster negative perceptions of African-American women that preclude current administrators from hiring these individuals, or when hired, subordinates from trusting them. When these perceptions become part of the dominant discourses in the workplace, the organization can become encompassed by a cloud of miasma—a polluted environment characterized by explicit and implicit stereotype use and misperceptions (Livers & Caver, 2003; Livers & Solomon, 2010). The purpose of this presentation is to discuss the socio-ecological factors that create miasma in sport organizations, the effect of these factors on African-American female’s identity and career experiences, and strategies to assist these women in their personal and professional development. Theory driven implications will be discussed at multiple levels (e.g. individual, interpersonal, institutional, and environmental) to highlight the matrix of oppression that makes it hard to pinpoint effective solutions without addressing the problems holistically.

5H Emma Ariyo, The University of Georgia & Jepkorir Rose Chepyator-Thomson, The University of Georgia
“Career Experiences of African Women in sport leadership: A focus on Major Sport Organizations”

Leaders occupy a critical juncture in society and serve as instruments of change in social institutions. Scholars point to an underrepresentation of women in sport leadership and this is acute in the African continent. African women in sport leadership are rare in prominent spheres of sport organizations. The purpose of this study was to understand career trajectory and experiences of African women in major international and national sport organizations. The theoretical framework used to guide this study is Social Constructivism, with feminist theory being used to locate the women’s status in society. The participants of this study were purposively selected from major national and international sport
organizations and they reflected diverse social and cultural backgrounds. In this study semi-structured qualitative interviews and thematic analysis method were used in data collection and analysis respectively. Preliminary findings in this study center on the following themes; (a) women have barriers to leadership roles and advancement in the sport industry, (b) education and athletic background influenced their entry into sport leadership, and (c) social and cultural networks impacted their sport careers.

5H Ketra Armstrong, University of Michigan & Elena Simpkins, University of Michigan

“Black Women in Sport Leadership: ‘Uncaged’ (An Organizational Critique)”

Most of the research seeking to unearth the seeds in and on the grounds of the race, gender, and class intersections that have silenced and marginalized Black women in sport leadership has done so from a critical race (notably Critical Race Theory) and/or critical feminist (notably Black Feminist Thought) perspective. These lenses have offered valuable insight; however, a veil remains. Sport organizations are ‘inequality regimes’ (Acker, 2006) that contain embedded structures and forces that normalize the assumptions, values, practices, processes, systems of power and access, networks, and domains of privilege (Collins & Barnes, 2014) that adversely affect Black women employed therein, attenuating their freedom. Thus, to further understand ‘how the caged bird sings’ requires critical and acute analyses of the ‘cage’ – the organization. This presentation will discuss how organizational theory in general and intraorganizational critiques in particular, should be infused into the ‘mix’ of critical analyses of race and gender in sport to: (a) expand our conceptual understanding, framing, and modeling of the intersecting personal, socio-cultural, and system/institutional dynamics operative in sport organizations that shape and sustain the relational positions of Black women’s voicelessness, and (b) improve our efforts to ‘uncage’ and empower Black women’s sport leadership opportunities and experiences.