The Emergence of Athletic Diversity and Inclusion Officer Positions in Division I Collegiate Athletics

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Abstract: In recent years, Division I athletic departments have adopted Athletic Diversity and Inclusion Officer (ADIO) positions in their organizations. These inaugural actors hold distinct titles, but the essence of their position mirrors Chief Diversity Officers (CDOs) in higher education and business domains. The purpose of this manuscript is to offer a conceptual model analyzing the emergence of ADIOs in Division I athletic departments and hypothesize why these positions will continue to increase in sporting spaces. The emergence of these positions occurs on the backdrop of prominent sociopolitical and sociocultural movements in the United States, high-profile intercollegiate sport scandals, and contemporary trends in higher education institutions. This paper challenges collegiate athletic department stakeholders to consider why they have adopted an ADIO, how they structure the ADIO position, and how their ADIO position will support and enact substantive organizational change as it relates to diversity, equity, and inclusion; in other words, to distinguish this position from a symbolic figurehead. Lastly, propositions for future empirical research on ADIOs in collegiate sport are recommended and implications for policy and practice are discussed.

　　Keywords: athletic diversity and inclusion officers, intercollegiate athletics, Division I, institutional theory, organizational culture theory

The Influence of Sociocultural and Sociopolitical Phenomena Upon NCAA Collegiate Athletics

　　Collegiate sport is reflective of broader societal phenomena and significant aspects of American culture (Beyer & Hannah, 2000). For example, as the United States (U.S.) continues to grapple with major social movements, such as #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter (#BLM), these efforts have shaped public discourse on gender and racial inequities in society (Black Lives Matter, n.d; Me Too Movement, n.d.). Consequently, these social movements are relevant to intercollegiate athletics, as gender and racial inequity is commonplace in big-time college sport in the U.S. (Cooper et al., 2020). A recent and novel solution to address gender and racial diversity in collegiate sport is the creation of the Athletic Diversity and Inclusion Officer (ADIO) position. ADIO positions are emerging against the backdrop of significant social movements in a highly politicized U.S. society. When considering why athletic departments have adopted ADIOs during our current sociopolitical and sociocultural climate, scholarly inquiries must first acknowledge the interplay between sociological phenomena and organizational practices, experiences, and structures. Henceforth, I offer a conceptual model that explores the emergence and significance of ADIO adoption and recommend propositions for empirical research on ADIOs.

　　Social movements (and other forms of resistance) have played an integral role in challenging and dismantling inequitable structures embedded in the hegemonic American society.

Such integral movements include the abolition movement, suffrage rights movement, women's movement, and the Civil Rights movement. More recently, the MeToo and BLM movements have brought attention to systemic sexism and racism in American social structures, practices, and lived experiences. The MeToo Movement began in 2017 and brought attention to the sexism and sexual assault women face in their everyday personal and professional experiences. Women from diverse backgrounds across the world used social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, Twitter) with the hashtag "MeToo" to share their stories of oppression, violation, marginalization, and exploitation. This sociopolitical and sociocultural movement coincided with numerous sexual assault incidents at major athletic programs across the U.S. (Jacoby, 2019) and sustained issues of sexism in sport more generally (Hindman & Walker, 2020). For example, former Michigan State University (MSU) doctor, Larry Nassar, sexually assaulted over 100 female athletes over a 20-plus year career (Held, 2018). His improprieties and abuse of power were known amongst institutional leaders and, disappointingly, were not adequately adjudicated in a timely manner (Nite & Nauright, 2020). This illuminated the essence of the #MeToo movement: the insidious trends of women being subjected to victim blaming or fallacious assertions of being dishonest and opportunistic (Dator, 2019).

At another Division I institution, Baylor University (BU) failed to document, address, and adjudicate sexual assault claims/acts against numerous football student-athletes for over a decade (Brown, 2018). These institutions continue to deal with the ramifications of such controversies, while attempting to reposition themselves as institutions of inclusivity and safety for students, faculty, and staff of diverse backgrounds. The #MeToo Movement has greatly informed public perceptions of these scandals and how athletic departments and universities choose to value athletic success and reputation over the needs of vulnerable populations on their campuses (Jacoby, 2019; Nite & Nauright, 2020).

The BLM movement began in 2013 by Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi. These Black women activists sought to bring attention to the racialized structures and injustices that lead to differential treatment of Black people in society. The BLM movement, also known as #BLM, formed after the acquittal of George Zimmerman. Zimmerman murdered Trayvon Martin, a Black boy who was unjustly killed for "appearing" suspicious due to his physical appearance and the hooded sweatshirt he wore. The BLM movement centralizes the role of structural and systemic violence in the destruction and subjugation of Black lives and communities. Stated another way, #BLM believes *all lives matter,* once Black lives matter.

Since the #BLM Movement began in 2013, numerous student protests have taken place during collegiate athletic contests, and these protests align themselves with the social movement. For example, on November 3rd, 2016, six women's basketball athletes from University of Arkansas took a knee in solidarity with Colin Kaepernick, who infamously took a knee during the national anthem to bring attention to the injustices experienced by Black Americans (Brantley, 2016). A few years later, students at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) protested against racial discrimination and a hostile campus climate during a men's basketball game on February 28th, 2019 (Zhu, 2019). The basketball game was utilized as an opportunity to magnify UCLA as an "environment that is not conducive to [B]lack students' success" (Zhu, 2019, para 11). These students strategically leveraged the visibility of sports to highlight the inequitable relationship between historically White institutions (HWI), Black athletic labor, and the concurrent devaluing of Black educational pursuits (Cooper, 2016; Donnor, 2005; Hawkins, 2013; Singer, 2019).

Additionally, the infamous University of Missouri (Mizzou) Football protests in early November of 2015 coincide with the sociopolitical and sociocultural aims of BLM. In 2015, Mizzou football athletes aligned themselves with Black student organizations (namely Concerned Student 1950) to protest the racial hostility they experienced on campus. Black football players utilized their athletic labor as a bargaining tool to capture the attention of university personnel. Their protest exacerbated the significance of Black athletic labor to White neoliberal capitalist interests and resulted in *some* Black student organizations' demands being addressed (Gilbert, 2016). Moreover, these protests demonstrate how the domain of sport is intertwined with relevant social movements and underscore the cultural significance and visibility of intercollegiate athletics in the U.S. (Beyer & Hannah, 2000).

Additionally, there have been high profile scandals in collegiate sport that have captured the attention of the American populace and, to some degree, have increased public disdain of athletics' place in higher education. Such scandals include: (a) Federal Bureau Investigation (FBI) into bribery recruitment deals that involve intercollegiate coaches and corporate shoe companies (Tracy, 2017); (b) the Varsity Blues scandal of Ivy institutions creating false athletic profiles to ensure White wealthy students received guaranteed admission to prestigious universities (Medina et al., 2019); and (c) the unwarranted heatstroke death of Jordan McNair during football training camp in 2018 at the University of Maryland (Richman & Donovan, 2018), to name a few. These scandals illuminate the centrality of race in collegiate sport issues, as the FBI investigation did more harm toward Black assistant coaches than the White head coaches (Murphy, 2019). In the other instances, the Varsity Blues scandal illuminated the significance of whiteness as property in athletic recruiting (Hextrum, 2019), while Jordan McNair's tragic death was due in part to racial ideologies that fail to humanize Black bodies (Hawkins, 2013). The aforementioned scandals and injustices are merely contemporary illustrations of "academic capitalism," a term coined by Sack (2009) that illuminates the paradoxical imbalance of the exploitative collegiate sport system that seeks academic, athletic, and financial success.

Instances of sexual assault and gender inequity (Brown, 2018; Dator, 2019), BLM protests and racial inequity (Brantley, 2016; Gilbert, 2016; Reid, 2017; Zhu, 2019), and issues of unethical practices and high-profile scandals in collegiate sport, e.g., Varsity Blues Scandal (Medina et al., 2019; Murphy, 2019) call into question the legitimacy of intercollegiate athletics. When institutions have their legitimacy questioned, they are confronted with unique isomorphic pressures (coercive, mimetic, and normative) that can induce institutions to alter their behaviors to establish a more legitimate status (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). "Legitimacy" is a foundational concept of organizational institutionalism and is understood as processes, norms, and structures that validate the existence of institutions and support their longevity (Greenwood et al., 2017; Suchman, 1995). Thus, if collegiate sport continues to have its legitimacy questioned, it highlights how this institution fails to be in congruence with higher education and espoused NCAA logics of equality (Cooper et al., 2020). These realities create tension and pressure that calls for a reimagination (i.e., different from previous reform efforts) of the collegiate sport field. Thus, in this conceptual paper, I argue ADIO adoption is emerging during this particular juncture due to issues of legitimacy and isomorphic pressures in collegiate athletics. I will discuss how the adoption of ADIOs can position athletic departments and the collegiate sport field as a legitimate institution capable of addressing sustained issues of gender/racial inequity and unethical practices. Therefore, I argue that the unique interplay between sociopolitical movements and sport is inducing ADIO emergence, as ADIO adoption is occurring on the backdrop of prominent social

movements, e.g., #MeToo and #BLM, and high-profile collegiate sport scandals, e.g., Varsity Blues Scandal.

Since fall 2013, 20 individuals (and counting) across the Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) and Football Championship Series (FCS) levels hold the ADIO position. These positions have specific emphasis on improving diversity and inclusion in their respective athletic departments. Thus, athletic department administration responsible for implementing the ADIO position can be categorized as *innovators* (Rogers, 1962). Rogers (1962) posited that innovative practices are adopted in stages of diffusion throughout a market of prospective adopters. Rogers (1962) argued that market ideas are adopted in the following stages and market percentages: (a) Innovators (2.5%), (b) Early Adopters (13.5%), (c) Early Majority (34%), (d) Late Majority (34%), and (e) Laggards (16%). Athletic departments that have currently implemented the ADIO position are innovators, which Rogers (1962) theorizes is 2.5% of a market. Given that 20 (and counting) of the 347 Division I athletic departments have adopted ADIOs, the innovator tag is applicable, as 5% of Division I athletic departments adopted ADIOs between fall 2013 and summer 2021. The innovative adoption of ADIOs is in concert with ongoing National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) legislation proposals for athletic departments to adopt a designated tag of "diversity and inclusion" upon an athletic administrator, similar to the designated tag of Senior Woman Administrator (SWA) (Burnsed, 2019). This legislation proposal heeds NCAA legislation *2018-30*, which requires Division I institutions to conduct an equity, diversity, and inclusion review every five years. Division II and Division III institutions already require such reviews, which demonstrates how Division I institutions have historically positioned diversity and inclusion in policy reform.

Examining the adoption of ADIOs through a multi-level perspective illuminates how societal and cultural phenomena are key attributes of institutional and organizational change in NCAA collegiate athletics. Singer and Cunningham (2012) called for in-depth research to be conducted on athletic departments leaders' commitment to diversity and inclusion. There has yet to be a scholarly article, theoretically or empirically, exploring the innovative adoption, implementation, and symbolic and/or substantive nature of athletic departments that have institutionalized ADIO positions. Hence, the current manuscript addresses this gap.

Literature Review

Context for Understanding the Need for Diversity & Inclusion Officers in Intercollegiate Athletics

Challenges to position diversity and inclusion in athletic departments' organizational culture, structures, and hiring practices are evident in sport management literature. Scholars have addressed issues of racial diversity in intercollegiate athletics (Cooper et al., 2020; Steward & Cunningham, 2015; Walker & Melton, 2015), issues of gender inequity and leadership ascension of female intercollegiate sport administrators (Burton, 2015; Darvin & Sagas, 2017; Hancock & Hums, 2016; Katz et al., 2018; McDowell & Carter-Francique, 2017; Smith et al., 2020), the importance of creating and sustaining inclusive sport organizations (Cunningham, 2008; 2019; DeSensi, 1995; Fink & Pastore, 1999; Singer & Cunningham, 2018), and the experiences of LGBTQ collegiate sport administrators (Borland & Bruening, 2010; Walker & Melton, 2015).

As outlined in the aforementioned literature, one major issue facing athletic departments is the lack of diversity in leadership positions. For example, ethnic minorities and women are persistently underrepresented in roles such as Head Coach, Athletic Director, and Conference Commissioner (Acosta & Carpenter, 2014; Lapchick et al., 2019). During the 2017-2018 season, 40.1% of head coaching positions in women's athletics were women, 90% of FBS conference commissioners were White men, and 85.4% of head football FBS coaches were White men (Lapchick et al., 2019). To fully comprehend issues of racial and gender inclusion in regard to leadership positions, as of May 2021, only five women lead Power-5 athletic departments, i.e., five of the 65 wealthiest athletics departments in the NCAA are led by three White women and two Black women (Lewis, 2020; Phillips, 2021). The descriptive and empirical data on race and gender in intercollegiate sport leadership is the byproduct of institutional racism (Cooper et al., 2017; Cooper et al., 2020) and gender biases informed by patriarchy and sexism (Burton, 2015; Walker & Sartore-Baldwin, 2013). Bimper and Harrison (2017) posited that issues of inequity, specifically racial inequity, remain invisible due to colorblind attitudes embedded in collegiate sport leadership and organizational cultures. Similarly, Fink et al. (2001) highlighted how intercollegiate sport administration has roots in the cultural norms of whiteness and maleness. This known history, in conjunction with scholarly work that has demonstrated how historically marginalized groups continue to experience barriers in intercollegiate athletics, marks the adoption of ADIOs as necessary, noteworthy, and controversial.

Related to the neglect of equity-minded practices, Bimper and Harrison (2017) conducted a critical discourse analysis of the role of race in the mission statements of 62 athletic departments across the Division I level. The authors found that athletic department mission statements conveyed their status as competitive spaces, while also perpetuating colorblind ideologies. In other words, athletic success was explicit, whereas racial equity was not centralized and, in many cases, not mentioned at all. Bimper and Harrison (2017) echoed the work of Althouse and Brooks (2013), which contended that it is ill-advised to discuss college sport without considering the historical and contemporary racial inequities that pervade this domain. In the same vein, Cooper et al. (2017) called for racially conscious leadership in intercollegiate athletics and outlined the necessity of intercollegiate athletic leaders to address the following colorblind NCAA policies and foundational premises: (a) the principle of amateurism and inequities within the social construction of the student-athlete paradox; (b) address how athletic departments and the NCAA abuse the "special admits" policies and eligibility requirements; and (c) create a penalization system for athletic department racial gaps of Black male athletes' graduation success rates (GSR) and academic progress rates (APR). Thus, Cooper et al. (2017) demonstrated how collegiate sport leadership can deconstruct and reform policy through a critical lens that centers racial equity, cultural competence, and inclusion.

Along the same lines, Cunningham (2009) examined diversity and inclusion efforts in a singular Division I athletic department. Through this research, Cunningham uncovered the difficulties that the department encountered, as their diversity efforts were viewed as symbolic as opposed to substantive. This perception was held by representatives within various institutional offices across the university and fueled by the athletic department's failed attempts to address issues of diversity and inclusion historically. Thus, attempts to make meaningful institutional change can be hindered by institutional memory of inadequate diversity and inclusion efforts. In contrast, universities with a historical memory of valuing diversity and inclusion promulgate

values across the institution, which can subsequently influence the commitment an athletic department has towards these efforts (Singer & Cunningham, 2012). Thus, an athletic department can be influenced by the institutional context of their respective university and align their efforts of inclusion with the broader institutional strategic plan.

The Emergence of Diversity Leaders in Professional Sport and Higher Education

In the 21st century, private and public sector organizations have explicitly stated that diversity and inclusion are important for their success and sustainability (Mor Barak, 2015; Shore et al., 2011). In contrast to viewing these efforts as ancillary, many corporate and public organizations have positioned diversity and inclusion as complementary to financial success. For example, when organizations position diversity as a "bonus," they value intentional hiring practices, remain attentive to the social identities of organizational actors, discuss cognitive diversity in their policies and practices, and implement diversity through organic channels rather than stringent mandates (Page, 2017). Regarding the private sector sporting realm, the diversity-as-a-bonus approach is reflected in inaugural positions, such as the Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion for the Brooklyn Nets of the National Basketball Association (NBA) (Hill, 2018). Dr. Maurice Stinnett is the first Black male to attain such a position. The appointment of Dr. Stinnett followed the inaugural appointments of Gail O'Bannon (Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion for the Dallas Mavericks) and Nzinga Shaw (the first NBA Diversity and Inclusion Officer with the Atlanta Hawks). These positions were adopted during the #MeToo and #BLM Movements and reflect how societal ideologies and social movements serve as vital backdrops, or rather pertinent influencers, for how sport organizations respond to issues of inequities through institutionalized diversity positions.

Similarly, higher education has and continues to adopt institutionalized positions focused on diversity and inclusion due to a range of factors. Some factors include: (a) legal and political dynamics of universities; (b) changing racial demographics; (c) the focus upon developing a post-industrial knowledge economy; and (d) persistent societal inequities (Williams & Clowney, 2007). Dating back to the early 21st century, the ever-changing landscape of higher education led to the creation and adoption of university-wide Chief Diversity Officers (CDOs), which are individuals who lead efforts to create and sustain diverse and inclusive campus environments (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013). Higher education instituted the first cohort of CDOs in the early 2000s and steady adoption has continued over the past two decades. For example, in 2007, Williams and Wade-Golden asserted the following observation:

> [N]o fewer than 30 institutions have created these [CDO] positions and early adopters of these inaugural higher education roles include: University of Michigan, University of Connecticut, Indiana University, the University of Washington, Brown University, the University of Denver, and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (para, 3).

Currently, it is commonplace to see an individual at a higher education institution with titles such as CDO, Chief Officer for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (CODEI), Vice President for Diversity and Community Engagement, Vice President for Diversity, Associate Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer, and Vice Chancellor for Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013).

Mirroring contemporary trends in the professional sporting realm and sustained trends in higher education, intercollegiate athletics has sought to position *diversity as a bonus* through the NCAA's creation of the Office of Inclusion in 2005 (Page, 2017). The purpose of this office is to "establish and maintain an inclusive culture that fosters equitable participation for student-athletes and career opportunities for coaches and administrators from diverse backgrounds" (NCAA Inclusion Statement, n.d., para 1). Given how many intercollegiate athletic departments operate as quasi-separate business entities that intersect with higher education (Sack 2009; Southall & Nagel, 2008; Southall & Staurowsky, 2013; van Rheenen, 2013), there is an increased likelihood that collegiate athletic departments will adopt institutionalized diversity and inclusion officers as diversity is conflated with financial success (Embrick, 2011). Thus, the role of ADIOs in intercollegiate athletics is an evolving role and the adoption, implementation, and effectiveness (or lack thereof) of these positions is an emerging topic of interest for higher education and sport management stakeholders.

Athletic Diversity and Inclusion Officers in Intercollegiate Athletics

When the NCAA created their Office of Diversity and Inclusion in 2005, their first diversity and inclusion leader was Charlotte Westerhaus (Williams, 2005). In 2010, NCAA President, Mark Emmert, appointed Dr. Bernard Franklin to the position of Chief Inclusion Officer of the NCAA (Rietmann, 2017). Upon Dr. Franklin's retirement in 2017, Dr. Katrice Albert became the Executive Vice President of Inclusion and Human Resources for the NCAA 2017). During Dr. Franklin's tenure, he initiated efforts such as the Presidential Pledge (a pledged signed by member institutions and conferences to vow a commitment to diversity and inclusion in hiring practices), NCAA Accelerating Academic Success Program (financial academic support grants for lower resourced institutions), and the NCAA Inclusion Forum (a forum focused on students of diverse backgrounds and their experiences as student-athletes) (Rietmann, 2017). Thus, the governing body of collegiate athletics has a history of creating diversity and inclusion leadership positions.

Diversity based research of collegiate athletics has expanded significantly over the past three decades. In a study of athletic departments' usage of diversity trainings for their staff, Cunningham (2012) found that 53% of athletic departments offered diversity training, and these trainings are more likely to be offered at the Division I level in comparison to the Division II and III levels. In 2013, a year after Cunningham (2012) examined diversity training in collegiate athletic departments, the inaugural position of Associate Athletic Director of Diversity and Inclusion (an ADIO position) was adopted at a Division I FBS institution. The position was adopted to cultivate diversity and inclusion measures for student-athletes, athletic department administration, and departmental initiatives (NCAA, 2014). Shortly thereafter, in 2016, a second Division I FBS institution implemented an ADIO position at the senior administrative level.

As of spring 2019, there was ongoing legislation at the Division III level to adopt the designation of "diversity and inclusion" amongst athletic department administrators, which mirrors the designated tag of SWA. This legislation was proposed by the Division III Management Council in an effort to "establish and maintain environments throughout the NCAA that value cultural diversity and gender equity" (Burnsed, 2019, para 5). The designated tag of "diversity and inclusion," similar to the sex designation of SWA, is not a position, but rather a "title conferred

upon a current staff member — inside or outside the athletics department — who would be charged with serving as the primary contact and conduit for diversity and inclusion-related information" (Burnsed, 2019, para 2). Therefore, the growing focus and interest of an inaugural position or designation to address concerns of diversity and inclusion is gaining momentum in intercollegiate sport.

A Conceptual Model of Athletic Diversity & Inclusion Officer Emergence in Intercollegiate Athletics

The conceptual model presented here (see Figure 1) utilizes a multi-level perspective to illuminate how the unique interplay of sport and social phenomena have contributed to select athletic departments adopting the ADIO position. The conceptual model is grounded in key concepts of organizational institutionalism and institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Greenwood et al., 2017; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Figure 1 situates the adoption of ADIOs to be in concert with sociopolitical and sociocultural movements, as well as high-profile intercollegiate sport scandals (*sociological influences*) and scholarly literature on collegiate athletic issues of diversity and inclusion, i.e., gender inequity, racial inequity, and unethical practices (*organizational inequities*). The model also offers propositions for future empirical research on the unique experiences of ADIOs (*field level analysis of ADIO experiences*).

Figure 1

A Conceptual Model of Athletic Diversity & Inclusion Officer Emergence
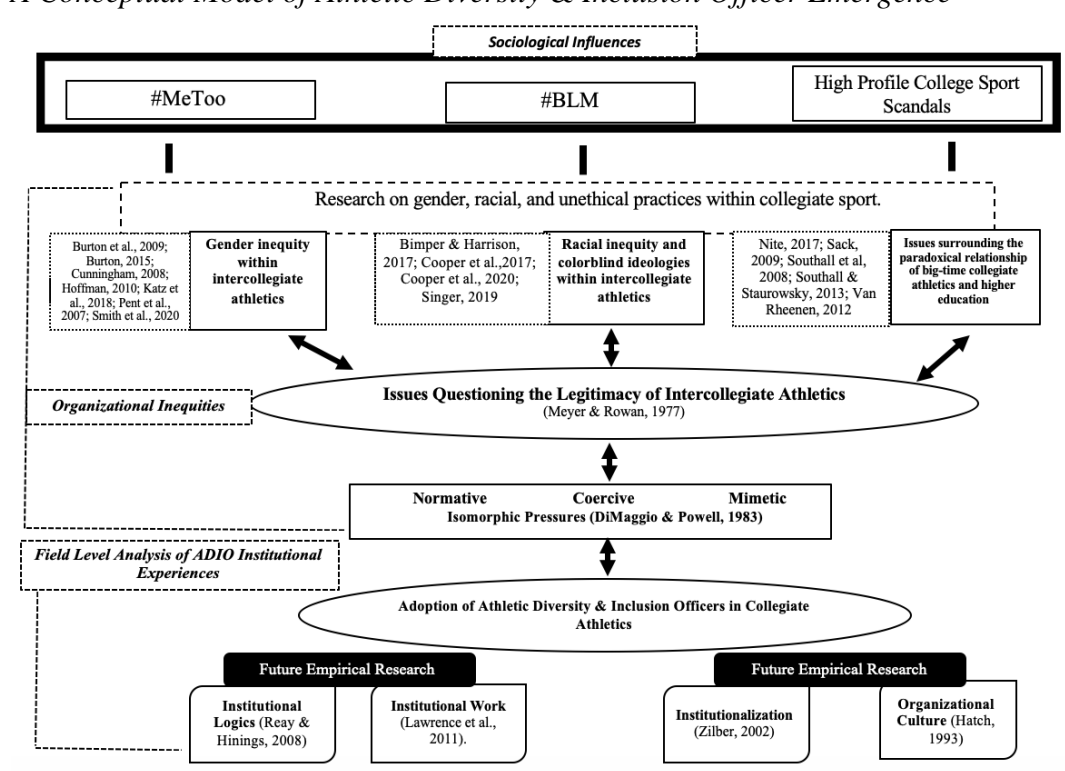
The *sociological influences* level outlines how ADIO adoption occurs in conjunction with concurrent social movements or institutional shocks (Macaulay et al., 2021) and how the essence

of these movements align with gender and racial inequities and paradoxical ideologies embedded in collegiate sport. Figure 1 does not suggest that the adoption of ADIOs is borne out of these social movements and high-profile scandals, but it explicates how these movements and cultural attitudes (in regard to diversity and inclusion) must be considered when studying and questioning why ADIOs are emerging during this specific juncture of time. Scholars have long challenged sport organizations to consider innovative practices to address diversity and inclusion (DeSensi, 1995; Doherty & Chelladurai, 1999), yet the adoption of ADIOs is a recent phenomenon. Additionally, institutional theory considers how norms, structures, customs, and assumptions become taken for-granted within institutional fields and examines what influences institutions to change or remain intact. Although sociopolitical and sociocultural movements are not the sole influence of ADIO emergence, the significance of these movements pressuring institutional change in collegiate athletics cannot be ignored.

The *organizational inequity* level captures how issues of unethical practices and inequities based upon one's identity (e.g., racial and gender) in leadership and athletic participation question the legitimacy of collegiate athletics (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Greenwood et al., 2017; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). When institutions have their legitimacy questioned, they become ripe to isomorphic pressures to alter their illegitimate status (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). *Isomorphic pressures* are conditions that induce institutions to mirror competing institutions in an effort to appear legitimate. Thus, Figure 1 articulates that collegiate sport (as an institution) has responded to claims of illegitimacy by creating inaugural ADIOs due in part to coercive, mimetic, and normative pressures, which will be defined in subsequent sections (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). The illegitimacies of college athletics are the failed attempts of fostering systemic diversity, inclusion, and equity across various levels of involvement, e.g., administration, coaching, staffing, athletic participation, etc. (Bimper & Harrison, 2017; Burton, 2015; Cunningham, 2009; Sack, 2009).

Additionally, the organizational inequity level highlights how these illegitimacies are connected to the essence of contemporary social movements and high-profile unethical practices in collegiate sport. For example, the #MeToo movement corroborates the sustained issues of gender inequity in athletic departments, the #BLM movement aligns with sustained issues of racial inequity in these spaces, and high-profile collegiate sport scandals, (i.e., death of Jordan McNair, FBI investigations) reinforce the paradoxical ideologies associated with the collegiate sport model. Consequently, such illegitimacies have induced isomorphic pressures to alter the status, perception, and reputation of collegiate sport (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Last, the *field level analysis of ADIO institutional experiences* proposes organizational and institutional concepts for future empirical researchers who study ADIO experiences and implementation. This level of Figure 1 is attuned to the agentic abilities and experiences of ADIOs and considers how their leadership will address sustained norms, practices, and structures that challenge their diversity, equity, and inclusion leadership agenda. Thus, scholars studying and athletic departments adopting ADIOs must be cognizant of how these individuals navigate their respective organizations. Moreover, institutional actors are agentic beings who contribute to institutional change and maintenance (Nite & Nauright, 2020). Thus, it is of significance to study how institutional actors interpret the leadership of ADIOs, as they have the agentic capabilities to uphold prevailing institutional dynamics of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) (i.e., institutional

maintenance) or assist with how ADIOs lead institutional change as it relates to DEI (i.e., institutional work) (Nite & Edwards, 2021). Consequently, the intricacies of athletic department change are best suited for micro- or field-level analyses (Nite & Nauright, 2020). Additionally, field-level or singular organizational examinations have proven valuable when studying diversity and inclusion in intercollegiate athletic departments (Cunningham, 2009; Singer & Cunningham, 2012) and when examining how institutions remain intact (Nite, 2017; Nite & Nauright, 2020).

Thus, I propose the following organizational and institutional concepts for future empirical research on ADIOs: (a) institutional logics (Reay & Hinings, 2009); (b) institutional work (Lawrence et al., 2011); (c) institutionalization (Colyvas & Jonsson, 2011; Zilber, 2002); and (d) organizational culture theory (Hatch, 1993). Being attuned to these theoretical concepts can assist with legitimizing ADIO positions in collegiate sport and inform how future ADIOs are (not) structured and supported in their respective domains.

Sociological Influences – The Impact of Broader Social Movements

Beyer and Hannah (2000) proclaimed that sport reflects society. Thus, the social inequities of gender and race that ground the #MeToo and #BLM movements are also inequities and experiences well studied in collegiate sport research. The sociocultural and sociopolitical issues these movements address is directly related to literature that captures inequities extant in collegiate sport. Consequently, the premises of #MeToo, #BLM, and the unethical practices of contemporary high-profile collegiate sport scandals highlight how macro-level sociological issues manifest in collegiate athletic departments regarding gender (Burton, 2015; Hoffman, 2010; Sartore & Cunningham, 2007), race (Bimper & Harrison, 2017; Cooper et al., 2020; Singer, 2019), and paradoxical ideologies associated with the exploitative collegiate sport model (Sack, 2009; Southall & Nagel, 2008; Southall & Staurowsky, 2013; van Rheenen, 2013). Although intercollegiate sport scholarship has examined racial inequity, gender inequity, and paradoxical ideologies of collegiate sport before these sociological influences (or institutional shocks), the adoption of ADIOs during this juncture is noteworthy, given these positions emerged during a juncture of prominent social, cultural, and political shifts in the 21st century.

Organizational Inequities – Isomorphic Pressures and The Legitimacy of Intercollegiate Athletics

In bureaucratic societies and cultures, institutions create formalized structures and processes that reinforce how and why institutions remain legitimate and rational (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Thus, institutional theory provides a macro-level analysis of how institutions, like collegiate sport, evolve or are maintained (Dacin et al., 2002; Lawrence et al., 2011; Scott, 2008). Institutional theory considers how homogeneous fields, i.e., collegiate sport, replicate and develop a shared understanding of norms, rules, and practices. The replication process is contingent upon symbolic messaging and "vocabularies of structure" that create isomorphic pressures (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 349). Isomorphic pressures arise due in part to societal changes; more specifically, they manifest when issues of legitimacy arise (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). As it relates to collegiate sport, I argue that societal changes regarding the climate for challenging racial (#BLM) and gender (#MeToo) inequities have pressured athletic departments to appear legitimate through the adoption of ADIO positions. Sustained paradoxical ideologies of collegiate sport and the

exclusion of women and racial minorities in leadership positions are prevailing issues that raise questions about institutional legitimacy along ethical and legal lines (Cooper et al., 2020). Consequently, these aforementioned issues have induced the emergent trend of ADIO adoption through *coercive*, *mimetic*, and *normative* pressures (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Coercive Isomorphism

Coercive isomorphic pressure occurs when institutional change is caused formally through legislative mandate or informally through a relational pressure from a competing institution (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Informal coercive pressure manifests as a result of societal or cultural expectations that challenge an institution's legitimacy; thus, institutional change occurs based on a *perceived need*. In Figure 1, Division I ADIO adoption is a result of coercive informal pressure when athletic departments seek to remain culturally congruent, i.e., legitimate, with societal messages that call upon organizations to address issues of diversity and inclusion. Thus, Figure 1 considers how coercive isomorphic pressure induces ADIO adoption for *symbolic* reasons, since diversity, inclusion, and equity are deemed good business practices for financially successful organizations (Embrick, 2011; Marvasti & McKinney; 2011; Shore et al., 2011). In other words, transactional leaders in collegiate sport would view the adoption of an ADIO as a strategic move to meet profit-generating aims, rather than sincerely adopting ADIOs to improve organizational cultures and climates for organizational actors of diverse backgrounds (Cooper et al., 2020).

As previously mentioned, the Division III Management Council proposed legislation to designate an institutional role to serve as an athletic department's diversity and inclusion representative in spring 2019 (Burnsed, 2019). Consequently, this legislation was passed by Division I, II, and III NCAA Convention representatives in January 2020 (Dent, 2020). Thus, as of August 2020, "athletics diversity and inclusion designees" (ADIDs) are mandatory role designations bestowed upon a representative in or associated with athletic departments (Dent, 2020). The passing of this legislation mirrors what DiMaggio and Powell (1983) refer to as "governmental mandate" (p. 150). Governmental mandate can be applied to this legislation given that the formalization of this bylaw allows the NCAA to require that all member institutions comply. Given the passing of this legislation, athletic administration must remain cognizant of practicing symbolic diversity efforts or institutionalizing the ADID role in a manner that resembles the SWA role designation, which has not *truly* assisted in benefitting women's leadership ascension (Katz et al., 2018; Smith et al., 2020).

Although the SWA designation sought to promote gender equity in intercollegiate sport leadership, the problematization of the label is evident in the literature (Hoffman, 2010; Pent et al., 2007; Smith et al., 2020). Hoffman (2010) argued that conferred titles upon women athletic administrators has confined the leadership of women in collegiate athletic departments to address gender equity and compliance issues. These constraints have limited SWA's leadership portfolios when they seek to have more involvement in athletic department financial decision-making (Pent et al., 2007). Moreover, there is sustained ambiguity surrounding the purpose of the SWA role, even though the position was adopted in 1981 (Pent et al., 2007). While, the NCAA adopted the SWA designation in good faith to promote gender inclusion in collegiate sport leadership, equity did not persist, nor did gender biases dissipate (Katz et al., 2018; Smith et al., 2020). Thus, there is historical precedence of a "governmental mandate," i.e., NCAA bylaw, failing to rectify issues

of organizational inequities (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 150). Consequently, the SWA designation has contributed to diminishing women's organizational prowess and career accession, which has resulted in *some* SWAs arguing for the elimination of the role (Smith et al., 2020; Tiell & Dixon, 2008).

The SWA designation is an adequate historical reference for questioning and exploring how individuals with *role designations* navigate intercollegiate athletic departments. Hence, coercive adoptions mandated by NCAA legislative bylaws may position individuals who hold a conferred designation to encounter adverse organizational experiences, as the ADID designation may not be desired and valued in *all* NCAA member athletic departments. Additionally, student-athletes and administrators may be subjected to ineffective programmatic efforts of some ADIDS, as ADIDs do not require formal training or experience (Dent, 2020). Lastly, the coercive adoption of ADIDs can lead to athletic departments operating on false perceptions of inclusivity, since it is required and *possibly* not desired by all NCAA member institutions.

Mimetic Isomorphism

ADIO adoption can occur through *mimetic pressure* when athletic departments seek to imitate competing organizations or aspirational organizations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Mimetic isomorphism is more likely to occur in organizations experiencing uncertainty and ambiguity. In the context of collegiate sport, uncertainty and ambiguity could be athletic departments dealing with a public issue, e.g., scandal, failure to experience athletic success, or new leadership. Along the same lines, mimetic behaviors are more likely to occur in organizations that view themselves as lagging behind other organizations (DiMaggio et al., 1983). The tendency of athletic departments to engage in the arms race mentality of competing for resources, e.g., recruits, sponsorships, coaches, and media access, highlights how mimetic isomorphism is already extant in collegiate athletic departments (Hoffer et al., 2015; Jones, 2013). Thus, mimetic pressures for ADIO adoption can also be rooted in the arms race mentality of collegiate athletics. However, regarding ADIO adoption, the arms race mentality can be conceptualized as athletic departments seeking *professional* legitimacy rather than *athletic* legitimacy. Athletic legitimacy is evident in extravagant athletic facilities and lucrative coaching contracts across varying collegiate athletic departments, which feeds into the arms race mentality of college sport (Dosh, 2013). On the other hand, ADIOs advance professional legitimacy and assist in positioning athletic departments as more aligned with higher education and business practices (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013).

Moreover, Figure 1 considers how mimetic isomorphic pressures may induce ADIO adoptions for the following reasons: (a) a competing athletic department is athletically successful; (b) a competing athletic department is achieving higher APRs and/or GSRs; (c) a competing athletic is receiving conference and NCAA acknowledgements for their diversity efforts; and (d) a competing athletic department is attaining successful recruiting cohorts because recruits perceive X athletic department as more *legitimately* concerned with addressing diversity and inclusion over another athletic department. This premise is extremely relevant given that a handful of talented Black athletes decide to continue their education and athletic careers at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU) every year for cultural reasons and as acts of political resistance against White institutions that benefit from Black athletic labor (Hammerschlag, 2020). Thus, administrators working in HWIs may mimic or do their best to come across as culturally relevant

in an effort to compete with the cultural legitimacy of HBCUs (Cooper & Newton, 2021; Hawkins et al., 2016). Hence, ADIOs may be hired due to the arms race mentality of collegiate athletics, where they may be used as leverage to assist in establishing an athletic department as professionally legitimate and culturally competent. Consequently, the mimetic pressures associated with adopting an ADIO may result in these administrators experiencing high turnover, as they were hired to remain relevant or in competition with similar organizations.

Normative Isomorphism

Athletic departments may adopt ADIOs due to *normative pressures*, which are pressures rooted in the notion of professionalism and, more specifically, the legitimatization of an occupational field (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Normative isomorphic pressure can occur through institutional pressures associated with higher education, as the normalization of CDOs (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013) may impact athletic department legitimacy and induce pressure for ADIO adoption. Normative pressures may also arise due to athletic departments seeking to challenge claims of illegitimately developing collegiate athletes, specifically Black athletes (Cooper, 2016). Additionally, ADIO adoption through normative isomorphic pressure may be influenced by how diversity is perceived as a bonus for financial profits (Embrick, 2011; Page, 2017). Consequently, adopting an ADIO from this type of normative pressure demonstrates how athletic departments operate as quasi-separate business entities that intersect, albeit to varying extents, with higher education (Sack 2009; Southall & Nagel, 2008; Southall & Staurowsky, 2013; van Rheenen, 2013).

Additionally, normative isomorphic pressures can be exerted by professional organizations, such as National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics (NACDA), Women Leaders in College Sports (WLCS), and National Association of Academic and Student-Athlete Development Professionals (N4A). These professional networks mobilize thousands of athletic administrative leaders to congregate for professional meetings to disseminate ideas about best practices. According to Dacin et al. (2002), professional associations create spaces for "intraprofessional discourse regarding the legitimacy" of institutionalized norms and practices (p. 46). If the hiring of ADIOs becomes more widely adopted and shared across these unique professional networks of college sport, then how these professional networks discuss the ADIO position has implications for how athletic departments utilize these inaugural actors, i.e., symbolic representation vs. substantive institutional change (Williams & Wade-Golden, 2013).

Field Level Analysis – Propositions and Theoretical Implications for Future Research

There are at least 20 identified ADIOs in Division I collegiate athletics. ADIOs are individuals who are in a formal leadership position to address diversity and inclusion as their primary job responsibility. As of fall 2019, the NCAA Diversity and Inclusion Office was not tracking such individuals. Thus, as of January 2021, I recognize 20 ADIOs (and counting), while also acknowledging that more ADIOs *may exist* in Division I athletics. Currently, a majority of ADIOs have the following characteristics: (a) affiliated with a Division I athletic department; (b) a majority of inaugural ADIOs are Black or belong to a racial community with a history of racial marginalization; and (c) some semblance of diversity, inclusion, or equity is in their position title. Thus, there are early salient themes of ADIOs, but there is a dearth of scholarship examining their

organizational experiences as collegiate sport leaders. The following section proposes organizational and institutional concepts for future empirical studies of ADIOs. These proposed organizational concepts include: (a) institutional logics (Reay & Hinings, 2009; Scott, 2001), (b) institutional work (Lawrence et. al, 2011), (c) institutionalization (Colyvas & Jonsson, 2011; Zilber, 2002), and (d) organizational culture theory (Hatch, 1993).

Institutional Logics

Institutional logics are the unique beliefs that collective organizational actors uphold, which in turn, inform the behavior of actors in organizations (Reay & Hinings, 2009). Thornton and Ocasio (1999) provided the following definition of institutional logics: "The socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality" (p. 804). Institutional logics inform how behaviors and practices become taken for granted. Institutional logics are simultaneously symbolic and material – they are communicated through unspoken and spoken practices and artifacts (Ocasio et al., 2017; Thornton et al., 2012; Zilber, 2008). The semiotic nature of institutional logics is what makes it difficult to pinpoint; institutional logics are a belief system, and beliefs can be abstract or captured in the actions of institutional actors (Reay & Hinings, 2009). Additionally, institutional logics are deemed appropriate given the historical context they operate in, meaning logics are informed by societal and cultural conditions (Greenwood et al., 2010). Thus, institutional logics are informed by societal logics and are malleable over time (Ocasio et al., 2017).

Reay and Hinings (2009) acknowledged that organizations have guiding logics that inform their organizational belief system and call for more examinations of how logics compete. Relating the inquiry of Reay and Hinings (2009) to ADIO adoption, Figure 1 proposes that future empirical work examine the competing institutional logics ADIOs encounter in their efforts to advance diversity, inclusion, and equity in their respective organizations. Hence, what institutional logics are in conflict with ADIO adoption and how do ADIOs address such conflicts? Such questions are influenced by the literature on colorblind tendencies of athletic departments (Bimper & Harrison, 2017; Cooper et al., 2017; Donnor, 2005), sustained issues of gender inequity in collegiate sport (Johnson & Newton, 2020), and the inequities extant in amateurism policies and practices (Comeaux, 2018; Hawkins, 2013). Possible competing logics that operate in intercollegiate athletic departments may include: (a) reinforcing the exclusive racial and gender status quo versus establishing a more racially and gender inclusive institutional environment (Lapchick et al., 2019); (b) continuing to provide a one-size-fits-all student-athlete program versus disaggregating student athlete development programming that considers the unique identity characteristics of student-athletes (Bimper, 2016; Cooper, 2016); (c) creating mission statements that purport ideologies of academic and athletic excellence versus creating mission statements that explicitly indicate the espoused position of athletic departments on diversity and inclusion matters, i.e., racial equity (Bimper & Harrison, 2017); and (d) athletic departments forgoing opportunities to explicitly address negative racialized experiences and racialized discourses (Singer, 2009) versus athletic departments actively taking an anti-racist approach to issues of racialized discourses (Cooper et al., 2020). Acknowledging possible competing institutional logics does not undermine the significance of athletic departments that adopt ADIOs. Rather, it suggests that institutional change

is a nuanced process, particularly when eradicating and transitioning logics are at play (Reay & Hinings, 2009).

> *Proposition 1:* Future empirical research on ADIOs would be enhanced by considering the competing institutional logics surrounding issues of diversity and inclusion in an athletic department and how ADIOs lead despite competing logics.

Institutional Work

Institutional work are the processes and behaviors that institutions and institutional actors engage in to influence their respective institutional conditions (Hampel et al., 2017). These actions can either disrupt, maintain, or imagine new institutional arrangements (Nite & Nauright, 2020). With institutional work, agency is rooted in the cognition and action of institutional actors. Hence, institutions do not *just come to exist*; rather, there are concerted efforts that create the norms of these institutions (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006). Thus, institutional work is concerned with the sensibilities of institutions and institutional actors to create, disrupt, and maintain institutional arrangements (Hampel et al., 2017; Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006). However, the *work* of institutional actors is conducted within their respective institutional environment, which presents the "theoretical paradox of embedded agency" (Seo & Creed, 2002, p. 223). The paradox of embedded agency questions how institutional actors who are influenced by their institutional environment are able to alter or disrupt particular conditions and norms. Consequently, the agency of actors to utilize their sensibilities is an integral aspect of institutional work (Battilana & D'Aunno, 2009; Nite, 2017).

Inaugural collegiate ADIOs are senior-level administrators or lower-level administrators commonly situated in areas of student-athlete support. Such organizational positioning is meaningful when considering ADIO agency and their abilities to enact a particular type of *work* to advance diversity and inclusion in their respective institutions. Hence, Figure 1 proposes an examination of ADIOs *institutional work*, specifically their ability to create, maintain, or disrupt institutional norms and processes related to diversity and inclusion (Lawrence et al., 2011). Moreover, future scholarship should examine how the institutional rank and organizational status, i.e., senior-level vs. lower-level administrator, of ADIOs is relevant to how they engage in institutional work. For example, will ADIOs of a particular institutional rank, i.e., senior-level administrator, be more inclined to maintain or disrupt institutional arrangements in comparison to lower-level administrators? Future scholarship can examine how the institutional work of ADIOs informs perceptions of legitimacy (Nite & Edwards, 2021), specifically how the creation, maintenance, and disruption of their institutional work elevates or hinders how they are perceived as legitimate collegiate sport administrators.

> *Proposition 2:* Future empirical research on ADIOs should assess to what extent their institutional work maintains or disrupts the institutional conditions of their respective athletic department.

Institutionalization

Institutional norms and taken for granted assumptions do not organically occur in institutions; rather, such attributes become legitimatized through the process of institutionalization (DiMaggio, 1991). *Institutionalization* is concerned with how institutions come to be and how norms, legitimacy, and taken for granted assumptions stick in institutions (Colyvas & Jonsson, 2011). The *sticky* aspect of institutionalization occurs through acceptance and repetition (Jepperson, 1991). Colyvas and Jonsson (2011) assert institutionalization as a process and outcome that captures a particular social order. Institutionalization also occurs at multiple levels (i.e., higher, lower, and field), which explains how, when, and why certain practices and structures become institutionalized while others do not (Colyvas and Jonsson, 2011). Scott (2001) asserts three fundamental characteristics of institutionalization: (a) it examines to what extent social practices become a social order; (b) the degree to which these practices are repetitively reproduced; and (c) the extent to which repetitive practices persist when challenged. Legitimacy, the act of valuing certain actions and beliefs in an institution as proper and appropriate, is a foundational aspect of institutionalization (Drori & Honing, 2013; Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Suchman, 1995). Zucker (1977) perceived the diffusion and acceptance of social facts amongst institutional actors to be pertinent to institutionalization, meaning that institutional acceptance of a social fact assists with how these facts stick to facilitate institutionalization.

Studying ADIOs through institutionalization can illuminate how disparate athletic departments ensure their inaugural ADIO position *sticks* (Colyvas and Jonsson, 2011). Zilber (2002) argues that institutional actors are purveyors of institutional meanings and that the process of institutionalization is an interpretative process for institutional actors. Hence, institutionalization is passive, i.e., institutional actors who carry meanings, and active i.e., institutional actors who interpret meanings and actively seek to uphold or derail such meanings (Zilber, 2002). Thus, if social structures are institutionalized through social actors, institutionalization is a beneficial framework for examining which athletic administrators carry and which athletic administrators interpret the stickiness of ADIO adoption (Colyvas and Jonsson, 2011; Zilber, 2002). For example, are there differences between how collegiate administrators interpret and carry the significance of the ADIO position compared to student-athletes? If so, how does this hinder or advance how the ADIO position sticks and becomes legitimate in collegiate athletic departments? Additionally, "[t]he more vulnerable an institutionalizing object is to challenge, the greater the level of inducement necessary to secure the pattern's persistence" (Colyvas and Jonsson, 2011, p. 44). Thus, if ADIO adoptions are persistently challenged by institutional actors, i.e., administrators, athletes, boosters, etc., then a greater amount of indoctrination is necessary for establishing the ADIO position as taken for granted and legitimate. Consequently, through institutionalization, collegiate sport leaders may learn why ADIOs resign, why the position does not *stick* in select athletic departments, and what techniques ADIOs enact to ensure the longevity and effectiveness of their position.

> *Proposition 3:* Future empirical studies on ADIOs would benefit from examining how the ADIO position becomes institutionalized in collegiate athletic departments. By studying the unique conditions of ADIO adoption, scholars can follow potential patterns related to ADIO longevity, success, and how ADIOs become a part of or assist in institutionalizing social orders of their respective organizational fields.

Organizational Culture

Organizations establish culture through artifacts, values, and assumptions (Schein, 1985). Organizational culture theory prescribes how individuals come to adopt and share ideological perspectives through shared language, myths, symbols, and philosophies (Schein, 1985). Hatch's (1993) interpretation of organizational culture theory acknowledged the significance of artifacts, values, and assumptions, but questioned *how* these attributes become embedded within an *organization's culture*. Hatch (1993) expanded upon Schien's (1985) theory by depicting organizational culture to be an emotional and cognitive process. Hatch (1993) applied a symbolic interpretive perspective to how organizational culture is adopted and sustained. Athletic departments adopting ADIOs must consider how the position disrupts basic assumptions, values, and artifacts of DEI, while also considering the symbolic interpretive nature to how organizational actors make sense of newfound aims of DEI (Hatch, 1993). Hence, the adoption of an ADIO does not guarantee that an athletic department's culture will become diverse and inclusive, but it signals a formalized step in a progressive direction.

Organizational culture is achieved through reoccurring instances of values, symbols, and artifacts being maintained, interpreted, and sustained (Hatch, 1993). Thus, the adoption of an ADIO can possibly lead to the *introduction* of new organizational values, assumptions, and symbols, but does not guarantee organizational actors will accept and interpret these new aims. For example, Cunningham (2009) found that the introduction of diverse and inclusive programs and policies did not establish an athletic department as diverse and inclusive in the perceptions of organizational actors. Also, symbolic language of diversity and inclusion in athletic department mission statements did not limit how these efforts projected colorblindness and abstract liberalism (Bimper & Harrison, 2017). Therefore, by remaining attuned to the "symbolic interpretive perspective" of organizational culture theory (Hatch, 1993, p. 660), *seeking* and *achieving* organizational consensus of diversity and inclusivity must be identified and understood.

Moreover, when examining the impact of ADIOs upon an athletic departments' organizational culture, future scholarship should explore how abstract liberalism, colorblindness, and gender discrimination remain intact through organizational artifacts, values, and assumptions (Bimper & Harrison, 2017; Cooper et al., 2017; Smith et al., 2020). Cooper et al. (2017) calls "for a shift from abstract liberalism and colorblind racism towards a culturally responsive and race-conscious leadership approach whereby race is centralized in policy creation, enactment, and enforcement" (p. 227). Thus, future scholarship should study how ADIOs contribute to creating a racially/gender conscious organizational culture. However, it is pertinent to gather insights from disparate organizational actors to truly assess collective perceptions of organizational culture (Mills & Hoeber, 2013). Therefore, scholarship can examine how athletic department administrators with an ADIO perceive the adoption as shifting, enhancing, or contributing to athletic department organizational culture.

> *Proposition 4:* Future empirical studies on ADIOs would benefit from considering how their adoption influences organizational cultures and to what extent diversity and inclusion become basic values, assumptions, and artifacts of an athletic department's organizational culture.

Limitations

There are several limitations of Figure 1. For example, athletic departments and ADIOs may perceive the emergence of ADIO positions as having no relationship to broader social movements and high-profile collegiate sport scandals (i.e., institutional shocks). Figure 1 acknowledges sustained issues of gender and racial inequity and paradoxical ideologies of collegiate athletics as institutional shocks that challenge the legitimacy of intercollegiate sport. Currently, Figure 1 introduces these illegitimacies as being equally salient and significant for ADIO adoption, but future research may find that illegitimacies related to race are more likely to induce ADIO adoption in comparison to illegitimacies related to gender and paradoxical ideologies of collegiate athletics. Nonetheless, as ADIO positions become more prominent, scholars and practitioners must continue to consider what conditions lead to the *perceived need* of an ADIO and how ADIOs are utilized to rectify athletic departments illegitimate standing. Lastly, Figure 1 is rooted in foundational concepts of organizational institutionalism, but other theoretical lenses may also illuminate why ADIOs are emerging during this unique juncture of collegiate sport.

Conclusion

The adoption of ADIOs in intercollegiate sport is novel, innovative, and controversial. As collegiate athletics pivots to formalize diversity leadership positions (Newton, 2019) and designations (Burnsed, 2019), those holding prominent collegiate athletic leadership positions (i.e. athletic director, conference commissioner) must be candid about the contemporary issues challenging the legitimacy of collegiate sport. Such issues include gender inequities (Burton, 2015; Hoffman, 2010; Katz et al., 2018; Smith et al., 2020), racial inequities (Bimper & Harrison, 2017; Cooper et al., 2020; Singer, 2019), and paradoxical ideologies associated with the exploitative collegiate sport model (Sack, 2009; Southall et al., 2008; Southall & Staurowsky, 2013; van Rheenen, 2013). Henceforward, the emergence of ADIOs does not dilute the histories of exclusion that marginalized communities experienced. Nonetheless, ADIOs serve as an opportunity for collegiate sport, as an institution, to address racist and sexist policies and practices (Cooper et al., 2020). Scholarship must interrogate the adoption, navigation, and legitimization of ADIOs in collegiate athletic departments to ensure these positions serve as long-term substantive adoptions, as opposed to short-term symbolic gestures.

Figure 1 illuminates sociological influences (or institutional shocks) occurring on the backdrop of ADIO emergence (e.g., #MeToo, #BLM, and high-profile scandals) and how these influences align with prevailing issues in collegiate sport (i.e., gender/racial inequities and paradoxical ideologies of collegiate athletics). Figure 1 provides future organizational and institutional concepts for scholars who study ADIOs and for practitioners who work in these roles and/or are involved in the adoption of them. The organizational and institutional concepts proposed are relevant to examining ADIO agency (institutional logics and institutional work), how the position sticks and becomes legitimized in select athletic departments (institutionalization), and how ADIOs are relevant (or not) to an athletic department's organizational culture (organizational culture theory). Although not extensively discussed in this paper, future research must study the identity characteristics of ADIOs, specifically Black and of Color ADIOs, to better understand how to support positive occupational outcomes for this underrepresented group. Additionally, the

racial and gender identities of ADIOs may influence how they navigate and enact their leadership agenda as it pertains to diversity, inclusion, and equity.

Moving forward, I believe there is ample opportunity to build upon Figure 1. Currently, Figure 1 explores the emergence of ADIOs by drawing upon theoretical assertations of organizational institutionalism. However, what other lenses can be applied to understand the unique positionality and emerging trend of ADIOs in collegiate athletic departments? Moreover, I challenge the field to consider what a successful ADIO looks like in praxis. Meaning, even if an ADIO position becomes institutionalized in an athletic department, the actor holding the position may still encounter organizational issues not accounted for in Figure 1. Thus, the model can be expanded to consider what unique institutional and organizational conditions are necessary for ADIOs to perceive themselves as enacting meaningful change. This paper approached the emergence of ADIOs through a critical lens and addressed concerns of ADIO leadership as symbolic rather than substantive. Although not accounted for in this paper, there may be benefits to symbolic ADIO leadership, and the symbolism of the position may assist with how ADIOs advance their diversity agenda. Thus, Figure 1 can be utilized as a foundational understanding to the emergence of ADIOs, but supplemental longitudinal empirical investigations are needed to support how the ADIO position can be utilized to address structural and policy issues of diversity, inclusion, and equity in collegiate athletic departments.

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