

Call for Papers

Special Issue of the *Journal of Sport Management*

Sport Leadership: A New Generation of Thinking

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While we consider leadership theory and research to be constantly evolving, over the past 10 years we see a significant shift away from a pre-occupation with formal, assigned leaders (e.g., CEOs) toward greater emphasis on (what has been variously described as) the **social construction of leadership** (Grint, 2005). This perspective views leadership as a social, collaborative, relational experience focusing on the idea that leadership emerges from the interactions and constructions of people in a particular context (Grint, 2011; Kihl, Leberman, & Schull, 2010; Ospina & Foldy, 2009). In this, leadership is viewed as a **collective achievement**, not something that belongs to an individual (Cullen-Lester & Yammarino, 2016).

This is an example of an innovative turn in leadership thinking that we consider has important implications for the study of leadership in sport management, organisations and systems, (or ‘sport leadership’). In what way have we kept pace with this new generation of leadership thinking? While our field of sport management is perhaps too small to limit a special issue on sport leadership to submissions orientated toward the social construction of leadership, we do propose to encourage approaches that consider **multilevel analysis** (Burton, 2015; Fink, 2008; Welty Peachey, Damon, Zhou, & Burton, 2015) and fresh approaches to leadership. As explained by Welty Peachey et al (2015) in their 40 year review of leadership research in sport management, multilevel analysis of leadership research includes individuals, dyads, teams, groups, and organisations. We would also add systems. We agree that, “There is a critical need to incorporate multilevel investigations into our work to develop sport-focused leadership theory ...” (p. 578) in a way that appreciates the diverse contexts and ways within which leadership occurs within our sector.

A multilevel approach to leadership expands on a foundational bias in the literature toward researching traits and characteristics of individual leaders (often white, male (Burton, 2015)) where **leader-centred perspectives** and theories such as transformational, transactional and charismatic, have taken prominence (Welty Peachey et al., 2015). A response to concerns about the leader-centric focus (sometimes referred to as the hero leader – often propagated by the sports media) has been the emergence of **follower-centred perspectives on leadership** (Uhl-Bien, Riggio, Lowe, & Carsten, 2014). Still relatively new to the leadership theory debate, this more expansive view of leadership aligns with the social construction of leadership, and has also helped to advance a resurgence of alternative theories such as emergent and servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1997; Parris & Welty Peachey, 2013). Such approaches have extended mainstream leadership research and practice but need more exploration in sport settings (O’Boyle, Murray, & Cummins, 2015). We also point to the emergence of **self leadership** and **emotional intelligence** as a central aspect of new leadership thinking that complements a more expansive view of leadership theory (Schneider, 2012). As Pearce and Manz (2005) offer, “In contrast to the traditional approach to leadership development, we argue that followers should also be included in leadership development efforts in order to prepare them to exercise responsible self-leadership and to effectively utilise shared leadership” (p. 130).

We consider there to be immediate relevance of this broader view of leadership for a special issue on sport leadership for the *Journal of Sport Management*. Most notably, a focus on

informal/emergent leadership and followership would be valued alongside assigned leaders, in combination with the encouragement of leadership research at multiple levels. A special issue orientated in this way would serve as an innovative, thought provoking resource for sport management academics and those in practice seeking to understand new ways of leadership within sport organisations and sport systems around the globe.

Theme and topics of the special issue:

The overall theme for this special issue is: **Sport Leadership: A New Generation of Thinking**. Papers adopting either a theoretical, conceptual, or empirical approach to the study of sport leadership that embrace new leadership thinking would be especially encouraged. In this way, the special issue would bring together a collection of papers that demonstrate the variety of approaches to sport leadership in order to map out future directions for research on sport leadership. Suggested topics of focus include (but are not limited to):

- **Collective sport leadership** - Cullen-Lester and Yammarino's (2016) exploration of collective and network approaches to leadership establishes leadership as a collective behaviour where leadership in organisations and other collectives is considered to "reside in the interactions between people thereby constituting a network of relationships that emerges and shifts over time" (p. 1). We contend that sport organisations and sport systems (leadership within and across organisations) would greatly benefit from empirical and conceptual work that explores leadership as a collective phenomenon.
- **Social construction of sport leadership** – as with the above, this view stresses the importance of context in the leadership dynamic. This matters because, as a body of scholars, we argue that the sport context has special characteristics that combine often competing elements of high performance and community interests, not-for-profit and commercial sensibilities, and a professional workforce alongside voluntary contribution (Ferkins, Shilbury & McDonald, 2009). Renewed investigations of the social construction of leadership grounded in the sport context is likely to yield new insights.
- **Multilevel analysis of sport leadership** – encouraging the investigation of multilevel analysis of leadership within the sport setting/system(s) is also likely to yield new insights and create future research and theory development opportunities (Welty Peachey et al., 2015).
- **Sport leadership and diversity** – leadership studies in sport management that have focused on elements such as gender, age, sexuality, race and ethnicity have offered rich insights about the leadership dynamic (Cunningham, 2010; Fink, Pastore, & Riemer, 2001; also see Ospina & Foldy, 2009). To date, we have not fully embraced the exploration of diversity in sport leadership.
- **Women in sport leadership** - the social construction theory has been widely used in understanding gender, and as noted above, the theory is increasingly used to understand leadership. At the nexus is the construction of leadership roles between men and women. The highly masculine, uber-competitive, and hierarchal nature of the sport industry offers a particularly meaningful context for understanding how leadership roles differ and, more importantly, understand how to manipulate follower perceptions to equalize the representation of women in sport leadership roles.
- **Leadership in sport governance** – surprisingly, governance and leadership (in any context) have rarely been explored as complementary of each other and little is known about the impact of one's theoretical frameworks on the other's field (Erakovic & Jackson, 2012; Pye,

2002). We propose that much insight could be gained from further exploring these two areas concurrently within the sport context.

- **Self and emotional intelligence in sport leadership** – as Schneider (2012) notes, this is one of the missing elements of leadership within the sport management literature. The idea that leadership begins with self and self awareness followed by social and emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2005; Pearce & Manz, 2005) is potentially a major gap of investigation within our context that has grown significantly in literature beyond sport management.
- **The dark side of sport leadership** – understanding the characteristics of unhealthy and dysfunctional leadership can enlighten future sport leaders of the dangers they could confront. Case studies identifying the traits and behavioural practices of these leaders could promote constructive debate for innovative solutions to deter and restrict corrupt leadership practices (Tomlinson, 2014).
- **Ethical sport leadership** – given the FIFA, IAAF and IOC scandals and regular indiscretions by players and coaches, there is a need for further exploration in this area. This also still appears to be a salient topic in business schools as they are criticized for developing leaders without any exposure to ethical leadership perspectives while at the university and who, subsequently, make poor decisions in practice. There is also scope to explore how ethical leadership is/should be intertwined with sport governance (Sherry & Shilbury, 2007).
- **Leadership background** - to what degree do managers in sport organisations need to have sporting backgrounds to be effective leaders? This is an interesting topic in relation to entry and advancement into leadership positions in sport and worthy of further consideration (Swanson & Kent, 2014).

Submission guidelines:

Manuscripts should follow the guidelines in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (www.apa.org), and should be prepared in accordance with the *Journal of Sport Management* “Instructions to Authors” (www.humankinetics.com/JSM/journalAbout.cfm). Manuscripts must not be submitted to another journal while they are under review by the *Journal of Sport Management*, nor should they have been previously published.

Manuscripts should be submitted **no later than April 30, 2017** using ScholarOne. Authors should indicate in their cover letter that the submission is to be considered for the Special Issue ‘Sport Leadership: A New Generation of Thinking’.

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