Investigating Changes in Gender Stratification in the Front Offices of Major League Baseball (MLB) Organizations

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Introduction
The field of sport management has often been characterized by male-dominated environments where both palpable and obscure forms of discrimination contribute to the unequal treatment and representation of women, known as "chilly climates" (Cunningham, 2019). Although efforts have been made to promote female involvement in sport, previous research has suggested that both amateur and professional power structures of many sports tend to favor men and exclude women from positions of authority (White & Kay, 2006). However, prior work on gender stratification in sports has generally examined the realm of college athletics (Welch & Sigelman, 2007). Thus, the current study aims to investigate the persistence of the chilly climate in front offices of Major League Baseball (MLB) organizations, as well as the progress, if any, that the league has made over the years.

Method
Data were collected from the MLB’s Racial and Gender Report Card (RGRC) produced by The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sports (TIDES). The RGRC designates letter grades and reports the percentage of women working in various positions in the MLB. For instance, an A would be earned if 40% of employees were women, B for 35%, C for 30%, D for 25%, and F for below 25%. We compiled figures for the following positions: Major League Central Offices, CEO/Presidents, General Manager/President of Baseball Operations, Vice President, Senior Administrators, Team Professional Administrators, Physicians, and Head Trainers. We recorded the gender grade, total number of employees and women in the occupations, and overall grade for the MLB from the 2004 to 2018 season.

Results
Preliminary analyses were performed using a series of simple linear regressions with year as an explanatory variable. Initial results reveal that overall gender grades and percent composition of women in the MLB has not meaningfully changed since 2004. Major League Central Office and CEO/President positions have experienced decreases in grades and proportion of women represented. There was an improvement in women holding Senior Administrator and Team Vice President positions. No compelling change in women's representation for Team Professional Administrator, Majority Owner, and General Manager/President of Baseball Operations positions was found. For Physicians, Head Trainers, percent of General Manager/President of Baseball Operations, an F grade was designated and/or there was no representation of women in these positions during this period. Thus, a linear model could not be estimated due to zero inflation. However, visual inspection of the time series plots confirmed no compelling changes in the assigned grades or percent composition for these positions.

Discussion
Further analysis of the data is currently ongoing. The findings from this research contribute to the field of sport management by highlighting how women have been neglected in participating in various aspects of MLB teams. While the MLB has made some efforts in creating initiatives to help diversify their workforce, results indicate that meaningful shifts in the representation of women have not been made. We hope that our study spurs strides for changes in the opportunities that women have not only in the MLB, but also other sports.