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Socio-Cultural Examination of the Collegiate Experiences of White International Student-Athletes at Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the United States

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A SOCIO-CULTURAL EXAMINATION OF THE COLLEGIATE EXPERIENCES OF
WHITE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT-ATHLETES AT HISTORICALLY BLACK
(TITLE)
COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

BY

Jana Matouskova

THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

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IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

2004

YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
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Abstract

A socio-cultural examination of the collegiate experiences of white international student-athletes at historically black colleges and universities in the United States

Jana Matouskova

The purpose of this study was to identify and examine aspects of the academic, athletic, and social environments that impact the collegiate experiences of white international student-athletes at two historically black colleges and universities, Hampton University and Bethune-Cookman College. The secondary purpose was to explore the culture of these athletes.

Nineteen white international student-athletes participated in this qualitative research. All subjects were interviewed through e-mail, and five of them were also interviewed personally on the campus of Hampton University.

Data analysis revealed five major themes and patterns regarding their experiences at historically black universities. The students felt that they have been greatly influenced by the African-American culture. They all perceived academics to be more important in their college life than athletics and they were all academically very successful. The fact of being a white athlete at a historically black college was also associated with forming a separate cultural group with other members of the athletic team based on common interests, values, attitudes, behaviors and lifestyles. Most of the athletes felt that a historically black university was a right choice for them at the time and it helped them tremendously in their personal growth.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this master's thesis to my parents, Pavla and Jiri Matouskovi, who have been extremely supportive throughout my entire academic and athletic career.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

International white student-athletes are considered to be a non-traditional segment of students attending historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). They go through a unique and special challenge during their studies at HBCUs while experiencing university life from a minority perspective. White international student-athletes are considered to be the only “true” group of white students at HBCUs because they live in residence halls and directly interact with the campus community in all aspects of their lives. Other white students who attend HBCUs are usually older and commuting, attending evening classes. These students do not live on-campus and do not socialize with black students.

The first higher educational institutions for blacks were founded in the 19th century. Historically, HBCUs had two major missions: providing the education for black lawyers, teachers and doctors in the racially-segregated society and preparing them for positions of leadership within the African-American community. Currently, there are 103 historically black colleges and universities in the United States located in 19 states and the District of Columbia; 53 private and 50 public institutions. In 1993, out of almost 300,000 students attending HBCUs, 13.1% were white (Wenglinsky, 1999). Out of 3,688 institutions of higher learning in the United States, only three percent are considered to be HBCUs, however, they enroll 21 percent of all black college students (Wenglinsky, 1999). Four of these HBCUs have white students as a majority of those enrolled - Bluefield State College, West Virginia State College, Lincoln University, and Kentucky

State University. In contrast, only three HBCUs have entirely black enrollments (U.S. Department of Education, 1991).

HBCUs are leading institutions in awarding baccalaureate degrees to black students in the Biological Sciences, Physical Sciences, Mathematics, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Computer Sciences and Education (Hoffman, 1996). In the past decade, there have been several questions raised about the HBCUs' racially homogenous student body, and judges in the states of Mississippi and Alabama put several practices in place that force these colleges to "desegregate" (Lee 1999; Turner 2002).

The main focus of the study is Hampton University and Bethune-Cookman College. Hampton University was founded in 1868 in Hampton, Virginia. It is a private institution with 5,787 students, out of which 0.8 are international students and three percent white students (http://studentsreview.com/VA/HU_i.html#demograpch). Bethune-Cookman College is a private institution with 2,724 students, located in Daytona Beach, Florida. Seven percent of its student body is composed of international students and one and half percent of white students (http://www.studentsreview.com/FL/BC_i.html#demograpch).

Much has been written regarding college experiences of black athletes at predominantly white institutions; however, there was no research done focusing on the collegiate experience of white athletes at HBCUs. Conrad and Brier (1997) identified 14 major factors influencing white students' enrollment at HBCUs. These factors cluster into three major categories - academic program offerings, student financial support, and characteristics of an institution. According to this study, white students were most likely to enroll into HBCUs that offered high-demand programs and financial support in terms

volleyball and soccer. However there have been no research reports investigating their experiences. Twenty-six historically black 4-year colleges and universities have been identified on the Internet as having full information about the composition of their athletic teams. Out of these 26 colleges, 17 institutions (66 percent) were found to have 88 white international student-athletes on their athletic rosters from 25 different countries (Appendix B). The most common sports for these international participants were tennis, golf and volleyball. Hampton University, Bethune-Cookman College, Norfolk State University, South Carolina University and Florida A & M University were found to have the most international athletes on their sports teams.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify and examine various aspects of the collegiate experience of international white student-athletes at historically and predominantly black university campuses. Areas of examination of athletes' lives include academics, athletics, and social life. The secondary purpose is to explore and examine the cultural environment of white student-athletes at HBCUs.

Research Questions

1. What are the major academic, athletic, and social factors which impact the experience of international white student-athletes at Hampton University and Bethune-Cookman College?
2. Why do these athletes enroll into historically black colleges?

3. What role does the sport play in the lives of white intercollegiate athletes at HBCUs?
4. What components comprise the culture of white athletes at HBCUs?

Scope of the Study

The research context is the Division I men and women's collegiate athletics (tennis, track and field) at Hampton University and Bethune-Cookman College.

Importance of the Study

In our rapidly changing world, we become witnesses of a greater and deeper mixture of ethnicities and cultures in all settings and aspects of our lives. In the United States of America this trend is reflected in sports as well as in the educational system.

The group of international white student-athletes at HBCUs is the first wave of a new multicultural trend as, in the same sense, were black male student-athletes attending predominantly white universities in 1960s. Therefore, it is extremely important to begin a body of research on this new tendency within higher institutions in the United States.

Researchers in the social science fields of sport sociology and sport psychology must begin to build a systematic body of literature that addresses this issue. In American higher education, there is a need for more information about HBCUs' racially diverse student body and what message the attendance of white international student-athletes at HBCUs sends to American society.

Limitations of the Study

The findings of this study are specific to the white international athletes at the two historically black colleges, and are not applicable to white American students or student-athletes.

Definitions of Terms

Black racism refers to the discrimination of white people by people of color. It is known to exist; but because blacks are seldom in positions of economic, social or political dominance, the influence of black racism on the lives of white Americans is negligible (Allen, 1985).

Cultural identity is the way in which individuals define and express themselves, and by which they want to be recognized.

Culture refers to any group of people who share common lifestyles, beliefs, values, customs, and behaviors.

Historically Black College or University is an institution where the majority of the student population is composed of African-American students and has been throughout the history of the institution. In 1965, the U.S. Congress formally designated Historically Black Colleges and Universities as the institutions which were founded before 1964, and whose principal mission was the education of African-Americans. Churches either immediately before the Civil War or in the following decades founded most of these colleges.

International students are those who were born and grew up in foreign countries and came to the United States for educational purposes.

Minority group is any group that is singled out in society based on physical or cultural characteristics and is treated differentially and unequally by the majority group. The defining features are a lack of social, political, and economic power (Jones, 1997).

Prejudice is a preconceived negative judgment, attitude or expectation that members of one group (racial, social, religious etc.) hold about another group.

Race is a classification of people into groups based on physical characteristics, such as skin color, hair texture, eye shape (Jones, 1997).

Racism is a set beliefs or practices that discriminate against individuals based on their racial characteristics, and it refers to strong and deeply rooted social biases primarily against people of color. Racism is the belief in the superiority of one race over another and it is learned through the social channels such as family, religion, media etc.

Subculture is a distinct cultural group that shares unique values, beliefs, norms and lifestyles that arise out of social interaction within a unique social situation (Donnelly, 1981).

Triple jeopardy is a concept proposed by D. King (1988) in order to describe a relationship between racism, sexism, and classism; these three simultaneous oppressions are widely used and accepted as the conceptualization of black women's position in American society. In the context of this research triple jeopardy refers to the situation in which the international white students at a historically black college are singled out based on three factors – their race, nationality and athletic participation.

White international student-athletes are students who have their origins in Europe, Australia, Asia, Middle East, North Africa, North America and South America. In the context of this research, students from the United States, Caribbean and Sub-Saharan Africa were excluded.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

As stated earlier, there has been no research conducted on the experiences of white student-athletes at HBCUs. Therefore, the literature review will first focus on the historically black colleges and universities and their cultural richness, unique role, and special mission in the past as well as in the present. Second, the literature review will focus on trends and patterns in enrollment of white students to HBCUs and the schools' recruitment strategies. Last, there will be a few articles that mention the presence and experience of international white athletes at HBCUs; however, none of them can be considered as a valid research study. Rather, they are general accounts of white international student-athletes' occurrence in the collegiate sports competition while representing an HBCU.

According to Daniels (1999), it is possible to find some hostility towards whites in the black community; however it is never pervasive because forgiveness, tolerance and reconciliation are traits that are deeply imbedded in black culture. There is no history of black people systematically advocating or conducting campaigns of hatred and terror against white people; therefore, isolated incidents of overt hostility or violence by blacks towards whites are the exception and not the rule. Daniel notes that, by definition, racism is the capacity or power to translate prejudice and bigotry into custom, policy or law. Based on the American history, black people have never had the predisposition or the power to oppress white people.

Historically, most of the analysis of racial relations in sports has focused on black male athletes. However, according to Birrell (1989), this trend reduces diversity in sport because it associates the concept of "race" with being black and the term "black athlete" with being a "black male athlete". Thus, this analysis excludes females as well as other racial identities. In this paper, I suggest a new focus emphasizing the interrelationship between the variables of race, sport, and citizenship status.

Body of the Literature

The literature review will focus on (a) the history of historically black colleges and universities in the United States; (b) role of HBCUs in American society; (c) Hampton University and Bethune-Cookman College; (d) reasons why students choose an HBCU; (e) presence of white students at HBCUs; (f) phenomenon of international white athletes at HBCUs; and (g) analysis of culture and subculture in relation to sports.

History of Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Historically black colleges and universities were established in the late 1800s to educate African-Americans who had been deprived of access to any level of formal education. Before these schools were established, the opportunity for African-Americans to receive higher education was very rare because whites considered blacks either subhuman or, at best, intellectually and morally inferior. Christian churches played a key role in the establishment of HBCUs. The first higher education institution for blacks was

founded in Cheyney, Pennsylvania in 1837. Two other black institutions followed it - Lincoln University at Pennsylvania (1854), which was a college for men established by the Presbyterian Church, and Wilberforce University in Ohio, a college for women established by the African Methodist Episcopal Church in 1856. Although these institutions were called "universities," initially they served as elementary schools and high schools. Once these institutions began postsecondary programs in the early 1900s, the emphasis was placed on the liberal arts, languages, humanities and sciences (Griffith, 1996; Wenglinsky, 1999).

Following the establishment of the Morrill Act after the Civil War in 1862, all states with racially segregated public higher education systems had to provide a land-grant institution for black students wherever a land-grant institution was established for white students. As a result, 17 black land grant schools were established in the southern and border states: University of Maryland-Eastern Shore, Alabama A&M University, The University of Arkansas-Pine Bluffs, Delaware State College, Florida A&M University, North Carolina A&T State University, Fort Valley State College, Kentucky State University, Southern University-Baton Rouge, Alcorn State University, South Carolina State University, Tennessee State University, Prairie View A&M University, Virginia State University, West Virginia State College, Lincoln University in Missouri, and Langston University. These institutions taught liberal arts, yet they also emphasized agricultural, mechanical, and industrial training.

The U.S. Supreme Court's 1896 decision in *Plessy vs. Ferguson* established a "separate but equal" system in public education. Based on this doctrine, educational

facilities were not supposed to be segregated as long as they were fiscally equal (Wenglinsky, 1999).

In 1953, there were more than 32,000 students enrolled in private black institutions such as Fisk University, Hampton Institute, Howard University, Meharry Medical College, Morehouse College, Spelman College and Tuskegee Institute in addition to over 43,000 students enrolled in public black colleges. HBCUs enrolled 3,200 students in graduate programs as well. However, black students were also increasingly admitted to traditionally white graduate and professional schools if their program of study was not available at HBCUs (U.S. Department of Education, 1991).

In 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* rejected the “separate but equal” doctrine and held that racially segregated public schools are unconstitutional. This decision ordered the schools to desegregate, nevertheless, most HBCUs still remained segregated with poorer facilities and budgets compared to traditionally white institutions (Wenglinsky, 1999).

In 1964, the Congress passed Title VI of the Civil Rights Act in order to provide a mechanism to ensure equal opportunity in federally assisted programs and activities. Title VI prohibited the spending of federal funds on segregated schools. In 1977, the federal government was ordered to establish a specific set of criteria in order to promote desegregation. One of the major changes was an expansion of non-minority enrollment at HBCUs by providing the colleges with appropriate resources and high demand academic program offerings (U.S. Department of Education, 1991).

In 1980, President Jimmy Carter established a federal program (Executive Order 12232) in order to improve the quality of education at historically black colleges and

universities. President George Bush Sr. established a Board of Advisors on historically black colleges and universities within the Department of Education (Executive Order 12677) and in 1993, President Bill Clinton signed Executive Order 12876 in order to advance capacities of HBCUs and increase their participation in federal programs (Hoffman, 1996).

Out of 3,688 institutions of higher learning in the United States, only three percent are considered to be HBCUs, however, they enroll 21 percent of all black college students (Wenglinsky, 1999). HBCUs are characterized by high numbers of women students and small university sizes with 4-year private institutions being considered as students' favorite school alternative (Hoffman, 1996).

Today, there are 103 HBCUs with almost 300,000 students enrolled. On average, 13.1% of these students are white. HBCUs are located in 19 states: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia as well as in the District of Columbia and Virgin Islands. Fifty-three HBCU institutions are private and 50 are public institutions. Eighty-nine institutions are four-year colleges or universities and 24 of them are two-year institutions (Wenglinsky, 1999).

Enrollment at HBCUs rose from 234,000 in 1980 to 257,000 in 1990. In the year of 2000, there were almost 276,000 students enrolled in America's historically black colleges and universities. There was an overall increase in non-black enrollment from 42,000 in 1980 to 48,000 in 2000 due to a significant increase in non-black female enrollment; it rose from 18,000 to almost 28,000 in 2000. In contrast, non-black male

enrollment dropped from 25,000 in 1980 to 21,000 in 2000 (Digest of Education Statistics, 2002). Overall, enrollment at HBCUs rose by about 25 percent between 1986 and 1994, however, most of this increase was caused by high numbers of women and part-time students entering HBCUs (Hoffman, 1996).

In the school year of 2002-2003, the five largest historically black colleges and universities were: Florida A&M University with 12,316 students; Howard University with 10,010 students; Tennessee State University with 8,664 students; Texas Southern University with 8,119 students; and Norfolk State University with 6,721 students (<http://www.studentsreview.com/>). There are a number of very small HBCUs with 14 of them having less than 500 students (Hoffman, 1996).

According to Coaxum (1999) HBCUs are a richly diverse set of institutions within higher education. Therefore he has classified HBCUs into seven major categories: (1) Nontraditional HBCUs, (2) Tuition Driven HBCUs, (3) Diverse Programmatic HBCUs, (4) Highly Accessible HBCUs, (5) Traditional HBCUs, (6) Community-Oriented HBCUs, and (7) Success Driven HBCUs.

Role of HBCUs in American Society

According Hoffman (1996), HBCUs are leading institutions in awarding baccalaureate degrees to black students in the Agriculture and Natural Resources, Biological Sciences, Physical Sciences, Mathematics, Computer Sciences and Education. HBCUs enroll 21 percent of all black undergraduates; however they award 28 percent of all baccalaureate degrees earned by black college students (Wenglinsky, 1999). HBCUs

have also provided undergraduate training for 75 percent of all black persons holding a doctorate degree; 75 percent of all black officers in the armed forces; 80 percent of all black federal judges; 75 percent of black lawyers; 85 percent of black doctors; 50 percent of black engineers; 45 percent of black U.S. Congress members; and 50 percent of black business executives (Grimes-Robinson, 1998).

Historically black colleges' graduates include Mary McLeod Bethune, educator and founder of Bethune-Cookman College; W.E.B. DuBois, sociologist, educator, and co-founder of the NMCP; Patricia Harris, former Secretary, U.S. Departments of Health, Education, and Welfare and Housing and Urban Development; Martin Luther King, Jr., the Nobel Peace Prize laureate; Leontyne Price, world renowned soprano; writers Toni Morrison and Alice Walker, black political leaders such as Douglas Wilder, Louis Sullivan, and Andrew Young, and television personalities such as Oprah Winfrey and Phylicia Rashad (American Association of University Professors, 1996).

According to the U.S. Department of Education (1991), HBCUs offer a valuable educational option for minority as well as non-minority students. HBCUs are attractive because of their cost, cultural and racial diversity, remediation and retention numbers, faculty support and several new program offerings. Many HBCUs have lower tuition than predominantly white institutions and offer a broad range of financial support. Students from various socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds attend HBCUs, and this aspect makes these institutions attractive to students interested in the Humanities, Sociology, Psychology, Economics, Government, Urban planning, etc.

HBCUs aim to be sensitive to the needs of foreign students and provide students with an opportunity to associate with different nationalities and to learn about cultural

differences. Many HBCUs have a racially diverse student enrollment at the undergraduate and graduate levels and the majority of HBCUs also has a racially diverse faculty and administration. HBCUs are very supportive to students with special needs, and they also offer a broad spectrum of effective remedial programs for students. The faculty is known for its commitment to teaching, student service oriented activities and its high quality student-teacher interactions. Several HBCUs also offer high demand programs such as engineering, pharmacy, computer science and architecture (U.S. Department of Education, 1991).

According to Hrabowski's speech (2002) at the Hampton University 2002 graduation ceremony, while more than 80 percent of African-American college students are now enrolled in predominantly white institutions, HBCUs still produce more than a quarter of the nation's African-American college graduates. HBCUs are very sensitive to diverse cultural backgrounds and they develop a sense of loyalty among students, faculty, staff, and alumni. According to Hrabowski, the president of the University of Maryland, the nation still does not fully understand and appreciate how important HBCUs have been in transforming the lives of millions of Americans for more than a century.

According to Wagener (1998), HBCUs focus on students who are underprepared by conventional measures to success at college. They foster the intellectual and social development of their students and they see it as the responsibility of administrators and faculty. The administration emphasizes the importance of graduating students as the institutional mission. HBCUs educate one of the most disadvantaged groups of students in the nation. More than one-third of students enrolled in 39 private HBCU come from families with a total income of less than \$25,000 in contrast to approximately 20 percent

of families of students attending private nonsectarian colleges nationally. African-American freshmen tend to come from less-educated families, often with a single parent, thus with fewer household resources to rely on than the average white student.

Another positive factor of the HBCU experience is the exposure of young African-American students to black professors, professionals, and their fellow students in leadership positions. Students learn in the environment where they feel comfortable and safe and where they can follow the role models from their own culture (Lee, 1999).

Unquestionably, HBCUs played a remarkable role in the development of African-American culture and society. HBCUs were the first institutions to collect systematically the works of African-American artists, and today they are the repositories of the most important works that African-Americans produced from the 1700s until the 1970s. For example, if it were not for the HBCUs, the country would have lost much of the black contribution to the visual arts (Lee, 1999).

In contrast to all the positive achievements of HBCUs, several questions have been raised regarding the future of these institutions in the U.S. higher education system in the 21st century. According to Turner (2002), several officials argue about the schools' mission and their societal value in the contemporary society. The federal government has issued an order to eliminate segregation in colleges and universities across the United States. Specifically, a 1992 decision of the Supreme Court in *U.S. v. Fordice* ordered the state of Mississippi to eliminate its HBCUs because the state had failed two of three key tests used to determine whether a state's higher education system had been successfully desegregated.

In general, HBCUs face many problematic situations such as increasing costs, legislative oversight, accreditation pressure, part-time faculty as well as competition from white institutions. Turner believes that HBCUs need to be re-structured in order to meet the rapidly changing demands of the American society.

According to Lee (1999) several critics question the viability of HBCUs. They say that HBCUs violate the country's commitment to diversity and multiculturalism by centering on their racial composition rather than on their performance. In addition some critics argue that students in racially homogeneous environments are not prepared for the real off-campus world. On the other hand, their opponents state that no university is culturally neutral. For instance, Harvard University at Cambridge, Massachusetts embodies a New England Yankee culture; Brandeis University at Waltham, Massachusetts builds on a Jewish legacy; and Georgetown University at Washington maintains its Roman Catholic tradition.

Therefore, although the role and the mission of historically black colleges and universities were clear in the past, it is being questioned today. Should they be desegregated or should they remain dedicated to the higher education of African-Americans? It is almost impossible to desegregate HBCUs because of the deep tradition that black students associate with attending those colleges. These go hand-in-hand with stereotypes that white Americans apply to attending these colleges. In addition, if educators want to desegregate HBCUs, they first need to have a look at the racial make-up of predominantly white institutions and consider their racial desegregation. White institutions have an average of 8 percent of black student enrollment which is much less than the enrollment of white students at historically black colleges, which averages 13

percent (Grimes-Robinson, 1998). In addition, HBCUs have never used racially biased admission procedures and do not have a history of admission discrimination based on the race of an applicant.

Hampton University and Bethune-Cookman College

Hampton University was founded in 1868 during the Reconstruction era as Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute. According to the Hampton University website, the school was established “to train selected young men and women to go out to teach and lead their people, and to build a viable industrial system on the strength of self-sufficiency, intelligent labor and solid moral character.” In 1878 Hampton began its commitment to serve as a multicultural institution by opening their doors to the Native American population. In 1984 Hampton Institute changed the name to Hampton University (<http://www.hamptonu.edu/about/heritage.htm>).

Hampton University’s 204 acre campus extends along the Hampton River in Hampton, Virginia. Hampton University had 5,787 students in the school year of 2002-2003, out of which 95% were African-Americans, three percent Caucasian and 0.8 were international students. Sixty-two percent of students were female and fifty-two percent of faculty members were African-Americans. Tuition cost in the year of 2002-2003 was \$12,252 and 72% of students received financial aid (http://studentsreview.com/VA/HU_i.html#demograpch). According to Wagener (1998), Hampton University’ emphasis is on character development, leadership, service to community and society. It also enforces an

elaborate code of conduct. The priority of Hampton President William R. Harvey is to build character and values in the students.

Hampton University has been continuously ranked by *Black Issues in Higher Education* magazine among the top 10 in graduating African-Americans with Biology, Business Management, Communications, English, Journalism and Psychology degrees. Hampton was also ranked by *Black Enterprise* magazine in 2001 as the No. 4 leading college or university for African-American students (www.hamptonu.edu). According to Roach (2000), Hampton University was ranked 72nd in the 2000 "Most Wired Colleges" report by the periodical "Yahoo Internet Life." According to Princeton Review, Hampton University ranked No. 6 in the 2003 "Most Connected Campuses" survey. Hampton University was the only historically black university listed in the top 25 (Roach, 2004).

Bethune-Cookman College's 70 acre campus is located in Daytona Beach, Florida. The college had 2,724 students in the school year of 2002-2003, out of which 88.5% were African-Americans, 1.5% Caucasian and 6.9% were international students. Fifty-eight percent of students were female. Tuition cost in the year of 2002-2003 was \$9,810 and 90% of students received financial aid (http://www.studentsreview.com/FL/BC_i.html#demograpch). Bethune-Cookman College was founded in 1904 by Mary McLeod Bethune as Daytona Educational and Industrial Training School for Negro Girls. In 1923, the school was transformed into a co-ed high school, and in 1924, it became affiliated with the United Methodist Church. In 1931, it adopted its present name Bethune-Cookman College (www.bethune.cookman.edu).

Reasons Why Students Choose HBCUs

An article written by McDonough, Trent, & James (1997) provides insight into African-Americans' college choice decision-making and particularly, why African-American students choose HBCUs. Following are two questions that guided the research. What are the factors that affect the college choice decision-making processes of African American students? Do African-American students who choose predominantly white campuses have different college choice processes than African American students who choose HBCUs? This research combined traditional status-attainment models, college choice models, and additional structural and cultural dimensions based on the theories of Pierre Bourdieu. The model incorporates analyses of students' background characteristics, high school activities, college choice behaviors, and self-concept and goals. This study moves traditional college choice models of the psychological level, and imparts a sociological dimension that accounts for socioeconomic and racial status effects.

The data was drawn from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program's 1993 Freshman Survey of a national sample of 220,757 first-time, full-time freshmen from a diversity of 427 American colleges and universities. The Freshman survey contained questions regarding the students' background and demographics, experiences in high school, reasons for going to college, reasons for choosing their particular institution, expectations about college, and a number of questions regarding their values, attitudes, goals, self-concepts, and degree and career aspirations.

Overall results indicated that, compared with other freshmen, students from HBCUs are more often Baptist, come from families with incomes below \$20,000, have

lower high school grade point averages (GPAs) and lower Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) verbal scores. They expect to take longer than 5 years to receive their degrees, and choose their college based on its social reputation, because they did not get into any other college, and because a relative wanted them to attend that particular institution. Among all freshmen, 54% are female; however, for black freshmen, 61% are female. African-American students in general are also a little older. Thirty percent of all freshmen have parents who are separated, compared with 60% of the black freshmen. Black students are more likely than other students to attend college more than 500 miles away from home. Seventy percent of all freshmen get into their first choice institution, but only 55% of black students can achieve that. Overall, HBCU students emerge as more academically challenged than the national population of first-time, full-time freshmen. The most powerful predictor of HBCU attendance is "geography" followed by the student's religion, the school's social reputation, and their relative's wishes. The top three reasons why African Americans choose predominantly white institutions are because an athletic department recruits them, they wish to live near home, and they value the college's academic reputation.

The authors believe that the results of this study may offer insight into the current policy dilemma of attracting other-race students while still ensuring that HBCUs remain attractive to black students. HBCU recruiters should promote the success of their institutions in working with under-prepared students. Based on the strongest predictor of attendance - geography - HBCUs should also look for other-race students and non-traditional students in their local area (McDonough et al., 1997).

According to Owens (2001), possibility of choices for African Americans affects the enrollment numbers at HBCUs. From 1976 to 1994, the number of African-Americans at predominantly white colleges increased by around 40 percent. During the same period, enrollment at black schools rose by 20 percent. In 1999 enrollment at black schools increased less than 1 percent. These statistics show that out of about 1.5 million black students attending U.S. colleges and universities in 1999, 276,790 were enrolled at HBCUs. This trend forced many HBCUs to recruit other minorities as well as white students.

Black schools also have to contend with the legacy of funding inequities as far as the state and federal support for research and development, faculty improvements, and facility maintenance. HBCUs have to fight against the stereotype of an "inferior" institution, which many whites continue to attach to them. According to administrators, one of the most important reasons why more than 20 percent of African-American students continue to choose HBCUs is a comfort factor in addition to the family tradition, supportive environment and relatively small class sizes. The average cost of tuition and fees of \$7,089 is attractive as well; it is less than half the average tuition for private colleges nationally (Owens, 2001).

Wenglinsky (1996) used the National Postsecondary Student Aid Study of 1989-1990 (NPSAS) in order to identify the main reason for students to choose an HBCU. The nationally representative sample included 1,429 students attending HBCUs as well as predominantly white institutions. Students were given 15 possible reasons why they chose the particular school. The results revealed that students chose to attend an HBCU because their parents attended an HBCU and the school was more affordable than a

predominantly white college in terms of financial aid offered, lower tuition and cost of living.

Presence of White Students at HBCUs

The account of white presence at historically black colleges and universities focuses primarily on non-traditional white students. In general, they are usually older, often married and attend as part-time commuters. They may be attracted by the proximity and easy admission requirements and they usually live off-campus.

Is it necessary to integrate black colleges or should they remain racially unique based on their historical mission? If they remain purely black, they might be seen as an obstacle to desegregation practices. On the other hand, if they try to attract white students, it might be seen unconstitutional for them to use considerations of race as a positive factor in the recruiting and admission of students. Therefore the future of historically black colleges and universities has been called into question.

Conrad and Brier (1997) conducted a study aiming to identify the major factors influencing the matriculation of white students in historically black colleges and universities. Their research had two secondary purposes. The first was to examine the correspondence between their findings and the major determinants of college student choice as identified in studies of mostly white student selection of predominantly white

institutions. A second purpose was to derive statewide and institutional policies and practices that advance desegregation and encourage white students to attend HBCUs.

This study used an open-ended, multi-case study design representing five HBCUs: North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, Winston-Salem State University, Southern University at New Orleans, Kentucky State University, and Savannah State College. These schools were selected based on their success in terms of attracting white students. On-site visits were conducted during the fall of 1994, each lasting 1 to 2 days. Eighty individuals were interviewed: 32 administrators, 12 faculty members, and 36 students. Interviews generally lasted from 45 minutes to 1 hour. Interviews were open-ended in order to allow the respondents to elaborate on the following question: ">From your perspective, what are the major factors that lead white students to attend HBCUs?" Later, a rating instrument was developed. It used a 1 to 10 point scale in order to rate various factors on their importance in attracting white students to HBCUs. If an interviewee rated a factor of 7 or above, the factor was considered important.

The findings of this research indicate that the factors that attract whites to HBCUs are significantly different from factors that attract students to predominantly white institutions. The results identified 14 major factors associated with white students' choice to attend an HBCU, clustered into three categories - academic program offerings, student financial support, and institutional characteristics. Program offerings in high-demand fields, unique program offerings, alternative program delivery systems, graduate program offerings in high-demand fields, and positive reputation for quality constitute factors associated with academic program offerings. Two factors related to student financial

support, student scholarships and low cost of tuition and fees. Institutional characteristics included a positive image of school as a multicultural institution, supportive and inclusive campus culture, white student recruitment, articulation and cooperative agreements with predominantly white institutions, positive external relations with community and professional constituencies, safe environment, and attractive campus appearance.

Based on the findings, the authors advanced some statewide and institutional policies and practices to encourage whites to matriculate in HBCUs. First, the state should ensure that there are meaningful numbers of high-demand programs in the HBCUs, especially at master's level. Second, there must be adequate state funding for programs, personnel, and for facilities and equipment that attract white students. Substantial financial support in terms of scholarships is critical as well. HBCUs should strengthen their recruitment efforts as well as their images and reputations as multicultural institutions.

A similar study, conducted by Hossler (1997), tried to discover what factors influenced other-race students to attend HBCUs. The study used Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System data, catalogs, personal interviews, Office of Civil Rights reports, and a campus visit of eight HBCUs with other-race enrollments greater than 20% and six HBCUs with the lowest proportion of other-race enrollments. The purpose of this study was to identify demographic and institutional factors that have an impact on either low or high other-race enrollments.

The results indicated that most of the other-race students attending HBCUs were part-time students, enrolled in graduate programs and usually coming to the campuses in

the evenings. There were few or no other-race students who lived in the residence halls on campus. Most of the campuses were described as "black by day and white by night." HBCUs with higher enrollment numbers of other-race students were found to have in place financial aid programs specifically designed to attract other-race students. HBCUs with lower percentage of other-race enrollment were found to be located in the states with high proportions of African-Americans.

In the 1990s there have been several cases in the state of Mississippi and Alabama in which judges ordered the historically black colleges to use a significant amount of money in order to attract white students to their campuses.

In 1994, the U.S. District Judge Neal Biggers Jr. ordered the state legislature to set up a trust fund of \$5 million for Alcorn State University and Jackson State University. Later \$5 million of additional funding was set up for Mississippi Valley University. These historically black institutions were ordered to use 65 percent of their endowment trust fund income for scholarships that would attract white students to their campuses. According to the judge, 65 percent of scholarships must go to whites, however other non-African American students can be considered as well. The priority should be given to Mississippi residents, undergraduate students and full-time students. The minimum scholarships would be \$250 a semester, the maximum would cover all tuition, fees, room and board and scholarship recipients must maintain a 2.5 overall GPA in courses counting toward a degree (St. John, 2000).

In 1996, the U.S. District Judge Harold Murphy ordered the state of Alabama to give to its HBCUs, Alabama A&M University and Alabama State University, up to \$ 1 million a year for ten years for scholarships to recruit white students. The same year,

Alabama State had increased its white enrollment from 397 to 600 and the white enrollment accounted for more than 7.5 percent. In Alabama A&M University, white enrollment fluctuates between 5 and 6 percent due to the graduate school where almost half of the 1,500 students are white. In addition to the money for the scholarship programs, each school would receive \$ 1 million a year for fifteen years for endowment funds. However, each campus would be required to put 25 percent of the endowment proceeds back into its fund. As a result, Alabama A&M University and Alabama State offer full scholarships to white students with high school or junior college grades averaging B+ (Hollis, 1997).

Trends in recruitment and enrollment of whites were examined in Cross's (2001) article. From 1980 to 1992 white enrollments increased at several HBCUs. For example, at Fayetteville State University in North Carolina in 1992 whites made up 32.6 percent of the student body compared to 11.9 percent in 1980. In 1980 there were no white students at Prairie View A&M University in Texas. However by 1992 the white student body had increased to 7.2 percent. On the other hand, the white enrollment began to drop at some institutions. For instance, at Lincoln University in Missouri, which appeared to be on the road to becoming a primarily white institution, white attendance dropped from 83.1 percent in 1992 to 70.4 percent in 1997. At Langston University in Oklahoma, white enrollment dropped from 44.9 percent to 33.5 percent and at Delaware State University, white enrollment dropped from 34 percent to 21.8 percent.

According to Cross (2001) the dilemma of whether HBCUs should be permitted to adopt race-sensitive recruiting and admission policies specifically targeted to attract white students is a very controversial subject. Southern University in Louisiana,

Savannah State University, Fort Valley State College in Georgia, North Carolina Central University, Alabama A&M and the University of Arkansas have already adopted policies earmarked for recruiting white students. Southern University added a group of doctorate programs specifically designed to attract white students in the fields of Biomedical Sciences, Public Policy, Nursing, Informational Systems, Forestry, and Mathematics. Savannah State University in Georgia established a Marine Biology program, the only one in the state system. This program has attracted mostly white students. Fort Valley State College inaugurated a veterinary science program, the only one in the state other than at the University of Georgia. North Carolina Central University instituted programs in Criminal Justice and Nursing in an effort to attract white students. In addition, white students and faculty are encouraged to submit names of prospective white students who could be recruited to attend the university. The state of North Carolina allocated \$ 1.1 million annually for Minority Presence Program grants that are used primarily to provide scholarships for white students wishing to attend an HBCU.

One of the four colleges where white students constitute the majority of those enrolled is Bluefield State College in West Virginia. This college is the "whitest" HBCU in the nation with 92 percent of white enrollment and no black faculty. Desegregation began at Bluefield State College in 1950s, when white Korean War veterans started attending the school because of its cheap and convenient education. The shift in the composition of the student body reflected the demographic changes in West Virginia as well. The college used to be in the heart of the black coal mining community; however a decrease of coal mining industry caused the drop in the black population in West Virginia. Nevertheless, the institution still receives more than \$ 1 million annually in

federal funding because of its HBCU status. And Bluefield State College is not alone. There are three other historically black schools with significant white student bodies. West Virginia State College is 87 percent white, Lincoln University in Missouri is 67 percent white and Kentucky State University is 42 percent white. Twelve other HBCUs have a student body that is between 19 and 49 percent white (Roach, 1998).

According to Jonsson (2001), immigrant white students find the African-American social culture refreshing. However, most of the white Americans are discouraged by sharp differences in behavior and school rituals.

International White Athletes at HBCUs

As mentioned earlier, most of the non-traditional white students at HBCUs constitute older commuting students. However, there is one group of white students who experience the “real” on-campus living and these are the international white student-athletes. These students-athletes live in dormitories and are a vital part of college communities.

No research literature has been found on experiences of this group of students at historically black campuses. Nevertheless, I believe that this complex phenomenon is one of the new trends in the American educational system and therefore it deserves a further analysis.

In order to demonstrate this trend, I browsed the websites of 83 historically black 4-year colleges and universities in the United States. Out of 83 colleges, 17 schools did

not have athletics as a part of their educational experience. There were 40 colleges that had athletic teams; however they did not provide sufficient information regarding their rosters. Thus out of 26 colleges that remained as a part of this sample, 17 institutions (66 percent) was found to have 88 white international student-athletes on their athletic rosters (Appendix B). Female athletes significantly outnumbered (50 out of 88) the number of male athletes, which was found to be consisted with the statistical data from 2002.

According to this report, there was a significant increase in non-black female enrollment and decrease in non-black male enrollment between 1980 and 2000 (Digest of Education Statistics, 2002). The athletes represented 25 countries – Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Czech Republic, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Germany, Latvia, Peru, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Venezuela and Yugoslavia. Tennis was found to be the most popular sports alternative for international athletes with 50 participants; 15 athletes played golf; 12 athletes participated in volleyball; five in track and field and cross-country; four in soccer; and three in softball. Hampton University, Bethune-Cookman College, Norfolk State University, South Carolina University and Florida A & M University were found to have the most international athletes in their sports teams.

Therefore, based on these statistics, I strongly believe that the occurrence of white international student-athletes at HBCUs is not random; instead, it became a popular trend for athletes coming from abroad. The schools do not recruit only African-American athletes anymore; they look for the best competitors of any race following the example of predominantly white universities. Nevertheless, this finding contradicts Hossler's (1997)

research according to which part-time and commuting students are the only student population of other-race students attending HBCUs.

According to an article published in *Chronicle of Higher Education* (2000), every year the National Minority Golf Championships for historically black colleges and universities are being dominated by white players, primarily the ones from foreign countries. In the year of 2000 Bethune-Cookman College won the women's tournament and Hampton University finished second. Both teams had squads composed almost entirely of white players, most of them being from Great Britain and Australia. Florida A & M University's team had a roster of three black and two white players and Kentucky State University was led by two white Canadians. According to the article, a lot of coaches say that they cannot find quality talent within the minority golf and tennis community. Therefore, golf and tennis teams throughout the country, not just those at black colleges, recruit abroad heavily, seeking a deeper talent pool than they can find in the United States.

An article by Bobby Clay (1996) features Eddie Payton, golf coach at Jackson State University, who had four white players in his six-man NCAA championship team. According to Payton, "A golf ball does not care about the color of the person hitting it, so why should I?" Payton argues that sports teams focus more on winning than on the racial structure of their rosters. Hampton University's golf coach Burl Bowens agrees to this assertion: "I used to recruit only black golfers, now I look at the best player I can get." This recruitment strategy does not mean that the coaches at HBCUs forgot their roots or commitment to their institutions. They just do their best in order for their team to be successful.

Black college baseball teams seek alternative strategies to field their teams as well. There are less and less black children playing baseball, therefore, HBCUs are forced to recruit available players, regardless of their ethnic background. According to Greenlee, (2002), the striking example of the shift in the racial make-up of the teams is Florida A&M University baseball team, which has forty percent of players either of white or Hispanic background. Delaware State University has a 50-50 racial mix, and a third of the players at Bethune-Cookman College are Hispanic. Out of 11 teams in the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC), there are also only three African-American baseball coaches.

Analysis of Culture and Subculture in Relation to Sports

According to Daniels (1966), sports sociology is “concerned with the study of sport in society as it affects man's development, his forms of expression, his value systems, and the interrelationships of sport with other elements of the culture (p. 157).” Inspired by the works of French sociologists and cultural critics such as Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu, many scholars, such as Genevieve Rail, Jean Harvey and John MacAloon, scrutinized the sociology of sport. Their studies are pure appropriations of what Bourdieu and Foucault had to say in their works. Rail and Harvey (1995) and MacAloon (1988) highlighted key Foucaultian concepts such as “surveillance,” “discipline,” “technologies of the self,” and argued that these terms were crucial elements in their study of the sociology of sport. Foucault argued that the society and culture are based on various “discourses” which are in conflict with each other. Additionally, in the

case of MacAloon, it was mentioned that “no sport... can be analyzed in isolation from the total system of sporting practices which supplies distinctive value to each element according to its position” (MacAloon, p.151). That is to say, in order to evaluate what white international athletes experience at HBCUs, one has to look at their sports experience in relation to the college environment.

In summary, the sociology of sport is a sub-discipline of sociology that focuses on relationships between sport and society. It comprises of the study of the culture and social structure within sport, the study of sports and sport’s relationships within the larger society and its institutions, and the study of subcultures.

Donnelly (1981) defines a subculture as a group of people who share common values, beliefs, identities and lifestyles that arise out of social interaction within a unique social situation. Subcultures create their own forms of communication, entertainment, and ascribing value to their surrounding. According to McPherson (1989), “subcultures may evolve in opposition to the dominant culture or around a unique lifestyle considered different or deviant by members of the mainstream society” (p.249).” According to this definition, members within a subculture are considered to be either non-traditional or deviant members of the society. There has been a variety of researches examining different sport subcultures (e. g., Pearson, 1979; Hughson, 1998; Humphries, 1997; Wheaton, 2000).

It is important to distinguish between the concepts of “subculture” and “subworld.” Crosset and Beal (1997) have noticed an overuse of the term “subculture” and an under-use of the term “subworld”. On several occasions these two terms have even been used interchangeably. In contrast to a subculture, a social world, which is often

divided into subworlds, is not defined by its relation to the dominant culture but by the production of a "social object," such as sports or card collections (Unruh, 1983). The members of a social world share the language as well as the communication channels while in the process of producing a social object. Therefore, in summary, a subcultural analysis focuses more on a structurally subordinate group and their responses to their marginal position within a broader culture and subworld analysis emphasizes a distinct cultural process through which groups of people unite to create a "social object" (Crosset & Beal, 1997).

According to Arnold (1970), subcultures may be formed either as a result of a deprivation or dealing with a problem; or social distance, social conflict and awareness of lifestyle differences; or a shared frame of reference. Pearson (1979) developed a model of a subcultural emergence and development. He states that a new sport subculture emerges when people interested in a particular sport share a common social situation. Gradually, this group of people forms its own belief, value, and lifestyle and communication system. The participation in a subculture is a social process that teaches the subcultural members the values and beliefs of that particular subculture (e. g., Pearson, 1979; Kemp, 1999, Green & Chalip, 1998).

Every subculture has its notion of identity associated with it. New members of a subculture take on the subcultural identity by modeling and adopting attitudes, behaviors, speech and customs of established members of the subculture (Donnelly & Young, 1988; Baldwin & Norris, 1999; Haggard & Williams, 1992). This process of identity construction is based on a four-stage contingency model which includes presocialization, selection and recruitment, socialization, and acceptance stage (Donnelly & Young, 1988).

Presocialization refers to a prior contact with the subculture through friends, family members and so on. In this stage all the pertinent information about the characteristics of the particular subculture should be gathered. In the second stage an individual is selected based on certain criteria and recruited. During the socialization stage an individual is trained and initiated into the values and customs of a subculture. In the acceptance stage an individual demonstrates appropriate roles and identity adoption. In case that the identity was not established and an individual was not able to conform, he or she may face ostracism or banishment from the group.

According to Shamir (1992), the concept of identity composes of two elements - self-identity and social identity. Self-identity is the extent to which it has been incorporated into the self-concept by the participant. In contrast, social identity represents the identity that others associate with the participation in the activity.

There have been two major theories aiming to describe sport subcultures – interactionist and cultural studies theory. According to Coakley and Donnelly (2004), interactionist perspectives tend to concentrate upon relatively small-scale levels of social interaction, such as between individuals, small social groups and so on. Therefore, interactionist theories are beneficent in order to find out what sport means to participants and to see the world through the eyes of the participants. However, they cannot offer any insights into structured inequalities. According to Donnelly (1985), their approach to subcultural studies describes sport in isolation from the larger class, gender, national, and international culture. Therefore, interactionist theories lack a critical perspective and tend to be ahistorical and atheoretical (Crosset & Beal, 1997). In contrast, a cultural studies approach to subcultures tend to describe subcultures strictly in terms of the racial, class or

gender conflicts within the dominant culture which omits unique qualities within the sport itself (Albert, 1991).

Summary and Conclusions

In summary, historically black colleges and universities have played a unique role in American higher education since the beginning of their establishment. They have provided educational opportunities to an African-American population that was deprived of access to any white institution of higher education. Most of the historically black colleges and universities were established in the 19th Century and supported by affiliation with various churches. HBCUs are considered as an attractive educational option due to the low tuition, broad range of financial aid programs, greater cultural diversity, and a nurturing faculty support.

Black students consider HBCUs as “their” rightful place. It is a place where they feel completely free of a social pressure from outside. They can fully express themselves without any constraints or stigma attached to their opinions. In addition, they do not feel a need to pretend or conform to the “white standards.”

The presence of white students at HBCUs remains one of the least known and researched aspects regarding the American educational system and its diverse student body. The only investigated aspect of white presence at HBCUs is the reasons for their enrollment. White students are mostly attracted to unique program offerings and scholarships opportunities at HBCUs.

As stated earlier, there has been no previous research conducted on experiences of white student-athletes at historically black colleges and universities. Researchers in the fields of sport sociology and sport psychology must begin to build a systematic body of literature that addresses this issue. In the multicultural American society, there is a need for more information about historically black colleges and universities and their racially diverse student body. Research that focuses on the presence of white student-athletes at these universities is becoming urgent as more and more international athletes enter these institutions.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

The purpose of this study is to examine the unique and challenging experiences of white student-athletes at historically black colleges and universities. The research aims to identify the main factors of their athletic, academic, social, and cultural experiences.

Subjects

Consistent with Babbie's analysis of qualitative research (2001), this project used purposive or judgmental sampling, which is based on the selection of sample on the basis of knowledge of a population and the purpose of the study. The intention of this research was to focus on white members of athletic teams (tennis and track and field) at Hampton University in Virginia and Bethune-Cookman College in Florida. Hampton University and Bethune-Cookman College both compete in Division-1 Mid-Eastern Athletic

Conference and were selected because of the high occurrence of white athletes at these institutions. This selection is consistent with the discussion published in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (2000). According to this source, Hampton University and Bethune-Cookman College had the most white players on their teams during the National Minority Golf Championship.

The total sample included 19 student-athletes, 14 females and five males. All subjects fell into an age category between 20 and 23 years old with one exception being 26 years old. The average age was 22.1. One athlete considered himself as Hispanic, the rest identified as white. The subject pool included 11 Czech athletes, three Slovaks, two Australians, two Bulgarians and one Venezuelan athlete. Twelve out of 19 student-athletes attended Bethune-Cookman College and seven athletes went to Hampton University. Nine out of the total sample of 19 athletes spent four years at those colleges while the others' attendance ranged from one year to 3.5 years. Two athletes were identified as transfer students to predominantly white institutions. Major affiliations included Biology and Biomedicine, Computer Science, Hospitality Management, Public Relations and Advertising, International Studies, Business and Accounting, Finance, Graphic Design, Architecture and Psychology. Fifteen athletes were identified as members of tennis teams and four as a part of track and field teams.

During interviews, several athletes mentioned the name of an African-American recruiter as the person who recruited them to HBCUs. He was contacted; however he refused to participate in the study due to personal reasons. Based on my previous encounters with this recruiter, I know that his major intention behind this type of recruiting was to improve the racial relations in the United States. He has lived in Europe

for two years and he strongly believed that international students were more open-minded and able to deal with a different cultural environment. However, I suppose that over the time he has lost the passion for this subject matter.

As a former athlete-tennis player at Hampton University, I had a convenient access to the selected sample. I transferred to Hampton University from a college in the Czech Republic and I spent my junior and senior year at Hampton University. I graduated in May of 2002 with a degree in Sociology.

I came to Hampton University with a specific intent in my mind. I have always been always interested in ethnology and cultural studies. Therefore, I thought it would be fascinating to spend some time in a cultural surrounding of African-Americans. I was eager to experience the life in a non-traditional setting and learn more about the culture of African-Americans. Therefore, although I have been offered a tennis scholarship to several predominantly white institutions, I decided for Hampton University. My primarily intention was to observe African-American culture. However, as the time passed by, I also found it interesting to observe the interactions and adjustments of white international student-athletes. Thus due to my insider's point of view, I was able to experience the life of a white student-athlete at a historically black college first hand and in all its aspects.

Research Design

This research used an e-mail interview as its main data collection method. The interview questions, both closed and open-ended, were e-mailed to white athletes at Hampton University and Bethune-Cookman College. The interview questions (Appendix

A) were clustered into four major categories: demographics, academics, athletics, and social life. Consistent with Babbie's analysis of qualitative research (2001), this study also used in-depth field interviews as the most appropriate qualitative methodology. The field interviews emphasize an interaction between an interviewer and a respondent. The interviewer has a general plan of inquiry, but not a specific set of questions that must be asked with particular words in a particular order. Among the advantages of field research are a depth of understanding it can provide, its flexibility, and its inexpensiveness. Compared with surveys and experiments, field research measurements generally have more validity but less reliability. Also, field research is generally not an appropriate technique to arrive at statistical descriptions about large populations. For the purpose of this paper, the in-depth interviews allowed the investigator to understand how the white international student-athletes perceive their experiences at an HBCU. The interviews lasted between thirty and forty minutes each. The questions were flexible enough to develop a discussion between the interlocutors. As a researcher, I tried to remain as objective as possible, even though I was inclined to introduce some of my ideas as well.

Data Collection Method

During the last week of October 2002, the first round of 36 e-mails with interview questions, asking about general information, demographics and athletic experience, were e-mailed to potential subjects. Two subjects were excluded on the second day of the interview process because they were found not affiliated with HBCUs. Therefore, the sample narrowed itself to 34 subjects. During the following week, eight athletes

responded in addition to four e-mails promising to reply as soon as possible. The responses ranged from half of a page to four full pages. Later that week, follow-up e-mails were sent out to students who did not reply. Two days after the follow-up emails, an additional five responses arrived. The same week, the second set of questions was sent to those eight students who replied on the first set. These questions queried the academics and social life. In addition, several questions were added about issues that stood out in their previous responses. The procedure was repeated with the second set of questions. By the end of November 2002, 10 student-athletes completed both sets of email interviews and nine subjects completed the first half of the interview process. By the 2nd week of December 2002, all 19 subjects completed the e-mail interviews. In January 2004 an additional set of culturally related questions was e-mailed to the subjects. All but three students replied on these questions.

Five field interviews were conducted on the campus of Hampton University during the Thanksgiving break in November 2002. This type of setting and the timing was conducive because it guaranteed calm and optimum conditions.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis focused on common themes and patterns that emerged from the queries.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the academic, athletic, social and cultural experience of white international student-athletes at Hampton University and Bethune-Cookman College. Several themes such as an emphasis on academics over athletics, culture shock, dissatisfaction with living in residence halls, interracial relations and dating, impact of black culture and forming a unique cultural group emerged during the interview process.

Reasons for Choosing an HBCU and the Initial Reaction

The most popular reason for choosing an HBCU was a full athletic scholarship, which is consistent with Conrad & Brier's (1997) study. They identified 14 major factors that attract white students to HBCUs and student scholarships were one of them. Three students also mentioned academics and four students were attracted by the location of the school (both schools are located close to the seaside).

A black recruiter whom the athletes considered a friend recruited ten out of 19 student-athletes interviewed for this project. He was identified as a former English high school lecturer in the Czech Republic, currently a high school teacher in Georgia. He was not paid by any organization and his motive to recruit white athletes was related to his believe that the interaction between white and black students might help to improve interracial relations in the United States. The rest of the athletes were either recruited by

coach or a friend of theirs who has already attended the school. One student was recruited through the sports company called The College Prospects of America, Inc.

When describing their first reaction after arriving to campus, students experienced mixed feelings that varied greatly. There were several students who felt positive about the new experience and they were excited about the school. However, most of the athletes used the word "cultural shock." They said they felt very confused, strange, and disoriented. They did not feel comfortable and they expressed the need to get used to the new situation that they were presented with. One student-athlete described her experiences as follow:

When first arriving on campus I felt very much out of place. I had long platinum blond hair and stood out like a sore thumb. I could feel people looking at me, some looking interestingly, some looking strangely, some looking happily, and some looking with ill feeling. I was not comfortable being so different and standing out so much. At the end of my first semester I actually colored my hair very dark brown so not as to stick out so much.

Their initial feelings of confusion might be influenced by the fact that all but three interviewees had no interaction with black people prior their appearance on campus of an HBCU. One student's experience was typical:

"At first it was strange to be surrounded by black people all around you. In Bulgaria we do not have any black people. I needed some time to get used to my new environment."

Several athletes mentioned the way they pictured black people before arriving at an HBCU. Their image was mostly based on TV, which presented African-Americans as being either good athletes or into music or drug dealers. One female athlete stated:

I have always liked Eddie Murphy from movies and when I was younger I thought that all or majority of black people had a space in between their front teeth. Otherwise, I just pictured them as very attractive men, I mean, as I love to watch track and field and those sprinters and their bodies are just killing me. I pictured black men in my mind as very muscular, as well as some of them

aggressive, which come from the movies where usually it is the black guy who is the gangster or drug dealer. But I did not expect all of them to be that way.

When asked about their parents' reaction to their decision to attend an HBCU, only three students stated that their parents would prefer a white institution over an HBCU for them. The vast majority of parents agreed with their children's school choice and encouraged them.

In summary, all white international students decided to attend an HBCU because they were offered a full athletic scholarship. Most of them were recruited by a recruiter who believed that white students might contribute to the improvement of interracial relations in America.

Athletics

Hampton University's athletes felt as being highly recognized by the athletic department, however, athletes at Bethune-Cookman College complained about the evident non-support of their teams from the athletic department although the women's tennis team at BCC was nationally ranked each year and three times in a row a winner of the conference title and therefore, a participant of the NCAA tournament:

We did have many wins and brought our school many accolades but I did not feel we received the recognition we deserved. We won our conference both years I played, we were nationally ranked both years as well, and we were recognized wherever we played but at our own school. First I thought that just white athletes were treated differently, but later I figured out that it was not just white athletes, but most of the international athletes.

For the majority of student-athletes, the athletic part of their experience at HBCU brought them the biggest disappointment. They felt that they were not improving in their

game and they often realized that it was the end of their athletic career:

As an athlete I suffered at Bethune-Cookman College. My game deteriorated and I was unhappy with the training, the coaching staff and the overall lack of professionalism I was expecting. Overall the whole athletic side of things was a big disappointment for me. I did not feel that I was making any forward advancements in my game, and that displeased me immensely. For I had come to America to play tennis, and that was not giving me what I had hoped it would. If I had wanted to play tennis, I would have been able to do better in Australia and traveling playing tournaments.

The tennis teams were composed mostly of international athletes, both black and white. The athletes described the interaction in the team as being very good most of the time. The athletes used to socialize together and be one big family:

Both men's and women's tennis teams were completely international. Of the sixteen players in my first season, we came from ten different countries, none of them being American. Only two players and one assistant coach were black, but they were from Zambia and Madagascar in Africa, which meant that their behavior was not like that of the African-Americans. I think the fact that we were all in the same boat, foreigners, not familiar with this new culture, made it a little easier for us. Of course we also had to deal with our own differences within the team, but the fact that we were all experiencing and at times struggling with our environment, gave us a common bond which made us closer and gave us some feeling of security in having to fit into this very different environment.

They perceived themselves as having good relationships with other athletes at school; however, these were more based on formal interactions than close friendships. On the other hand, the vast majority of white athletes felt increased feelings of hostility while competing against teams composed entirely of black athletes. One student's description served to illustrate the group experience:

I am not sure to what to contribute the hostility. Perhaps it could have been just a competition, plus black athletes are louder and show their emotions more. However, I have observed that the majority of times their level of competition was very low and they could hardly ever give us a good fight, yet they seemed extremely confident and believed in themselves even though they lost big time. So this was quite interesting.

On the university scale, white foreign athletes used to socialize separately from African-

American athletes. They felt that it was based on the composition of team as well as on the situational context:

“The whites in general used to stick together and the blacks separately, but I think it was more a cultural thing that kept us separate and the long hours we were away from school on tennis trips etc.”

As another student noticed:

“It is kind of tradition to sit together in cafeteria but is it because we are friends or that we are white? When nobody white is there I am having fun with others.”

All student-athletes said they felt being recognized as athletes in the classroom and the vast majority agreed that to be a part of an athletic team makes it much easier in order to feel as a valid member of the college community.

In conclusion, white internationals were athletically very successful although they did not put that much emphasis on athletics as they did on academics. They realized that the participation in athletics pays for their collegiate education; however they knew that they would not become professional athletes in the future.

Academics

In general, athletes at Bethune-Cookman College were not satisfied with the academic level of their institution. In contrast, athletes at Hampton University perceived their institution as above average on academic scale. One student pointed out:

I chose Hampton because of its architectural program. If it was not for architecture I would probably not stay here. We are accredited, which is very important, and then it all depends on us. There are a lot of HU alumni that are very successful; every year there is an HU graduate being accepted on prestige graduate schools like Notre Dame, Harvard, and Columbia.

Most of the students ranked themselves “A” students with a few perceiving

themselves as “B” students. None of the students was a “C” student. The student-athletes described themselves as either not being involved in the classroom at all or being involved only to some extent. One student-athlete described her experience in detail:

There were some classes I was a little more reluctant to volunteer any questions or comments. For example it was a requirement to take an African-American history class and I was the only white student in a class of 35 or more. The professor was not quite racist, but was determined to rile her class up into caring about the history of their people and to become angered by their mistreatment. This I completely understand. But sitting through the first few weeks of that class were some of my most uncomfortable moments at Cookman. The professor painted a very graphic picture of the conditions in which slaves were taken, shipped to and treated once arriving in the Americas. That was fine, but once she began to generalize that all white people were horrible, immoral, cruel human beings, and that they should all be held accountable for the atrocities that took place during the height of the slave trade, made me feel very uneasy. Members of the class looked at me hatefully, like I had personally loaded them onto these awful ships and whipped them. Then the professor proceeded to question everything that I believed of my religion (Catholicism). The worst part was, that I knew exactly what she was trying to do. She wanted to make her students angry, she wanted them to stand up and shout “That is not right, white people should pay”, and the students did. They became angered on a number of occasions, so the professors lessons were successful. I cannot say that I ever felt threatened, but I was most uncomfortable, and I thought it a little inconsiderate of the professor to maintain the vigilance with which she continued to rally the class “against white people” especially while I am sitting directly in her line of vision. She did not seem to care too much, and neither did the class. I think many of them actually enjoyed knowing that the class probably made me feel uncomfortable. Just as a side note, on the last day of class, the professor noted that it was a sad day when the only white girl in the class received the highest grade in a class that was specific to their history, not mine.

A different experience however, in one of my major classes, mass media and society, my professor was extremely tough on her students. She expected them to stretch themselves to their personal limits for her. And she was not shy about saying that she thought everyone in that class needed to do twice as well as I needed to do, just to be seen as an equal in the real world. I felt a little uncomfortable when she singled me out like that, but it was done with any venom so it was ok. In that class my professor also sure many times that she expressed her gratitude and respect for my attending an HBCU. She would say that the world needed more people like me if we are ever going to bridge the gap between black and white. She would often ask for my perspective on issues just to add to the diversity of the class. Some of my most memorable and insightful class discussions took place in that class.

However, most of the students thought their professors to be fair, and did not experience any major differences between the interactions with either black or white faculty members. They felt as treated equally from all faculty professors, no matter of their racial characteristics:

“I did not experience any pressure or discriminatory behavior from a faculty towards me as a white student. I got along with my professors very well and I felt that they treated me the same way as other students.”

The vast majority of student-athletes perceived academics as being more important to them than athletic because they realized that academics would be their future. Only one student thought that the school was not a right choice for him. Others were either not sure about its impact yet or expressed their satisfaction with their school choice at the time. One student's opinion was present in numerous responses:

An HBCU was a good choice of school for me for the time I spent there. It opened my eyes more than I could have ever imagined. I saw an entirely different world. I was taken from my element and thrown amidst a culture that was very different from the one I knew. Although at times this was difficult, having gone through it strengthened me, and it certainly has given me a different perspective of American and its contradictions.

Besides the two students who transferred to a predominantly white college, there were several others who thought about that option but never realized it. According to one student-athlete who transferred:

I had always thought in the back of my mind that after exposing myself to this different experience, I would also like to experience college as a member of the majority. Somewhere where I did not stand out so much, somewhere that I could blend in and relax a little, not have to be so aware of my every move and my every word. After three semesters at Bethune-Cookman College I transferred to Drury University and my first few weeks here were a breeze. I loved the fact that I just blended into a crowd and I could get lost there.

Therefore one can argue that the academic experiences of white international student-athletes satisfied the students at Hampton University whereas the students who attended Bethune Cookman College thought that their academic needs were not met. All of the student-athletes had outstanding GPAs, which demonstrated their enthusiasm for education. Thus the basic criterion for white international student athletes was the quality of academic studies at the HBCUs.

Social Life

Most of the interviewed student-athletes felt like their social life were far from being rich. They did socialize with black students; however, they did not form close friendships with them. For the vast majority of these student-athletes, the on-campus social life consisted of attending parties held in the homes of other white athletes. Yet only two students expressed a strong feeling of isolation and social alienation on campus of a historically black university.

Many athletes attributed their socializing problems to spending most of their time either at the practices or on the road trips to tournaments and sporting events in the company of other white athletes. In addition, there were no organizations, programs or interest groups specifically established to meet the needs of white students. Thus the only organization white student-athletes were involved in was an athletic team.

The vast majority of athletes reported to live on campus, whereas, they did not participate in any socialization effort in their residence halls. In general, student-athletes expressed their dissatisfaction with living in dormitories:

The dorms were always noisy, unruly, and raucous, and I did not like that. I was used to things being quiet, and I hated listening to the music blaring in the halls from girls' rooms. It was just an environment different to what I was used to, and I did not enjoy it much. But again, the other girls on the tennis team were there, and other white athletes lived in the dorms also. So we managed it by spending time together.

None of the students indicated a major concern for their physical safety on campus grounds. White females were not concerned with the possibility of being molested by black males and they were not afraid of walking alone on campus, days or nights. In general, students perceived the university campus to be safe and well guarded.

Although white students formally interacted with their black peers, for example in the classroom, lab and meetings, they perceived themselves as being unconsciously treated by many black students as "aliens" who do not have a right to be there. In their view, black students perceived the school to be their "rightful" place with whites being the outsiders in this setting. Nevertheless, student-athletes described the formal racial relations at school as generally good although some students experienced a few subtle racial remarks directed towards their race. One student-athlete explained:

"I have never experienced any direct acts of racism, but there were the dirty looks that said they did not really approve of my being there. In general, I think that racial relations at school were mostly good; however, there were always a few who were looking to start something."

Most of the athletes felt overwhelmed with having to deal the issue of race on a daily basis. One student expressed his opinion:

It seems like people in this country love to talk about race and ethnicity. They are eager to know who you are, not at a personal level but at a societal level. They cannot wait to put you into some kind of a category. I have never had to decide what kind of race or ethnicity I belong to till I came to the United States. And here, they ask you at every step, in every single form you fill out what race I am. To me this is crazy.

Several white female athletes reported having black boyfriends. In contrast, only

one white male reported engaging in interracial dating, however, all athletes were in favor of interracial dating yet they were able to realize that it brings with a few additional obstacles:

“I think it has many advantages as well as disadvantages and being in one I believe that it takes a lot of respect, courage, understanding and empathy to be in a successful interracial relationship.”

However, white athletes received a mixed set of reactions towards the interracial dating from other black students, primarily from black females. One female athlete described her experience as follows:

“Black females told me and my black boyfriend before that it is disrespectful toward black women for us to be together. They said we (white females) steal their men. Some white students tried to discourage me at the beginning, but later even they started dating interracially.”

All student-athletes felt that they received a special attention from black students of the opposite sex based on their racial characteristics. Most of the student said that it made them feel special and unique in the college community:

I definitely can say that African American boys were more interested in me on campus because I was white. For some of them it is a novelty, for others it is a status symbol and for others they are just interested in you for being exotic. So that was interesting. I was pursued a great deal by boys at school, and although I dated three of them briefly, it never really worked out. I think we just wanted different things, and maybe that stems from our upbringings.

All students agreed that after attending an HBCU, their view on racial related issues drastically changed. They feel that they understand the black culture and interracial problems better than before and that they are more aware of racism, discrimination and “non-mainstream - black perspective”:

“Before coming here I looked at racial issues through pink-colored glasses. This lesson helped me to be more tolerant of all kinds of people in the bigger scheme of things.”

Another student realized that she can understand the cultural differences between whites and blacks much better after experiencing the atmosphere of an HBCU:

I think that the only thing that makes me view racially related issues differently now, is that I can understand what the culture differences are, and this almost makes more accepting of the fact that there are always going to be differences. Before coming to this school, I just thought we were all the same and that we should just get along. I still think we should just get along, but I understand the differences, and they are what make it difficult to see eye to eye on things.

Some students felt that the close contact between them and blacks on the college ground reduced prejudices and stereotypical views that one group might have held about another group. However, there were several students who said that their view did not change. According to one student-athlete:

I think that it reduced prejudices on both sides but it is all about individual students where you can have intolerant people on both sides. I see this as an excellent step forward if you mix two groups like that, nevertheless, I think it is a long process where you cannot expect results immediately. Plus we were all international students and I think that black students realized that we acted differently from white Americans. White Americans would never live on campus of a black college because they grew up in this country surrounded by racial issues on a daily basis. We did not so I think it was easier for us because most of us came here with open minds and eager to experience new culture.

In general, the respondents felt that they are better prepared for life, more independent and open-minded after experiencing the life at an HBCU:

The school took me out of my comfort zone, pushed me and prodded me in all kinds of uncomfortable positions, and asked me to cope. And I did. That is very self-assuring to know that one can adapt. Having being able to fit in and be successful at an HBCU I am confident that I can fit anywhere. My mind is more open to things that differ from what I am used to, while I am strong in my moral values and beliefs, and also know that they will not be shaken.

In general, many students gradually realized that although their experience seemed far from being positive initially, it turned out to have several beneficial impacts on their personal growth. Athletes' interaction with black students also strongly

influenced their perceptions of the importance race played not only on the campus of an HBCU but also in American society in general.

Cultural Environment

The athletes attending Hampton University described the school as a place rich in rituals, rules and traditions which were reflections of the institution's social and cultural values. Several of those were implemented by HBCU students themselves; however, most of the rules were put in place by the school itself and were referred as the code of conduct. The code of conduct requires all students who enter any kind of building on campus to take off their hat. Also, one might have been denied entrance to cafeteria or library if dressed "inappropriately," which included short shorts, skirts or tight t-shirts. All kinds of alcohol were strictly forbidden on the campus grounds as well.

According to the white athletes, black student culture and lifestyle at an HBCU were characterized by hip hop and rap music being loudly played in residence halls as well as on campus grounds; emphasis on sororities and fraternities; sexually provoking way of dancing at parties; late night eating, study and socializing habits; different styles of handshakes, jargon and interpersonal communication; popular church services on Sundays; black pride of the heritage; soul food and emphasis on material things. One student-athlete explained:

"Black students loved to show off. They used to wear a lot of jewelry and drove very expensive cars. We were different; we did not care much about brand name clothes."

White athletes identified several aspects that set them apart from the black

students with three factors standing up in their responses – being white in the black environment, being foreign in the United States and being athlete on the collegiate ground. They felt that these were the major barriers regarding their interactions with black students. Thus as a result, white athletes formed a unique group within the college community based on similar lifestyle, culture, values, beliefs, language and common points of reference. One student-athlete described:

What automatically connected us as a group was our involvement in tennis and time spent at practices, tournaments and road trips. However, that is what separated us from the rest of the college. Our beliefs and culture definitely contributed to the separation but it did not have such a huge impact as the lifestyle created at the university.

According to another student-athlete:

We were all from different parts of the world going to school in a foreign country and that is what connected us. Plus we had in common the fact that we were all athletes, we all lived together and we were experiencing the same situation. Besides that, our cultures were similar, especially for the people from the same area, like South American or Europe.

In general, all athletes were aware of their “minority status” in the school community and they exhibited several features associated with their status. They tended to form a close group, often described as family; however, they did not see it in a racially related context but in a cultural context. They perceived themselves as culturally different and that was what distinguished them from African-American students. According to a tennis player from Venezuela:

Most of the difficulties I encountered were culturally related and not race related. I found more in common with people from South America than with anybody else because we liked the same music; we went to the same parties and had more in common. And they might be considered either white or black. It does not matter. To me this is a cultural issue and not a racial issue. I can take a white guy and a black guy from the United States and take them to Germany and I bet they would hang out together despite that most people are white over there. However, they both come from the same country and have similar cultural background.

The bonds that developed within this group of athletes were described as very strong, ranging from friendship to romantic relationships. One athlete described attitudes of her friends:

We became very close to each other and looked for a help if we needed in this group of people. At the beginning we had the same experiences with culture, language barriers, teachers, food etc. However, at times there was a competition which resulted in fights and problems between us, and after some time as we were able to meet other students and get to know them better, some of us tended to leave the group on our own in our free time and looked for new friends. Yet most of us were the happiest and the most comfortable in the group.

Many white students did not feel as comfortable socializing with black students as with being around their white peers. Nevertheless, there were a few student-athletes who tried to interact with black students more than the others. Some of them truly enjoyed diversity and being around different people as one student who pointed out:

“I became best friends with a person who was not white and I had several other black friends as well as a black boyfriend. One of my black friends even invited me for the Thanksgiving and I spent the whole week with her family and it was a great experience.”

Some student-athletes tried to assimilate into the college community, nevertheless some students felt the most comfortable around other white students. The experience of one student-athlete illustrated this trend very well:

Generally I think that I am that kind of person who likes to fit in so after I got familiar with the environment I tried to get out of the group of other white athletes as much as I could. On the other hand I don't think that this was an attitude of other white athletes. The group was a safer environment with no surprises, you knew everybody and everybody knew you, so some of my teammates lacked the desire to move on and tried something different than hanging out with people on the team.

Most of the students realized that they were greatly influenced by African-American culture. They became familiar with ghetto slang, black fashion, music, dance

and so on:

“I listen to hip hop, reggae, watch BET and like some of the fashion, but it does not mean that I would wear anything I see other students wearing, however I respect it. Unfortunately after experiencing the slang used by black students I was quite shocked and it really sounds demeaning and disrespectful to me.”

All athletes agreed on that they initially dressed very differently from the rest of the college student body and some of them acknowledged that their style of clothes changed later on as a result of natural feeling to fit in. The following description was typical:

I think at the beginning we dressed very differently from the black female students because the European style is trendier and more fashionable and do not put the most emphasis on brand names but focuses more on styles and what is in fashion. I think that after a while my style changed but not dramatically. I also realized that I began to care less about what I wore to school because I saw people in warm-ups, sweatpants or pajamas at school, so I even wore my team clothes to my classes and things like that. Back home I would not do it because people dress more formally or at least wear a jeans to universities there and never wear white snickers with their jeans!!

In some cases, white athletes tried new hairstyles, such as braids as well. Their music taste changed tremendously as they were introduced to rap, hip hop, reggae and slow jam songs. One's athlete response was typical:

“I got exposed to all different kinds of music and I really enjoyed some of them such as hip hop, reggae and some rap. I think that the exposure to different types of music broadened my view of what music is out there and I just pick which ones I like or do not like and want to listen to.”

In short, HBCUs became a test place wherein black Americans and white athletes interacted with each other. In their lifestyles both parties differed to a large extent; so much so that, even their interaction suffered. However, despite those differences, this “failed” interaction created its own way when it came to developing a subculture. For international white athletes at historically black colleges created a very close group of people based on similar values, experiences, attitudes and lifestyles and their involvement

in sport (tennis and track and field) provided them with a well-defined identity within the college environment.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study aimed to identify and examine the academic, athletic, and social experiences as well as the cultural environment of white international student-athletes at two historically black colleges and universities. Nineteen subjects were interviewed either by e-mail or in person in order to identify common themes and patterns in their experiences. The results revealed that there are several social, cultural, and academic factors that impact experiences of white student-athletes at historically black colleges and universities.

The vast majority of student-athletes decided to attend the school because they were offered a full athletic scholarship. All the student-athletes perceived academics to be more important in their college life than athletics; however, they still recognized the athletics as an important aspect of their lives. They saw their involvement in athletics mostly as a mean of accomplishing their education and enjoying their college life at the same time. The vast majority of student-athletes displayed characteristics of highly motivated and successful students in the academic arena and expressed their satisfaction with the school choice at the time. They strongly believed it allowed them to grow tremendously as a person although it may have taken them some time to adjust to the

college environment. Most of the students regarded their professors as mentors who provided them with a nurturing support.

Regarding their social life, some athletes might have experienced some feelings of isolation and social alienation; however, they did not see them as being persistent in their experience. They did not socialize a great deal with black students and did not form close friendships with them either. In many cases, their interaction was limited to formal school meetings. They all lived in residence halls and perceived the school campus to be a safe environment. They might have occasionally experienced some subtle racial remarks from other students but they still identified the overall racial relations at school as good. Some female athletes engaged in interracial dating and several athletes expressed their enhanced feelings of confidence while being perceived as “special” and “unique” in campus community. Nevertheless, most of the students identified their overall experience as positive.

Almost all athletes experienced an initial “culture shock” and they felt “out of place.” Several students were able to adjust to the black college culture later on; however, some athletes had a problem with adaptation and felt a strong need to create their own social and cultural network within the university community. They formed a close “family” group and a support system based on their common values, attitudes, behavior and lifestyles. White athletes felt alienated due to three major factors – being white in a black setting, being a foreigner in the United States, and being an athlete in the college community. On the other hand, several students felt that they have been greatly influenced by the African-American culture; they became familiar with ghetto slang, black fashion, music, dance etc.

In summary, student-athletes' experiences varied significantly due to their personal characteristics, adjustment patterns, academic and athletic goals and their social interest and socializing efforts. However, they all left or will leave their HBCU as different individuals with a "non-mainstream" perspective on racial relations in the United States. The future presence of these students is without question. They have established a tradition at HBCUs and the word of mouth will bring new generations of white international athletes to those campuses. Questions exist regarding the nature of their experiences. To what extent will they assimilate or will keep their cultural identities?

Conclusions

The fact of being a white athlete at a historically black college was associated with forming a separate cultural group with other members of the athletic team based on common interests, experiences, attitudes, values, behaviors and lifestyles. White international athletes created a very close group and they relied on each other for need satisfaction and social interaction.

Therefore, I conclude that the behavioral patterns and the interdependency among the white international athletes and their collective relation to the college community are the basic notions of them forming a new form of a "sport subculture."

This group of athletes can be considered a sport subculture because their values, beliefs, identities and lifestyles reflect the social interaction within a unique social situation. This subculture was formed as a result of a social distance and lifestyle

differences between the white athletes and black students, which is, according to Arnold (1970), one of the means how subcultures can be created. In addition, the social distance was amplified due to the polarization of black versus white, American versus foreign, and athlete versus student. The fact of being white in the black environment, being a foreigner in the United States and being an athlete in the college setting initiated several coping mechanisms from white athletes as well as several stereotypical reactions from the black student body. I suggest the term "triple jeopardy" in order to describe the situation that white athletes had to deal with. They were scrutinized because of three major factors - their race, nationality and participation in athletics. In addition, they had a distinct way of communication because they shared a foreign accent, which increased even further their social distance from other HBCU students.

The white student-athletes realized that they were unique, distinct and outside of the mainstream HBCU population, however, they did not choose it and did not claim it. Indeed, dominant population of an HBCU defined them as outsiders through their treatment. Therefore, as a result, they unconsciously formed an identity and thus a subculture around their "uniqueness".

The sport subculture of white international athletes began when students interested in sport (tennis and track and field) found themselves on the grounds of a historically black college. This common social situation gave them the feeling of cohesion and solidarity. In addition, they were able to share common values, beliefs, norms, customs, lifestyles, clothing and hairstyle and in some cases even the language. They interacted with each other on a daily basis; they occupied specific tables in cafeterias during the mealtime and sat in the same section during sporting events. The

close interaction and communication between white athletes were extremely important to their sense of psychological well-being and security. Therefore, their participation in the subculture was a social process that taught them the values and beliefs of the subculture. This process was demonstrated in other studies as well (e. g., Pearson, 1979; Kemp, 1999, Green & Chalip, 1998).

All white international student-athletes were involved in the subculture to some extent and their interaction within the subculture helped them to construct and maintain their subcultural identity (e. g., Donnelly & Young, 1988, Haggard & William, 1992). However, white international student-athletes did not hold uniform attitudes toward black students, which was based on their personal experiences and socializing efforts. Their interactions with black students varied greatly from avoiding any contact with black students to forming close friendships and romantic relationships with black students.

It is my contention that in the late 1990s, a group of white international student-athletes emerged as a distinctive subculture due to three major events: (a) the overflow of international athletes to predominantly white American universities, (b) the non-prominence of the sports of tennis, golf etc. in the African-American community, and (c) the racial stereotypes not being as deeply rooted in the international population as in the American society.

But how do we explain the common signs of a subculture among athletes at Hampton University and Bethune-Cookman College although these two groups of students could rarely interact with each other? It is possible because the close interaction is not required for a subculture to exist, according to Pearson (1979). Different individuals or groups may share common values, customs and lifestyles although they are

not in close contact. Therefore, it is probable for white international athletes at different HBCUs to exhibit the same coping mechanisms and well as adjustments patterns. Thus I suppose that white international student-athletes at other HBCUs will exhibit similar subcultural characteristics to those of white athletes at Hampton University and Bethune-Cookman College.

I believe that the emergence of this new kind of a sport subculture can bring a fundamental change to how wider American society looks at racial relations. McPherson (1989) states that sport subcultures do not have a major impact on the society, but I have to disagree with him. I assume that this subculture can serve as a catalyst for change by exposing the American society to this alternative educational option and many of its advantages.

The presence of white athletes at historically black colleges is an accepted and tolerated phenomenon, and therefore I conclude that the subculture of white international athletes is being gradually transformed into a subworld. Marginalized by the aspects of race, nationality and athletics initially, it is becoming accepted by the dominant student body and incorporated into the college setting. As a result of this developmental shift I predict an increased focus of white athletes on creating an excellent athletic tradition at HBCUs. I believe that this concept will be emphasized over a focus on their coping mechanisms regarding their race and nationality. This evolution of a subculture is consistent with Donnelly's (1981) argument that subworlds can become subcultures and subcultures can transform into subworlds.

From my two-year involvement in tennis at Hampton University I argue that the life of a white international athlete at an HBCU was more than just a new cultural

experience. It was a once of a lifetime learning experience for white international students as well as for black American students.

Recommendations

The subcultural experience of white international student-athletes remains an untouched and largely un-theorized topic in the field of sport sociology, although it has been a trend for several years. Thus this research is the first one of its kind and constitutes the first step toward a broader literature body on experiences of white athletes at black campuses. It enriches the field of sport sociology by the notion that every cultural and racial group can become a minority in a certain setting in our contemporary, rapidly changing world. The group of white student-athletes at black colleges is one of the first waves of people facing this challenge, and therefore they deserve to be paid full attention.

The findings of this research should serve as a capstone in building a body of research on white athletes at historically black campuses. It may be beneficial for future research on black athletes at predominantly white campuses as well. However, the results should be used wisely because they are specific to white international students' experience at historically black colleges and universities in the United States.

The possibility of a financial aid (athletic scholarships) was the major reason for matriculation of white international students and therefore, it is recommended for HBCUs to focus on their scholarship programs in order to increase diversity of their campuses. It is proposed that HBCUs emphasize the quality of their academic offerings as well and possibly institute new and unique academic programs. It is also suggested that historically black colleges and universities establish a practice of recognizing its diverse

students. A special week of social activities dedicated to white international students should be instituted so that the black students can experience the international culture. In addition, HBCUs should establish records that chronicle the history of white student enrollment as well as the achievement of white athletes.

Further studies should focus on deepening certain areas of white students' experience, for instance to focus either only on academic arena or athletics or social life. It is suggested to conduct an ethnographical study of the subculture of white athletes at an HBCU as well. This type of study would greatly contribute in understanding their college experiences. It would also be beneficial to compare experiences of black athletes at predominantly white colleges with experiences of white athletes at historically black colleges and look for common patterns and themes.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

I am conducting a research examining the collegiate experiences of white international student-athletes at historically black colleges and universities in the United States.

I hope you will answer the questions as frankly as possible. Your name will not appear anywhere on these pages, and your replies will be held strictly confidential and anonymous.

First a few questions about your background:

1. What is your sex?
2. What is your age?
3. What is your nationality?
4. Name of the historically black college that you have attended or you are currently enrolled to.
5. What is your major?
6. How many years have you spent at HBCU?

General informational questions follow:

1. Why did you choose this school?
2. How were you recruited?
3. How did you react when seeing the campus for the first time?
4. Have you had any interaction with black people prior to your enrollment?
5. What were the major differences you had to deal with?

Questions related to the academics:

1. Describe the academic level of your institution and your academic performance.
2. To what extent are you involved in the classroom?

Questions related to your athletic experience:

1. Describe your experience as an athlete and your involvement in the athletic team.
2. Please, share achievements of your athletic team.
3. Describe the interactions between white and black athletes.
4. Did you experience a differential treatment in the classroom due to your participation in athletics?

Questions related to social life on campus of an HBCU:

1. Describe your socialization efforts on campus. Did you socialize and make friends with black students on a regular basis?
2. What do you think about racial relations at school? Did you experience any signs of racism?
3. How do you look at interracial dating?
4. Describe the overall impact of the school's racial composition on your personal development and educational experience.

Questions related to your cultural experience:

1. Did the black culture influence you in some way? Share your experience please.
2. Describe your relationships with other white athletes. What did you share with them in common?
3. How does your home culture differ from black culture?
4. How did your lifestyle change while at HBCU?
5. Describe your assimilation efforts on campus.

Appendix B
HBCUs with White International Student-Athletes – Spring 2004

- 1) Alabama A & M University - <http://www.aamu.edu/PR/sports/athletics.htm>
 - 1 female soccer player from Canada
 - 1 female volleyball player from Canada

- 2) Alcorn State University - <http://www.alcorn.edu/Athletics/default.htm>
 - 2 male golf players from Canada
 - 1 female golf player from Canada
 - 1 female soccer player from Russia

- 3) Bethune-Cookman College - <http://www.cookman.edu/athletics/>
 - 4 male tennis players from Argentina, Brazil, Bulgaria and Czech Republic
 - 3 female tennis players from Slovakia
 - 2 male golf players from Canada
 - 2 male golf players from the United Kingdom
 - 1 male golf player from India
 - 2 female golf players from Ireland
 - 1 female golf player from the United Kingdom

- 4) Chicago State University - <http://www.csu.edu/athletics/>
 - 1 male tennis player from Yugoslavia
 - 1 male tennis player from India
 - 1 female tennis player from Poland
 - 1 female tennis player from Romania

- 5) Delaware State University - <http://www.desu.edu/athletics/index.html>
 - 1 male tennis player from Romania
 - 1 male tennis player from Sri Lanka
 - 1 female tennis player from Germany

- 6) Florida A & M University - <http://www.famu.edu/sports/>
 - 2 female volleyball players from Bulgaria
 - 6 female volleyball players from Peru

- 7) Hampton University - <http://www.hamptonu.edu/athletics/index.htm>
 - 3 male tennis players from Brazil
 - 1 male tennis player from the Czech Republic
 - 1 male tennis player from Romania
 - 1 male tennis player from South Korea
 - 4 female tennis players from the Czech Republic
 - 1 female tennis player from Slovakia
 - 1 female track and field athlete from the Czech Republic

- 8) Howard University - <http://www.bisonmania.com/>
 - 2 male soccer players from Canada

- 9) Jackson State University - <http://tigersports.jsu.edu/>
 - 2 females from Canada participating in soccer and track and field

- 10) Kentucky State University - <http://www.kysu.edu/athletics/athdefault.htm>
 - 1 male tennis player from England
 - 1 female tennis player from England

- 11) Lincoln University – Missouri - <http://www.lincolnu.edu/~athletics/>
 - 3 female tennis players from Argentina, Brazil and Russia

- 12) Norfolk State University - <http://www.nsu.edu/athletics/>
 - 5 male tennis players from the Czech Republic
 - 2 female tennis players from Turkey
 - 2 female tennis players from Peru
 - 1 female tennis player from Poland

- 13) North Carolina Central University - <http://www.nccu.edu/campus/athletics/>
 - 1 female volleyball player from Brazil

- 14) South Carolina State University - <http://www.secsports.com/>
 - 6 male tennis players from Australia, Brazil, Chile, Croatia, Czech Republic and Indonesia
 - 2 female tennis players from Yugoslavia
 - 1 female tennis player from Bulgaria

- 15) Tennessee State University – <http://www.tsutigers.com/>
 - 3 male golf players from England
 - 1 male golf player from Australia

- 16) Texas Southern University - <http://www.tsu.edu/athletics/>
 - 1 male tennis player from the Czech Republic
 - 1 female tennis player from Venezuela

- 17) University of Maryland Eastern Shore - <http://umeshawks.ocsu.com/>
 - 2 female cross-country athletes
 - 2 female softball players
 - 3 female volleyball players