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Devin Leslie Walker
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From Enclosure to Exposure to Enactment:
A Phenomenological Study on the Experiences of 20 Division 1 Black Student-athletes Abroad

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A Phenomenological Study on the Experiences of 20 Division 1 Black Student-athletes Abroad

by

Devin Leslie Walker

Dissertation

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Dedications

    This accomplishment is dedicated to my ancestors who marched forward despite their continual denial of full humanity. I am my ancestors wildest dreams. To my father who I miss and love dearly, David Albert Walker - this is a testament to the unrelenting confidence and morality you instilled in me throughout my adolescence. The legacy of 8-Ball lives on… this shit is in the books forever!!!

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From Enclosure to Exposure to Enactment:

A Phenomenological Study on the Experiences of 20 Division 1 Black Student-athletes Abroad

Devin Leslie Walker, PhD

The University of Texas at Austin, 2018

Supervisor: Louis Harrison, Jr.

This phenomenological study explores the experiences of 20 Division I Black student-athletes who took part in international educational experiences as part of their collegiate careers, as well as the subsequent influence of these experiences on their identities and future orientation. This study utilizes the theoretical framework of Critical Race Theory (CRT) as well as the concept of figured worlds as described by Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain (1998). Many Black student-athletes suffer from identity foreclosure as they fail to develop salient aspects of their identity outside of the athlete role. International education proffers the opportunity to take advantage of a holistic collegiate experience, which can impede the detrimental effects of the athletic identity foreclosure process that disproportionately affects Black student-athletes. Education abroad can influence student-athletes' personal, academic, and professional development while stimulating their critical consciousness of the world beyond the gym and campus. The number of college students in international education is increasing. However, most student-athletes are not given access to these opportunities. The 2016 NCAA Goals report highlighted student-athletes desire to have access to international education opportunities. The value of these student-athletes is critical the financial well-being of these institutions, yet they are often denied the invaluable opportunity to experience education abroad. This dissertation examines the process of identity negotiation and development that Black student-athletes

experience as they partake in three types of international education: 1) Study Abroad, 2) Competition Abroad, and 3) Service-learning Abroad. This study is solution-oriented. The findings reveal that international education serves as an extracurricular learning experience that enhances the process of identity development and negotiation for Black student-athletes, diminishing the detrimental impact of identity foreclosure. There international learning experiences shaped their future orientation and positively influenced their ability to navigate their lives and careers after their playing days ended.

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Preface

Negotiating my racial, athletic, and academic identity in adolescence:

I was one of the smartest as well as one of the most athletic students, in my elementary school. I loved standing up and getting answers right in class as much as I enjoyed playing outside during recess and lunch. Getting A's and B's in school was just as, if not more important, than staking the claim as the fastest boy in the fifth grade. I was often positioned by others as "smart" and "a good kid," as well as "athletic," "fast," and "good at sports." I was in the magnet program at my elementary school. I was on the football and basketball all-star teams at the local park I grew up in Los Angeles. My academic identity and athletic identity were quintessential to how I identified in elementary school.

As a mixed race Black boy, with a White mother and a Black father, I often felt like my athletic identity and strong athletic skill-set authenticated my Black identity. I attended a majority Black elementary school, however, I was tracked into the magnet program which forcefully separated me from most of my Black peers. Most of the students designated to the "regular" track at my elementary school were Black and Latinx while the "magnet" program was more racially diverse. On the playground, the students in "regular" often ridiculed those of us in the "magnet" program; I wouldn't say they bullied us, but clearly the "Big Yard" was their domain. The Black kids in magnet who weren't good at sports seemed to get it the worst. I can't recall what was said to them or about them, but I clearly remember them being alienated by the larger Black community. Myself, on the other hand, I could compete with them athletically; in fact, I was better than most of them athletically. So, I seemed to get a pass. As I reflect on my

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elementary school experience, it is clear to me that I was being socialized the structural racism embedded in the public education system to believe in the unfortunate myth that Black people were athletically superior yet academically inferior. I believed my athletic skills were due to my Blackness, while my academic skillset was due to my Whiteness. There was plenty to disprove this association, for example, the smartest kid in my class was a Black girl. Nevertheless, this was how I made since of the intersection of my racial, academic, and athletic identities.

By junior high school , I had been tracked into a magnet school where I was no longer the exception to my Blackness. I was no longer positioned as "smart" or "different" from the "other Black kids;" instead I was tracked in the other direction. I found myself in classes with predominately Black students, while my White and Asian friends, and some Black girls, were often tracked into more challenging classes. I don't remember having a problem with this arrangement as it allowed me to take classes with most of my friends. We would go straight from class to the basketball courts for recess and lunch. I slowly started to detach from academics and my identity as a student; instead, I put more energy and pride into my athletic identity. This negotiation of the various aspects of my identity was a combination of how I saw myself and how I was being positioned by peers, teachers, staff, and administrators within the school.

My favorite subjects had always been Math and History, yet I struggled in my 6th grade World History class, not because it was too challenging, but rather, I started to identify problems with what I was taught. While the class was titled World History, it was nothing more than a selection of readings on European history, culture and global influence. I vividly remember skimming through the table of contents and noticing only one chapter on Africa, while there were at least ten that focused on different European countries and their culture, history, and civilization. I expressed this frustration to my mother who encouraged me to question the

curriculum. I stood up in class one day and asked the teacher why we learned exclusively about European history in a world history course. Mr. Hans responded by talking about how America was founded by Europeans, so in order to understand American culture we must understand European history. His response informed me that non-European history was not important in our school curriculum. Although I knew there was something wrong with that answer, I did not resist or respond. His comment neglected and derided the cultural influences of non-Europeans in the modern-day Western world. His comments derided my history. This was the first time I ever remember feeling different within a classroom. The first time I remember feeling marginalized and silenced. It was the foundation for what developed into an inferiority complex compared to white students inside the classroom.

What troubled me the most was that I knew a lot about the richness of African and African-American culture and history, yet there was no place to discuss this within the curriculum of the course. Looking back, I realize that knowledge did not fall within the discourse of the way we learn and talk about the history of the world. I started to become aware that my history, the history I learned at home was not important in relation to the history I learned in school. After finally studying the one chapter on African history in the book and realizing that most of it was dedicated to the slave trade, my frustration turned to misplaced anger. I was angry with my teacher because I wanted him to teach the other students about my history just as I spend the majority of the semester learning about theirs. I was angry because the history we did learn about African history was limited, deficit-oriented, and from a Eurocentric perspective. What I remember most is coming home saddened and angry with my parents for misleading me. I distinctly remember asking my mother why she taught me about Malcolm X, Muhammad Ali, and African kings and queens, if all I learned about in school were African slaves?

Consciously and subconsciously, this had a profound effect on me as I started to distance myself from the school learning environment and put more energy and pride into my athletic identity. I became invisible in history class, never raised my hand, and rarely felt connected to the content. While feeling underappreciated in my favorite subject, history, I gained the acknowledgement and recognition that I sought by trying out for the 6th grade basketball team. My teachers and classmates began to know me for my athletic skill set rather than my academic skill set. I pulled further and further away from the formal academic learning environment and became increasingly comfortable with academic mediocrity. I started to believe that sports were my only avenue for success and recognition. Against the urging of my parents, I even bought myself a Dennis Rodman jersey, which I now believe was in part due to his "fuck the man" persona. That year, I received my first ever C, not surprisingly it was in my once favorite subject, history. In 7th grade, my student identity continued to wither, as did my grades. I often forgot books and homework assignments, but I never forgot to wear an extra pair of shorts, under my pants to ball during lunchtime.

An experience in my 7th grade U.S. history class, along with the continued denial of my culture's history within the curriculum further alienated me from my favorite subject, thus exacerbating the alienation I already felt. As a class, we were tasked with doing a research project on a "notable person" from history. After a few others, I excitedly raised my hand and said that I would like to do my research project on Marcus Garvey. I could tell most of my classmates were unfamiliar with who he was by the looks on their faces, even my teacher was surprised as he asked, "Why do you want to do a research project on him?" I immediately became uncomfortable because he didn't ask anyone else to explain themselves. He then went on to suggest that if I didn't know why I wanted to research him, then I probably shouldn't. I

remember the embarrassment and shame I felt for trying to expose the class to a leader whom I had read about, but who obviously didn't fit the mold of a "notable" historical figure for a 7th grade class. History went from being my favorite subject, to the class that I dreaded going to. I like many other young black boys retreated to a place where I felt confident and equipped relative to my white counterparts: athletics.

Mr. Turner, my 6th and 7th grade physical education (P.E.) teacher, loved me. He was a tall Black man with light brown skin and a gray ponytail. I remember sitting down on the tennis courts staring up at him, as he was the first Black male teacher I ever had. I had never played tennis before, yet, he invited me up to model and lead movements for the rest of the class. I think he was impressed with my athletic skills during my 6th grade year, and thus, he positioned me to be a leader during our 7th grade P.E. class. I would often be named team captain and asked to model techniques that he wished to teach. The acknowledgement and recognition I received from Mr. Turner fed my growing athletic identity. I was excited to come to class, not just because it was P.E., but rather it was a space where I felt valued, where I could develop a positive self-concept. Outside on the courts, I was positioned as a leader; in history class, I felt invisible.

Heading into the summer of my 8th grade year, I had to make the toughest decision of my young life. I could enroll at Fairfax High School where I could play football, or I could stay at the Los Angeles Center for Enriched Studies (LACES), a 6th-12th grade college preparatory school. While I had a deep passion for football and was widely recognized for my academic prowess, LACES didn't have a football program. As I weighed my options, I remember asking my father for advice. He told me that I would probably never be six feet tall and that my athletic career would only take me so far. He was right and I knew it. I was always one of the shorter students in class and while I could compete at the high school level, he and I both knew that

college football likely wasn't going to be an option. I decided to stay at LACES.

The plan was to take my academics more seriously, however, I slowly kept slipping away from my potential until I hit rock bottom my sophomore year of high school. I went from being one of the smartest kid in my magnet class in elementary school, to a frustrated, confused, and alienated middle school student, to a 15-year-old high school student who got caught cheating and earned a 'D' in the same semester. I was punished and could not leave the house for months except to go to school or school-related events. I had time to reflect, and soon realized that I was resisting what I saw as an oppressive educational system in the worst way possible - self-defeating. I decided to do better. I did. I received 3.5's and above for the rest of my high school career and earned a full-tuition leadership merit-based scholarship to The University of Wisconsin-Madison.

While initially having a terrible impact on my self-esteem as a student, I believe my experiences in middle school fundamentally shaped who I am and what legacy I want to leave in this world. As a 7th grader, I set a goal to author new social studies and history books; books that spoke to the diversity of experiences that make up American history, society, and culture. While I have yet to do just that, my current trajectory will allow me to do that one day. I research the intersection of race, education, and sport identity, because much like myself, the intersection of those identities for Black males can, and often is, challenging to navigate. I believe this dissertation is a piece of literature that resists hegemonic narratives about the value of Black students who are also athletes, within the education system, American society, and the world at large. Writing this dissertation brought me back to when I struggled mightily with my identity as a Black student and how that led to the strong adoption of my athletic identity. While I can look back on my experiences and be thankful to have had them, this is not always the case for

individuals who struggle finding themselves, their history, and their worth within schooling environments.

In addition to my own experiences, my orientation to the intersection of race, sports, and education, and more specifically the plight of Black student-athletes has been heavily influenced by my best friend Jason Ferguson. Being as though my high school didn't have a football team, I used to leave my high school early on Friday's and take the bus to Fairfax high school to watch him play. He was my best friend and in a way, I lived out my football dreams through watching him play. He was shorter than me, yet determined to be the best athlete in the city. It would be a disservice to this dissertation and its readers if I did not provide the space for Jason to tell his story, as his story has been so influential in harnessing my passion for the plight of Black student-athletes.

Jason's Story

Growing up I was always a natural leader. I was a pretty popular kid, plus I stood out in every sport that I played. Being a multisport athlete wound up attracting a lot of attention and as a teenager my identity began to get wrapped up in how others perceived me. But I was so much more than an athlete. I had a deep passion for writing, I was a poet and I rapped. However, the older I got the more attention I received from sports. It became my primary identity when interacting with others.

I was lucky enough to get a football scholarship during my senior year of high school. This is where things really began to shift for me mentally. The coaches made it clear from day one that I was there to play football. Everything else came second. The athletic department dictated my schedule and conditioned me to conform to their mindset. And I did. I would not

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have been there if it were not for football, so I felt like I owed them. I was made to believe that I was in debt to the program before I had even played my first snap. I completely bought in just as I did throughout my high school athletic career. I immediately began to work my tail off, night and day to be the best. I lived for competition and I never settled for anything less than greatness. This mentality wound up paying off heading into my sophomore year. I wound up winning the starting spot as the slot receiver. On top of that I was selected as team captain for the first game of the season against USC. This was ironic because attending USC had been a dream of mine, but they refused to recruit an extremely undersized wide receiver with mediocre speed. This was my chance to make them pay. When the coach told me that I'd be going out to the fifty-yard line for the coin toss, it seemed that my dreams were coming true and my plan for revenge was now seconds away.

What felt like a dream coming true turned out to be a nightmare that I could not wake up from for nearly seven years. I wound up tearing my ACL on the opening play of the game. I remember hearing a shotgun explosion and my knee feeling like it absorbed the bulk of the blast. The feeling was all too familiar. When I was in high school, I tore my ACL so I knew the feeling, sound, and adrenaline rush of an ACL tear all too well. A normal person would have exited the field and immediately searched for the team doctor to be evaluated. Not Jason Ferguson. I decided to stay on the field for another 10 plays, determined to catch Colt Brennan's first collegiate pass. I remember being in the huddle thinking to myself "Damn, my entire family is here. My career is for sure over. Fuck it, they're going to have to drag me off this field." After catching Colt's first pass, I completed two more downs then sadly gimped my way off the field over to the team doctors who were able to pretty quickly confirm what I already knew. I tore my ACL, again.

From here on out everything is a blur. My head Coach embraced me on the sideline, which made me feel important, oddly enough. I remember his embrace because it wound up being the only real affection I received from anyone on the coaching staff. I was given the option to let the team doctor perform my surgery or go home and find my own doctor. Based on my team doctors track record, I decided to find my own doctor that I felt would give me the best chance to get back on the field. I went to my dorm room, packed all of my stuff, shared a nice long cry with my teammate, Davone Bess (former Dolphins wide receiver), and then I headed to the airport. I spent the next four months at home. Three of those months were bed ridden due to the severity of my injury. I later learned I had fractured my femur because I stayed on the field for those additional plays.

How many times did my coaches call while I was bed ridden? How many hand-written letters did I receive? How many "get well soon" care packages did the athletic director send me while my 19-year-old self, laid in bed for months? The answer is ZERO. I found myself isolated and alone. I went from having my picture on the ticket stub and signing autographs, to a 'has been' in seconds. Before the injury I was the guy that they sent to high schools and middle schools all throughout Hawaii to motivate the youth. I was quickly becoming the face of the program, but the worst part about it was that I too had begun to believe I was the face of the program. I carried myself with a certain swagger. I was invincible. So why had no one called?

When something like this happens one quickly begins to ask, "What now?" Then it becomes, "Who am I without sports?" I went through a full-blown identity crisis. Depression set in and I was lost. I started abusing opioids, eventually spiraling into a full blown oxycontin addict. I began selling oxy and using oxy throughout my last two years in school to support my habit. I often look back and ask myself, "How did this happen?" If someone only gave a fuck. I

was a kid, completely lost. I didn't receive counseling, nor was I prompted to even consider counseling. Not one adult, coach or school administrator stepped up to the plate. No one even checked in to see how I was holding up. I missed nearly every practice and when I did show up, I was so high on the sidelines it was clear that something was wrong. In my mind, I wasn't playing anymore so why not? Did no one really notice, or did they just not care?

I quickly learned that this was a business and at the end of the day our coaches number one goal was to win games. I don't blame the coaching staff, nor do I blame the University's administration. I made a lot of poor decisions and I'm responsible for my actions. I do think that they could have done more. There should have been a procedure or protocol in place to handle situations like mine. They did such a good job of making us eat, sleep, and live football that it became nearly impossible to identify as anything other than a football player. For those of us who were really good it was intensified. But once it's taken away... what do you do? What do you have?

I was able to work through a lot of my issues and with the support of my wife, some amazing friends, and the grace of God, I was able to pull it together. Today I work in the tech industry where I experience similar success to what I experienced on the football field. I work harder than most and my competitive spirit thrives within my current work environment. My life isn't perfect by any means, but through a lot of hard work and self-awareness I know who I am. I am a son, a brother, a good friend to many, a husband, and a father – first and foremost. I am a proud Black man who lives life with integrity and love. I am a leader and motivator who thrives on seeing his peers succeed. This is who I am, whereas football is something that I did. It is a game that I played and a game that I loved dearly. I would have given anything for it and I did. I gave everything. Luckily, I was able to bounce back, but not everyone's story is like mine. Not

everyone has access to the kind of support system I was privileged enough to leverage when it was time to change for the better.

Chapter One

Introduction

As a mixed-race Black male trying to make sense of my racialized experiences in America, I set a life goal of traveling to Africa to reconnect with a part of my ancestral heritage. In 2007, I spent my last semester of college achieving that dream. As I climbed Lion's Head Mountain in Cape Town, South Africa, I set my sights on a new goal: helping other Black adolescents travel to Africa. Seven year later, I was climbing the same mountain, but this time, I had 45 students behind me, 25 of which were Black Americans. As I reached the peak, I took a seat and watched each student become overwhelmed with joy and emotion as they saw the saw the expansive views of the Atlantic Ocean to the west and the Cape Town city bowl to the east. Minutes later, I heard a radio blaring a recent hit by Drake. The lyrics reverberated as if reminding us, "Nigga, we made it." Most of the students had never climbed a mountain. None had ever been to Africa. This moment, in their words, was "an experience of a life-time."

My experience working with Black students within the field of study abroad has been consistent with what the literature suggests about Black students and international education. In the focus groups I conducted, most of them suggested they believed study abroad was for White students. They decided to go on this trip because they knew there would be other students of color and entrusted Black faculty and staff. While there was lots of doubt in the buildup to the trip, in the end, most considered this one of the best decisions they made in college. They gained confidence. They saw a Black country, being run by Black people. They were able to make connections between racism at home and imperialism abroad. They were able to identify the global nature of White supremacy. They were challenged to negotiate aspects of their racial,

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national and global identity. They confronted challenging questions: How can one be oppressed and privileged at the same time? How can one use their privilege to change the systems that gave them such privilege? In just four weeks, many of the Black students were speaking and thinking in ways that made me recall the fifth and optimal stage of Nigrescence (Cross, 1971). They were grounded in a strong racial identity, and committed to uplifting not only Black Americans, but Black people around the globe, as well as other demographics who have been marginalized by racial hegemony.

Back on campus, the students spoke passionately about their international experiences abroad in Dr. Moore's Black Power class. When Dr. Moore challenged the student-athletes in his class, most of whom are black, as to why none of them applied for the trip, they all had similar answers, "summer workouts," "coach won't let me," "trying to win a championship." It appeared that the internal and external pressure of being a student-athlete in a revenue-producing sport positioned them to focus almost exclusively on athletics. However, in my various roles as Instructor in the College of Education, Teaching Assistant, AAMRI (African American Male Research Initiative) Graduate Assistant, and Academic mentor for the football team, I got to know many of these student-athletes personally, and most of them were intrigued by the idea of international education, however, they felt like the experience was not for them.

These young Black students wanted to have similar international experiences as their peers, but felt that they could not. In fact, a recent report conducted by the NCAA found that student-athletes would like to have more study abroad and international education opportunities (NCAA Goals Report, 2016). I began this research project by examining persistent underrepresentation of Black student-athletes within international education as an issue of

inequitable access. An exploration into the experiences of Black student-athletes abroad is a foundational step in better serving the educational needs of this population.

Statement of the Problem

The world of collegiate athletics encourages Black student-athletes to develop a strong athletic identity, which often encloses on the opportunity to develop self-efficacy in areas outside of sport, namely the racial, academic and professional aspects of their identities (Beamon, 2012; Bimper & Harrison, 2011). Black student-athletes often feel like they are treated like athletes first and students second (Singer, 2008). Sack and Stuarowsky (1998) claim, "universities are far more concerned with exploiting the athletic talent of the Black community than with nurturing its academic potential" (p. 104), which is especially true in revenue-producing sports where the difference between wins and losses are millions of dollars. Singer (2011) argues athletic departments invest an abundance of resources into their facilities in hopes of recruiting top student-athletes, rather than providing them with opportunities to build their personal and professional selves outside of sports, such as internships, research opportunities and study abroad.

The figured world of collegiate athletics creates a process of foreclosure that limits the holistic development of Black student-athletes and funnels them towards exclusive athletic identities (Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993). Beamon suggests that athletic identity foreclosure, an over-reliance on the role of athlete in one's overall conception of self, could lead to delayed critical consciousness, a decreased academic identity, lower graduation rates, and career immaturity in student-athletes (Beamon, 2012; Bimper & Harrison, 2011; Brewer et al., 1993). While not all Black student-athletes suffer from athletic identity foreclosure, Bimper and

Harrison (2011) suggest for some Black student-athletes, "sports is more than merely a game to play, rather it's a means of defining self" (p. 275), and the role of athlete "may dominate their alternative social and personal identities" (p. 278), especially at a Primarily White Institutions (PWI), where they are easily recognized due to their status as athletes. The pitfalls of athletic identity foreclosure leave student-athletes "vulnerable to emotional difficulties upon termination of his or [their] sport career" (Brewer et al., 1993, p. 241). These athletes struggle to develop an orientation towards their futures that do not involve athletics. For this study, future orientation refers to the degree to which an individual is able to conceptualize what their life will look like in the future (McAdams, 2013). For too many Black student-athletes, the environments they occupy in college limit opportunities for identity exploration outside of athletics and what they see as possible for their future self.

In this dissertation, I use the term enclosure to provide readers with a visual of the figured world of college athletics for Black student-athletes. Woods (1998) introduced the term in the fields of social and public policy to highlight how institutions would control physical and ideological resources in South Los Angeles, in an attempt to blur the vision of Black communities. The application of the term enclosure for this project identifies collegiate institutions and their athletic departments as controlling Black student-athletes lives and access to resources in a manner that contributes to identity foreclosure.

For many elite Black athletes, the process of enclosure, begins in their youth (Beamon; 2010; Howard; 2013; Smith, 2015). Howard (2013) suggests that powerful stakeholders including major sports brands, the NCAA, high schools, and community members create an "athletic seasoning complex" that funnels Black youth toward exclusive identification with the athlete role. The overrepresentation of Black professional athletes and the underrepresentation of

Blacks succeeding in other professions within media representations further suggests to Black youth that they are one-dimensional and that their proper function in society is to play sports (Logan, 2017). The allure of a professional sports career and all the social accolades that come along with that status contribute to the enticement of an athletic identity among Black youth and is further heightened if they reach the collegiate level.

If there were an abundance of jobs as professional football and basketball players then this would not be such a severe issue, however, just as the NCAA commercial states, "there are 400,000 NCAA student-athletes, and almost all of them will go pro in something other than sports." There is an urgent need to provide Black student-athletes with opportunities to develop themselves holistically while in college to counter the likelihood of athletic identity foreclosure and help them successfully transition into the workforce (Henry & Closson, 2012). International education, more specifically, study abroad, is widely regarded as a collegiate experience that has an array of positive impacts on students (Paige, Fry, Stallman, Josic & Jon, 2009; Preston, 2012; Wick, 2011). In fact, the positive implications of study abroad would appear to counter some of the pitfalls of athletic identity foreclosure (Beamon, 2012; Bimper & Harrison, 2011; Brewer et al., 1993), however, very few Black student-athletes get the opportunity to study abroad. When Black student-athletes do participate in international education, it is primarily on athletic-oriented trips or service-learning trips (Barker, 2016). It is imperative to gather data on the experiences of Black student athletes who participate in all types of international education trips to better understand how these experiences influence identity formation and future orientation.

Pilot Study

The underrepresentation of Black student-athlete participation and the dearth of research on the experiences of Black student-athletes within international education moved me to conduct a

pilot study on the experiences of Black student-athletes abroad. The pilot study consisted of two research consultants, both former student-athletes who had international learning experiences while in college. One of the research consultants studied abroad in Israel for three weeks, and the other research consultant went on an athletically-oriented foreign tour to Italy for 11 days. While the results overall were positive in regard to the influence on these Black student-athletes' identity formation and future orientation, the experiences were quite unique and divergent. While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to study the structure of the different types of international education opportunities, this qualitative exploratory multiple case study will focus on the experiences of Black student-athletes who participated in various forms of international education and how their experiences influenced their identity formation and future goals and orientation.

Research Questions

1. *How does international education impact the identity formation of a sample of Black student-athletes?*

2. *How does international education impact Black student-athletes' goals and future orientation?*

Justification of the Study

The following research inquiry is based on several premises, triangulated through Critical Race Theory, the knowledges and gaps within relevant literature, my positioning within collegiate athletics as well as international education, and the pilot study conducted. First, international spaces serve as an alternate figured world or third space where individuals can negotiate aspects of themselves and re-negotiate their identities (Wick, 2011). This is also true

for Black athletes. The history of Black athletes in this country highlights how international spaces have served as a space for identity development for elite Black athletes who were marginalized as inferior and one-dimensional within American hegemonic practices. An early example is Marshal 'Major' Taylor (1878-1932), a cyclist, who was the first Black person to win a World Championship after winning the world cycling title in Montreal in 1899. In response, White America refused to recognize, honor, or even race against Major as "he was never acclaimed, and once he had retired he was quickly forgotten. Only by leaving the United States for Europe was Taylor able to sustain and prolong his career" (Wiggins, 2006, p. 23). Taylor's races were often sold out across Europe as White audiences marveled at his cycling ability, his Blackness and his character as he "was instantly transformed into an athletic superstar" (Wiggins, 2006, p. 30). What is particularly interesting about Taylor's treatment in Europe was his ability to be recognized as more than an athlete, a multi-faceted human being.

Taylor was afforded an opportunity to publish an article about himself in a prominent French paper, *La Vie au Grand Air* (Wiggins, 2006) in which he positioned himself as more than an athlete, someone who enjoyed the arts and played multiple instruments. Major Taylor was one of the first, but certainly not the last Black American athlete "to experience a new identity and freedom in Europe" (p. 32). Ultimately, it was the international arena that allowed him to "refocus on his career and redefine his identity" (p. 32). Major Taylor provides an early example of how international spaces have served as a place for Black athletes to develop a multi-faceted self-concept and positive identities outside of sports. This legacy continues with the likes of Paul Robeson, Muhammad Ali, Bill Russell, Kareem Abdul Jabbar, and others. International spaces provide new spaces for identity development and construction while allowing individuals marginalized within America to step outside of the box they have been framed within.

The second premise is that all international educational experiences are not the same and thus, all international education experiences should *not* be accepted as unquestionably good for all students. Overwhelmingly, research on study abroad and service-learning abroad programs suggests the experience positively impacts identity formation, academic outcomes, and professional maturity of participants (Altbach, 2015; Harder, Andenoro, Roberts, Stedman, Newberry, Parker & Rodriguez, 2015; Posey, 2003; Redden, 2013). Furthermore, many institutions of higher education, educational associations, foundations and governmental agencies recommend participation in international education as a means to develop the personal and professional knowledge needed to compete in today's globalized job market (Harder et al., 2015; Obst, Bhandari & Witherell, 2007; Preston, 2012). However, researchers have called into question if all international educational experiences have similar positive outcomes as well as "the assumption that study abroad has the same benefits for all students" (Wick, 2011, p. 1). Recent research suggests that Black students may have unique and potentially challenging experiences abroad (Willis, 2016) due to the universality of white supremacy. The limited empirical research on the experiences of students of color abroad leaves room to question if students of color experience international education in similar ways as their White peers. Furthermore, I have yet to find any research on how student-athletes experience foreign tour trips focused primarily on athletics. The foundation of these trips is quite different from those focused on education or service abroad, and thus the experiences on these trips may influence student-athletes in unique ways.

Lastly, student-athletes want to study abroad. The NCAA Goals research study (2016) highlights student-athletes' demand for more access to study abroad programs. Student-athletes stated that they wanted more free time to engage in activities like study abroad. The students

who bring the most economic value to the university are often denied one of the most valuable educational opportunities the university has to offer. Studying the international education experiences of Black student-athletes fills voids in the scholarship surrounding the intersections of international education and students of color, as well as student-athlete development. The foundational goal of this research is to bring educational equity and justice to Black student-athletes at PWI's as "perhaps nowhere in higher education is the disenfranchisement of Black male students more insidious than in college athletics" (Harper, 2006, p. 6). The research will also add to the literature around athletic identity foreclosure and potentially introduce a powerful intervention, international education, to the discourse. Lastly, the research will contribute to the broader field of racial identity in a globalized world.

Why study the intersection of sport and race?

Sports has often proven to be a microcosm for the broader complex issues of race and racism in society (Eitzen & Sage, 2003), a platform where ideological wars are waged. Black people have been one of the most researched subjects of scientific inquiry since Thomas Jefferson's, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1781). In this article, Jefferson calls upon science to explain why Blacks are inferior to their White counterparts. According to race historians Smedley & Smedley (2012), this plea led to an onslaught of so-called scientific theories that answered Jefferson's question, theorizing around Negro inferiority. One of the most popular and well documented theories was put forth by Dr. Samuel Morton, a well-known scientist due to his theory of craniology, which purported that those of African descent were indeed inferior with less capability for intelligence because their skulls were smaller than those of European descent (1839). Stewart (1823) claimed that slaves in Jamaica had an increased physical capacity

compared to other people and were thus best suited for laborious work. What underscored much of the theorizing around the inferiority of Blacks was that they were animal-like, a closer relative to the ape, and thus could withstand more physical labor and hardship, ultimately, legitimizing the institution of slavery. As Blacks began to integrate the American domain of sports, investigations into the intersection of race and athletic ability quickly built upon this previous line of scientific inquiry.

The 20th century saw a wave of Black athletes competing at the highest levels despite the social inequality and barriers to upward mobility faced by Black communities. Athletes such as Marshal "Major" Taylor, Jack Johnson and in later years, Jesse Owens and Joe Louis, led to a plethora of research suggesting genetic differences by race, both physical and mental, called eugenics (Cobb, 1942; Metheny, 1939). Similar to how theories suggested Blacks could deal with more pain and physical labor to legitimize slavery, theories needed to be developed to explain away some of the athletic feats of Black athletes, in order to maintain and continue to legitimize the dominant narrative of white supremacy. After Owens won four medals in the 1934 Olympics in Berlin, people developed so-called scientific theories to explain and make sense of his dominance. Olympic track coach Dean Cromwell, said of the African American athlete,

> His ability to sprint and jump was a life-and-death matter to him in the jungle. His muscles are pliable, and his easygoing disposition is a valuable aid to the mental and physical relaxation that a runner and jumper must have. (Wiggins, 1989, p. 161)

Yale track coach Albert McGall suggested that African American sprinters had an advantage because of a projecting heel bone (calcaneus) more common among them (Wiggins, 1989, p. 161). The trope of Black men being more closely connected to apes was solicited as the reason

for his win, not that he could have trained harder and more effectively than his White counterparts.

The scientific reasoning behind eugenics has been challenged throughout research (Sailes, 1991) which has suggested that there is more gene variation within a racial group than between racial groups (Betancourt & Lopez, 1993; Zuckerman, 1990). While more recent research has suggested that race is more of a social construction than a biological fact (Omi & Winant, 1994; Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley & Chavous, 1998), dominant narratives continue to purport the idea that biologically, Blacks are physically and athletically superior to Whites while intellectually inferior.

The discourse that positions Blacks within a duality of athletically gifted and intellectually inferior has permeated mainstream culture and is imposed upon Black youth at a very young age. Ladson-Billings (2011) suggests that society has a love/ hate relationship with Black boys, adoring them in "narrow niches and specific slots-music, basketball, football, track" but is "less comfortable with them than in places like the National Honor Society, the debate team, or the computer club" (p. 9). Black boys are "applauded and emulated" while simultaneously "loathed and despised" (Howard, 2013, p. 55), which continues to feed into the deficit-oriented narrative that Black males are a homogenous group with little to offer society outside of athletic prowess.

This hegemonic and simplistic portrayal of Black males is often detrimental to Black male academic development (Harrison, Azzarito, & Burden, 2004) beginning in their youth and furthered at the collegiate level. The narrative that Blacks are athletically gifted and intellectually inferior not only impacts Black athletes; it impacts the Black community as a whole. Howard (2013) argues that families, community members, coaches, and teachers take part in an *athletic*

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seasoning complex and subconsciously perpetuate the stereotype of athletic superiority and intellectual inferiority among Black male youth. Harrison, Harrison and Moore (2002) advance the idea that more research is needed focusing on the complexity of identity in Black athletes stating a, "deeper understanding of these phenomena may help to stifle the oppressive funneling of the limitless dreams of African American youth into an extremely limited pool of athletic opportunities" (p. 131). When Black youth think they are naturally better than another group of people in one area, and deficient in another area, it can be assumed they would put their time and energy into the area where they believe they will have the most success. While there is a longer history of Black males being socialized into the exclusive role of athlete (Alder, 1991), the growing acceptance of women's sports, especially women's basketball, is leading to similar limitations being placed on Black girls and Black female student-athletes.

Current research on Black student-athletes tends to focus more on issues related to Black student-athletes such as: stereotypes, academic achievement, racial identity, athletic identity foreclosure, micro-aggressions, and socialization processes (Beamon, 2012; Bimper & Harrison, 2011; Comeaux & Harrison, 2007; Demo & Hughes, 1990; Hodge et al., 2008; Simons, Bosworth, Fujita, & Jensen, 2007). While there has been a positive trend in research that attempts to better understand the dominant culture and systemic forces that lead to some of the challenges faced by Black student-athletes, there is a dearth in research that highlights interventions that disrupt the binary of athletic superiority and intellectual inferiority. Hawkins (1998) reasons,

> The continual misrepresentation of [B]lack men will require a perpetual opposition.
> Images and a continual means of cultural resistance by [B]lack writers, directors,

scholars, photographers, producers, and so forth, who are consciously aware and

concerned about freedom from ideological opposition. (p. 51)

The visibility of Black athletes can be powerfully used to disrupt this binary when and if they are

highlighted in ways that contradict the idea that all they can be is an athlete. There is nothing

wrong with being an athlete; the problem arises when it is assumed that is all one can be. I assert

that studying the experiences of Black student-athletes abroad challenges the dominant narrative

that Black athletes are static, intellectually deficient, and destined for success only in the realm

of sports. In my pilot study, one of the research consultants of this study eloquently articulated

that studying abroad helped them realize that "being an athlete is something that I do, not who I

am."

Theoretical Foundation

This research uses Critical Race Theory (CRT) and as its theoretical foundation. CRT is

made up of multiple tenets while also encouraging researchers to be interdisciplinary in its

approach. For this reason, the concept of *figured worlds* as described by Holland, Lachicotte,

Skinner and Cain (1998), and summarized by Urrieta (2007) will be utilized to enhance this

study's understanding of the fluidity and flexibility of identity. The theoretical foundation of this

study also speaks to the methods employed. What follows is a brief framing of each of the

theories utilized for this study.

Critical Race Theory

CRT developed from an examination of race, racism, and the law in the post-civil rights

period to better understand the permanence of white supremacy in society, in an effort to further

social justice. CRT scholars challenged dominant narratives like the color-blind discourse of

equality that became especially prevalent during the Civil Rights movement (Tate, 1997). CRT scholars recognized that the law and the available theories to make sense of the law and society did not speak to the actual needs of Blacks and other people of color, nor the constraints they faced, and thus set out on a mission to develop their own theories that could empower and humanize their communities (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). Scholars utilized CRT in various fields including law, sociology, women's studies, ethnic studies, and education to highlight the ways racism was institutionalized and influenced policy. Ultimately, CRT posits that racism is endemic to all U.S. institutions which would include international education as well as collegiate sports. CRT is based on five guiding tenets (Yosso, 2005):

- *Racism is endemic to society -* This tenet suggests that racism is a normal and ordinary aspect of US society rather than an anomalous occurrence. America is built on racism and our society "exists only because of its foundation in racially based slavery, and it thrives only because racial discrimination continues" (Hochschild, 1984, p. 5). CRT acknowledges that the neatness and singularity of identity is artificial and arbitrary (Ladson-Billings, 2013) and the intersection of race, gender, among other identities shape how people see and experience the world.

- *Challenge to dominant/ majoritarian narratives -* Dominant narratives include what have been deemed as commonsense narratives about the United States such as the belief in meritocracy, colorblindness, objectivity and individuality. Majoritarian stories distort and silence the experiences of marginalized people purporting neutrality and objectivity yet implicitly making negative assumptions and stereotypes about people of color (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002).

- *Social Justice Orientation -* CRT scholars in education are focused on conducting research that identifies inequity in society while also proposing "radical solutions for addressing it" (Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 27).

- *The use of experiential knowledge and voice to provide counter narratives -* Critical race theory values the lived reality of people of color and views their narratives as a source of strength. Voices of the oppressed, whether true or fictionalized can be utilized "illustrate and underscore broad legal principles regarding race and racial/social justice" (Ladson-Billings, 2013, p. 42).

- *Interdisciplinary and ahistorical -* CRT scholarship utilizes multiple theoretical approaches to provide researchers with a greater total understanding and is focuses on how current issues are rooted in history.

Figured Worlds

In *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds,* (1998), Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain) suggest an individual's identity or self-perception is in a constant state of mutation and fluidity as it responds to new figured worlds. They describe figured worlds as "collectively formed activities" that are "socially produced" and "culturally constructed" (Holland et al., pp. 40-41). Identities are situated within participation of these worlds, at times advancing and at other times limiting an individual's agency. The socially and culturally constructed world of college campuses, which Menke coins in her dissertation as the athletic "bubble" (2010, p.7), cultivates and solidifies Black student-athletes' athletic identity at the expense of other aspects of their multifaceted identities (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011). From the figured world perspective, student-athletes are simply attempting to respond and act in accordance with how they and others envision their identities. International education may create an alternate and completely new

figured world, where Black student-athletes can construct profoundly new understandings of their identity.

Definition of Key Terms

Research consultant – This term is used for participants in the research study. The term consultants in used in place of participant to honor the contributions of those who shared their narratives with me and allowed this research to happen. Throughout the research process, their role is acknowledged as a consultant. I use the terms consultant interchangeably with student, student-athlete, and Black student-athlete when referring to the research consultants for this study to highlight their multidimensionality. At times, it seemed more appropriate to use one word compared to the other.

Black people – People who identify as members of the African-diaspora

Black student-athletes – Students who participate in a NCAA sanctioned sport who self-identify as Black or African-American.

Revenue-producing sports – The collegiate sports of football, men's basketball and women's basketball. At most D1 universities, these sports produce more revenue than they spend.

International educational experience – Any university affiliated international trip. These include study abroad, service learning abroad, foreign tours, volunteerism trips, ministry trips, etc.

Study Abroad Trip – Study abroad refers to trips where student-athletes receive academic credit for participating in an international learning experience. These trips are typically

outside of the athletic department and facilitated by the Universities study abroad

program. Non-student-athletes also participate in these trips.

Competition Abroad / Athletic oriented foreign Tour – These are athletically oriented

trips designed around athletic competition abroad. These trips consist of a team, for

example a collegiate women's basketball team, traveling abroad and competing against

other women's basketball teams from the United States or professional teams from the

country of destination.

Organization of the Study

This research supplements extant research examining the intersection of racial identity,

academic identity and athletic identity in Black student-athletes at the collegiate level (Beamon,

2012; Benson, 2000; Bimper, 2016; Bimper & Harrison, 2011; Bimper, Harrison, & Clark, 2013;

Harrison, Sailes, Rotich, & Bimper, 2011; Singer, 2011). This research extends the current

research on athletic identity foreclosure (Beamon, 2012; Brewer et al., 1993), and student-

athletes' development by suggesting study abroad as a potential intervention into the process of

athletic identity foreclosure. In this study, I recruited research consultants, Black student-

athletes who participated in a University affiliated international educational trip, through a

process of purposeful sampling (Patton, 2015). Merriam and Tisdell (2015) state, "purposeful

sampling is based on the assumption that the researcher wants to discover, understand, and gain

insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (p. 96). This

research was based on the proposition that Black student-athletes who have experienced

international education are best suited to answer the research questions.

Research consultants consisted of 20 Black student-athletes from various Division 1 (D1) institutions, participating in different types of University-affiliated international trips. Qualitative data was collected through semi-structured individual interviews, focus groups, and various forms of artifacts and document analysis, including Photovoice to explore Black student-athletes process of identity formation abroad. These data collection methods provided a mechanism for the research consultants to narrate their own stories (Chio & Fandt, 2007; Thomas, 2011), which is theoretically compatible with CRT methodologies.

Significance of Research

In their research on the psychosocial development of students who participate in international education, Braskamp, Braskamp, and Merill (2009) found students consistently,

> Express a greater self-confidence in their ability to meet new situations, communicate with others not like them, and have a lesser need to be continuously supported by others…Education abroad may be an important catalyst for students developing personal attributes, like a sense of self-direction, i.e., helping students make progress in their journey towards self-authorship. (p. 112)

International education can have a powerful and transformative impact on students, which is especially important for a demographic of students who have been recognized to suffer from the pitfalls of identity foreclosure at alarming rates (Beamon, 2012; Brewer et al., 1993). A lack of academic motivation and preparedness (Harper et al., 2013), social isolation (Murphy et al., 1996; Singer, 2011), delayed identity development (Bimper & Harrison, 2011), and low levels of career maturity and readiness (Beamon, 2012; Harrison, 2001; Lally, 2007) are but a few of the deleterious consequences of identity foreclosure. Furthermore, the literature on international

education suggests that such an experience may have a positive impact on Black student-athletes' identity formation while also inhibiting the process of identity foreclosure. International spaces can serve as a figured world (Holland et al., 1998) or Third Space (Bhabha, 2012), an alternate reality where students can construct and negotiate aspects of themselves that will benefit them personally and professionally.

An additional area of significance of this research is that it explores the influence that athletically oriented foreign tours have on the identity formation of student-athletes. Studying the influence of athletically oriented trips is especially significant as college football and basketball have become increasingly internationalized as part of the global expansion of ESPN, and the NCAA, creating more and more opportunities for student-athletes to participate in athletically oriented internationally learning experiences. To date, no research on the experiences of student-athletes on these trips has been conducted, in fact, the NCAA doesn't even keep official records of basketball teams that go abroad to compete.

Between 2015 and 2016, there were six Division 1 collegiate football games played in the countries of Japan, The Bahamas, Australia and Ireland (ESPN, 2016). Every year, men's and women's basketball teams travel to tournaments internationally to compete. In 2015, The University of Texas's men's basketball team played against the University of Washington in Shanghai, China and less than two weeks later, traveled to the Bahamas for another tournament. While students are being provided with international experiences, it is imperative that we explore the influence of these experiences on student-athlete's identity formation. This qualitative exploratory case study adds to the literature on student-athlete development and creates a foundation for future literature exploring the impact that international education including athletically-oriented trips have on Black student-athlete's identity formation.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Black student-athletes should be provided the same opportunities for holistic development as the general student body on a collegiate campus. However, due to the fact that Black student-athletes are overrepresented in the high-profile revenue-producing sports of football and men's and women's Basketball, their holistic development is often secondary to their athletic development (Harrison, Harrison, & Moore, 2002). Athletic departments have become one-stop shops, where revenue-producing athletes can seemingly get all of their needs met in one place including academic tutoring, meals, personal and professional development opportunities, as well as all athletic oriented activities (Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2011). Athletic departments believe this is the best way to meet the needs of their athletes, however, researchers have argued that this 'athletic bubble' does not provide student-athletes the experiences necessary to develop their multifaceted selves (Beamon, 2012; Brewer et al., 1993; Singer, 2011). In fact, the world that student-athletes occupy often leads them into a process of identity foreclosure (Marcia, 1966), where they become engulfed in their role as athlete (Adler, 1991; Beamon, 2012). This process of athletic identity foreclosure is especially problematic in Black student-athletes (Beamon; 2012; Brewer et al.; 1993) because the identity of athlete is more salient in Black student-athletes than their White peers (Bimper & Harrison, 2011). Black student-athletes are often miseducated on college campuses, as they are heavily socialized into focusing on sports (Harrison, Bimper, Logan, & Smith, 2017), and denied educational opportunities such as study abroad that have proven to be transformational for students of color (Jackson, 2006; Wick, 2011).

The first part of this literature review will lay out the theoretical frameworks that I will operate from, so readers can understand the lens in which I have reviewed the relevant literature.

I will give an overview of Critical Race Theory, its primary tenets, and then I will explore the framework of figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998), which will be used to frame the way I conceptualize identity throughout this research. After reviewing literature on Black racial identity, I will move to literature on athletic identity, and athletic-identity foreclosure. Then, I will take a step back and look at literature that focuses on the figured world of collegiate athletics, focusing on issues that may lead to athletic-identity foreclosure in Black student-athletes.

The next part of the literature review will focus on international education. I will explore the literature on international education through a CRT lens, identifying potential barriers to equity and access, as well as the influence that studying abroad has on students of color, specifically Black students. Lastly, I will highlight the gap in literature around international education for Black student-athletes. The gap in literature around study abroad for student-athletes, as well as the impact that studying abroad can have on athletic identity foreclosure highlight the necessity for this study.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is the theoretical foundation of this research because it encourages the centering of race when attempting to understand and deconstruct social oppression. Early CRT scholars recognized that most theoretical frameworks did not speak to the actual needs of Blacks and other people of color, nor the constraints they faced, and thus set out on a mission to develop their own theories that could empower and humanize their communities (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). CRT speaks from the perspective of marginalized racial groups in an attempt to counter master narratives that suggest the U.S. is a colorblind and meritocratic society. These dominant master narratives often position people of color from a

deficit perspective and blame them for their marginalized status within society. The goal of CRT is to bring about social justice to marginalized groups of people, which this study endeavors to do. Scholars have utilized CRT in various fields including law, sociology, women's studies, ethnic studies, and education to highlight the ways racism is institutionalized affecting all aspects of society.

CRT emerged from Critical Legal Studies (CLS) which "sought to expose and challenge the view that legal reasoning was neutral, value-free, and unaffected by social and economic relations, political forces, or cultural phenomena" and instead highlights how the law "tends to enforce, reflect, constitute and legitimize the dominant social and power relations through social actors who generally believe that they are neutral and arrive at their decisions through an objective process of legal reasoning" (Brown & Jackson, 2013, p. 12), formed a base for future CRT scholarship. Many scholars of color concerned with inequity in the law and society identified with the CLS platform, however, they also felt "the movement did not adequately address the struggles of people of color, particularly blacks" (Brown & Jackson, 2013, p. 13), so they began a theoretical movement that placed race at the core.

One of the concerns with CLS scholarship was the dismissal of incremental reform, not recognizing how the quest for basic human rights has always been a central focus for Black Americans and other people of color (Parker & Lynn, 2002). CLS scholars were also critiqued because they were too focused on deconstructing ideology (Delgado, 1989), as to where CRT scholars took more of a racial realist approach (Bell, 1992; Lynn, Jennings & Hughes, 2013), which acknowledged the urgent challenges of being a person of color in the United States. CRT scholars claimed that CLS scholars spent too much time focusing on how oppressed people buy into their oppression (false consciousness) without paying enough attention to how they were

forced into their situations through hegemonic forms of structural racism (Tate, 1997; Parker & Lynn, 2002).

Derrick Bell, a critical race legal scholar widely considered one of the foundational theorists of CRT, became increasingly incensed with the slow pace of racial reform in the years after the Civil Rights Movement. Not only were the gains coming at a slow pace; many of the gains won since emancipation were being systematically undone by a sequence of federal and state court cases (Lynn et al., 2013). Bell and a host of other scholars concerned with the way race was ignored within the colorblind discourse of the law, came together and founded a few central principles of what would be known as CRT including racial realism (Bell, 1992), interest-convergence (Bell, 1980), challenging dominant narratives with storytelling and counter-narratives (Lawrence, 1987; Delgado, 1989), whiteness as property (Harris, 1993), and intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1991).

Branches of CRT

CRT focuses race at the core of its analysis, however as Omi and Winant (1994) argue, minoritized groups are racialized in different ways and while they are all oppressed and marginalized, they are subjected to different forms of racism. Thus, there have been various branches of CRT that have developed to speak to the specific need of different oppressed groups in society, such as TribalCRIT (Brayboy, 2005), LatCrit (Delgado & Stefancic, 2013; Valdes, 1997), AsianCrit (Museus & Iftikar, 2014) and Critical Race Feminism (Evans-Winters & Esposito, 2010), among others. For example, LatCrit is specifically concerned with growing a progressive sense of Latin(x) pan-ethnic community and address issues often ignored by CRT such as language, immigration, ethnicity, culture, identity, phenotype, and sexuality and has a tradition of offering a strong gender analysis (Bernal, 2002). The different branches of CRT are

used to complement each other and provide a greater understanding for the way race and racism operate in America.

Critical Race Theory in Education

Ladson-Billings and Tate formally introduced CRT into the education literature in 1995, with a firm foundation in the legal studies scholarship but also encouraging scholars to expand beyond the critical race legal literature. It was not enough to "simply use CRT's text in law and apply it to the education context without rewriting it, without reinventing it...CRT has to continue to "reinvent" itself so as to work for the communities they serve" (Solorzano, 2013, p. 57). CRT scholars in education utilized theories and concepts from multiple disciplines and created a set of tenets from which CRT scholarship could be explored within education. For the purposes of this research, the following tenets will be employed.

Racism is endemic to society

This tenet suggests that racism, as well as other forms of oppression such as sexism, are normal and permanent aspects of US society rather than anomalous occurrences. America is built on racism and our society "exists only because of its foundation in racially based slavery, and it thrives only because racial discrimination continues" (Hochschild, 1984, p. 5). Bell argues that Blacks will never gain true equality but should still fight for it because through knowledge of truth and struggle, Blacks will be empowered (Bell, 1980). This racial realist approach is based in Bell's interest convergence theory which suggests that "the interest of blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of whites," (1980, p. 523). Bell's analysis is largely based on Brown vs. Board in 1954 as well as the Civil Rights Movement of the 60's. Blacks had been challenging educational policies for over some

100 years, so why did Brown succeed? Bell lays out numerous reasons why the Brown case was won, exemplifying how the interests of Blacks are met, only when they align with the dominant group. He argues that "Whites in policymaking positions were able to see the economic and political advances at home and abroad that would follow abandonment of segregation" (Bell, 1980, p. 524). Interest convergence can be used as a tool to better understand the permanence of racism in society.

This tenet implies that racism is also deeply rooted into all of our institutions, including education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). College athletics is a breeding ground for racial injustice against Black student-athletes (Beamon, 2012; Bimper & Harrison, 2011; Comeaux & Harrison. 2011; Harper, 2006, 2013; Singer, 2008;) and in order to challenge the way racism operates within the institution of higher education, it is necessary to focus on the racialized experiences of these athletes. Focusing on race allows us to look at the way racism operates within two smaller functions of a college or university, the athletic department as well as the study abroad department.

Challenge to dominant/ majoritarian narratives

Majoritarian narratives include 'commonsense' ideologies about the United States such as the belief in meritocracy, colorblindness, objectivity, and individuality. These narratives include the belief in the American Dream and the idea that if you work hard enough, you will make it in this country. These narratives often fail to incorporate relations of power and history, and are told through the lens of the dominant group. Majoritarian stories distort and silence the experiences of marginalized people, purporting neutrality and objectivity yet implicitly making negative assumptions and stereotypes about people of color (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). These narratives ultimately suggest assimilation as an ideal way to deal with students of color.

For example, legislation that outlaws race/ethnic consideration in university admissions is supported by the myth of meritocracy, colorblindness, and equality under the law. Another example is the notion that SAT tests are objective and measure knowledge, when in fact they measure a specific type of knowledge. Communities of color possess other knowledges including bilingualism, biculturalism, and commitment to communities - knowledges that are not valued by the university admissions system, suggesting that the knowledge developed in these communities is deficient and not valued by the dominant society (Bernal, 2002). This is apparent in practical situations like university admissions, but is also widespread in research conducted on and about communities of color, even when the research is done from a critical perspective.

This tenet provides the theoretical foundation to challenge dominant narratives that suggest Black student-athletes are one-dimensional (Logan, 2017). This tenet will be used to debunk dominant narratives about Black student-athletes that position them through a deficit-oriented lens, suggesting athletic superiority and intellectual inferiority. The challenge to dominant narratives humanizes subordinated groups and creates space for counter-storytelling which allows these groups to author their own stories.

The use of experiential knowledge and voice to provide counter narratives

Critical race theory values the lived reality of people of color and views their narratives as a source of strength. "Experiential knowledge of people of color is legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing, and teaching about racial subordination" (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 26) This approach to knowledge includes methods such as: storytelling, family histories, biographies, scenarios, parables, cuentos, testimonies, chronicles and narratives, which challenge deficit notions of people color and present research "grounded in the experiences and knowledge of people of color" (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 23). The authors assert counter

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stories are beneficial as they: a) build community among those marginalized, b) challenge

dominant wisdom, narratives, and established belief systems, c) open new windows into the

reality of those on the margins, and d) and create space for new possibilities and a richer future.

Brown and Jackson (2013) suggest that providing space for the victim's perspective vs

the perpetrator's perspective acknowledges how racism is a social phenomenon and occurs even

without overtly racist actors. Giving voice to the victim acknowledges impact rather than intent,

which is critical because "those who have experienced discrimination speak with a special voice

to which we should listen" (Matsuda, 1995, p. 63). When people get to author their own

narratives, society gains better insight into the way laws, systems, and structures impact them.

Utilizing voice as a method does not imply there is a single voice that represents communities of

color, as CRT is anti-essentialist (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). Showcasing a variety of voices

and narratives exposes the heterogeneity of people of color who are often framed as a

homogenous group through majoritarian narratives (Solorzano & Bernal, 2001). Voices of the

oppressed, whether true or fictionalized, can be utilized to "illustrate and underscore broad legal

principles regarding race and racial/social justice" (Ladson-Billings, 2013, p. 42). One

methodology of storytelling consists of "the authors creat[ing] composite characters and

plac[ing] them in social, historical, and political situations to discuss racism, sexism, classism,

and other forms of subordination" (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 33). An example of this is

Solórzano's (2013) article, where through a series of fictional letters to Derrick Bell, he explains

how and why he developed his philosophies around CRT in education.

Solorzano and Bernal (2001) utilized the experiential knowledge of Latinx students in

their research - creating space to explore how students resist against oppression in schools. The

use of student voices allowed for the authors to challenge dominant narratives of Latin(x) student

resistance through the lens of self-defeating behavior. Storytelling allowed for the authors to highlight transformational resistance within students. Counter narratives about transformative resistance within institutionally oppressive structures allow people "on the margins" to use their decentralized space as a "site of resistance and empowerment" (Solorzano & Bernal, 2001, p. 336). The use of voice and experiential knowledge challenges dominant narratives and constructions of knowledge, creating space for people of color to theorize around their own experiences (Bernal, 2002).

This research will position Black student-athletes as holders of knowledge and will use their narratives to shape the implications of this work. This research will look at the figured worlds of college athletics as well as international education from the perspective of Black student-athletes. Furthermore, these athletes will have the opportunity to challenge dominant narratives around Black student-athletes by authoring their own experience.

Interdisciplinary and historical

While CRT in education has legal roots, Solorzano (2013) argues that CRT in education draws from the progressive fields of thought such as African-American studies; race, ethnic and women's studies; as well as Freirean critical pedagogy. CRT scholars, Sleeter and Bernal, state, "rather than suggesting a grand theory, we find it more useful to ask what insights each perspective can offer" (Sleeter & Bernal, 2004, p. 253). Utilizing different theoretical lens provide researchers with different entrance points to assess a problem, and each has their own strengths and shortcomings. CRT encourages collaboration among scholars who are looking at similar problems within society from different disciplines. There is not one way to look at a problem, so having multiple theoretical approaches provides researchers with a more comprehensive understanding.

CRT scholarship also pays particular attention to how current issues are rooted in history. Majoritarian narratives such as meritocracy, ignore history and the role that racism and power have played in shaping the current reality. The foundation of this country, including its laws and institutions, were built upon slavery and the belief in White male superiority. To divorce current social inequity from their historical roots does a disservice to all proposed solutions (Bell, 1980; Ladson-Billings, 2013). Berry III, Ellis and Hughes (2014) utilize CRT along with historical research methodologies to unveil how reforms in Mathematics education have failed to have a positive impact on Black children. By historicizing the problem, researchers critiqued a system that continuously fails Black children. For this particular project, Black student-athletes' experiences are inextricably connected to a variety of disciplines and their historical legacies. For the purpose of this project, it was important to look at research within the field of Education, Sociology, Sports Management, Psychology and Ethnic Studies.

Social Justice Orientation

CRT scholars in education are focused on conducting research that identifies inequity in society while also proposing "radical solutions for addressing it" (Ladson-Billings, 1999, p. 27). In her article titled, *What critical race theory is and what it is not*, Ladson-Billings (2013) suggests that researchers who consider themselves Critical Race Theorists need to connect their scholarship to the practical and offer solutions that are oriented towards liberation and social justice. In their review of CRT scholarship in education (2005), Dixson and Rousseau suggest one of the most urgent needs within CRT scholarship is to develop more solutions to the many issues addressed. For example, Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2000) used CRT to unearth the ways racism, specifically microaggressions, play out in schools while also providing solutions to the issue. The authors state, "Microaggressions are subtle insults (verbal, nonverbal, and/or visual)

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directed towards people of color, often automatically or unconsciously" (p. 60). They found that microaggressions negatively impacted African-Americans student's grades, relationships with professors and peers and ultimately led to self-doubt. African-American students responded by creating counter-spaces – sites where deficit notions of people of color can be challenged and where a positive collegiate racial climate can be established and maintained (cultural organizations, offices that provided services for African-Americans, Greek life, and Black organized academic study halls). These spaces provided students the opportunity to vent and share similar experiences. The authors not only identified the problem; they identified responses and possible solutions to the issue in an effort to raise awareness around what it takes to have a positive collegiate racial climate.

Research focused on social justice did not originate in CRT, as scholars have fought for social equality and justice for years. In *The Mis-education of the Negro*, Woodson (1933) argued that it was not enough for Black folks to get educated and earn fancy degrees if they weren't utilizing that knowledge to positively impact Black communities. His efforts to create social justice led to him starting *The Journal for African American History* in 1916 as well as the founding of Negro History Week in 1926, later to be re-named Black History Month in 1970. Similarly, educator and activist Paolo Freire (2000) argued that the goal of education should not only be to transform the way people think, but to transform their actual lived reality by taking action against the oppressive structures that subordinate them.

This research suggests that study abroad may serve as an educational opportunity that will lead to more social justice for Black student-athletes. Current research on study abroad suggests that studying abroad has positive impacts on students of color both personally and

professionally. These benefits should be extended to Black student-athletes who many argue are one of the most oppressed groups in higher education (Harper, 2006, 2013; Hawkins, 2013).

CRT Critiques and Tensions

CRT's approach to research and knowledge production, as well as its social justice-oriented goals have led to many critiques being leveled against the framework. One of the major critiques of CRT is its focus on race as a tool of analysis. When Ladson-Billings and Tate first presented on the idea of CRT in education, Ladson-Billings recalls colleagues and allies, from the multicultural and diversity field, challenging their theoretical foundation of race, as some believed it "violated the sacred rule of maintaining the race, class and gender triumvirate." (Ladson-Billings, 2013, p. 34). Race is often conflated with other forms of oppression, suggesting they operate under the law and within institutions in similar ways, when in fact they each operate in unique ways, and should be studied both together and separately. Another critique of CRT is the use of personal narratives and voice, which many researchers see as subjective, biased, and unworthy of merit within the academy. However, majoritarian narratives similarly tell stories that are positioned as truth, such as meritocracy, objectivity, and color-blindness. Bernal (2002) asserts "They believe their stories are based on facts, and because Eurocentrism and White privilege are invisible, they fail to see how subjective their stories are" (p. 120). Tate offers a similar interpretation as he suggests "The *IMPERIAL SCHOLAR* employs a set of strategies to mute, devalue, and/or co-opt the voice of critical race theorists" (1997, p. 221). CRT will continue to face attack because it challenges dominant frameworks and conceptions of knowledge which define and give credence to the current power structure (Parker & Lynn, 2002).

Identities in Figured Worlds

Holland and colleagues describe a figured worlds as "a socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts. And particular outcomes are valued over others" (1998, p. 52). Urrieta (2007) utilized figured worlds to better understand how Chicano/a educators developed activist educator identities. Rubin (2007) used figured worlds to better understand what identities were made available and also denied to students in an urban school with low performance. This theory highlights how identities "are not located solely in the individual, but rather are negotiated in social interactions that take form in cultural spaces" (Nasir & Saxe, 2003, p. 17). Black student-athletes on college campuses take part in a figured world that provides them opportunities to develop certain aspects of their identities while also making certain identities, like student and future professional, more challenging to access.

Within this figured world, there are certain expectations and values that Black student-athletes must live up to in order to be recognized. Student-athletes often adapt to the values of the figured world, and come to "understand themselves in relation to these worlds" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 54). Many student-athletes, especially Black ones, come to understand their own value and worth through the lens of what is valued within the figured world of college athletics (Harrison et al., 2011) and have a hard time imagining themselves outside of this world. Within the world of college sports, student-athletes are often stuck in an athletic bubble that values wins and losses, and too often, these student-athletes come to define their own worth through this limited lens. Furthermore, student-athletes spend most of their day occupying spaces with other people who also place a higher value on athletics than most other aspects of their lives (Beamon & Bell, 2006).

Many student-athletes are complacent in this process as they fall in line with the norms of the figured world, as certain acts are "reproduced, forming and reforming in the practices of its participants… a figured world is formed and re-formed in relation to the everyday activities and events that ordain happenings within it" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 53). Most scholarship players spend summers working out rather than obtaining internships or studying abroad. Most scholarship players attend workouts that are named voluntary. However, in actuality, they are mandatory because they comprise part of the culture of this figured world. In order for the figured world to maintain its rules of governance, participants in the figured worlds must form a collective reality (Holland, 1998). Student-athletes often adapt similar attitudes towards their athletic identities because they are socially isolated, spending most of their time with one another. Most of their day is spent together on activities that reinforce the importance of athletics such as: practice, team meetings, working out, study hall, and even eating and living together. Many Black student-athletes get stuck in the expectations of the figured world of college sports and their personal and professional development is limited by the racialized identities that are made available to them within the spaces they occupy (Nasir, 2011).

International travel creates an alternate figured world, and perhaps alternative identities to those traditionally offered to Black student-athletes within the figured worlds of college campuses. Figured worlds, especially in the international arena provide physical, psychological and philosophical spaces for the development of alternative and varied identities (Holland et al., 1998). In essence, these identities build upon one another, making this theoretical concept a valuable tool in conceptualizing and understanding identity production across varied spaces.

Black Racial Identity: A process of negotiation

The influence of race and racial stereotypes on how one conceives of their racial identity

within a country built on White racial supremacy, is critical to this project. One of the earliest and most prominent Black philosophers, W.E.B Du Bois, believed that Black Americans come to learn themselves through their own lens, but also through the lens of dominant White society. Du Bois most widely recognized theory, "double consciousness," claims that Black Americans see the world through two lenses,

> This sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness, -an American, a Negro: two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder (Du Bois, 1903, p. 5).

DuBois' notion of double consciousness, similar to Holland's conceptualizaiton of *figured worlds*, suggests that identity is dialogic and always in relation to the "other." Du Bois' understanding of identity challenged binaries and suggested a duality, being both Black and American, instead of simply one or the other. His understanding of identity challenged rigid and exclusive national and ethnic identity labels. Such distinct categories and binaries were used to reinforce colonialism and white racial superiority through a divide and conquer approach. DuBois challenged this paradigm by acknowledging that identities are not static. He understood that people, using the American Negro, for example, experience the world through a multiplicity of cultural identities, that of being both Negro and American. The challenges of dealing with this intersection of identities cannot be overstated. DuBois dedicated an entire book trying to better understand how the Negro deals with this duality and the fact that his Blackness is seen as a problem to society.

Although written over 100 years ago, DuBois' notion of double consciousness set the

foundation for the importance of studying identity in Black Americans. How could one adopt a positive self- concept in the face of constant racism? How could one develop a positive Black identity when everything we know about Black means bad? Black identity has since been a major topic of research interest in the fields of education, psychology, and social psychology. The question of whether Black students could develop a positive racial identity was one of the foremost concerns in the Brown vs. Board decision in 1954 as well as the cultural educational movements in the 1960's and 1970's and is still widely theorized about today (Bimper & Harrison, 2011; Cokley, 2014; Cross, 1995; Hall, 2014; Sellers et al., 1998).

Black identity has been theorized through a stage development model, highlighted by Nigrescence (Cross, 1971, 1991) and also through a more fluid and flexible approach, as identified by prominent Black intellectuals like Du Bois, Frantz Fanon, and Stuart Hall. This research project is interdisciplinary in its approach to identity, with a focus on the socio-cultural approach to identity as theorized by Holland and colleagues' (1998) notion of figured worlds, while also connecting it to Cross's optimal fifth stage of racial identity development: Internalization- Commitment. Cross's work is seminal, influential, and foundational to most contemporary work regarding Black racial identity (Cokley & Awosogba, 2014). There have been many iterations of his work on racial identity since 1971 (Cross, 1991,1995; Parham, 1989; Parham & Helms, 1981; Vandiver, 2001; Worrell, Cross, & Vandiver, 2001), however, I will focus on the revised nigrescence model (Cross, 1991) before connecting it to more socio-cultural understandings of identity.

Nigrescence

In the 60's and 70's, Dr. William Cross theorized that African-Americans must go through a process of Nigrescence to develop a positive and healthy racial identity (Cross, 1971).

He posits that due to this country's founding in ideals of white racial superiority, African-Americans first come to understand their racial identity through the hegemonic White lens, which occurs through schooling and other dominant racialized narratives. Cross asserted that Black people must go through stages of development that eventually take them from identifying as a Negro to a more desirable stage of identifying as Black. Cross's understanding of Black racial identity comes from the field of Psychology and uses an Ericksonian perspective on identity, often premised on stages of development (Cross, 1991). Each stage of Nigrescence is briefly discussed below, though it is the fifth stage which is of particular importance for this research study.

Stage 1: Pre-encounter

This stage often refers to Black individuals who might harbor negative or majoritarian views about black people as a group. Essentially, individuals in this stage want to assimilate into White culture and escape from the implications and negative stereotypes of being Black.

Stage 2: Encounter

Typically, an encounter is an uncomfortable racial experience where one is forced to grapple with their Blackness. For example, a Black high-school student is repeatedly pulled over and harassed by the police on accord of his racial identity.

Stage 3: Immersion-Emersion

This stage reflects the individual's journey to deconstruct their previously held view of Blackness while constructing a new, more constructive view of Blackness. This process of re-socialization is filled with chaos as the person is more familiar with the identity they are trying to get rid of than the identity they are yearning for. This emergence will lead them to a greater

understanding of themselves and their Black identity.

Stage 4: Internalization

This is where the person is re-examining their Blackness within the larger realm of being Black in America. They become aware of the "twoness" found in all Black psyches, the fact that they are Black as well as American, and they can no longer neglect or pretend that their Blackness precludes them from being American (Cross, 1991.) Their Blackness becomes internalized, it is part of their identity, but does not make up the whole of their existence. Individuals realize that supplementary things such as hobbies and other group affiliations are part of their identity.

Stage 5: Internalization- Commitment

This stage is associated with a positive sense of self and group identity, where Black people are a central part of their life in some capacity. This stage focuses on individuals who continue the process of Black identity development which ultimately leads to an identity which works for the improvement of the Black person and Black community within society. This stage also speaks to some individuals who are able to look at society through the lens of their Blackness, and also recognize the oppression of other marginalized people such as women, and other racialized groups, etc.

While this paper does not focus on the process of Nigrescense, or see identity through a step by step developmental perspective, Cross's work on racial identity provides a framework to better understand if experiences, like study abroad, might lead Black student-athletes to develop a positive and salient racial identity, ushering them towards the optimal fifth stage of internalization, where they work to become agents of change in their communities. Cross was

interested in the progression of self-actualization that Blacks went through under conditions of oppression (Cross, 1971). Cross identified characteristics of a person's racial identity that would lead them to respond to the needs of their racial group. He was interested in identifying the type of Black person that was conditioned to tend to the needs of the community.

Socio-cultural understanding of Black racial identity

Similarly, Black identity theorists such as Franz Fanon and Stuart Hall argue that healthy Black identities can be developed by disrupting the White structures that define Blackness as the inferior other to Whiteness. Fanon (2008) asserts that Blacks need to develop a perspective that allows them to identify themselves through their own value system, allowing for a multiplicity of identities and characteristics which truly define what it means to be Black. Through the development of these hybridized identities, developed from within, Blacks can remove themselves from the psychological inferiority complex imposed upon them by the White colonization project.

Recognizing difference within Blacks and other colonized groups, constitutes "who we really are" and "what we have become" (Hall, 1990, p. 394). This understanding of cultural identity names the fact that culture and identity are not static, but rather in constant negotiation, a state of becoming, in relation to systems of power and domination. It also gives credence to the idea that all of the people of the diaspora are in fact united, through their very difference,

> The diaspora experience as I intend it here is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of identity which lives with and through, not despite, difference: by hybridity. (Hall, 1990, pp. 401-402)

Through this understanding of identity, Hall believes that recognizing the heterogeneity of

Blackness is an important step in developing a healthy Black racial identity. Appreciating the global hybridity of Blackness allows for Blacks to build coalitions and community across the diaspora, which connects to Cross's fifth and optimal stage of racial identity development. International education has the ability to positively impact Black student's racial identity development due to the heterogeneity of Blackness they are challenged to confront abroad (Jackson, 2006; Morgan, Mwegelo, & Turner, 2002).

This socio-cultural framing of identity, previously outlined in the theoretical section of this chapter, is best suited to explore the influence that international education will have on Black student-athlete's identities and conception of self. However, Cross's framing of the fifth stage of racial identity development is important for this research because the research questions are designed to explore how international learning experiences impact Black student-athletes' identity formation and if their experiences lead them towards embodying the characteristics of Cross's optimal stage of Nigrescence.

Athletic Identity

Athletic identity has been defined as the degree to which an individual identifies and associates with the role or identity of "athlete" in their overall self-conception (Brewer et al., 1993). Brewer and colleagues (1993) suggest that there are both positive and negative aspects of a strong athletic identity, and that identity can impact other facets of one's identity. Individuals with a strong athletic identity tend to put more focus on exercise, healthy habits, goal-setting, and teamwork, while also using that identity to build relationships and community (Brewer et al., 1993; Harrison & Bimper, 2011). While there are many benefits, there are also some potential pitfalls such as: difficulty moving away from a career in athletics, delayed critical consciousness,

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lower graduation rates, career immaturity, and athletic identity foreclosure (Beamon, 2012).

Individuals with a strong athletic identity are at risk of identity foreclosure because their laser-like tunnel vision and focus on athletics can impair them from noticing other opportunities outside the realm of sports. Brewer et al. (1993) state, "Strong, exclusive athletic identity leaves an athlete vulnerable to emotional difficulties upon termination of his or her sport career" (p. 241). While in college, it is important for student athletes to identify alternative areas to develop aspects of their identities so when their careers to come to an end, as all sports careers do, they will be able to effectively transition out of the athlete role.

Athletic identity and Black student-athletes

At an early age, many Black student-athletes are socialized into sport and become known based off of their affiliation to sport (Beamon & Bell, 2006; Harris, 1994; Lomax, 2000). Depending on the sport one plays, as they grow older, the popularity of their sport both locally and nationally, as well as the competitiveness of their team, certain athletes become very visible and are often recognized through their role as athlete. Nasco and Webb (2006) nuanced the idea of athletic identity by suggesting that it is multidimensional and impacted through two lenses, both the public/social identity as well as the personal identity. This public identity refers to "the extent to which the individual is known and recognized by others as an athlete" (Stephan & Brewer, 2007, p. 68). This is especially true for Black student-athletes who participate in revenue producing sports such as football and basketball at Primarily White Institutions (PWI's) where there is a limited number of Black students on campus, especially Black males. Harper, Williams, and Blackman (2013) found "between 2007 and 2010, Black men were 2.8% of full-time, degree-seeking undergraduate students, but 57.1% of football teams and 64.3% of basketball teams" (p. 1) in the six major conferences within Division 1 of the NCAA. Publicly,

these students are widely recognized as athletes on their campuses and the surrounding communities due to their over representation in said sports. The second part, the personal identity, refers to how much one relies on their athletic identity as part of their private self-concept. The personal identity can be heavily influenced by the public identity for individuals like Black student-athletes at PWI's, leading to an overall stronger athletic identity (Bimper & Harrison, 2011).

For Black student-athletes, the personal part of their athletic identity is part of the larger socio-political context in which they find themselves, where blackness is seen as inferior to Whiteness. Hall and Du Gay (1996) suggests that in order to better understand Black identity, it is imperative to analyze both Blacks and Whites as their identities are reliant upon one another, and develop in relation to one another. Similarly, Fanon (2008) argues that you can't have a superior race without an inferior one nor an inferior race without a superior one. As previously articulated, sports, namely football and basketball, have provided a space, or figured world, where Blacks are seen as the superior and dominant race. One could assume that Fanon would not be surprised with the salience of athletic identity Black student-athletes because sport has provided a world in which Black people can develop a psychologically healthy racial identity (Cross, 1971).

In researching the intersection between racial and athletic identity in student-athletes, Bimper and Harrison (2011) argue, sports, for Black-student-athletes "is more than merely a game to play, rather it's a means of defining the self" (p. 275). Due to the perceived and structural limitations of a racialized society (Nasir, 2011), many Black males, beginning in their youth, see sports as not only "a way out" but "the only way out." The strength of one's athletic

identity is also related to their racial identity, suggesting that for some, being Black is synonymous with being an athlete (Harrison, 1995; Harrison, Harrison, & Moore, 2002).

Athletic identity foreclosure

Marcia (1966) defined identity foreclosure as the process in which one identifies themselves in a specific identity role without giving proper attention to the wide range of possibilities available to them. It can be viewed as a premature infatuation with a role with the potential to reach celebrity status, but has a questionable chance of attainment. Identity foreclosure is especially prevalent when that individual is widely recognized by others based on a solitary aspect of their identity, such as Black student-athletes being recognized for their athletic prowess at PWI's.

Beamon's case study (2012) with former Black student-athletes explored the factors that led to the prevalence of athletic identity foreclosure in Black male athletes. Beamon described identity foreclosure as a process that occurs through a variety of different interactions with socializing agents in the figured worlds in which they occupy. In the collegiate setting, Black student-athletes are regularly recognized because of their athletic status and are encouraged to develop that aspect of their identity, often to the detriment of developing alternative aspects of their identity (Harrison, Harrison, & Moore 2002), leading to foreclosure. Beamon's research provides readers with a greater understanding of being "big and black" on a PWI, as one respondent stated, "they wanna come up to you and talk to you about sports cuz they feel that's the only way they know you... or that's the only way they can communicate with you" (Beamon, 2012, p. 202). Due to the intersection of race, power and athletic status on college campuses, Black student-athletes are often confined to one-dimensionality, as purely athletes, who have few desires, skills, or interests outside of the athletic arena.

Athletic identity salience vs. athletic identity foreclosure

While the line is different for each student-athlete, the salience of athletic identity can be positive in some domains and negative in others (Murphy et al., 1996). In thinking about how to help student athletes develop other salient aspects of their identity, it is important not to see the salience of their athletic identity in deficient terms (Bimper, 2016; Singer, 2008). It is the salience of this identity that provided them with the opportunity to be both a collegiate athlete and a college student. The process of identity foreclosure is where the salience of their athletic identity becomes problematic (Beamon, 2012). Foreclosure happens not when their athletic identity is too strong or salient, but rather when it is the only strong and salient aspect of their identity. Interventions, like study abroad, provide the opportunity for student-athletes to develop other aspects of their identity without directly challenging the salience of their athletic identity. Researchers and practitioners concerned with the plight of Black student athletes must be careful not frame our research and solutions through deficit-oriented and subtractive measures (Valenzuela, 2010).

There is a robust history of Black student athletes who competed at the highest levels propelled by their salient athletic identities who were multifaceted and had other salient identities. Paul Robeson was a stellar football player, an actor, a musician, a politician, and widely considered "a leader of the race" during the early and mid-parts of the 20th century. More recent examples include Myron Rolle, a standout football player at Florida State who was also awarded a Rhodes scholarship and started his neurosurgery residency at Harvard Medical School in June of 2017. The number one pick of the 2017 NFL Draft, Myles Garrett was recently quoted in an ESPN article talking about his various interests, "I don't think I'm the smartest player in the draft," Garrett stated, "but if you consider all the things I think about daily, how many things

intrigue me and I try to get involved in, I'm up there" (Alipour, 2017). Garrett is a clear example of an athlete with a strong and salient athletic identity who is also multifaceted, complex, and focused on aspects of his identity outside of athletics. Later in the article, he talks about his goals after his athletic career which involves possibly a PhD in paleontology, so he can build upon his passion of fossilized dinosaurs. Garrett's passion for poetry and paleontology exemplify the heterogeneity of Black student-athletes' identities, and how these students can be dynamic athletes without becoming completely engulfed in their role (Adler, 1991) and foreclosing on that aspect of their identity.

The Miseducation of Black Student-Athletes

In 1933, Dr. Carter G Woodson authored, *The Mis-education of the Negro* where he explained how schooling processes discourage the development of the Black mind. Black students were mis-educated as they learned to value anything associated with whiteness, while learning to despise their Blackness. He argued that, "the thought of the inferiority of the Negro is drilled into him in almost every class he enters and in almost every book he studies" (Woodson, 1933, p. 253). Of primary importance to Woodson was correcting what he thought was the distortion, misrepresentation, and denial of African American history. While Woodson is most noted for declaring the value of African American history, his writing in the 30's raised questions that Black educators are still attempting to answer. In 1933, Woodson wrote, "The education of the Negroes, then, the most important thing in the uplift of the Negroes, is almost entirely in the hands of those who have enslaved them and now segregate them" (p. 22). Woodson was referencing the ways in which the White establishment controlled the curriculum within Black schools, a problem that still persists today. This problem is exacerbated when it comes to Black student-athletes who compete in revenue-producing sports at the highest levels.

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In their piece entitled, *The Miseducation of the Black athlete*, Harrison, Bimper, Smith & Logan (2017) argue that Black student-athletes are educated to have a single-minded pursuit of athletics that ultimately fails to meet their needs or the needs of the Black community. Woodson believed that Black students needed educational options and thus neither an industrial or classical education could serve the heterogeneous needs of the Black community. Similarly, Harrison and colleagues (2017) argue that Black student-athletes find themselves within a figured world on college campuses that often lead to their mis-education. Athletic enclosure is introduced in this research to describe the figured world of collegiate athletics; this term highlights how institutions and their athletic departments utilize their position of power and influence to enclose on the world of student-athletes. This hegemonic enclosure process provides the environment that leads to the prevalence of athletic identity foreclosure in Black student-athletes. Black student-athletes are restricted from transferring institutions without penalization, majoring in their topic of choice, participating in endeavors outside of sports, socially isolated, and are rarely afforded opportunities to engage in academically enriching programs like internships and international education that serve to expand their personal and professional identities.

Athletic Enclosures and Black student-athletes

The term enclosure was introduced by Clyde Woods (1998) in the areas of social and public policy as he argued enclosures are processes utilized by those in power to "gain control over resources and over the ideological and distributive institutions governing their allocation" (p. 26), ultimately to "blur the social vision of Black communities" (Sojoyner, 2013, p. 242). In his book, *First Strike: Educational Enclosures in Black Los Angeles*, Sojoyner highlights how public schools serve as a form of enclosure that influences the educational opportunities and lack thereof of Black students, eventually leading to the imprisonment of Black people in Los

Angeles (Sojoyner, 2016). For the purposes of this research, I argue that the NCAA and its member institutions create a figured world on college campuses for Black student-athletes that encloses on their ability to obtain a holistic education and subsequently leads to the overrepresentation of athletic identity foreclosure in Black student-athletes (Beamon, 2012). Cooper, Davis and Dougherty (2017) claim:

> More money is placed into fueling and rewarding athletic success, institutions are more susceptible to creating cultures and conditions that prioritize athletics over academics and student-athletes' holistic development, which can lead to poorer academic outcomes, negative psychosocial experiences, and lower preparation for success in post college careers particularly for male student-athletes in general and high-profile sport student-athletes more specifically. (p. 60)

The prevalence of athletic identity foreclosure among Black student-athletes in revenue-producing sports is a direct output of the athletic enclosure process, the figured world these students find themselves in once they enroll as a student-athlete. The process of enclosure includes NCAA rules and bylaws that must be followed, social isolation, over-criminalization of their identities on campus, and a lack of personal and professional holistic development.

Amateurism

The NCAA has a series of bylaws and regulations they use to regulate collegiate sports. While many of the regulations are built to protect student-athletes, there are many that effectively limit their agency and civil rights. NCAA bylaw 12.01 designates that all student-athletes are amateurs (NCAA, 2011, p. 55). The amateur label renders student-athletes unable to receive payment for their athletic services, sign professional contracts, get professional

representation, or make money off their namesake. Hawkins (2013) argues that the NCAA and their bylaws create a plantation style culture where the most highly valued commodities, Black student-athletes, have little to no agency within the system. They do the back-breaking labor, and yet are restricted from receiving any of the financial profits due to the rules and regulations of the NCAA and its member institutions.

An example of NCAA bylaws limiting the agency of a student-athlete is the 2017 case of University of Central Florida (UCF) kicker De La Haye. De La Haye was ruled ineligible by UCF and the NCAA as his scholarship was revoked due to his YouTube channel. De La Haye, has an income earning YouTube channel where he talks about his lived experiences, including being a backup kicker at UCF. The NCAA ruled that the only way De La Haye could keep his channel and his scholarship was if he separated the videos where he referenced his day to day as a football player. De La Haye and his You Tube channel allowed him to develop invaluable entrepreneurial skills, a platform, and an income to support himself, all things which the NCAA and its member institutions should applaud and encourage.

Athletic time commitment

NCAA bylaws allow for student-athletes to get systematically exploited by their athletic departments due to the obscurity of the laws. Bylaw 17.01.1 requires each institution to limit its athletic activities and competitions "to minimize interference with the academic programs of its student athletes" (NCAA, 2011, p. 237). The law indicates student-athlete's participation in athletic activities is limited to four hours a day and 20 hours per week. Athletic related activities are defined as activities "at the direction of, or supervised by one or more of an institution's coaching staff" (NCAA, 2011 p. 237). All other activities are considered voluntary, and while Bylaw 17.02.13 states "the student-athlete must not be required to report back to a coach…"

(NCAA, 2011, p. 239), the bylaw does not prohibit the coach from being informed of voluntary activities from other teammates or staff members including athletic trainers. This suggests to many student-athletes that voluntary activities are in fact not voluntary, but instead an expectation (Henderson, 2013; Singer, 2008).

The 20-hour limit does not include 'voluntary' activities, travel time to athletic events, medical attention or personal workouts. While the 20-hour limit is designed to protect student-athletes from exploitation and set boundaries between their multiple roles of being both an athlete and a student, many student-athletes regularly exceed the 20-hour per week limitation (McCormick & McCormick, 2006; Singer, 2008). According to the NCAA's own research, student-athlete weekly commitments ranged from 24.9-37.6 hours per week (NCAA, 2011). This number refers to a year-round average, as the number is typically a lot higher during the season as travel to athletic events is not considered part of the 20-hours. For example, The University of Texas at Austin competes mostly in the Southwestern region of the United States, however, with the addition of West Virginia to the Big 12, they must now travel across the country for competition, none of which is counted towards their 20-hour limit. In Pac 12 Basketball, teams travel from Thursday-Sunday to compete, however, the two games played over those four days are the only hour counted toward the 20-hour time limit. An even graver example is a school like Hawaii, which must travel at least 5 hours and across numerous time zones for every away game. The fact that this is legal, gives credence to those who liken college athletics to a slave plantation (Hawkins, 2010), not only are these athletes not getting paid for their labor; the time they put into their work is not even recognized.

While many find this an outright injustice, the hegemony within the NCAA and its member institutions creates a culture where those with power rarely speak up for those without.

While there have been strides to increase the presence of minoritized races in the coaching and administrative leadership positions within NCAA member institutions, these positions are primarily held by White men. Lapchick (2012) found that over 90% of university presidents, athletic directors, and faculty athletic representatives were White in the 2012-2013 academic year. Black student-athletes will continue to be exploited if people put in leadership positions at these institutions are more concerned with the success of their athletic program as compared to the holistic development of their student-athletes.

Social and physical isolation of Black student-athletes

The more time spent in athletic departments, the more that Black student-athletes come to consider themselves solely as athletes rather than multidimensional individuals with intersecting identities and goals outside of athletics (Beamon, 2012). Holland and colleagues (1998) suggest individuals perform the identity expected of them in the figured world they occupy and come to "understand themselves in relation to these worlds" (p. 54). In the world of collegiate athletics, Black student-athletes are valued commodities and thus, athletic departments limit their mobility as to maintain control of their assets. Comeaux and Harrison (2011) argue:

> The college educational experiences of Black student athletes at predominantly White
>
> institutions are often times hindered as a result of feelings of social isolation, racial
>
> discrimination, limited support and lack of integration. (p. 208)

The research is clear that the current climate of collegiate sports leads to a disturbing trend of identity foreclosure in Black student-athletes who participate in revenue producing sports (Beamon, 2012).

The process of enclosure is further aided through social isolation from non-student athletes on campus, academic clustering, separate housing and the time demands of mandatory study hall, team meetings, workouts, practices, and games (Howard-Hamilton & Watt, 2001; Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2011). In order for college athletics to maintain its social isolation and collective understanding of their own reality (Holland et al., 1998), they lead student-athletes to prioritize goals based on their athletic identity. The CRT tenet of interest convergence suggests when Black student-athletes and their identities are exclusively wrapped up in sports, the needs of dominant groups at the University are served, such as high-level administrators, coaches and boosters. Murphy et al. (1996) proclaimed:

> The physical and psychological demands of intercollegiate athletics, coupled with the restrictiveness of the athletic system, may isolate athletes from mainstream college activities, restrict their opportunities for exploratory behavior and promote identity foreclosure. (p. 240)

The process of identity foreclosure is especially problematic for Black student-athletes who compete in revenue-producing sports, however, as the authors suggest, these are also the athletes with the most restricted schedules. The isolation of Black student-athletes from the general campus community allows for pervasive stereotypes to go unchallenged.

Criminalization of Black male student-athletes

Black athletes are over-criminalized as compared to their White peers (Anderson & Ranay, 2017). The over-representation of Black male athletes in the media as criminals adds to the process of identity foreclosure as the stereotype limits the opportunity for positive self-identification. Anderson and Ranay (2017) found "evidence of a Black criminal stereotype

among sports fans but also that activation of that stereotype is more prevalent among sports fans versus nonfans" (p. 13). Given that colleges, universities and the surrounding communities are hotbeds for collegiate sports fan, college campuses provide a figured world where Black student-athletes are over-criminalized. In an attempt to protect themselves from these dehumanizing portrayals, Black student-athletes often self-segregate, furthering the process of social isolation. The over-criminalization of Black student-athletes in and around their University community add to the athletic enclosure process, as negative stereotypes enclose upon their ability to be recognized as full human beings. Other dehumanizing stereotypes such as the Black "dumb jock" (Edwards, 1984) negatively impact Black student-athletes' ability to obtain a quality education.

Academics

In 1963, Civil rights leader James Baldwin stated, "The paradox of education is precisely this - that as one begins to become conscious one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated" (Baldwin, 2008), and this could not be more precise as it relates to the education of Black student-athletes in higher education. Harper (2006) identifies Black student-athletes as the most oppressed group in all of higher education, thus it serves the institution to control most aspects of their lives, so they do not begin to critically examine their positionality within these institutions. Controlling the academic experiences of Black student-athletes is found in academic clustering (Singer, 2005), being denied the opportunity to major in a field of their choice as well as limited opportunities to engage in academically enriching activities like international education (Walker, in press).

Faculty interactions with Black student-athletes

Comeaux and Harrison (2007) found that the most likely indicator of academic success for

student-athletes across racial lines is dependent upon positive interactions with faculty members. Looking at the role that faculty play as intellectual mentors for student-athletes, Harrison, Comeaux and Plecha (2006) found that, "faculty who are willing to extend communication beyond the classroom and are connected with students in an intimate enough way to discern personal qualities have the potential to significantly influence the students' lives, and vice versa" (p. 278). The researchers further suggested that "faculty who provided intellectual challenges and stimulation for their students, encouraged graduate school, and helped in achieving professional goals made a relatively strong contribution to student success" (p. 281), highlighting the importance of teacher expectations on student-athlete academic success. Strong interactions between faculty and Black student-athletes might serve as one of the few socializing factors that expand the identities of Black student-athletes as compared to enclosing upon them (Comeaux & Harrison, 2007).

Carter-Francique, Hart and Cheeks (2015) sought to better understand how interactions with faculty can both positively and negatively impact Black student-athletes' experiences on campus. They found numerous themes that influenced how these students understood their academic experience, but ultimately found "Black student-athletes' positive and negative academic experiences hinged on their interactions with faculty" (p. 169). One student athlete who identified a positive academic experience stated, "I'd say all my experiences have been pretty good. Most of my professors have been really good about, like, if we're gone for a test they will let us take it on the road. They will give it to our, um, academic advisor or whatever and we'll get to take it on the road" (Carter-Francique et al., 2015, p. 165). The professor understood the particular needs of this student and was able to adjust the expectations of their class to meet the needs of the student without lowering them.

While positive interactions with faculty help the academic development of Black student-athletes, the overrepresentation of White faculty and underrepresentation of faculty of color has been identified as a challenge for Black student-athletes in developing positive relationships with faculty at PWI's (Carter-Francique et al., 2013). In support of previous research (Engstrom et. al., 1995), Carter-Francique and colleagues (2015) suggest that faculty member should be trained in working specifically with Black student-athlete's due to their unique positionality and educational needs. If faculty members fail to recognize the unique culture that Black student-athletes are a part of during their time on campus, they are likely to believe dominant narratives that frame Black student-athletes from a deficit-oriented perspective.

Engstrom and colleagues sought to better understand faculty perceptions of student-athletes and found that faculty have negative perceptions of student-athlete's academic competency both for revenue and non-revenue sports (Engstrom, Sedlacek, & McEwen, 1995). Furthermore, they found that faculty were more likely to have positive attitudes towards student-athletes who were taking "less-rigorous" courses and majors. Comeaux (2010) built off of Enstrom's work and sought to better understand the role that race plays in faculty perceptions of student-athletes. He used CRT to frame a photo-elicitation study around faculty perceptions of student-athlete accomplishments by race. Results showed that faculty were more favorable of white student-athletes' accomplishments than Black student-athletes' accomplishments. Some faculty questioned the merits of Black student-athletes' academic accomplishments and acceptance into the university while White student-athletes' accomplishments were deemed "normal" (Comeaux, 2010, p. 390). Furthermore, the faculty had lower expectations for Black student-athletes' academic accomplishments.

Faculty relied on hegemonic narratives and coded language to describe Black student-

athletes' success, ultimately suggesting that their success may not have been earned. In reference to a Black female student-athlete, one faculty member stated, "I am pleased for her - I hope she did not get higher grades than she deserved. If she did well in her studies while playing sports, then that's fine" (Comeaux, 2010, p. 403). The response highlights the faculty member's deficit-oriented perspective, calling into question whether she deserved the grades that she got. He associates this doubt with her ability to do "well in her studies while playing sport" however, the faculty member did not share similar doubts of white student-athletes in the study. Similar findings by Comeaux and Harrison (2007) suggest that Black student-athletes deal with additional racialized issues on collegiate campuses including racial stereotypes and social isolation that negatively impact their academic success making their interactions with faculty even more important.

Harry Edwards (1984) argues that stereotypes of Black-athletes are socially constructed, stating, "Dumb jocks are not born; they are systematically created" (Edwards, 1984, p. 8). Edwards argues that Black student-athletes must face two negative stereotypes: the dumb jock stereotype as well as the dumb Black stereotype. These athletes must not only fight against this stigma with their student peers, but as research suggests (Carter-Francique et al., 2015; Comeaux, 2010; Comeaux & Harrison, 2007; Edwards, 1984; Eitzen, 2009) that professors and other campus administrators also frame Black student-athletes through this negative lens. The prevalence of these stereotypes leads to lower academic expectations by both the Black student-athletes themselves as well as their professors. Eitzen (2009) suggests that the lower expectations for Black student-athletes leads to a process where they take classes from sympathetic professors who provide them with special circumstances. Adler and Alder (1991) note that these sympathetic professors do not help to build the academic identity of their students but instead do

the exact opposite. "The athletes receive greater positive reinforcement for their athletic performance than for their academic performance" (Eitzen, 2009, p. 172), leading to role engulfment (Adler, 1991). Role engulfment, similar to identity foreclosure, is when an individual becomes so wrapped up in their role, as a collegiate athlete, that they fail to develop other aspects of themselves. This is problematic because it hinders their academic development while reinforcing to the Black student-athlete that their primary and perhaps only reason for being on campus is to compete athletically. Faculty must recognize the unique cultural needs of Black student-athletes, but still set high academic expectations for these students. Black student-athletes need to be provided with educational opportunities, like study abroad, to prove to themselves as well as their faculty members that they are entitled to all the educational benefits the University has to offer.

Graduation rates

CRT encourages analysis at the intersection of race and economics to reveal inequity within American structures typically hidden by majoritarian narratives. The principle of interest-convergence highlights how the academic experiences of Black student-athletes are valued only when they can positively impact the framing of the NCAA and its member institutions. Harper, Williams and Blackman (2013) analysis of graduation rates shows how these institutions use statistics to blur the reality of Black student-athletes and their academic experiences. Harper and colleagues (2013) provide a comprehensive report on the graduation rates of 76 institutions of higher education from six major conferences: ACC, Big East, Big Ten, Big Twelve and the SEC. They state,

> The Association (NCAA) has a television commercial in which it claims that Black male student-athletes at Division I institutions graduate at rates higher than do Black men in

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the general student body. This is true across the entire division, but not for the six

conferences, whose member institutions routinely win football and basketball

championships, play in multimillion-dollar bowl games and the annual basketball

championship tournament, and produce the largest share of Heisman trophy winners.

Across these 76 colleges and universities, Black male student-athletes graduate at 5.3

percentage points lower than their same-race male peers who are not on intercollegiate

sports teams. That an average of 49.8% of Black male student-athletes on these campuses

do not graduate within six years is a major loss. (p. 7)

Black student-athletes, who compete at the best and most competitive programs across the

United States, also have the lowest graduation rates, highlighting a huge inequity. The best Black

student-athletes, who produce the most money for their institutions, are also the least likely to

graduate. Here, the financial interest of the university converges with the Black student-athletes'

desire to be a professional athlete, producing a toxic environment where Black student-athletes

are encouraged to focus exclusively on athletics at the cost of other aspects of their identity. This

negatively affects their graduation opportunity and ability to be professionally competent in

fields outside of athletics once their playing days are over. Even at elite universities in elite

conferences, the chances of becoming a professional athlete are dismal (NCAA, 2017).

Career readiness

The process of foreclosure not only impacts students while on campus but also negatively

affects their ability to transition out of their athletic status and find careers outside of sport.

Brewer et al. (1993) state, "Strong, exclusive athletic identity leaves an athlete vulnerable to

emotional difficulties upon termination of his or her sport career" (p. 241). Lally (2007)

conducted a qualitative research study with Canadian student-athletes of various sports to better understand the process of sport-career retirement. The research found that all participants admitted to committing physically and psychologically to athletic goals, which often came at the expense of attractive opportunities to develop other aspects of their academic and social selves. Specifically, a few mentioned the inability to study abroad or gain valuable internship experience while in college. Due to a high salience of the athletic role in individual's lives, "the loss of the athlete role upon retirement affects not only one's athletic identity, but one's overall sense of self" (Lally, 2007, p. 85). These emotional difficulties may leave student-athletes unprepared for the world that follows after they retire from their athletic careers.

The majoritarian narrative, echoed in the popular NCAA commercial states that after graduating college, most student athletes "are going to go professional in something other than sports," however, while on campus, student-athletes in revenue-producing sports are effectively excluded from professional development resources due to their rigid schedules (Henderson, 2013). Henderson's dissertation focused on the experiences of 20 Black female student-athletes as they transitioned out of sports and into their careers and found that her participants had feelings of inadequate preparation regarding their futures due to a lack of experiential learning outside of the athletic domain. From the moment they step on campus, student-athletes are provided with plenty of opportunities to develop themselves both physically and mentally in relation to their sport, which increases the likelihood they will be more confident in pursuing careers in sport than in other areas.

Singer (2011) argues Black student-athletes reproduce their social status when they aspire to become professional athletes because they often miss other opportunities to develop professionally due to their focus on sport. Similarly, Beamon (2012) found 70% of the Black

male student-athletes strongly agreed they expected to have a career in professional sports compared to 31% of White student-athletes. These numbers are supported by an NCAA report (2013) that suggested 76% of Division 1 men's basketball athletes believe they will move on to a professional athletics career and 52% for Division 1 football. More concerning, Beamon found the higher Black student-athletes' classification in school, the more they believed sport was the best avenue to success for them. Beamon's findings implicate collegiate institutions as figured worlds that reinforce the belief Black males' best opportunity for professional success is through athletics. While students come to college to be exposed to the many opportunities of the world, it seems that Black student-athletes in revenue-producing sports are not provided with such opportunities.

The NCAA attempted to address this shortcoming with NCAA Bylaw 16.3.1.2, which requires institutions to conduct a life skills program on their campus, to help student-athletes engage in exploratory behavior (NCAA, 2011, p. 221). Previously known as CHAMPS/ Life skills (Challenging Athletes' Minds for Personal Success), the program was designed to help coaches, trainers, and student affairs practitioners implement programming to help students with non-athletic goal setting, including career development. In 2010, the program was discontinued and folded under the Student-Athlete Affairs department. In 2016, the NCAA partnered with the National Association for Academic Advisors for athletics (N4A) to provide oversight of all student-athlete development programs at member institutions ("Life Skills," NCAA, n.d.). While there are clearly student-athlete affairs professionals who care about the holistic development of student-athletes, the institution of collegiate athletics, including the NCAA and its member institutions, are more concerned with economic gain than student-athlete development, which is evidenced by the 20-hour a week work limit, that even their own research suggests, is not

followed. Going back to the plantation reference, a slave owner likely cares about the well-being of his slave, but only insofar as it serves the master and his plantation.

Disrupting the athletic enclosure process

The athletic enclosure process facilitated by the NCAA and its member institutions disproportionally negatively effects the holistic development of Black student-athletes in revenue producing sports. Athletic identity foreclosure is most prevalent among Black student-athletes (Bimper & Harrison, 2011) due to their value in collegiate revenue-producing sports, and thus, the foreclosure process manifests disproportionate negative outcomes on them. Black students-athletes report higher levels of racial hostility as compared to their white peers, feel more pressure to conform to deficit-oriented stereotypes, and feel they are not treated equally by administrators (Jones, Liu, & Bell, 2017). The athletic enclosure process leads to a lack of academic motivation and preparedness (Harper et al., 2013), social isolation (Beamon, 2012; Murphy et al., 1996), delayed identity development (Bimper & Harrison, 2011), and low levels of career maturity and readiness (Beamon, 2012; Bimper & Harrison, 2011; Lally, 2007) among Black student-athletes. While there are multiple studies that identify problems involving the intersection of race, education, and athletics (Beamon, 2010; Bimper & Harrison, 2011), more research is needed to develop innovative, socially justice-oriented solutions to such issues.

Comeaux and Harrison (2011) designed a conceptual model for working with student-athletes that addressed their specific needs. When developing intervention approaches, they noted it is important not to alienate the student-athlete by suggesting they rid themselves of the vehicle (athletic identity), that facilitated their arrival to the university community. Student-athletes need a figured world where they can develop other salient identities without directly

diminishing their athletic identities. Here, I suggest studying abroad might be able to provide this space, as it removes them from a space where their primary identity is athletic providing space for new identity development without directly challenging the prevalence of athletics in their conception of self. A critical element of CRT is providing socially justice-oriented solutions to the problems researchers identify, and thus, in the following section, I look at the benefits of international education, suggesting such experiences may provide an opportunity to counter the prevalence and potency of athletic identity foreclosure in Black student-athletes.

International Education

While there are some scholars who challenge the idea that all international educational experiences have equally positive outcomes for all students (Willis, 2012, 2016; Zemach-Bersin, 2009), overwhelmingly, the literature on international education suggests the experience is valuable to college students and their futures (Altbach, 2015; Harder, Andenoro, Roberts, Stedman, Newberry, Parker & Rodriguez, 2015; Posey, 2003; Redden, 2013). Many institutions of higher education, educational associations, foundations, and governmental agencies recommend participation in international education programs as a means to develop the personal and professional knowledge needed to compete in today's globalized job market (Harder et al., 2015; Obst, Bhandari & Witherell, 2007; Preston, 2012). In addition to global competitiveness in the labor market, the literature suggests the benefits of international education programs include academic engagement (Redden, 2013; Sutton & Rubin, 2004, 2010), identity negotiation and development (Wick, 2011; Young & Natrajan-Tyagi, 2015), and career maturity and readiness (Preston, 2012). In recent years, some have argued that those who lack global skills of flexibility

and intercultural communication would be, in fact, at a disadvantage (Harder et al., 2015; Trooboff, Vande Berg, & Rayman, 2008).

The Institute of International Education (IIE) noted that between 2000 and 2011, Black participation in study abroad only rose from 3.5% to 4.7% (IIE, 2011). African-American students make up 14% of the total collegiate student population, making them severely underrepresented within study abroad. Given the disparities in study abroad participation for students of color (Chow & Bhandari, 2010), the benefits of study abroad are not reaching a part of the population that has historically been denied, and continues to be denied, access to educational benefits on and off campus (Delpit, 2006; Duncan-Andrade, 2004; Valenzuela, 2010). Furthermore, the benefits appear to have the potential to compensate for the deficits of identity foreclosure, which disproportionately impact Black student-athletes. Considering the growing global nature of sport, inclusion of meaningful study abroad programs for Black student-athletes may serve to provide them with alternate identity formation opportunities.

Evolution of international education

Scholars and students crossing borders to learn, share, and discover concepts and ideologies dates back to the ancient world (Anderson, 2007). However, in the United States, study abroad did not become prevalent until the 20th century. In 1923, the University of Delaware established the first recognized study abroad program in the United States, as students in their third year of schooling were provided an opportunity to travel to Paris, France (Kochanek, 2008; Nelson, 1995). The goals of the program were to support students interested in international careers, develop foreign language efficiency, and to make students more well-rounded (Kochanek, 2008). This same era also saw a rise in non-governmental organizations devoted to international education such as The Institute of International Education (IIE) which

was founded in 1919 on the belief that peace among nations could be achieved through international education (Mikhailova, 2003).

In 1946, the U.S. Department of State established the Fulbright Act which sent scholars around the world to increase knowledge, understanding, and social awareness of other nations. Succeeding the Fulbright Act, other U.S. organizations, such as the Council on International Education Exchange (CIEE), then known as the Council on Student Travel, was created to assist U.S. students with study abroad travel logistics including accommodations, program design, and risk management. The CIEE influenced the evolution of international education, modeling how institutions designed and developed programs. For example, CIEE established operations abroad and began sponsoring conferences on student travel for administrators, educations and teachers (CIEE, n.d.).

The latter half of the century saw a slow and steady increase in international education participation as technological advances made traveling more accessible and affordable. Institutions of higher education began to ramp up their efforts to prepare students to be global citizens (Hovland, 2009). In the age of globalization, universities and colleges are responsible for providing students a curriculum that engages the world and fosters a student body with strong global awareness (Braskamp, Braskamp, & Merill, 2009; Hanson, 2010; Hovland, 2009). Braskamp and colleagues (2009) suggest "student engagement in education abroad experiences enhance global learning and development" which they argue "should now become an important and even the core of holistic student development, a goal of almost every undergraduate college or university" (p. 111). Similarly, governmental organizations are also encouraging institutions of higher education to promote study abroad.

In 2003, the U.S. government appointed the Abraham Lincoln Commission on Study

Abroad to engage one million American students in international education exchange programs by 2016. The 2009-2010 academic year saw about 270,000 U.S. students study abroad for academic credit, up significantly from 75,000 in 1990 (Institute of International Education, 2011), as institutions of higher education connected international education to larger institutional initiatives. A key goal of the commission was to engage traditionally underrepresented students in study abroad opportunities as the globalized market was becoming more international and multi-ethnic. While considered minorities in the United States, people of color are actually the majority in the globalized world. As a result, ethnic diversity in international education is imperative for the building of cross-cultural dialogue and trust amongst oftentimes competing nations (Eyes, 2013). While demand for international education has increased, and resources have been put in place to engage students, an intersectional racial analysis shows international education participants are still overwhelmingly white and female. Black students are one of the least likely groups to participate (Lu, Reddick, Dean, & Pecero, 2015), let alone Black student-athletes (Barker, 2016; Walker, in press).

Study Abroad Benefits for Students of Color

In this section of the literature review, I will focus on the benefits of study abroad with particular attention paid to students of color, then review the tensions as they relate to Black students and study abroad. Next, I will highlight the dearth of scholarship on the impact international education has on Black students. By incorporating CRT and focusing on identity, race, power, and oppression, this research suggests international experiences could be particularly impactful for Black student-athletes, based on the way their identities are positioned in the figured world of collegiate campuses. International education can be a vehicle to give Black student-athletes identity-expanding experiences outside the athletic enclosure process.

Academic engagement

Research has shown study abroad can have a positive influence on student's academic identities (Norris & Gillespie, 2005; Posey, 2003) which suggests potential avenues for expanding Black student athletes' identities. Multiple studies have shown students who studied abroad had higher graduation rates than students who did not (Posey, 2003; Sutton & Rubin, 2004, 2010) making study abroad a possibility for increasing Black student-athlete graduation rates. In conducting research on the fall 2003 cohort of freshman at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, Paige and colleagues (2009) discovered 64.5% of those who studied abroad graduated by their fourth year, compared to 41% of those who did not. Furthermore, the dropout rate of students who studied abroad was far lower than those who did not study abroad. In the same study, 33.3% of the 2003 cohort dropped out by the fourth year as compared to only 6% who studied abroad. If this were to hold true for Black student-athletes, it could be a positive influence in raising graduation rates.

The Georgia Learning Outcomes of Students Studying Abroad Research Initiative (GLOSSARI) conducted a longitudinal study that examined international education data by race. Consistent with other research on study abroad programs, GLOSSARI researchers found studying abroad led to higher graduation rates, especially among Black students. Black students who studied abroad in GLOSSARI had a 31.2% higher four-year graduation rate than other Black students who did not study abroad. According to Sutton and Rubin (2004), study abroad programs seemed to close the graduation gap between Black and White students, as both groups who studied abroad graduated in 6-years respectively at rates of 84.4% and 88.6%. Based on the suggested academic advantages of studying abroad for Black students, this research signifies similar patterns might emerge if Black student-athletes have more opportunities to study abroad.

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Study abroad experiences can also influence students' decisions to pursue graduate education. For instance, Norris and Gillespie (2005) found students who studied abroad were 20% more likely than students who did not study abroad to attain a graduate degree. While all of the cited research indicates relationships between study abroad and positive academic factors, it is recognized these studies do not substantiate cause and effect. However, these relationships do suggest the possibility of the positive influence of studying abroad on Black student-athletes' identity formation.

Intercultural competence

Much of the early study abroad research focused on intercultural communication and competence (Deadorff, 2006; Williams, 2005). Researchers were interested in whether studying abroad impacted students' ability to understand, connect, and empathize with other cultures knowledge and ways of being. Overwhelmingly, research showed that studying abroad greatly impacted students' intercultural competence and awareness (Deardorff; 2006; Goneya, 2008; NAFSA, 2003; Williams, 2005). However, Salisbury, An and Pascarella (2013) suggest that notions of intercultural competence are often oversimplified in research and not enough attention is given to experiences students had prior to embarking on their study abroad trip, which would likely impact how they perceived their trip. Salisbury conducted a longitudinal study testing long-term intercultural competence and found that intercultural competence is not a given outcome for study abroad participants. Aligning with Salisbury's argument, most research was predicated on middle-class, White, and female students. Just as there is an entire research field dedicated to understanding how students of color often experience college campuses different than their White peers, there is a gap in research that explores how students of color are experiencing study abroad in ways that are both similar and different to their white counterparts.

Lowe, Byron and Mennicke (2014) sought to fill this gap by conducting a mixed-methods study that measured the way White students were impacted by their study abroad trip compared to students of color. They found that students of color were nearly twice as likely to express that their study abroad trip positively impacted their openness to racial diversity on campus upon return. Furthermore, they found statistical significance that upon return, students of color were more likely to join a diversity related organization and engage in interracial interactions on campus. The research addressed the notion that studying abroad will likely have a different impact on students of color and White students suggesting that the experience can be even more powerful for students of color than white students in regard to creating cross-cultural bonds upon return. While the research was limited in that only seven participants were students of color, Lowe and colleagues' (2014) research raised new questions and created space for new opportunities. How does the lived reality of being a person of color in the U.S. impact a student's experience abroad and even more importantly, does that translate to social justice-oriented action upon return? The ability to engage with other students, cultures, and worldviews, is a vital skill for Americans as our country is becoming increasingly multi-cultural.

Identity negotiation and development

The National Association of International Educators (NAFSA) issued a report called *Securing America's Future* on the importance studying abroad has on student identity development. They state, "In their struggle to learn among other people in distant places, students learn about themselves in ways that simply cannot be replicated in the comforting and familiar confines of an American campus" (NAFSA, 2003, p. 6). Collegiate campuses serve as a figured world that allow for the development of some identities while inhibiting the development of others (Holland et al., 1998). Due to the new and often times drastically different

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environments students find themselves in, identity appears to be highly malleable while studying abroad (Angulo, 2008; Day-Vines, Barker & Exum, 1998). Opportunities for Black student-athletes to learn about themselves in a variety of contexts, while their identities are malleable, can be crucial to their overall development as multidimensional beings.

Scholarship has recently begun to highlight how students reexamine their national identity on behalf of their study abroad experiences (Dolby, 2004, 2005). Dolby (2004) argues that negotiating American identity abroad can be the most substantial component of the study abroad experience. Negotiating one's American identity abroad can be especially powerful for Black student-athletes, because within the confines of their higher education institutions, their most salient identities are often their racial and athletic identities (Beamon, 2012; Bimper & Harrison, 2011). The process of confronting their American identity abroad as well as the subsequent reflection on that experience may provide Black student-athletes with a new opportunity to locate themselves within the larger world in which they live, which as Freire (2000) suggests, is part of the process of coming to consciousness.

Wick utilized CRT to understand identity development and negotiation of students of color while studying abroad (Wick, 2011). Wick argues time abroad "allows for profound changes because of the possibility for reinvention and the necessity of taking on new responsibilities" (p. 160). Students of color have the opportunity to reflect and reexamine their national, ethnic, and racial identification, as well as the perceptions that come with them. Being recognized first and foremost through their privileged identity as American, participants in Wick's study were forced to grapple with their national identity in ways that they previously had not while in the United States, due to the different figured world they occupied abroad. One participant in Wick's study stated, "When I was hearing of other people's education system, it

kind of opened my eyes, that yeah we have our downfalls but so does everyone else" (2011, p. 161). This student was challenged to reflect on their educational experiences not only as they related to other American students, but to all students across the globe. In that reflection, the student came to the realization that although their educational system might not have been great, in many ways, they were privileged to receive such an education. The questioning of one's experiences and identity on a global stage has recently been referred to as global citizenship or global identity.

Global citizenship

"Global citizenship" is a complex and multifaceted term, and although contested within the study abroad literature (Hanson, 2010; Zemach-Bersin, 2009), it is generally accepted that the term is made up of three dimensions (Schattle, 2009) including: social responsibility, global awareness, and civic engagement (Tarrant, Rubin, & Stoner, 2014). Tarrant and colleagues refer to social responsibility as a concern for others and the environment, global awareness as the ability to locate oneself in the world and worldly issues, and civic engagement as actively engaging with local, national, and global issues. The idea of being a global citizen is similar to Freire's (2000) notion of praxis and CRT's call for social justice, which includes gaining a consciousness about the world in which one lives as well taking action to improve the issues facing the world.

Jackson's (2006) dissertation on the study abroad experiences of nine Black females found the questioning of racial expectations in a global context led to a renewed self-awareness regarding the interconnectedness of racial struggles globally while adding to their social and cultural capital. Studying abroad allowed students of color "to leverage and build capital, negotiate their intersecting identities, and develop agency that guided them in their future"

(Wick, 2011, p. 166). Bimper's (2016) study on the development of capital for Black student-athletes extends this notion into the athletic realm. The research on students of color and study abroad highlights the importance of having a new figured world to develop aspects of their identity where they previously were unable to, primarily because of the hegemonic power relations that exist in the United States, especially in collegiate sports. Within the athletic bubble, Black student-athletes would rarely be afforded these kinds of developmental opportunities. The ability to engage with other cultures, worldviews, and countries is a vital skill for U.S. residents as the country is becoming increasingly multicultural, which benefits students personally and professionally. These same skills would be very beneficial to Black student-athletes, who are often isolated from the rest of the campus community.

Schattle's (2009) extensive work on global citizenship suggests that it "entails being aware of responsibilities beyond one's immediate communities and making decisions to change habits and behavior patterns accordingly" (p. 12). The idea of global citizenship picks up on arguments made by historical Black leaders such as DuBois and Robeson. They argued in the mid 1900's that a global mindset is necessary to dismantle the foundation of White Supremacy. Historian Galliccho (2000) notes "During the years when much of the world came under the sway of Europe or the descendants of Europeans in the United States, Black Americans developed a view of world affairs that drew a connection between the discrimination they faced at home and the expansion of empire abroad" (p. 2). Black leaders began to understand that the race issue was far bigger than the American South; it was a global issue, which needed to be challenged on an international level if there was any hope of liberating Black people in the United States and people of color around the world.

Professional development and career opportunities

Globalization is happening at a rapid pace due to technological advances enables individuals, corporations, and nation-states to connect across the globe quicker and economically. For this reason, many government and employment agencies have been encouraging people to pursue international opportunities (Dwyer & Peters, 2004; Lincoln Commission, 2005; Norris & Gillespie, 2009) as they believe having global skills will likely benefit their businesses. Craig (1998) interviewed top business executives and found that global competency was one of the most sought-after skills as businesses looked ahead to the 21st century.

The Institute for International Education of Students (IES), a national academic consortium, found studying abroad positively affected students' career paths. IES reported 84% of alumni believed studying abroad helped them build valuable skills for their careers including language proficiency, cultural training, adaptability, and communication (Preston, 2012). They found 97% of study abroad participants' secured employment within one year of gradation as compared to 49% of the general college graduate population. Furthermore, the alumni from IES abroad programs earn on average, in starting salaries, $7,000 more than the general recent college graduate population. While it is unclear exactly how studying abroad directly impacts career trajectory and opportunities, the research suggests studying abroad positively influences one's career (Norris & Gillespie, 2005, 2009; Posey, 2003). Since a very small number of Black student-athletes will have the opportunity of making a living in professional sports (NCAA, 2017), it is incumbent on educational institutions to provide opportunities for these athletes to obtain employment in other areas. This research indicates engaging Black student-athletes in study abroad has the potential to substantially improve their career maturity and readiness,

making them more eligible for jobs upon graduation.

Perceived Barriers to Black Students and International Education

The vast majority of literature around Black students and study abroad identifies the problem: Black students are underrepresented in study abroad in relation to their collegiate peers (Craig, 1998; Obst, Bhandari, & Witherell, 2007). In 1991, the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) held a conference to address the underrepresentation of Black students in study abroad participation (CIEE, 1991). The opening address was given by Dr. Johnnetta Cole, who declared that there were four primary factors negatively impacting equity and access for Black students within study abroad: faculty and staff, finances, lack of family support, and fear. Cole brought much needed awareness and attention to the underrepresentation of Black students in study abroad. While Cole correctly identified some barriers to Black students studying abroad, she located many of these barriers within student characteristics, absolving the institution of responsibility. Re-framing the problem as an institutional issue rather than a student issue challenges institutions to be more reflective of their colonialist legacies and how that may influence their contemporary processes and overall campus climate. More recently, scholars have found that Black students were less likely to understand the benefits of study abroad as they relate to career opportunities, less likely to have role models and peers who have studied abroad, and received less encouragement and support from their families to study abroad (Salisbury et al., 2011).

Outside of identifying the barriers to studying abroad for Black students, there is literature suggesting why Black students should go abroad and strategies on how to recruit them. Craig (1998) identified the top ten reasons why Black students should study abroad: 1) expand employment opportunities; 2) gain a better understanding of the global society; 3) broaden life

experiences; 4) meet people from different backgrounds; 5) grow income potential; 6) explore

new interests; 7) learn a specialized career skill; 8) engage in new relationships that expose one

to new insights and perspectives; 9) author their own future; and 10) better understand life goals.

Lu and colleagues (2015) explored Black students' decisions to study abroad in China

and offered numerous suggestions for engaging Black students in study abroad including short,

faculty led trips, marketing to students early and often, and providing scholarship opportunities.

Sweeney (2014) found that effective mentorship by faculty and staff can positively influence

Black students' decision to study abroad. In both studies, Black students identified positive

relationships with faculty and staff as one of the most influential factors in making their decision.

In addition to faculty and staff, the racial climate on campus contributes to Black students'

decisions to study abroad (Sweeney, 2013). Penn and Tanner (2009) conducted a research study

on the intent and desire of Black high school students and found that Africa was the top

destination, however, other countries with Black people, like Brazil, were also highly desired

destinations. Landau and Moore (2001) found similar reasons for Black students who chose to

study abroad in Ghana. Morgan, Mwegelo, and Turner (2002) researched the experiences of

Black women studying abroad in Africa and noted the liberatory potential of such a location,

> Cross-cultural experiences between the African culture and the Black women of a
>
> Diaspora culture are significant because those experiences aid in the development of an
>
> ideology of the shared values, cultural traditions, and racial/ethnic identities. (p. 350)

Non-traditional locations, read countries with predominantly people of color, may better speak to

the personal and academic goals of a diverse student body, while also speaking to the economic

concerns identified as a barrier for many students of color.

Institutions and research claim lack of finances is the primary reason Black students don't

study abroad. However, recent research challenges this narrative, suggesting that there is a confluence of institutional barriers that limit Black students' participation in study abroad. While Luo and Jamieson-Drake (2015) found cost did deter Black students from studying abroad, other research (Penn & Tanner, 2009; Sweeney, 2014) found cost was not a significant deterrent to study abroad for Black students, regardless of their socioeconomic status. Raby (2005) found that while cost was important to students, 70 percent of the students noted that cost alone would not prevent them from study abroad. Sweeney (2014) and Lu, Reddick, Dean and Pecero (2015) found Black students received significant support and encouragement from family in their decision to study abroad.

One of the persistent dominant narratives regarding students of color, especially Black students and study abroad is that they are simply not as interested (Hembroff & Rusz, 1993; Washington, 1998). Many institutions have relied on this reason to explain away their low participation rates of students of color. By locating the problem within the student, it absolves the institution from maintaining a level of equity and access in all of their educational programming. Two recent studies (Penn & Tanner, 2009; Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2015) challenged this narrative when they found that Black students expressed interest in study abroad at the same rate as White students. Their research suggests that interest among Black students is there, as long as they are informed and aware of their study abroad opportunities.

Some research has noted that students of color fear of racial discrimination abroad may impact their interest and ultimately their decision to go abroad (Carroll, 1996; Talburt & Stewart, 1999; Willis, 2012). Carroll (1996) found that Black students in particular feared traveling abroad more than any other underrepresented group. Black students often encounter myths about being Black abroad from their peers, family and the media (Jackson, 2005). This belief is part of

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a larger racialized project (Omi & Winant, 2014) within American hegemony that suggests that America is the best place for Black people. Hurd (2002) argues that the racialized experiences of many Black students in American society leads them to believe they don't belong here, so the idea of traveling to a foreign country and culture, where they also don't belong, can be undesirable.

While much of the fear of Black students to travel abroad emerges from dominant myths that help to secure America's international status, some research has confirmed that Black students experience discrimination abroad. Willis's (2016) qualitative study of Black women and their experiences with microaggressions abroad confirmed this finding as "all 19 of her participants experienced some form of microaggression from either U.S. peers, the host culture or both" (p. 132). Her findings also suggest that microaggressions were more pronounced in European countries. Willis's study re-emphasizes the importance of institutions interrogating their own procedures and campus climate if they hope to make study abroad more equitable. Institutional decisions, such as program location and program participants, heavily impact the experiences of students of color abroad and may serve as barrier for engagement with students of color.

In her research on women of color abroad, Jackson (2006) found "dealing with the attitudes of their White compatriots was often more challenging than dealing with the host country nationals" (2006, p. 177). Willis's (2016) study also highlighted the importance of the peer group students of color were traveling with as it related to dealing with discrimination. Most of the participants in Willis's study were the only, or one of a few Black students on the trip. One of her participants noted, "It was like I am a black dot on a White piece of paper...I wasn't afraid or anything like that, it was just like I don't have anyone that can share… people who, you know,

can understand" (p. 131). While being the only Black person can be challenging enough, another participant referenced more negative experiences with her U.S. peers then the British people in the host country, "Most negative interactions or huge emotions came from just interacting with the students that came on the trip with different things they would say" (p. 131). For some White students, traveling abroad is the first time they authentically engage with race relations, hence the focus on intercultural development and communication in study abroad research (Anderson, Lawton, & Rexeisen, 2006; Williams, 2005). When institutions do not address conversations around race, power, and equity on both a local and global scale during pre-departure orientation and continue these conversations while abroad, they are creating a barrier for students of color participation in study abroad.

Research needs to move beyond the barriers and perceived benefits discourse, and provide a platform for Black students who have studied abroad to tell their stories of challenge and triumph, to empower and encourage other Black students to take on that same challenge. This is especially true for Black student-athletes as there is a dearth of research that explores the impact that studying abroad has on the identities on Black student-athletes.

Service learning abroad

Service learning has been theorized as an optimal learning opportunity for students and has steadily been incorporated into larger university goals over the last 20 years (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996; Butin, 2003). Service learning has its theoretical and practical roots in experiential learning and constructivism, which suggests service learning is an opportunity for students to both apply their knowledge and learn from the communities they serve (Furco, 2001). Service-learning has been noted to increase community engagement between universities and the

communities as well as help students apply theory to practice, better understand issues facing

communities and enrich personal development (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Hardy & Schaen, 2000).

In recent years, globalization and the increase of study abroad opportunities in higher

education has led practitioners to develop service learning opportunities on an international level,

referred to as International Service learning (Larson, 2015) or Global Service Learning (Hartman

& Kiely, 2014). According to Hartman and Kiely (2014), Global Service Learning (GSL) is

distinct from domestic service-learning in five key ways: 1) GSL is committed to student

intercultural competence development; 2) GSL uses a structural analysis that highlights power,

privilege, and hegemony in global relations; 3) GSL focuses on volunteerism within a global

market; 4) GSL is immersive; 5) GSL critically engages global civic and moral obligation.

GSL provides a structural analysis to global issues can be disruptive of student

assumptions and understanding of the world and often leads to formative and transformational

questioning (Kiely, 2005). Research suggests that while students participating in domestic

service learning find space to discuss political, social, and cultural structures and how they

impact their experiences, the degree of dissonance and open-mindedness to transformational

learning is expanded through GSL (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996; Hartman & Kiely, 2014; Kiely,

2005). Full-blown immersion plays a key role in the process of disruption which has been

identified as a key element to the transformational learning process (Kiely, 2005), leading to a

critical global citizenship. Hartman and Kiely justify how they came to their definition of critical

global citizenship:

> Our understanding of a critical global citizenship follows from student's articulations of
>
> their experiences, accepts our postmodern positions, and allows for diverse, currently
>
> unknown or unknowable efforts toward building a better world. This kind of global

citizenship therefore admits that we do not have precise answers but calls us to humble, careful, and ongoing action to better acknowledge common human dignity. It continuously reminds us of the possibility of our own, perhaps unintentional or unwitting, complicity in perpetuating structures of exclusion (such as states) and patterns of oppression. (p. 237)

The process of disruption and questioning of assumptions that leads to a critical global citizenship is important for all students but can be even more transformative for Black student-athletes because the breadth of their educational experiences in college is restricted due to time commitments to their sports (Barker, 2016; Singer, 2008).

Service Learning and student-athletes at The University of Washington

Barker (2016), a professor at The University of Washington, helped to facilitate a trip of 13 student-athletes to Polynesia in 2015 and documented the experience. The trip originated because three football players with Polynesian heritage became increasingly frustrated that their football schedule did not allow them to take advantage of study abroad opportunities that would supplement the material they were learning about the Oceania region. In response, the author along with two colleagues in the athletic department developed a 12-day trip (10 in Polynesia, two flying) offered exclusively to student-athletes. The trip was developed using Hartman and Keily's (2014) Global Service Learning (GSL) framework that pushed students to make connections between the "ways power, privilege and hegemonic structures intersect" (Barker, 2016, p. 1073) globally.

Upon return, the student-athletes participated in a two-day service learning experience with Taro Roots, a nonprofit in Seattle that supports the athletic and academic growth of Polynesian students. Trip leaders noted that the service-learning component back in Seattle was

too short "to contribute meaningfully to the students' learning" (Barker, p. 1074). Student evaluations of the trip revealed four important themes: (1) expanding notions of family and a commitment to build local community, (2) the benefits of exposing students to indigenous epistemologies, (3) the persistent and degrading stereotypes that follow student-athletes, and (4) improvements to the athletic lives of students. A component of Polynesian epistemology is the idea that all people are interconnected. The people on the island of Happu, where the study abroad experience took place, started to consider the UW athletes as "family," which helped the UW athletes start to see themselves in community with the people of the Polynesian islands. By starting to see themselves in community with people on the island, students were challenged to redefine what they believed to be important in the world, and were surprised by the way their perceptions shifted in such a short amount of time.

The shift in thinking about how they defined community also had a profound effect on their athletic and personal lives. Their increased commitment to community helped them become better teammates and instilled a desire in them to be patient and more understanding of teammates from different racial, ethnic, and geographical backgrounds. Furthermore, the student-athletes were able to identify and develop an appreciation for the opportunities they had in their lives, leading to more motivation to excel in their sports (Barker, 2016). While the trip positively impacted their athletic lives, Barker suggested that more emphasis should have been placed on discussions around adjusting back to America as many of the student-athletes experienced culture shock upon returning home and had difficulty talking about their experiences with friends and family. More specifically, the male student-athletes of color reported that peers both inside and outside the athletic department insisted on framing the experience as a vacation on sandy beaches, rather than a transformative educational experience. This finding highlights how the

pervasive culture of college athletics and athletic enclosures position student-athletes, especially Black males, as one-dimensional (Logan, 2017). The student-athletes wanted to share their experiences of transformation with their peers, however, others were not able to see these athletes outside of the athletic box. Barker's research challenges the binary of athletic superiority and intellectual inferiority among athletes of color (Edwards, 1984; Smith, 2015) as the three football players who argued for a study abroad trip to enrich their educational experience ended up playing in the NFL.

Barker's research suggests that study abroad experiences can be particularly impactful for student-athletes in revenue producing sports. As student-athletes are highly scheduled and their time is under constant demand from athletic commitments, the opportunity to live without technology including cell phones was noted as liberating (Barker, 2016). More importantly, Barker suggests:

> It is important for institutions to acknowledge the desire of student-athletes to access study abroad opportunities, particularly given the athletic labor that these students provide to universities. We need to focus our scrutiny of power, privilege, and hegemonic structures on our own practices that continue to erect barriers of full participation in the academic experience to student-athletes, particularly for the low-income men of color that represent a disproportionate number of revenue-generating D-1 sports. (p. 1076)

Barker's research is foundational in that it uses research to contribute to the conversation around creating study abroad opportunities for student-athletes, specifically student-athletes of color in revenue-producing sports. However, the findings are limited due to the methodology selected which included evaluations rather than actual student-athlete testimonial. Furthermore, while the article suggested there were many students of color on the trip, the race and gender of the

student-athletes were not identified.

Program Content and Duration

Some have questioned whether short-term study abroad programs are adequate to bring about transformative learning; however, there is a considerable amount of research that does support the efficacy of short-term international education (e.g., Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004; Donnelly-Smith, 2009; McKeown, 2009; Tarrant & Lyons, 2012; Tarrant, Rubin & Stoner, 2014; Wynveen, Kyle, & Tarrant, 2012). McKeown (2009) argues, "students who had been abroad for as little as two weeks showed patterns of intellectual development more similar to peers who had been abroad for months or years than to those who had not been abroad at all" (p. 6). However, Tarrant and colleagues (2014) warn that, study abroad alone is "*not* the most powerful engine for nurturing a global citizenry. Rather it is the combination of location (abroad) and academic focus (sustainability via experiential/ field learning) that appears to yield the greatest increases in global citizenship scores" (Tarrant et al., 2014, p. 153). This finding suggests that the development of study abroad programs needs to be intentional if the goal is to build a sense of global citizenship in students. Tarrant and colleagues (2014) go on to argue that "education abroad can effectively prepare students as responsible global citizens if programs incorporate the principles of experiential education, notably action-oriented experiences that encourage reflection, critical analysis, and synthesis" (pp. 145-146). For Tarrant and colleagues, it is not enough to simply send students abroad, programs must be specifically tailored to critically engage students if the positive outcomes of study abroad are to be accomplished.

Interest Convergence and Black Athletes Abroad

Black athletes have been used in international spaces by powerful American institutions

to bring economic prosperity and power to dominant White interests. This was in stark contrast to the early years of the 1900's when American Black athletes of championship pedigree such as Jack Johnson and Marshall "Major" Taylor were forced to travel internationally in order to compete due to White racism in the United States. However, when America began to gain global prestige in the 20th century, Black athletes were used as commodities to highlight American superiority (Wiggins, 1997). Historical events in the 1930's, such as Jesse Owens performance at the Berlin Olympic Games and Joe Louis's two boxing bouts against Max Schmeling, pitted Black American athletes against Germany, and their growing belief in Aryan superiority. As the international fight between American democracy and German fascism raged, Black athletes were touted as proof of American superiority. For Black Americans, the success of Black athletes did not prove American superiority, but instead the success of Black athletes abroad was heralded as proof to challenge the growing eugenics movement and belief in White superiority in America. After WWII, America found itself in another struggle for global dominance against the Soviet Union, and utilized Black athletes in a similar fashion.

In 1955, during the early stages of the Cold War, President Eisenhower sent Jesse Owens on an official State Department tour of the Far East to prove the efficiency and superiority of American democracy as compared to Russian communism (Thomas, 2012). Owens identified with dominant American ideology and was thus an ideal international representative for the State Department. He was a prime example of the opportunities for freedom and greatness that American democracy provided to all of its citizens. Owens traveled abroad essentially "selling America" (Wiggins, 2006, p. 127) to the world, setting up a precedent of utilizing the popularity of elite Black athletes for political purposes abroad. Throughout the 50's, 60's, and 70's, prominent Black athletes such as Jackie Robinson, Bill Russell, Arthur Ashe, Kareem Abdul

Jabbar, Oscar Robertson, and countless others, were sent on international tours, primarily to Africa, paid for by the U.S. State Department. These goodwill or cultural ambassador tours (Thomas, 2012) highlighting successful Black American athletes proved to be some of the State Department's most influential tools in the fight against Communism in Asia, and certainly in Africa.

Identity and Agency of Black Athletes Abroad

In his autobiography, Bill Russell describes his 1959 State Department sponsored tour of Africa as a "life-altering experience" (Russell & Branch, 1979, p. 80). Russell came to understand his identity in a global context and began referencing Africa as his homeland. In reference to his daughter, Russell stated, "I named her Kenyatta because it means 'Burning Spear' and because it will always remind her of the beauty of Africa and the beauty of the noble race from which she descended" (Russell, 1966, p. 215). Upon returning home, Russell's comments in an interview exemplify how powerful his experience was in relation to his racial identity as he stated, "I was welcome because I was black instead of in spite of being black" (Rogin, Sports Illustrated, 1963). For Russell, and other Black athletes who would participate in cultural tours of Africa, the trip served as an opportunity to connect to their African heritage and develop new understandings of blackness. What started as a trip to show African nations how successful America has been in creating a racial democracy, ended with Russell, finding a new-found appreciation and understanding of his racial identity.

Other Black athletes such as Oscar Robertson and Kareem Abdul Jabbar, who toured Africa together in 1971, were able to connect the racism they experienced in America to American imperialism abroad. While in Tanzania, Robertson stated to a reporter:

I don't support the war in Vietnam or racism at all… I'm not an ambassador for the

states, but this is a great opportunity for me to come see Africa because I've wanted to come for such a long time. (Witherspoon, 2013, p. 1516)

Similarly, throughout the trip, Jabbar became increasingly critical of U.S. foreign policy and noted that as a Black American, he was on the trip to explore his personal connection to Africa. While the trip was sponsored by the State Department with diplomatic goals in mind, Jabbar and Robertson were far more interested in exploring their ancestral connections to Africa which in turn provided space for identity production and critical consciousness.

Gap in literature: CRT, Black Student-athletes and Study abroad

The gap in scholarship on the study abroad experiences of student-athletes is highlighted by the fact that my research found only one article that focused specifically on the experiences of student-athletes and their international learning experience (Barker, 2016). This article did not incorporate the voice of the student-athletes in the findings and was based largely off a survey conducted once the student-athletes returned. Furthermore, researchers have yet to engage how traditional study abroad trips as well as University affiliated athletic trips abroad impact student-athletes. However, through my research, I did find Henderson's (2013) dissertation research which focused on personal and professional development opportunities made available to Black female student-athletes while in college. Henderson's (2013) research gave a platform to Black student-athletes and they identified study abroad as an underutilized resource that could enhance their personal and professional development. While most of the student-athletes in Henderson's study did not have the opportunity to study abroad, the few that did, all participated in short-term programs and found the experience to be transformational.

One of the participants in Henderson's study acknowledged that the reason she attended

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her particular institution was because they offered student-athletes the opportunity to attend a short-term study abroad program in January over winter break. She reported that her study abroad experience pushed her to be more service-oriented and heavily influenced her decision to work with trauma victims upon graduation. This finding highlights how studying is beneficial to both student-athletes and their Universities, as the opportunity to study abroad can be used as a recruitment tool.

Another participant in Henderson's research who participated in a short-term study abroad program relished in the opportunity to build relationships with people besides her teammates:

> We went to Croatia to see a different part of the world and to meet different people and different situations. I went there, and I flew by myself to Croatia … I had to figure out how to get on the train to meet everyone else, and I didn't know anyone else on the study abroad that I went on … We became really close friends. I think just being able to be away from volleyball to meet new people helped a lot and also to see how public health functions in different parts of the world too. (Henderson, 2013, p. 73)

This student-athlete was thankful to have time away from her sport to develop new aspects of her identity and meet new people, highlighting the fact that student-athletes are often alienated from their non-athlete peers.

Another participant in Henderson's study wish they had a similar opportunity, however, she didn't feel like she had access to it:

> I would have loved to study abroad. In the summer, we're expected to be [here], even though we are not in season or whatever, you just can't put down your racket for three months and expect to be fit and expect to be at the level you need to be at in the fall. So, I

like pushed every summer and gotten a lot better but at the same time I've been here every summer. I've either been at school or living at home and all my other friends from high school in college they have been able to study abroad somewhere. My sister went to Spain for a semester. I would have loved to do that but that's kind of something going into school I knew wasn't going to happen but still just the thought of it. It would have been fun. (p. 92)

This quote exposes how the figured world of collegiate athletics encloses on the educational opportunities of student-athletes. She succumbed to the expectation that student-athletes should spend their free time working on their athletic crafts, rather than taking advantage of opportunities that could lead to their personal and professional development.

In the implications of her work, Henderson noted the few participants who did study abroad found it to be an enriching experience, an experience she felt could have a profound impact on the professional development of student-athletes. Henderson (2013) argued "athletic departments should encourage study abroad opportunities and use student-athlete development funds to financially support student-athletes who are interested in pursuing school-sponsored experiences" (p. 120). In addition to encouraging study abroad, Henderson argued that athletic departments are missing out on an opportunity to develop their student-athletes holistically when they fail to incorporate educational components to team-oriented foreign tour athletic trips. Henderson argues that while international travel is a great learning opportunity, athletic departments should work with academic departments to build out educational components to the foreign tour trips to enhance the learning and professional development opportunities for student-athletes.

Henderson's work, like Barker's (2016), set the foundation for my current study. My

research and usage of CRT as the theoretical and methodological framework fills an important gap in the discourse around student-athlete development. This study focuses exclusively on the international experiences of Black student-athletes, using qualitative methods to provide a thick description of their experiences. Furthermore, CRT encourages the researcher to highlight the voice of the research participants as to allow them to author their own narratives (Bernal, 2002; Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). Studying abroad is powerful for any student, but especially powerful for individuals who have been racially oppressed and are constantly positioned as inferior through a white lens (Morgan et al., 2002), such as Black student-athletes who must face the stereotype of being a dumb jock (Edwards, 1984).

Chapter Three: Methodology

In this chapter, I begin with an overview of the study and its relevance to the fields of student-athlete development and international education. I then present the transformative paradigm on which this research study is based, followed by its epistemological, ontological and theoretical orientations. Next, I introduce a hermeneutic phenomenological research design and its suitability for this qualitative study. As suggested by hermeneutic phenomenological research, I present my positionality to the research question within this chapter to acknowledge the knowledge, experiences and assumptions I bring to this work. Finally, I illustrate the specific methods and procedures used to conduct the study, analyze the data, and validate the findings.

Overview of study

The research questions of this phenomenological study seek to explore the experiences of Black student-athletes participating in various forms of international education and the subsequent influence that these experiences had on these individuals' identity formation and future orientation. The purpose of this study is significant because in a 2016 survey conducted by the NCAA, student-athletes articulated their desire to have more time off during the summer to take advantage of study abroad opportunities (NCAA Goals Report, 2016). Specifically, "33% of Division I student-athletes and 22% of Division II student-athletes say they would like to participate, but cannot because of their athletic commitments," (p. 7) while only 10% of Division I athletes have studied abroad or believe they will. Despite these statistics, there is a dearth of research highlighting the experiences of Black student-athletes who participate in international

education. Furthermore, there is no research on Black student-athletes participating in athletically oriented foreign tours, a growing component of international education.

An exploratory phenomenological design is utilized for this research due to the limited research on Black student-athletes and their international learning experiences. This exploratory study is designed to position Black student-athletes as experts in their own experience so that future research can learn directly from Black student-athletes. Greater insight into the self-described experiences of Black student-athletes abroad may provide scholars and practitioner's perspective into working with Black student-athletes and developing international educational programming that meets their unique needs. Critical Race Theory and Figured Worlds frame this study by providing space for 'the researched' to use their voice to author their own narratives and experiences (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), and serve as research consultants. Thus, the aim of this study is to investigate how Black student-athletes experienced international education and its influence on their identity formation and future orientation.

This study included the following methodological instruments: 1) 20 semi-structured interviews of Black student-athletes who had international education experiences, 2) focus groups drawn from the aforementioned research consultants to corroborate the themes and findings, 3) document analysis, 4) Photovoice, 5) and five carefully selected case studies, each accompanied by an additional in-depth interview. The methodology of this research study is grounded in the theoretical foundation of CRT and figured worlds, as well as the relevant literature.

Transformative Research Paradigm

A paradigm within research is a tool to identify the researcher's worldview as well as the philosophical assumptions that describes one's worldview (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Mertens (2007) suggests that the fundamental assumptions and belief of the transformative paradigm provide a framework for addressing issues of social justice and the subsequent methodological selection. According to Mertens (2007), this paradigm challenges the traditional role of the researcher, suggesting that the researcher not only recognizes inequality in society but that one also takes on a shared responsibility to transform the inequitable power relationship. A central tenet of the transformative paradigm is the idea that power must be addressed throughout every stage of the research process, including the research question. The research question within the transformative paradigm should be developed in collaboration with the population one is seeking to study (Mertens, 2007). This ensures that the research question and subsequent process is worthwhile and important to the participants as well as the researcher. The research question of this paradigm was developed through many formal and informal conversations with current and previous Black student-athletes. Throughout my informal conversations, former Black student-athletes have expressed disappointment that they did not participate in international education during their collegiate experience, while many current student-athletes feel that they do not have the opportunity due to their time commitment as student-athletes. In fact, the NCAA goal report (2016) stated that one of the primary concerns for student-athletes was having more time to take advantage of extra-curricular activities, such as international education. Exploring the influences that international education has on Black student-athletes' identity formation and future orientation will help practitioners develop programming that will best suit the unique educational needs of Black student-athletes.

Epistemology

Epistemologically, the transformative paradigm suggests that knowledge is constructed, often referred to as constructivism (Mertens, 2010). Knowledge is not objective and neutral, instead it often constructed through the lens of power and culture. The cultural knowledge and wealth of members from marginalized communities is often not valued within dominant constructions of knowledge (Yosso, 2005). Qualitative research methods helped to position research consultants for this study, Black student-athletes, as valuable holders of knowledge; knowledge that can be used to effectively transform systematic and institutional oppression. Through the research process, consultants co-constructed knowledge which proved empowering, especially for communities whose knowledge have not typically been recognized as valued knowledge within traditional academic and professional spaces (Yosso, 2005).

Ontology

The ontological foundation of this study is grounded in the belief that reality is socially constructed, as there are multiple understandings of reality (Mertens, 2010). While there are multiple views of reality due to varied lived experiences, there are also dominant narratives that shape what is validated and acknowledged as real. The transformative paradigm asserts that hegemony often blinds or masks systemic oppression, which devalues the voice of marginalized people whose reality is shaped by such oppression. This research provided a marginalized group of people a platform to name their own reality. This research is chiefly interested in how Black student-athletes "interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" with international education (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 15). The narratives of Black student-athletes abroad will counter the many master narratives that

talk about Black student-athletes, rather than allowing them to make sense of their own racialized experiences.

Critical Research

The goal of critical research is to critique, challenge, transform, and analyze power relations within the study's findings or results (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). McLaren (2015) argues that critical research is a form of cultural criticism that unveils how power operates within society, with the goal of disrupting and transforming the inequitable power relationship. Critical research should not only raise the consciousness of research participants and readers of the research, it should lead to some action, or praxis (Freire, 2000). This research focused on the context in which Black student-athletes found themselves in while abroad, how they navigated such spaces, and how their experiences influenced their identity formation and future orientation.

Theoretical Framework: Critical Race Theory and Figured Worlds

As detailed in Chapter two, this research utilized Critical Race Theory (CRT) and *Figured Worlds* as theoretical foundations to ground this study. Critical Race Theory (CRT) was employed for this study because it focuses on bringing social justice to issues of race, racism and other forms of subordination within education. CRT provided me, as the primary researcher, the theoretical tools to expose racism, and counter the master narratives of meritocracy, objectivity and colorblindness in sport, by highlighting the voices and narratives of Black student-athletes. At the core of this research was the goal of bringing educational equity and justice to Black student-athletes at PWI's as "perhaps nowhere in higher education is the disenfranchisement of Black male students more insidious than in college athletics" (Harper, 2006, p. 6). As one of the

most underrepresented demographics within international education, it is imperative to document and explore the experiences of Black student-athletes abroad.

CRT informed the primary research questions and research methodology employed. As such, the main research question centered on the experiences of Black student-athletes abroad and how they have been influenced by their international experiences upon returning to the United States. The qualitative methodology employed was used to further inform an underlying principle of CRT that recognizes the experiential knowledge people of color as legitimate and critical to understanding and analyzing systemic forms of racial subordination (Solorzano & Bernal, 2001), in order to transform such oppression. Exploring their experiences through this qualitative lens positioned the participants to name their own experiences using the conceptual tools of storytelling, oral narratives, photo sharing, and provided counter-narratives to dominant 'stories' that shaped their lived realities. Delgado (1989) suggested there are at minimum three reasons for using qualitative research methods for CRT:

1. Much of reality is socially constructed;

2. Storytelling provides members of subordinated groups an opportunity for self - preservation, and;

3. The exchange of personal narratives and experiences can help combat ethnocentrism and dysconscious racism

CRT as a framework was appropriate for this study as it sought to explore the experiences and reflections of Black student-athletes abroad to help practitioners serve this student demographic. This theoretical framework centered the experiential knowledge of Black student-athletes to challenge dominant narratives that frame these students as one-dimensional, 'dumb jocks' (Edwards, 1984; Logan, 2017; Singer, 2008), unworthy of equitable educational

opportunities. In addition to CRT, Holland's concept of *Figured Worlds* (1998) was used to frame the international experiences as unique figured worlds that may offer Black student-athletes access to certain identities while denying them access to others (Nasir, 2011).

Holland's concept of figured worlds is an ideal lens to study identity formation and re-negotiation because it recognizes that an individual's identity or self-perception is in a constant state of mutation and fluidity as it responds to new figured worlds. The socially and culturally constructed world of college campuses commonly referred to as the "athletic bubble" (Menke, 2016) cultivates and solidifies Black student-athletes' athletic identity at the expense of other aspects of their multifaceted identities (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011). Holland's (1998) conceptualizatoin of figured worlds suggests that in a figured world, individuals communicate from different places or social realities based on the power dynamics at play. From the figured world perspective, student-athletes may respond and act in accordance with how they and others envision their identities. This often leads Black student-athletes to over-identify with the role of athlete within the figured world collegiate athletics. The concept of figured worlds was well-suited to this research focused on identity formation.

Hermeneutic Phenomenology Research Design

Merriam and Tisdell (2015) suggest that while there are numerous qualitative research designs, "all qualitative research is phenomenological" (p. 25), due to its subjective and interpretive nature. From a phenomenological perspective, the purpose of research is "to question the way we experience the world, to want to know the world in which we live as human beings" (Van Manen, 2016, p. 5). Phenomenology is desirable for qualitative research that seeks to explore how people make meaning of and describe a phenomenon they directly experienced (Patton, 2002). The phenomenon of interest in this study was Black student-athletes perceptions

of their experiences with international education and how those experiences have influenced their sense of self and future orientation. Moreover, phenomenology lent itself well to this study because it was exploratory and as critical race theorists argue (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Milner, 2007; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001), it should be the voices of those being researched, Black student-athletes, whose words and narratives lay the foundation for this emerging field of scholarship.

Phenomenology seeks to understand a given research topic from the perspectives of those being interviewed, which is especially important for minoritized groups, like Black student-athletes, whose narratives are often marginalized within dominant conceptions of how society operates. As the purpose of phenomenological research is on "revealing meaning rather than arguing on a point or developing abstract theory" (Flood, 2010, p. 7), this study prioritizes the perspectives and narratives of the research consultants as well as my own understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

Theorists and researchers have varying understandings of the role of the researcher within phenomenological research. While Husserl (1970) believes that researchers should clearly identify and then bracket away their prior knowledge through a process of "phenomenological reduction" in order to uphold objectivity in their work, Heidegger (1988) encourages researchers to engage their prior knowledge to better understand and co-construct the phenomenon of what is being studied with the research consultants. This research project took the approach of Heidegger (1988) and used my prior knowledge and pre-conceptions to make sense out of the data, while keenly aware that my experience in this world is unique, as are all of the lives of the consultants of this study. Moustakas (1994) regards this as "a return to experience in order to obtain comprehensive descriptions" which "provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis" (p. 13)

by the researcher. A hermeneutic phenomenological study builds upon the understandings of both the research consultants and the researcher, to identify the essence of that lived experience (Van Manen, 2016).

Hermeneutic phenomenology allowed me as the researcher to collect and interpret descriptions of student experiences to co-determine the structures or essences that comprised those experiences. This methodological approach provides the space for me to use my theoretical knowledge and personal experiences to explain meanings and assumptions of participants' experiences (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007). As the primary tool of research, my identity and experiences played major roles within the study, from start to finish. The research questions that I asked, my means of collecting data, as well as my analysis are all influenced by the individual that I am, and the life experiences that have shaped me. Therefore, when beginning this study, I engaged in a reflective process of making explicit my understandings, biases, theories, and beliefs related to the study (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003; Laverty, 2003; Richards & Morse, 2012Van Manen, 2016). I wrote a memo outlining my experiences and understandings of the topic, shared the document with a colleague and talked through how it might influence my study. Because it is not entirely possible to set aside one's personal feelings and thoughts (Van Manen, 2016), researchers need to "become aware as possible and account for these interpretive influences" (Laverty, 2003, p. 24). For this reason, I open this dissertation with an autobiographical portrait, so readers understand my orientation. There is also a positionality statement within this chapter which highlights my connection to this work. These two pieces incorporate many of the experiences and ideas I wrote in the initial memo. A researcher with a different lived experience than myself, or a researcher that chose to bracket away their lived experiences, would likely come to different findings and conclusions than those identified within

this dissertation study. What follows is a statement of my positionality as the researcher and the experiences, assumptions, and biases that I carried with me into this research.

Researcher Experiences, Knowledges, and Presuppositions

Positionality refers to how an individual is situated in relation to others, in this case, how I as the researcher, was positioned with the research consultants (Merriam, 2002). One's positionality is not fixed and often shifts according to similarities and differences one has with the consultants as well as relationships of power as "power relations are everywhere, including in the research study itself" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 62). As the primary instrument of data collection, I, the researcher, was cognizant of my positionality and how it might impact data collection and analysis (Morrow, 2005). As the lead researcher, I considered myself an external insider, a person raised outside of the community but one who has similar values and cultural perspectives of the community, and as a result, experiences a form of closeness with the community (Banks, 1995).

My status as an external insider who is familiar with the figured world of collegiate athletics as well as international education was both a benefit and a hindrance to interpreting data. As an insider, I was able to use their experiential knowledge to get the most pertinent information from the research participants. My status as an insider benefited the research process as I used my lived experiences to help inform my data collection methods and analysis. While prior knowledge and experience can serve as a benefit to the research process, Chavez (2008) also suggests that those with an insider status must probe and request clarification so as not to become reliant on their own interpretation. It was imperative for me as the primary researcher to be reflective about my positionality and bias, in hopes of making a clear distinction between

what was being observed and heard as a researcher as compared to what was already known (Miller & Dingwall, 1997).

While I was not a Division 1 athlete, I am a Black man who grew up playing sports and was recognized in my youth as a stand out talent. During much of my adolescence, being an athlete was a salient part of my identity. Not only did I participate in organized sports during my adolescence, I have watched collegiate and professional sports for most of my life. I am knowledgeable of historical and contemporary events at the intersection of race, sport and education. I have seen both the best and the worst of what sports can do for communities and individuals.

As I matriculated into college on a leadership merit-based scholarship to The University of Wisconsin-Madison, my best friend received an athletic scholarship to The University of Hawaii to play football. In many ways, this dissertation topic speaks to the divergent experiences he and I had in college, which is why his story is told in the preface of this dissertation. After suffering a career ending injury in college, he struggled mightily trying to find himself. His experiences with identity foreclosure, drug addiction and a devalued sense of self heavily influenced my decision to study the experience of student-athletes in the collegiate setting, especially the intersection of race, education and intercollegiate athletics.

When I enrolled at The University of Texas at Austin for my graduate studies, I decided to work as a mentor for Black student-athletes on the football team. It was my goal to help them navigate the institution academically, while also pushing them to develop salient aspects of their identities outside of their athletic identity. My informal experiences within the world of collegiate athletics as well as my formal roles have influenced my framing of this study.

Another critical element of my positionality is that I have extensive experience traveling, studying, and living abroad. As an undergraduate student, I attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison and felt as if that was a study abroad experience itself, as it was a stark difference from the community I grew up in Los Angeles. Everything was white. The clouds, the snow, and the people. In college, I set a specific goal of studying abroad in Africa, so I decided to pick up French in hopes of traveling to a West African country. I did a five-week language immersion program in Quebec, Canada during the summer of my sophomore year. I had a great experience, but upon returning to Wisconsin, I decided to give up on French and study abroad in an Anglophone African country. I settled on South Africa and applied to participate in an exchange program at The University of Cape Town during the spring of my junior year. I was denied entry to the program; however, I was determined to get abroad so the University admitted me to a program in London, England. This trip was not an exchange program, instead, 30 students from the University of Wisconsin-Madison lived together and studied together at a study center in London. This trip proved to be pivotal in my trajectory. I learned how to backpack by taking numerous short trips throughout Europe, but more importantly, I finally met White students from Wisconsin who I could call friends. Arriving back in Wisconsin the following year, I now had friends of all races and access to spaces on campus, in the community, and in Wisconsin, that I had never experienced. My experience in London was an example of how studying abroad can facilitate intercultural competence and expand upon ones' circles of influence.

After completing my fourth year in Wisconsin, I decided to re-apply for the program in Cape Town and was admitted for the following fall. I thoroughly enjoyed my personal and educational experience in Cape Town. I was taught about Africa and the world through an

African-centered lens, which challenged much of what I had learned during the previous 22 years of my life. At the end of the semester, I traveled with a friend to numerous countries in Southern Africa, where I was forced to negotiate aspects of my identity and redefine my understanding of Blackness.

My most vivid memory of negotiating aspects of my racial and national identity was during a 26-hour bus ride from Johannesburg, South Africa to Lusaka, Zambia. I was traveling with a White American friend who I met while studying at The University of Cape Town. While on the bus, an African man suggested that I wasn't Black. I became viscerally frustrated and attempted to prove my Blackness to him. "Yes, I'm mixed, but my father is Black. He raised me as a Black man. In the United States, I'm Black!" I went on and on attempting to prove myself. He listened and then said calmly, "You are White. You represent the White man." He then showed me his forearm and suggested that my friend and I reveal ours as well, so we did. He went on, "I am Black. You are like him. You are White." In that moment, in that world, he was right. My skin was a lot closer to my White friends' skin than it was to his dark brown skin. I had a lot more in common socially, culturally and economically with my White American friend then I did with this Black man from South Africa. I sat back in my chair and didn't speak for the next 2 hours. I struggled with what this meant for me and my identity. It turned out to be one of the most pivotal moments in my life as it relates to my identity as a Black American man. I had to own my American identity in a way that I was never challenged to do while living in the United States.

After returning back to Cape Town, I traveled to Egypt alone for two weeks accomplishing a goal I set for myself when I was 10 years old. I gained a lot of confidence in myself on that trip. It was the first time I reached a personal goal of mine. Going to college was a goal, but it was also an expectation. Going to Egypt was something I decided I wanted to do for

myself, and I made it happen. I finally got to experience the Pyramids of Giza. I spent a total of 6 months in Africa and then returned to the United States.

After working in Los Angeles for three years at a non-profit that prepared students to excel in college, I decided to move to Korea to teach English for a year. After one year of teaching, I traveled through Southeast Asia alone for three months before returning to Korea for an additional five months. In Korea, I applied to graduate school and was admitted to the University of Texas at Austin. While trying to secure a graduate assistantship (GA), I was introduced to Dr. Moore who was interested in my traveling experience, as he just began two study abroad programs out of his office. He hired me to manage his study abroad operations, and over the last four years, I have become well-known on campus for my work with study abroad.

I won an award in March of 2017 from the Diversity Abroad network for my leadership as it relates to providing equity and access within study abroad to minoritized communities. Also, in March of 2017, I started a nonprofit, T*he WorldWalker Foundation*, which focuses on providing educational and financial resources to Black students who want to study in Africa or the diaspora. My affinity for international travel clearly impacts the work that I do. My international experiences have had a huge impact on me personally and professionally, as being identified as a 'traveler' has become a salient part of my identity. My understanding of identity has been heavily influenced by my own process of identity negotiation and development as I traveled across the world as a Black male with light skin. This qualitative study speaks to my experiences as a Black man who has traveled extensively throughout the world, totaling 30 countries. It is further framed by the people I met along my journey, as well as the people in my life who never had the opportunity to engage in international education. In an effort to bring trustworthiness to this study, I adopted numerous measures to limit my bias as a researcher

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including research consultant member checks, peer reviewing, and triangulation. Furthermore, I made sure to constantly immerse myself in words and narratives of the research consultants so their voices would be prioritized in the analysis and dissemination of this study.

Ethics

As a qualitative researcher, I critically considered the ethics of my research study, especially because I am working with a marginalized population (Thomas, 2011; Yin, 2014). Two critical questions I had to consider are: a) who is the research benefitting? And b) what are the risks for participating in this research? This research project had low risks for research participants and is theoretically designed to help Black student-athletes by gaining a better understanding of the process of identity formation and negotiation while abroad. CRT strives for social justice, and my research intends to bring more social justice to the collegiate experiences of Black student-athletes. Throughout my study, I found that research participants enjoyed speaking about their international experiences. Many of the questions I asked throughout the interviews and focus groups, the consultants had not thought as deeply about, which they suggested further helped them process their experience. Research participants had an overall positive experience throughout their experience based on the feedback they provided.

Research Questions

1. *How does international education impact the identity formation of a sample of Black student-athletes?*
2. *How does international education impact Black student-athlete's goals and future orientation?*

The questions above were carefully fine-tuned after completion of my pilot study. The research questions speak to my theoretical understanding of the issue and attempt to capture how the participants experienced, and later reflected upon their international education experiences. The following theoretical propositions inform the methods undertaken in this study:

- Black student-athletes are an oppressed group within collegiate institutions.

- Understanding the heterogeneity of Blackness challenges racial hegemony (Hall, 2014).

- Identity is shaped by the figured world one occupies at any given moment.

- Some forms of international education such as study abroad have overwhelmingly positive student outcomes, however less is known about other forms of international education including athletically oriented foreign tours.

- Identity negotiation is heightened while abroad and influenced by the 'cohort' one travels with.

- Identity formation shapes future goals and orientation.

Data Collection and Analysis

This research study used phenomenological data collection methods such as semi-structured interviews, focus groups, artifact analysis, and Photovoice to capture 'the essence' of the experiences of Black student-athletes abroad and the subsequent impact that their trip had on their identity. This research study was conducted in the following stages:

1. Qualitative research methods including semi-structured individual interviews, artifact and document analysis, and Photovoice were used to collect data with the 20 research consultants. Interviews began in January of 2018 and ended in mid-February 2018.

2. One focus group of five consultants was conducted to corroborate themes and findings from the initial round of individual interviews. The focus group took place in early March and consisted of the following research consultants: The Guy, Black, Stones, Brotha love and Lebron.

3. Five consultants were selected as case studies to highlight the prominent themes that emerged from the individual interviews and focus groups. Each consultant was sent the case study that I wrote to solicit feedback and check for accuracy while also participating in a second interview.

Participants

The research consultants consisted of a heterogeneous group of 20 self-identified Black student-athletes who participated in a university affiliated international learning experience. For the purposes of this research, a university affiliated international educational experiences referred to study abroad, service learning abroad, athletically oriented competition trips, also known as foreign tours. The research consultants were both current and former Black student-athletes. The participants' unique backgrounds and histories provided comprehensive and contextual understanding to the way in which they experienced their international trip and how it impacted them.

Participant Sample

The participants for the proposed study were selected through a strategy of purposeful sampling, which has been identified as the most common form of sampling strategy for qualitative research (Patton, 2015). As highlighted in the introduction, the sample size of Black student-athletes with international education experience is small, thus identifying a random

sample would have proved challenging. Instead, Merriam and Tisdell (2015) state, "purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the researcher wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (p. 96). This study is exploratory as there is currently no peer-reviewed articles or dissertations that focus on the experiences of Black male student-athletes abroad.

The sample was identified and recruited precisely because of their unique experience and ability to provide "rich information" (Patton, 2015) that helped me, as the lead researcher best answer the proposed research question. This process is often referred to as criterion-based selection, when key attributes or criteria are identified, before locating people who meet that criteria (LeCompte & Schensul, 2010). The criteria used to recruit research participants were based on meeting the following requirements of the study: 1) Identifying as a Black student-athlete who traveled abroad as part of a university affiliated international trip, and 2) their willingness to participate in the data collection measures including an audio-taped interview. In one way or another, I got connected to the consultants at The Black Student-Athlete Summit at The University of Texas at Austin in January of 2018. Some of the consultants I met directly at the summit, while I got connected with others through professional networks established at the summit.

Semi-structured Interviews

The primary form of data collection for this phenomenological study was semi-structured interviews (Moustakas, 1994), as the format provides the space to get "the best of both worlds" (Thomas, 2011, p.163). Thomas suggests that this structure will provides me as the researcher with the flexibility to ask specific questions but also listen attentively to the participants and ask follow-up questions in areas that develop an interest on behalf of both the participant and the

researcher. This approach allowed for the fluidity of conversation while also ensuring that each participant was asked a series of identical questions. Individual interviews provided an opportunity for me to build rapport with the research participant, creating a space where the interviewee could open up about their experiences. The interviews took place in person, via facetime or skype, or over the phone and lasted anywhere from 30-100 minutes. Most of the interviews took place over Skype. All interviews were audio taped and the researcher took informal notes during the interview to capture aspects of the interview that the audio misses such as body language, tone, etc. All research consultants who were selected as case studies participated in an additional interview as well as a back and forth communication regarding the content of their case study.

Prior to the interview, participants were informed that I was interested in them and their experiences with the studied phenomenon. I informed them that there were no right or wrong answers, I simply wanted to gain a deeper understanding of their experience. The interview format was briefly discussed, so they would be prepared for my line of questions. Consultants were informed that I had pre-arranged open-ended questions to guide the conversation, however, I also asked intuitive follow-up questions to gain a thick description of the phenomenon they experienced. This process allowed for an open dialogue between myself as the researcher and the research consultants.

Focus groups

Focus groups are the convening of a small group of research participants to be interviewed at once. Focus groups are useful in that they can stimulate the perspectives of the interviewee's in unique ways as the dialogue is facilitated by the interviewer but shaped by the participants (Thomas, 2011). This method for interviewing is especially useful within the CRT

framework as it positions the research participants as leaders of the dialogue. Madriz (2000)

asserts that focus groups provide the space for marginalized groups to validate one another's

voice and advance the social justice agenda. Focus groups used in collaboration with individual

interviews provided opportunities for thick description of the phenomena being studied. While I

initially had plans of conducting two to three focus groups, I was only able to conduct one focus

group, which consisted of five research consultants. The five consultants that participated in the

focus group were The Guy, Black, Stones, Brotha love and Lebron. The focus group took place

over skype as the consultants were located across the country. Through the focus group, I got a

better understanding of whether group attitudes were consistent with individual attitudes.

Documents and Artifacts

A number of artifacts were used to triangulate the findings including souvenirs, videos,

social media profiles, journals, blogs, and emails written while abroad or in reflection of their

experience abroad. Research consultants were asked to send me written documents and provide

me access to their social media profiles. Only eight consultants provided me some type of written

document, however, most provided me access to their social media profiles. During the

interviews, they would show me updates and pictures they posted about their experiences abroad.

I catalogued the documents used them for data analysis. If research consultants chose to share

multiple documents, that was welcomed as it provided more context to better understand the

phenomenon of interest. Two consultants provided me with additional written documents after

the interview.

Numerous consultants showed me souvenirs they acquired on their trips. These souvenirs

often had significant meaning to them and were accompanied with stories that helped contextual

the essence of their experiences abroad. While these souvenirs were not collected, they were important parts of the interview and served useful during data analysis.

Photovoice

In recent years, developments in technology have made it easier to utilize photographs for effective means of data collection as "image-based methods provide a powerful extension of observation and open up a range of possibilities for case study research" (Thomas, 2011, p. 166). Photovoice as a data collection method emerged from critical theorists suggesting those being researched should be included in the research process itself (Johansen & Le, 2014). Wang & Burris (1994) argue that documentary photography can be used for social reform, privileging the lens of those who are often oppressed and talked about in research, rather than talked to. Chio and Fandt (2007) support this argument as they believe Photovoice method gives "voice, via camera, to members of communities not typically represented" (p. 486). Using Photovoice is another way to provide the research participants a platform to lead the conversation as they get to choose which pictures they want to share and what the images mean to them.

Research consultants in this study were asked to bring up to three photos to the semi-structured interview they felt captured "the essence of their trip." Consultants who were interviewed via video calling or over the phone were asked to send me copies of the photos they selected. On a few occasions, consultants took me through their social media profiles and pointed out the pictures that best represented "the essence of their trip." Some research consultants did not capture any photos of their own while abroad, so they had the option to use photos taken by their friends, or photos from the internet.

Case Studies Portraits

In phenomenological research, case studies are used as a research method, rather than a research design. Case studies are an ideal method to use when the researcher has a "desire to understand complex social phenomena" (Yin, 2014, p. 4); specifically, how an international experience impacts the research consultants' conception of self and future goals. Utilizing case studies as a method, coincides with the Critical Race Theoretical framework for this study by providing space for 'the researched' to use their words to author their own narratives and experiences (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Yin, 2014). Specifically, case studies were employed for this study because they helped to illuminate the themes that emerged from the research, by focusing on specific cases. As there are numerous types of international learning experiences that Black student-athletes take part in, including study abroad, service learning abroad, and competition trips, case studies were used to help highlight some of the similarities and differences. The selection of five critical case studies supported the goal of this phenomenological study by providing thick description to the phenomenon of identity exploration of Black student-athletes abroad. Each consultant selected for a case study participated in a second interview to further discuss their experience while also providing feedback on the case study portrait that was written.

Case Study Portrait Selection

These case studies were selected for the following reasons: 1) I wanted to choose at least one case study for each of the three types of trips (competition, service learning, study abroad). 2) After collecting and analyzing the data, the consultants' narratives were often the ones I spoke about when sharing my reflections on my data with friends, peers, mentors and my advisor. This suggested to me that their narratives spoke to my own understanding of the phenomena and

would likely serve as good case study portraits. 3) Individually, they each brought something unique to the research and collectively they highlight the similarities and differences within the consultants' experiences abroad. 4) Of the seven consultants I reached out to regarding a case study portrait on them, the selected five responded with a level of urgency and excitement. They wanted their stories to be told. Each of the 20 consultants for this research project was worthy of an individual cast study portrait, as no one experience is better than another. However, the case studies selected should provide a level of depth and richness to contextualize the findings of this dissertation study.

Key Informants

Key informants can be critical to the depth and thick description of qualitative research. Informants provide contextual information and insight into the case and the research participants. Informants can also be helpful in connecting the primary investigator with more research participants as well as more key informants (Yin, 2014). Key informants for this study included athletic department personnel, University administrators, trip organizers, and others who were able to provide depth and thick description to the phenomenon being studied. The most critical key informants for this study were trip organizers and athletic department personnel who connected me with research consultants who fit the scope of the study.

Analysis

Data collection and analysis took place in early 2018 when I conducted my first interviews. The analysis of interview data used, what Strauss and Corbin (1967) identified, as the constant comparative method, which allowed me to immerse myself in the data. This method was first used to develop theory but has since been used in a variety of qualitative data analysis

methods, emphasizing the need to go "through data again and again, comparing each element, phrase, sentence or paragraph, with all of the other elements" (Thomas, 2011, p. 171). This method was employed after each interview, so that the knowledge gleaned from one interview helped to shape the method of data collection in subsequent interviews as "data collection and analysis are simultaneous activities in qualitative research" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015, p. 191). As I moved through the research process, each interview began to take on a shape of its own, which informed how I conducted subsequent interviews.

I began adapting the flow of each interview to what I believed each consultant needed in the moment, making each interview a unique co-constructed process. Some research consultants had a lot to say about their experiences and didn't need much priming, while others were more reluctant and withdrawn at the start of the interview. For example, Charlie's answers were very short and direct, often lacking contextual information. Throughout our interview, I asked many follow up questions and often paraphrased what I thought I heard him say to provide him with the space to provide any additional information. On the other hand, most consultants spoke very passionately about their experiences and didn't need much priming from me. My sixth interview was with Brotha Love and our conversation heavily influenced the way I started the subsequent interviews. After providing him with some background information on myself and my orientation to the study, he jumped right in and spoke for nearly ten minutes before I asked a specific question. After our interview, I adjusted the protocol to provide the consultants space to author their own narratives by starting with the following prompt, "Based on that, tell me your story. Tell me whatever you think is relevant. As you move through your narrative, I will ask you follow-up questions here and there." I believe this change heavily influenced the richness and depth of my data as I began to frame my questions around their experiences, rather than

have them frame their experiences around my questions. Though the structure was different for each interview, the content of my questions was consistent.

Immediately after each interview, I drafted a memo focusing on aspects of the interview that would likely be missed during transcription. Memos heavily concentrated on what transcription would miss, such as body language, tone, pauses, laughter, and other emotional sentiments and how I made meaning of their expressions. It was particularly important to capture aspects of emotion, and body language in reference to the pictures, documents, and souvenirs they shared so that I could attempt to capture the essence of their meaning. In addition to the memos, most of the interviews were transcribed within a 24 to 48 hour period so that important contextual information was not lost. While most interviews were transcribed within this time frame, I got back logged conducting the last five interviews and was not able to transcribe them until after all the interviews were finished. Soon after transcribing the interviews, data was member checked by participants for further interpretation and adjustment if necessary (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). As I continued to conduct more interviews, I would constantly revisit previous transcripts so that I was constantly immersed in the data as a whole, and not overly influenced by any one particular interview.

After an initial read through of the transcribed interview and memos, *temporary constructs* were identified to frame the ideas or subjects that were recurring (Thomas, 2011, p. 172). As more interviews were transcribed through the constant comparative process, some *temporary constructs* emerged into *second-order constructs* that helped to "capture the essence" (p. 172) of the data, while other *constructs* that were not supported by the data, were set aside but not discarded. These constructs were originally noted in the margins of the transcribed interviews, and then eventually put into an excel document where they could be better organized.

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Other forms of data analyzed such as pictures, emails, journal entries, social media handles, and videos were used to support the identification of relevant *constructs*. The *second-order constructs* that emerged were grouped together to form "themes" (p. 172). Other graduate students served as peer-reviewers and read through the transcribed data to corroborate themes within the conceptual frameworks of Critical Race Theory and Figured Worlds. The peer-review process brought forth new ideas and lenses to the data. Some of the peer reviewers were familiar with the literature and some weren't, which led to interesting conversations that often pushed my thinking in new directions.

These conversations led to the development of more themes than I had originally wanted or anticipated. During the tail end of the analysis period, I als started utilizing the computer software, Nvivo, and added my themes to the section described as "nodes." I additionally uploaded all of my interview transcripts. I then went through each transcript and added the statements of the consultants to the relevant themes. Throughout this process, the themes were adjusted and collapsed within one another until four "final themes" emerged from the data. (Thomas, 2011, p. 172). Each final theme was comprised of multiple sub-themes which were articulated by using direct quotes from the consultants. At this point, I solicited the support of my peer reviewers and settled upon these four final themes and sub themes. The final themes and sub-themes were used to develop questions for the focus group interview protocol. The focus group interview was then transcribed, coded and uploaded into the appropriate final themes or "nodes" on Nvivo. It was at this point in the analysis process in which I selected the five consultants for case studies. The consultants were ultimately chosen based on their narratives and how their narratives highlighted the themes and provided thick description and contextual information allowing the reader to immerse themselves into their world. The reason for their

selection are further detailed in the beginning of Chapter 4. Trustworthiness (Mertens, 2010) of the research was established through the triangulation of multiple data sources, member-checking, reflexivity of the lead researcher's positionality, and a collaborative peer review process.

Trustworthiness and Quality of Research

Trustworthiness has been referred to as qualitative researcher's companion to validity in quantitative research (Vogt, Gardner, & Haeffelle, 2012). Trustworthiness of a research project is based in the researcher's ability to build trust with the research participants, collecting and analyzing data through a constant-comparative method, triangulation of data, and ensuring researcher confirmability and dependability (Vogt, Gardner, & Haeffele, 2012).

Triangulation

In order to prove triangulation, this research used multiple forms of data collection including, semi-structured interviews, artifact analysis, Photovoice, focus groups, and follow up interviews with research consultants selected for the case studies. I also conducted individual interviews with key informants in an effort to gain multiple perspectives to better know the social world being studied (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Member checks were conducted with research participants throughout the research process to ensure trustworthiness and to limit the bias of the primary researcher. Furthermore, the data was analyzed through peer review with multiple colleagues, some who were familiar and one who was unfamiliar with this research to ensure quality and trustworthiness.

Unlike quantitative research where replication of a study is used to ensure dependability, qualitative researchers understand that world from an interpretivist lens, suggesting the world is

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always changing and being impacted by people, time, and place. Dependability, is thus, established through a detailed description of research and inquiry process, as is done in this chapter (Mertens, 2010). I have provided a rich description of all data including all data sources, all notes and transcribed interviews to provide the reader with enough data to determine the validity of this research and its implications (Mertens, 2010). The goal of this research is not to make broad generalizations about Black student-athletes or international education, but rather to explore the influences that international education has on a sample of Black male student-athletes to provide a foundation for future research that implores practical solutions to disrupting the prevalence of athletic identity foreclosure in Black male student-athletes.

Axiology

This study was confidential and anonymous as pseudonyms were employed for all people and institutions involved in the research. Part of the review process is to ensure axiology, an ethical protocol ensuring all research participants are respected and benefit from the study (Mertens, 2010). This is especially important for the transformative paradigm as the research is meant to positively impact research participants. I was intentional about building rapport and establishing respect with the participants and spent the first few minutes of each interview forming a relationship before moving forward with questions. My relationships with the key informants helped establish me as trustworthy. Furthermore, the consultants were very receptive to me because I wanted to learn more about an experience in their lives that meant so much to them. The methodology of this research including interviews, focus groups, and artifact analysis served as an opportunity for research participants to reflect on their experiences, leading to enhanced identity formation, and development (Wick, 2011). Merriam & Tisdell (2015) bolster this argument as they claim:

When participants are asked questions in interviews or in other forms of data collection

about their experiences related to gender, race, class or sexual orientation, the very act of

talking about issues changes their consciousness about these things and hence invites

change. (p. 63)

At the core of this qualitative research study framed through a transformative paradigm is the

belief that this research will positively impact the research consultants and their narratives will

inform more equitable outcomes for Black student-athletes.

Chapter Four: Case Study Portraits

Introduction to Case Study Portraits

The portraits in this chapter were developed to offer greater insight into the ways in which international education influences the process of identity development and negotiation among Black male student-athletes. Within qualitative research, researchers seek to find research consultants (participants) who can best answer the research question(s), and thus the five case studies were chosen based on this criteria. The themes outlined in Chapter 5 are woven throughout the consultants portraits, yet these narratives go a step further by providing readers with a first-person reading of the consultants experience to better help the reader understand the "complex social phenomena" (Yin, 2014, p. 4) of identity development and negotiation while abroad. Each case study serves to provide the reader with both a broad understanding of the phenomena being studied, as well as an in depth look into the uniqueness of each case. Using Case studies as a data collection method coincides with CRT, by providing space for 'the researched' to use their own words to author their own narratives and experiences (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Yin, 2014).

I made the decision to present the case study portraits using first-person voice. This decision was made for numerous reasons. First, using first-person allows the reader to visualize the experience and become immersed in the data. In addition, full transcripts can be challenging to read and don't bring the research consultants and their narratives to life. I could have also made the choice to write the narratives in third person, however, I believe that important data would have been lost, including the humanization of the consultants. Thus, the case study portraits are written in first-person, although they are not completely verbatim. I, as the

researcher, still made the decision of which parts of their narrative to add and which parts to leave out. As Stake (2000) posits, "even when empathic and respectful of each person's realities, the researcher decides what the case's own story is, or at least what will be included in the report (p. 441). For three of the portraits, I was able to incorporate the near totality of their transcript, however, two of the five transcripts were long enough as to where I had to make decisions on what to incorporate and what to leave out. These decisions were made based on how the various parts of their narratives contributed to answering the research questions.

Efforts were made to keep the portraits intact with the actual flow of the interview so the reader can follow stream of consciousness of the research consultants. At times, I moved a few sentences around to enhance the flow of the interview, though this was intentionally limited. In fact, readers might find aspects of certain portraits repetitive, and wonder why I did not organize them in chronological order or based on themes. In response, I felt it was important for the consultants portraits to be as close to the actual transcript as possible. Consultants often came back to topics they felt were specifically important later in the interview, which would not be picked up by the reader if I pieced together the portrait by using themes. I introduced transition statements at the beginning of some paragraphs to help the reader follow along. I also did some grammatical editing, but again, this was done minimally, simply with the goal of making the portrait legible to the reader. It was important for me to use the exact language that the consultants used, so that readers could hear their distinctive voice. With that being said, these portraits utilize their words to craft my understanding of their stories.

After writing the portraits, I sent them to the research consultants to solicit feedback and compatibility with their lived experiences. Each consultant offered a few minor suggestions which helped bring clarity and validity to the research. Within this chapter there is no analysis of

the portraits as I believe they are powerful enough to stand on their own. There are a few direct quotes that have been taken up in the findings chapter, however, most of their quotes were intentionally removed from Chapter 5, to ensure that each chapter was vivid and engaging.

John's Portrait

Growing up, all I thought about was going to the NFL and preparing and positioning myself to be a star athlete. I've been an athlete since I was four years old when my mom signed me up for youth football in Fontana, California. I used to play with a diaper on. I was so focused on that for a period of time, I had that one track mind. However, I was also under the impression that, if I want to be a great athlete, I need to be great at every single thing I do. How I tie my shoes, how I put on my socks, how I treat my grades, how I treat my mom, how I treat my sister, so that's why the grades came along. I pursued other things outside of football because I understood that I needed to be excellent at everything I was doing. I wanted to be great at everything but my biggest identity was that of an athlete.

I'm from Compton, I went to predominantly Black schools all my life, so I wanted to go to a white school for college. I wanted to learn their language, economics, money and real estate you know? I saw a lot growing up in the hood so I was excited to get out for college and experience things that I never got to experience in Compton. The main thing when I first got to college was my roommate; the dude had so many snacks under his bed. He would say, "bro you can have whatever you want." His family would come and take us out to eat sometimes, too. I had teammates and people that would take me to their mansions in Long Island. I saw a lifestyle that I never knew existed. I loved that experience because I came from a situation where there are gunshots at night time. I didn't always have food, so for me, to do well as a student-athlete

was nothing. In high school, I worked at a bank through a corporate work studies program, I took eight classes, and was in school every day from 7:30am – 4:00pm. I got to college and sometimes I would only have two classes a day! I was like, "man that ain't shit, that's so easy, two classes a day and I got as much free time as I needed to study?" I really enjoyed having so much free time to study. In high school we didn't have a lot. Compared to three meals a day and no gunshots going off at night time. I had my own bed in my own room for the first time in my life.

When I was a freshman I walked into each office on campus. I'm talking about janitorial offices, food services, scholarship and graduate programs, I went into each office and I introduced myself "My name is John. I'm an African-American male from the inner-city, do you have any opportunities for me to better myself?" Sometimes people would laugh at me but I'd just stand there, in a young bull stance until they found someone for me to talk to. I wasn't going home empty handed. I did that so many times and they would tell me the name of scholarships and their requirements. I only had a 3.3 in high school but hey, I was like shit, I got all these resources and now I have a computer, I got lights, and I got hot water, so there's no reason I shouldn't do better academically, life was far easier.

I started realizing that the better my grades were and the more I engaged in my community, doors were going to open for me. I started to think about opportunities off the field and applied for a Fulbright. I applied for the 2015 Fulbright commission summer institute, and by the grace of god I was successful. I had never been out of the country before, so the process was a bit difficult. I was scrapping together the money for a passport and actually had to borrow it from a family member. I didn't even know what to do. I didn't know how or where to get the little picture thing. Passports are not a thing people have in my family. But my coach was very

supportive because it was good press for the school and the football program. I guess because I'm a black dude, you know, I have a story, so they didn't have much of a problem with it.

I went to University of Bristol in Ireland to study the transatlantic slave trade. We did archaeological digs, cultural immersion activities, and just many different things. I went with the Fulbright commission staff and a student cohort of like seven to ten people for like a month, maybe two months. The students were from across the country, and there was one other Black dude. The people in the program were cool but we had different goals. They enjoyed drinking and partying. I could drink at a party back in Compton, back in the hood. There was no need to make it all the way out there and start playing around, so I was real focused, I had a mission. I was convinced that I was going to do something there that was going to change the United States for Black people.

I remember we had to give a presentation and this one girl, she was from Missouri, she was hating on me and my presentation topic. We were covering slavery and race and other stuff and I wanted to highlight peoples current day ignorance to the problems that are going on in the Black community. People want to go on a mission trip to Africa or Haiti and take pictures with little babies hanging on their arms or whatever the case may be but who's going down to the Nickerson Gardens? Who's going down to the Cabrini Green projects in Chicago? Who's going down to Harlem and talking to the youth? Who's teaching the young men how to fill out a FAFSA? Who's standing in the front lines? I was so passionate and she thought I was playing and they started to laugh and that just pissed me off. I decided I was going to "go in."

I had on a suit to do the presentation but then I took off the jacket and had just a wife beater on. I took a do-rag out of my pocket and I put my do-rag on, and was like, "y'all think I'm bullshitting, like y'all think it's cute, no, this shit ain't sweet." And this was a big thing, like the

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final presentation at the University of Bristol, but I gave my presentation like that, they thought I was playing. I took them on a day in a life of an inner city African-American male and I literally talked about the day in a life for me, from the time I wake up and take a bucket bath, to the time I catch the bus, to walking my sister home, all these examples, all the way until I go to sleep on the floor on my pallet. I took them through a whole day in the life. They probably read "A New Jim Crow," but they didn't know about this, so I gave it to them in a do-rag. That was my mindset.

My educational experiences as well as the people I met abroad, really broadened my perspective. It threw me off to hear Black people speak with a British accent. I was like "They're black but they're not African-American, what do you consider yourself?" I met many Afro-Caribbean's, and other Black dudes who spoke with a French or Spanish accent. It broadened my perspective about the world and about Blackness. I learned that like 32% of slaves were brought to Brazil and then another 30% were brought to the islands and only like 16% or less were brought to the US. It gave me a broader perspective of the African diaspora and the struggles that are going on. I realized, man, everywhere I go on the planet Earth, the most objectively impoverished individuals and the most downtrodden people of society, no matter what country you go, whether it's the Travadi people in India, the people with the most melanated skin are the most downtrodden everywhere. Like what's going on here? It made me ask a lot more questions. It expanded the mission of the struggle, from just "Black lives matter" against the cops, to, it's us against oppressive systems worldwide. It reminded me of the movie, *Boyz n the Hood,* when they ask one dude "Where are you from?" and he explains he is from Africa. The other boy is like, "Nigga, I ain't no African booty scratcher, I'm from Crenshaw Mafia." People always made fun of African kids growing up, but I realized we are them and they are us. There are similar things

going on there to what's going on here and sometimes even worse.

These experiences made my passions grow. It made me want to explore more things, it made me want to travel more, study at different places, talk to different people, I even carry a little notebook with me now to write down the things I learn all day long. I have seven of these now, I call them my books of wisdom. I've just been growing to learn, I could learn from any individual but especially people of your own color. Sometimes we assume we all have the exact same shared experience, like what we see in a rap video but there's so much diversity to us, and my experience kind of opened me up to that. It's what led me to creating organizations to help Black people and studying things that I know long-term will benefit my people.

When I returned from my trip, I started this organization called SPARK, Strong Players At Reaching Kids. It's essentially a program for student athletes to speak life into dying situations. We go into the local communities and speak to the kids and we tell them our stories and the narrative threads that have helped get us into college, to get to the point that once seemed impossible. We talk about the importance of education and ultimately being a SPARK in their community. I'm also starting up a social venture enterprise at Oxford called Grades for Fades.

As you may know, the barber shop is a main cultural hub of exchange in the African-American community and the Hispanic American community. One thing I know is that most people are going to that barber shop every two weeks, sometimes even cats with dreads, right? We want to take advantage of that time, so essentially the program that we created is young men will be able to get a free haircut if they bring in their report card, because that means first, they went to school and did enough to get grades. Second, they actually have to look at their grades, because some dudes have never even looked at their transcripts. On top of that, now they will be held accountable because they have to bring the report card with a family member or brother, so

they also got to see it. Then, they show it to the barber and the barber uploads into the program and they get their cut. But we know how barbers are, the same way they ask you how you did in the game, they are going to ask about the grades. "These grades? Boy you got C's, man what's up, man?" Or on the contrary they can say "Oh, man you struggling in math, it's funny because I cut a math teacher's hair on Thursday, I'm gonna connect you with old boy." It's a genius idea. I also got this other thing, the SeeMo. It's a scholarship fund. The first recipient was my younger brother. I flew him to Paraguay. We saw Paraguay, we saw Chile, we say Argentina, we saw Brazil and we saw Mexico. I did the scholarship fund to get people out to expand their perspective, get them abroad, get some stamps on that passport, because it was a life-changing experience for myself and I venture to say it would be for anybody.

I was so motivated by the people I met and the things that I learned in Bristol, there was momentum I carried out of that program. Meeting with people from British Parliament and others that wanted to be the movers and shakers of the world, I started to see myself as such. On top of that, it gave me a different context to understand poverty and the things that work and I was like, "Wow, I understand the key in any situation, in any country I go to, is education." The most downtrodden people have the least education, and it made me realize that this education stuff was a little bit more important than I thought it was.

When talking to people that are highly successful in high octane environments such as the University of Bristol, and now I am studying abroad again actually at the University of Oxford, it starts to expand your perspective about what is possible for yourself. Everyone is coming with their own goals from different places, so when you amalgamate all those goals, it makes you think "Okay, I need to start dreaming bigger in this area, okay, I need to start dreaming bigger in this area." It went from, "one day I want to write a book" to, "I'm going to start writing a book

tomorrow and I'm about to get a literary agent." From, "I'm about to publish this book in a couple years from now" to "hold up Harpers college is down the street, my man's dad is the CEO at the New York Times, let's get something popping right now." It just pushes this urgency and makes you realize what's out there and what's possible, what's attainable. My book should be published around late July or something like that, we're still working on a launch date.

When I returned to campus, I think a lot of my teammates were curious about how it was. Everybody on my team was receptive like "Hey dang bro, what was it like? How were the girls?" You know, all these, stupid little questions "Did you, you know, eat fish and chips?" I was able to undo some stereotypes and just give them some perspectives on things, because most of what they knew was from Harry Potter or something like that, so it was really cool. It enhanced my experience directly as a student athlete because all my teammates were so curious about what it was like and I didn't think they would really, you know, care. If I could think of a comparison, it's like someone that goes off to a foreign land or like goes to war or something like that, everybody wants to know, "Man, how was it?" Why? Because they may never go to war or they've never been to war, and it gives them a glimpse into that world and kind of opens up peoples perspectives. It encouraged them, just that curiosity and the urge for them to, you know, hop on a plane too. That directly happened because they would ask, "Hey, bro, how did you find that program, how do you do that?" Which is a way of saying "I would like to do that as well." I actually just got a text from the athletic academic advisor at my college, and she said, "Is it okay if we have a young man reach out to you? He's a student athlete and he wants to study abroad in the Fulbright program." That happened two days ago and I did this what, three, or four years ago?

My study abroad experience impacted my interactions with everyone, all the students. It

made them think, "Man, this guy must be really smart." I would go to a new teacher, a new class and they would already know of me, like "Hey, man, you're the dude that studied abroad," and they would have an expectation of me being intelligent. I think it impacted me in a positive way, they saw me like a serious student. They didn't ask me too many questions about football when I was in class. I had on a different hat, like, "I'm a student," my hand in class is going up and down like I'm in the club, like, you know, football was almost irrelevant when I was in class because they knew "Alright, this dude is a scholar."

While I was coming to the end of my career, I started realizing and noticing, as the scripture says, "The scales will peel from my eyes." I went from somebody that solely thought about the NFL until I got a concussion before football camp started. I had a whole week to sit there and think. I still worked hard but I was like "You know what? There's something way greater than this, like I'm not a walking football anymore." I was excited at the end of my career, I was excited "Why", because some of my teammates they run that 4.3 on the field, I run that 4.3 off the field.

When you start realizing "Wow, what's going on in here?" I'm really running full speed ramming my head into folks, that's crazy. Our brains, our head is not built like that, we are not rams, you know? We're not goats. I started to think about the ill preparation of most of the student athletes that were around me. I started to think about how a good chunk of their family members were like leeches. One of my friends, his mom after the game would be like, "Why didn't you get this many sacks? Why didn't you do this?" When he didn't make the league, his mom kicked him out his house but she ill prepared this man for life after college. It made me realize "Wow, the homies are not ready for this" but by the grace of God, I had been working on other things.

My senior year, I missed a game for the Rhodes scholarship interview and at that point the coaches were bitter and angry but I didn't care, it did not matter to me because I knew this opportunity would change my life. My loyalty to my future, my loyalty to God, my loyalty to my family, my loyalty to my unborn grandchildren, my loyalty to my community that comes way before my loyalty to my position coach. I ended up winning multiple prominent scholarships, while most of my teammates were wondering "Man, am I gonna go to the league, what are we gonna do? Arena football ? What if it doesn't work out?"

I was sitting and I was chilling because I had options. Should I take that fellowship at Harvard that I was offered and start my PhD or should I go to study at the University of Oxford? Or three, I got offered a position by the U.S. government to be a foreign service officer and to work my way up to being an ambassador for the United States government, so I was exploring my options. I was just chilling, I was not worried about my career, I was thankful because now, being at Oxford, this is the first time in my life that I can truly consider myself a student, you know?

Student athletes? You might as well just call them an athlete, everybody is studying youth and community studies or communications, let's not kid ourselves. They didn't pick those majors because they were passionate about those things, someone told them that's the easiest thing possible where they can do the absolute least. That's the reality. These students don't know what the fuck they want, they don't know, they don't do anything other than running routes and hopping on a ladder. They ain't got no exposure, they've never been in another country. They don't know how to breakdown and understand what these majors are.

I decided to study economics and minor in mathematics and sociology, because I had a why, I had a reason. I had a mentor in high school, Kendall Simmons, he worked at the bank, and

we were talking about what to study in college, and he said he studied economics. I did my own research and DuBois said "African-Americans would never move to the upper echelons of society until they have a better understanding of economics," so when I got to college, I chose one major and stuck with it the whole time. That's what White students was doing, you know? Like for real, they are coming to college ready, its typically us that come to college way behind as if college surprised us, like, what's this? Instead of preparing for it, that's why, that after sports life, it's get ugly.

There are so many stories, people like Maurice Clarett, somebody did that man a disservice, you know, all these different football players, somebody did these men disservices by only asking about their 40, when they should've asked "What's the last 10 books you read?" I honestly felt bad for many of my teammates, most of them were my friends and they didn't have a clue of what to do once they finished. Studying abroad can give them some exposure. That exposure is not to be slept on. Leaving your comfort zone, you get better access to education, you get a better understanding of money, the flow of money, a better understanding of people, a better understanding everything. I'm going to say there's like no downside to it. I can't hear a legitimate argument for a downside to having student-athletes study abroad.

I think it would be a good idea to add in a language component, teaching someone a second language. Everybody in the world speaks second languages; my wife speaks five languages, fluently, easily and she's teaching herself other languages and that's why, you know, she can do mathematics at a high level, she can play instruments at a high level because she got that cognitive training at early age. I think there's no negatives about it, I think it's an essential thing. True cultural immersion, not just like "hey the basketball team went here and we're taking pictures doing the dab by the Eiffel tower." No, like try to sit down, talk to locals, meet the local

black people in that community, you know. Like you need to have some experiences that are going to make you laugh, some experiences that are going to make you cry, not just take some pictures, right? You can take pictures in New York.

My collegiate experiences changed me, and now, I see myself as more than an athlete. For example, I was in an elevator recently and this lady was like "Oh, are you a football player?" I said "No, ma'am, I'm just a genius." She said, "What?" I said "Yeah, I'm a student at the University of Oxford and I say that with the upmost arrogance." She was shocked. She was thrown off because usually when people see a black dude, with dark skin, kind of buffed with dreads, like myself, people assume I am 'a walking football.' I'm not.

Malcolm's Portrait

I was a four-sport athlete in high school. I wanted to play football in college and was really struggling with where to play. I always felt like I was good enough to play in college, but a lot of the big offers came late because of different injuries and things. So, I selected University State because of the study abroad opportunity and I figured I would be able to start right away and play at a high level. I played all four years in college and was a captain for the last two. Really, my life has been shaped by my experiences as an athlete and a member of the team. I think being able to play my entire career, I really look back on it and appreciate it. I moved to Chicago a week after graduation and ever since then, I feel like there's been a void in terms of companionship. It's so weird not to have your brothers with you all the time. I'm used to being around 100 guys, so no matter what's going on, at least one of them had something we could do. Now I'm in a place where I've been in Chicago for two, three years and that companionship doesn't exist in the real world. It just did so much for me and opened up so many doors. It

created opportunities and gave me a platform to do what I wanted to do. I could not imagine my life without playing football.

During my second year at State, my roommates and I were talking about going abroad and looking into it a little bit but not taking it too seriously. At that time, I think one of our teammates, a walk-on, went abroad for the summer. So I was like if he can go, we can go. I called my dad and I was like "how cool it would be to go to Africa?" He was like, "if you find a trip I'll pay for it, I'll take care of it." I was also working for admissions at that time and I kept telling people on tours that 70% of State students go abroad at least once before they graduate. One time someone asked me about student-athletes, and if they ever go. I responded that all the other sports got to go abroad, through competition or during the off-season, but football players didn't. So, I asked coach and coach said "yeah, if you wanna go, you can do it during your January term," which is like a three or four week timeframe in our quarter system where many students go abroad.

So my roommate and I, also a football player, decided to go to different programs. He went to South Africa, I decided to go to Ghana. It was interesting because that one coach was a Black guy and got fired that season. In the weeks to come right before it was time for us to go on our trip, a new coaching staff came in and the head coach was pissed, like pissed at the idea of us going abroad. He told the whole team that we were sellouts and that we were bad teammates for going, especially me, a guy who is a leader on that team. I didn't want to let my team down but it took a lot out of me to feel like I couldn't do the opportunity. I ended being like you know what, I think it's more important that guys see people stepping up and being like "I wanna do this opportunity of a lifetime, and take advantage of these experiences," and I didn't really regret that at all.

I didn't become captain until a couple of months after I got back. I was definitely seen as a leader on the team at that time, and I felt like it was kind of my team already. I respected my coaches, and staff and my teammates looked up to me, so I felt this season was going to be a great opportunity to change stuff up and get us going the right direction. The new coaching staff didn't think I was dedicated, they didn't think I was disciplined just because I decided to go abroad. Ultimately, they realized I was and that they were wrong. I knew I was a great athlete and I could play at a high level and use that as fuel to prove my coaches wrong when I got back from being abroad. I think I was gone for just three to four weeks in January, and from the day I got back in February through the summer, I showed them.

I think that for me, the way that I kind of rationalized it was, "it's just three to four weeks of my life that I get to spend back home, home that I've never been to and be able to immerse myself in the culture and enjoy that experience, soak up that history and that time." My dad always wanted to go to Africa and never had an opportunity to go. The majority of my family has never been to Africa and I thought that it was important that I went. My mom wanted me to choose another location but I was able to come back and tell them stories about my trip and bring them souvenirs. Like I have pictures and all that kind of stuff. I really wanted to do something bigger than me.

When I look back on my experiences that I remember and can really talk about from college, that's one that I'll never ever forget. We spent three weeks in Ghana and travelled throughout the whole country. From the capital of Accra to Kumasi, which is another big city all the way north to Tomale, which is near Togo. We went to the border for a little bit. We spent some time in classes, we spent time with the host family. We did everything and it was such a great experience. Safari Park, I got chased by an elephant. There were so many parts of that trip

that I look back on and I'll never forget. I remember when I came back it got to the point where I was talking about it so much, people were telling me the stories that I was telling to other people. It's really cool to look back on.

They treated me like a king when I was there. Me and one of the professors on the trip, who was from Ghana originally so basically she was going home, I was really tight with her the whole time. As soon as we got out of the airport, we were walking towards the bus and the bus was about 200 yards from the entrance of the airport. A guy comes from the bus, went past all my white classmates, and takes my bags to the bus. From that point forward, I was like "they really treat me right." Everywhere we went, people were giving me stuff and asking me about home, just really engaged and supportive. I think the most powerful moments, probably two powerful moments, one I was with some kids in a village playing soccer. I used to wear a lot of wrist bands. The kids were playing with them and looking at them. I gave it to one of the kids and I was like "you can have this, just keep it." He was in tears, probably like eight to ten years old. He hits me up on Facebook like as soon as I get back home and we have been in contact ever since. I think it is crazy that we developed that kind of connection in a short period of time and we can still follow up each other because of that experience. Whenever I see those bracelets I think of him. I think of all of them. I think second in terms of my race, we went to the slave castle and basically it was the last place that the slaves saw before coming across Atlantic. I remember we were in the room, the last room before the door. It was the dry season and it doesn't rain during that time. We were singing amazing grace in front of the door. I just started crying. My white classmates could tell what was going on but they didn't understand why I was crying. When the professor came to me, she came to hug me and she was like, "your ancestors are proud of you, you gotta keep fighting, keep doing what you're doing. They love you, you're

loved like your home." And we walked out of the slave castle and the sky started pouring down. She was like, "that's a sign, they hear you, they hear your pain, they're with you." That was the weirdest experience that I've ever had. That was like really meaningful and impactful as a Black man. I started a big connection with that space.

One of the biggest things for me was realizing that the problems that we have here are just like the problems they have there. There's such a disconnect, but that's our home. I feel like I have this sense of, ok, I have family, I have brothers and sisters that are abroad that made me feel like family. What can I do to better improve their situation but also take what I learn from there and better improve the way things are here? I think one of the things that I really appreciated from my experience there was the sense of community and the accountability of one another and the love that they shared for one another, it was like nothing I really ever seen before in the States. So I really wanted to create environments for young people Black people in general, like children, so they can feel like that. So they can feel loved and appreciated and supported and valued and deserving of all the same things. I think it has really allowed me to have a much bigger world view and perspective. I realized that the biggest piece was feeling connected to something bigger than myself. That's kind of what formulated a sense of self, if that makes sense.

My experience was so impactful and meaningful there, coming back, I felt that I had to advocate for student athletes to be able to get that experience. Especially football players because if we say we're student-athletes and students first, like why aren't we granted the same opportunities as other students? I get it, like we train, we do a lot of different things that other students don't do, like our time commitment is much greater than other activities, but for us not to have that chance to go abroad, I didn't feel was fair. So I learned where and how I should advocate for that. That made me feel really good because I felt that all that hard work paid off. I

knew that some of my brothers that were coming behind or some of my brothers that were already there, had never been outside of the state of North Carolina. They got to go abroad and have an experience they have never had. That meant a lot for me coming back home.

I think also it really increased my world view in terms of, or perspective, on how I want to attack issues. I think at first, I was really interested in direct service, being like a counselor of some sort. I think after that, I really wanted to do more, looking more at the macro perspective and figure out how I can tie some of the things that I learned back to a larger group of people here. One of the things I want to do is open my own school one day. I really want opportunities to be able to get Black students to travel abroad but especially to Africa. I think that would be a dream come true and such an impactful experience for students to have. I think ultimately those are some things I feel carried over from my return.

Different things I learned come up at different times. That's something I learned from being away. There were a lot of symbols that I saw in South Africa, like a lot of the artwork or furniture, or paintings on the walls had strong meanings for me. I ended up getting ten of those symbols with the continent of Africa tatted on me. It was such a meaningful experience for me and the symbols are all representative of who I am and the values that I hold. I think that sometimes it will come up in my work, like, "when I was in Africa, this is what happened." Or if a student asks me how I travelled to so and so, I'm like I was in this place and that place and you should go to. I was strong advocate and motivator, I mean encourager of the students to go to Africa, especially bright kids. I think also the sense of community and like community accountability is one of the things that I definitely try to bring to my work. Especially, with the story of justice, because that's what it's all about. Developing relationships and holding each other accountable to those things and finding any way to not be punitive, to love one another and

learn from conflict.

Coming back to the team, it was honestly crazy because the season before the new coach came, I had hip surgery. I was still injured while I was abroad and I was doing rehab throughout the whole spring. I wasn't able to play in spring ball. I think I might have practiced probably like half of the time, but I actually remember consistently being in the building, whether studying film, or getting treatment, or working out. During spring ball, my roommate and I had punishment lifts and punishment runs. We had to get up at six in the morning. I had to clean the room or do extra stuff as punishment for going abroad. It was worth all that. I think the coach could see in me that I was dedicated, that I had work ethic and nothing was going to prevent me from being that leader and being that person people can count on. We can laugh about it now, but I remember before I graduated, the coach met me and questioned me about going to Africa. I told him, "Now you get a free trip to Costa Rica", and he laughed about it. I think more than anything, it was a testament to my teammates, for really believing in me and trusting in my capability more than anything. They advocated for me and supported me despite the ridicule.

My teammates were interested in going abroad but I think at first, they were like, "I'm not doing that, I'm not trying to get enslaved like you did." At the same time, there were definitely people that were like, "I want to do it too." I was like, "let's just figure out how we can make that happen." Barack and I were on a committee of Black students that tried to illuminate some of the disparities to the ways in which Black students were treated on campus in comparison to white students. It was a big diversity, inclusion, and equity effort. We met with members of the board, the school president, and we came up with list of demands that we felt were important. The list went from having more Black people in the admissions department, recruiting more faculty of color and creating more support for bright kids. And part of the demands was for them to us as

student-athletes, like student-athletes and allow football players to go abroad. They decided to find ways to get funds to do so. I think that was really cool to see something that we advocated for, not teachers or staff, that was actually listened to. Now, State has a policy where juniors are able to go on spring break service trips abroad sponsored by the university. Now, even football players because before they had basketball players, they had tennis players, I even think the baseball team was able to go abroad, but the highest concentration of Black athletes is on the football team. And that was the team that wasn't able to have any international experiences. So now all the juniors are able to go abroad at least once during their college degree.

As Black athletes in general, I feel like we deserve every opportunity that we can receive because all that we do for the university, especially in terms of like athletics. If we're not going to get paid, I think we should be able to get every student experience possible and be able to go abroad. It's one of the experiences that the majority of Black students do not get the opportunity to do. We know that a lot of the White students are able to do that because the capital that they have unlike Black students. Because of social and economic reasons, Black student athletes typically come from a lower socioeconomic background than a lot of white student athletes. So being able to get them exposure can give them the capital to do things that a lot of people in their communities probably haven't done. I feel like it will have a domino effect and create pathways and connections to other people. That's the way I look at the argument of why Black student-athletes instead of all student-athletes. I think there are challenges that Black students face that are different than White students and there's unique parts of having exposure to international experiences that would benefit them, and impact them socially, emotionally, and mentally. I feel like it would be a much different experience and Black students would have a greater appreciation for experiencing that.

I just feel like I can't explain the joy that I felt while I was there. I was conscious of having fun but I'm not a person that goes out there, like jumping off cliffs and doing crazy stuff like that. It was important for me to have my own time, where I would just walk around go to people shops, talk to someone. Go into someone's house, doing this or doing that. The group had no idea where I was, but I felt so safe and comfortable and so loved and appreciated that I was like, you know what, this is where I wanna be. I think I would love for other Black athletes to be able to experience that joy. I think that being able to experience that and then and be able to go home and talk about it some more, like, "hey mom and dad this is what I got to do, I got to do this, and this is what I saw when I was there." That can be motivating and encouraging and inspiring to others. I think that we can find different interests and be exposed to different opportunities when we are able to compare and contrast cultures. Compare and contrast experiences abroad and at home, compare different cultures and different customs, what works well in one country and what doesn't work well and how we can create a system that is similar or better or improve on certain things or even different foods that you might like. I love Jollifies and chicken now. I eat it so much when I have the opportunity. I guess opening up possibilities, and interests in different things, I think it's important for black students.

Probably the picture that means the most, at least what comes to mind right now, was when I was standing at the door of no return. It felt and still feels like I was connected to something bigger than me, my ancestors are connected to people who I never saw but made it possible for me to be today. Actually, I did a documentary on my experience abroad. I think that captures kind of the mindset and the essence of why I went there. Sometimes I look back on that footage just to feel how powerful it was and what it means to me.

The documentary was produced by the conference I was in because I was selected for a

scholar-athlete team that is acknowledged at the Super Bowl each year for leadership and community service. They pick 20 football players from across the country in all divisions. I was selected and it was really cool, a great honor. I think because of that, they were like trying to understand what I did on campus, what I did in my community, and then I told I was going abroad, and they were like, "if you're going abroad take this camera with you." So I came back with some cool stuff from that. They made a video. I think it might be on YouTube.

Shaq's Portrait

For me, coming from my community and backgrounds, sports have always been seen as our way out. Either from impoverished backgrounds or just to get our foot in the door, into some type of upbringing that is better than how we grew up. Sport has been a symbol in my life just because its opened so many doors to me. Getting to college, getting my college paid for and just meeting different people from different walks of life. It has paid for my degree, I can't complain about the lifestyle that it has given me. It has kept me in shape and active throughout my life but it also has blinded me to some of the resources that are available. Many times as I was growing up, instead of holding a job, or, you know, going on family vacations, I was training for the upcoming season, and things of that nature. I didn't really get to experience a lot. It can handicap your growth as an adult, and not to badmouth sport, but it, you know, it just allows you to think one way. Just because you can make it into a basket, throw balls far, throw balls fast, it's not your only way out of your poverty or your bad background. I'm just learning that at this age, 23, I just recently learned all of this and its mind-blowing and eye opening.

I heard about the service-learning trip during my sophomore year from a couple of older guy on the team who went the previous summer. I think it was the first year they started. The

university had put that trip on, I want to say two to three years ago, and now it was an annual thing. The group the year before went to Nicaragua, they went there a couple of times and it was successful but they wanted to pick another destination, and the year I went, they chose the Dominican Republic. I guess for the university, it was picking tooth and nail just to get the program off the ground, but I had never been out of the country, so I was like, shit, this is my opportunity. Just learning about the Dominican Republic, whether it was their culture or just the area itself, it was different actually being there. Learning about it I got the bigger picture but when I was engulfed in the everyday life, I really got to see what's going on.

So, through the university, we partnered with an organization that partners with other organizations in other countries. There was an application process, they picked like 20 student athletes and probably five to seven administrators. Leading up to being selected I had to fill out the application and write an essay in response to a couple of questions, and then I was selected. Fortunately for us, our University is on a quarter system, so it fell right in between our summer break, which was ten days, so the trip was set for eight days. Before going there, I want to say we had six meetings, leading up to the day of travel. We got all got acquainted with each other and the group, and then we also learned about the community in the Dominican Republic. One of the organizational leaders came to the university, came to a meeting and gave us the background, of what we were getting ourselves into. We were told that, at the time, the Dominican Republic was, it wasn't a very, good space, it wasn't a very safe space for just the Haitians and the Dominicans there. There were, a lot of times, people being deported from the Dominican Republic to Haiti. He told us to "be aware of our surrounding and aware of who you were with at all times." They told us they were going to stay with host families and we were going to be safe, so there was no problem with our safety there. Through the various teachings and lessons, I got

the feeling that this wasn't going to be a normal journey or trip. Learning about the environment there was always intriguing because I rarely ever hear about what's going on in a 3rd world country, but I have always heard that there is something different about it. Learning about their culture, how they live day to day, what they don't have, and what we are going to experience with them there, it was intriguing to me and it was one of the reasons why I wanted to go on the trip. We were going there to build a court.

My favorite and most memorable part was probably just being out there with the kids, and introducing them to different sports. They played baseball out there a lot, so I want to say like every day, at eight or nine o'clock, like the whole community would start to gather around for a baseball game. And that was probably one of the influential moments there, connecting over sports. They barely had the basic necessities to play the sport, they were lacking but somehow they make do with what they got. I mean, there wasn't grass, they were playing on dirt, rocks, and you know, a little bit of mud here and there. It's what they got and what they are working with it. It was just eye opening to me that you can reach far more people with a sport than you can with politics and talking to people. Sports can just bring so many people together from different cultures and different backgrounds, that was one of my eye-opening experiences. And then it was just the kids, like, when we first rolled up to the hostel, the kids crowded the van, they didn't know what was going on, and, we didn't know what was going on. There were just a whole bunch of kids, and some of the elders and they were just happy to meet us. Our host family brought us in, took us to our place where we were going to stay, and we just got to enjoy the time there.

I really enjoyed the kids. I want to say like every day, there were actually like just shifts and shifts of them. They came around the morning, afternoon and then right before we got out of

work. Spending time with them, spending time with the elders, although they didn't speak English as well as we did, they tried their hardest and we were able to get an interpreter to learn some of their stories. It was great company, great conversation and great to break bread with them. That was probably one of the most rewarding things. Just learning about what it is to live in the Dominican Republic.

I really appreciated not having technology all the time. It was seven, eight days without technology and I really got to like sit and talk with different student-athletes and different administrative staff and got to know them on a different level. These are people I saw each and every day, but I mean, we are living our lives, a hundred miles at a time, so I don't' really get to sit down for seven, eight days, and just rant about life and what they want to do, how they got to this place and where they are now. Those conversations gave me a better appreciation and a better understanding of my time as a student-athlete and the people that were coming in and out of my life.

My experience helped me develop more of a leadership role. I became more outspoken during the process of building the court and I found my sense of self. Being surrounded by 24 other strangers that I really don't know that well was powerful. Although I had teammates there, we were encouraged to break outside of our friends group and find new friends, and in doing that, I just, found my sense of self and, you know, was able to see who I am when people didn't know that I was an athlete. We didn't have to tell people that we are athletes, we were just, people coming here to help a community out and give them something that has given us so much. We were here to do something that either the person was directly benefiting from or generations to come would benefit from.

It was awesome to not be under the microscope anymore. No one was really watching our

every move, we didn't have to worry about who was around us. It was just great to break free from the identity of student athlete, and just to know that I'm actually something else rather than an athlete. That was probably one the hardest things, transitioning out of college, that student athletes have to go through. I mean, the transition its hard in itself but the trip definitely gave us something to fall back on. It gives me a sense of, "ok, you've done this before," the trip gave me an avenue to just be myself. I was able to be the person that I am when I am at home with my family, when I'm out with the boys, when I'm out with friends. It gave me a cognitive, remembrance of what it is to be, I guess a real person. Or like a regular person.

Being Black out there, I don't know, I really didn't have to, you know, make any changes or anything, the only thing I had to do was, you know, give some street knowledge to some of my counterparts. I believe, either our first day in the Dominican, like we were up in our apartment for the night and before we went to the hostel we were able to go around the community. There were street vendors coming up, there were artists, there were different little shops on the strip, then there was like a little beach and random vendors were coming up to us on the beach trying to sell us this and that. Basically, I had to drop some street knowledge for my White counterparts that really didn't know or understand what was going on. I was trying to instill just a little bit of knowledge, like "this is what's going to happen, all of this is just negotiation. They are going to give you a price, think of your price and go from there. Don't come off your price unless they come down on theirs and until you find a compromise that fits you. I mean they are looking for a sell and you are looking to shop."

But in terms of Blackness, it gave me a sense of, what it is to be Black in America. It gave me, a sense of pride that, I hadn't really thought about because of where I come from. I come from a low-income household with one mother and she had me when she was 18, so we

grew up together. So that adventure, that journey growing up together, just made me realize that, I'm built differently than others, and I'm able to appreciate the little things that are given. And me giving this gift of a court, some clothes, some shoes and some sporting equipment to some kids, was probably the best thing they had all year. They didn't know whether or not their families or themselves may or may not get deported the next day so it makes a difference. It was awesome and just showed me how, although I'm an African American, I can make changes on a big scale to a little kid in the Dominican republic.

You really don't' really know what's going on in a community unless you are in it. I'd probably say after that, after that trip that's when I started to get more ingrained in the community here at the university to give back. I got involved with organizations in the community because I felt like it would help them and also help me in the future. I did some coaching and community service. That's what I took back from the trip, just a sense of building up the community for the next generation.

Coming back was weird because, it was like a seven, eight day crash course with 20-25 people that we saw every single day. We ate together, slept basically in the same room, and just grinded with them. It was like being on a team, doing the dog days of camp, and then we come back to civilization, and it's like, wow, I can't really go back to that. I wanted to go back so bad because I was able to let my hair down, you know, just be myself in an environment. But now, I was back in the states, back under the microscope, back to my sport, back to achieving my goals; whatever they are, graduating, or working for that starting spot. I didn't get to see them at all because we are not in the same sport, not in the same classes as them, we had different schedules. But when I would see them in the hallway or something, we would share a lot of smiles and stories. I would try to share my stories with friends that didn't go on the trip but they

didn't get the inside jokes, they didn't know what happened. But, we were able to come together, once before school came back together, and that was probably the best thing for us, just because we were able to sit at the table, talk about the experience, talk about what happened and it brought back great memories from the trip.

I was fortunate that, some of the older guys that were on the team, had went the year before me so they understood exactly what I was going through. A lot of the younger guys were interested and they asked me a lot of questions but most didn't sign up, they were scared. You don't get as many resources as you do here. Being over there, you are constantly working like 12 hours a day, in the heat, and you're not putting back what you lost at the rate that you would at the collegiate level at this university. They were scared that they would lose muscle mass, they would lose large amounts of weight, and they couldn't gain it back and it would put them behind the 8-ball in trying to earn their spot, or make an impression on the coaches. That's what stopped a lot of them from going, but I was like, "yo, you got to get out that mindset, it gives you an experience of a lifetime."

What I've learned over my time being a student-athlete, no matter what they say about collegiate athletics, whether its amateur, professional, whatever it is, at the end of the day it's a business. The coaches and administration, they are going to get the best players and they are going to get the best out of you. Now, whether or not you take advantage of your experiences and opportunities, that's on you. But they are paying for our school and in our conference, a rule was passed a couple of years ago that makes scholarships fully funded, like, you can't take them away. So once that happened I started taking advantage of opportunities and this was one of them. I was like, "I'm going to take all the opportunities you are going to offer me. I'm working my tail off, 40 hours a week for you, so the administration is going to work for me and get me

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where I want to get."

My teammates would see me having conversations with the athletic director, the director of student athlete development and they see me out in the community. They ask me how I do it, and why I do it. And I just tell them straight up, "we are giving everything we got Monday through Sunday, the least they could for to us is give us the same effort and help get us to where we need to be. It may not be the pros, but it may be a master's degree, it may be a job in college. As soon as you get your degree, they are not going to work their tails for you like we do on the field. At the end of the day, we are going to be better if we take advantage of the opportunities and make them work for us."

The trip influenced the reach that I have. It made me realize that I'm doing this not just for myself but for the next person behind me. I'm giving myself a plan, and then I'm giving someone else the blueprint on how be successful. How to get the most out of their college career. I tell them, "if you want to make it far in life, you're going to need others to help you." It takes village to raise a boy; it takes village to raise a girl. It takes a community to get a collegiate athlete into becoming an adult.

The trip changed my view of what I wanted to do, it gave me more avenues to go down. Our deputy athletic director was on the trip as well as a couple of coaches and just picking their brains was helpful. Learning what they actually do on a day to day basis, visiting them from time to time, getting their backstory, I realized, that you know, I don't' really have to be just an athlete. I can affect the life of others in a different way and those were just the conversations I had with the athletic director and coaches, it just helped me realize that man, balling won't be there forever. I started to think about what else I could fall back on and I realized I was passionate about helping the next generation. I want to help other collegiate athletes make the transition

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from college athlete to adult. In the future, I want to shoot for being an athletic director because that's what I'm passionate about. Even right now, I got a couple of things going for me, since I graduated. I am planning to go to grad school, and I am also doing internships with different companies.

It's definitely important for Black student-athletes just to get out and study abroad, even if it's not studying abroad, just a service trip. It's imperative for us to break out from our student-athlete label. Too many times that's what we are labeled as, and that makes the transition out of sport harder. We identify with being a student-athlete so much that when it's taken from us, we have a hard time figuring out the next step. That's why I like the trips because they give you a sense of self. They give you time just to think about what else is out there. Some of the major revenue sports, they're so time consuming and all these coaches and administrators, the boosters, they want a product out there that is going to be successful and bring millions of dollars to the University. We make them, billions of dollars, but, we don't see no return. The whole landscape of the NCAA is a conundrum but the money that we supposedly can't get or won't get should go towards providing student athletes a different perspective from what we get on a day to day. Breaking out from the monotony of the day to day life, is good for you, it gives you a break, it lets you see what else is out there, it gives you more options. There are great options out there and sport is just one. You can go abroad, get a master's degree, and also play your sport. There are also more countries out there that are doing better things than the United States with regard to equal pay, paternity and maternity leave. Going abroad just gives you more knowledge and information, it's helpful.

The best thing was getting different staff on the trip, that was probably the best thing for us. Having a variety of student athletes and administration on the trip and going on that journey

together, it was a great time. We had senior staff, we had coaches we had, we had one of our university board members on the trip, we also had the director of student athlete development; just different levels of the athletic department. You really don't see the different levels unless you are in the athletic department office. Interacting with them gives student athletes, different avenues to see that, you don't' have to just be a coach, you don't have to just be senior staff, there are different avenues you can go, even in athletics. Athletics is a big business, and there is a multitude of levels, and a multitude of resources out there that can help a student athlete get through their career and prosper in their life. We need more trips like that, you only hear about the smaller teams going on these trips, or some of the sports that are not revenue sports. Being a football player, this is what other football players need. They should go on trips like this just to get out of that space, and the coaches should do the same thing so that they can relate to their players and also relate to the upcoming generation and break free from the monotony.

The Guy's Portrait

I grew up in Texas and had dreams of one day playing in the NBA. In high school, I earned a basketball scholarship to Texas University and I was there from 1999 to 2003. In 2002, my junior year, the coach that recruited me resigned from the job. We ended up getting a new coach, he was an assistant under Roy Williams at Kansas. When he came to the school, we were able to do a program abroad because he was a new coach. We were trying to learn to play his style, so the school was able to set up a trip for us to go play overseas in Australia. We were able to get a jump start with the new coach, you know, the season was approaching fast, preseason and stuff, so the trip was designed to integrate everybody with his new style. We didn't take a class before going, but they just kind of prepared us with different types of laws and what was different over in that country. We didn't learn about culture, they just told us the laws, and you

know, the basic dos and don'ts over there, and, we just got it how we lived. Because when we were there, we were over there for Basketball.

We were there about a month, and maybe some change, and, each city that we played in we stayed there four to five days. We went to Melbourne, Brisbane, Sydney and Kantz. Sidney was the last city and we stayed there like a week, because that was the big city, like New York. The main thing was just to get incorporated with the new coach but it just so happened that guys had never been overseas and were able to go over there and see different things and do different stuff. For instance, you know we went downtown, we went snorkeling, I hadn't ever been, so I was nervous because I was in a big sea. I was like, what kind of big creatures are here but the people were like "nah this is what we do here" you know. Being from the hood or whatever, I was like, I'm not going to get into this water, what if jaws is coming? But you know, actually getting in there and doing it, that was a good experience, I was like, wow, it was actually kind of fun. I told my mom about snorkeling and she was like, "what you mean, swimming? Everybody has done that before." But for real, it was cool experience, just going like rock climbing, you know, stuff like that. When you are not playing basketball, you get to see what the Australians sort of like to do, as far as how they spend their free time.

It impacted me because before I took the trip, stuff like, rock climbing, snorkeling, going over the bridge and taking pictures, and just seeing different sceneries and landscapes, for me all I knew was playing basketball. I would come home, play video games, and you know, hang out with friends, maybe go bowling. I wasn't doing all this other stuff like interacting with different cultures and ethnicities; so that was cool. Now that I'm playing professionally overseas I feel like it helped me because I can adapt to any situation I'm put in. I feel like that Australia trip, it jump started me because you know, I thought I was going to be in the NBA, like, that was my dream,

being in the NBA, but being over there, it was like, "if I don't make the NBA, I feel like I could play overseas. I can do something like this, this is not as bad as I thought it would be."

Just being over and playing in the games was crazy. I remember seeing the crowds and thinking they actually love basketball. Growing up in the USA, all I would see was the NBA, the international scene wasn't like that. But when I was over there, experiencing how they do it; beating the drums, the sold-out crowds, it was cool. I was trying to film it so people could see it, or they wouldn't believe it.

We didn't have that much down time because like I said, we were playing. We played two days in a row, then we might have an off day, and on the off day, we might do some scouting first. Then we might have done an activity, but for the most part like I said, we were playing a lot and practicing as well. Of course we wanted to have fun but at the same time, the mission was to get to know the coach and interact with his plan for basketball. Actually, this past season before the season started they went back to Australia, and my friend who was on the team and is now an assistant coach was telling me how different the trip is. They did more activities because I think, now it's more about team bonding than the coach itself. I feel like that's better than how we did it, back in 2002.

On that trip I'd probably say Coach Damon was the most influential. He was an assistant coach and he was one of the young assistants. He was charismatic in his personality, and he was trying to help us, like, "yo, check this out." Our head coach, he definitely wasn't trying to help us. I mean, we had fun, but he still had to have that sort of like, dictator role, like, "I'm the coach." So it was fun but at the same time, he let us know who was in charge, so to speak. I mean, I get it, you got to know when to be serious and what not but at the same time, it would have been nice to have more team bonding. But, I would say with coach Damon, it was more like

he was a big brother for us, he was just as intrigued when we saw new stuff as we were. I think maybe because the head coach had done a trip like this before when he was at Kansas, he looked at us like we should kind of know this stuff, but it was all new to us. Kansas was a top five team in the nation all the time, they are a big program, so his demeanor was like….I don't know man, but coach Damon, like I said, and coach Louster also. Coach Damon was a black guy, and Louster was a white guy, but they were both just trying to help us to broaden our horizons. They helped us understand like, "yo, this is a once in a lifetime experience," people don't just come to Australia. They definitely had a positive influence on us over there.

After we finished our group stuff, my teammates and I went out to experience the night life, and that was different and useful. Usually when we were together, we would be riding and have a driver or something but overseas public transportation is so much more effective; much better than in the states. Everywhere I've been a lot of people use public transportation, it's just easier. Like everything was a five or ten-minute walk from the train station. It helped with my budget, I didn't need to gas up my car, or pay a car bill, just use the subway. I also got to try different cuisine over there as well. The school set us up to go to certain restaurants, where "this is famous for this or that," so that was cool.

The trip taught me life, because after we had our games and did the group stuff, we were able to be on our own, able to walk on our own. I feel like it was more rewarding, you know, being my first time away from the states, and of course my friends were there, but for me I learned that I could be on my own. I would go about by myself, I would walk with nobody else, I'd just leave everyone and just walk around exploring by myself. Now I was in a foreign country so I didn't know what's good or what's bad, but I was aware of my surroundings and I feel like that helped me as far as, peeping the scene, meeting new people and just interacting

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with people that definitely weren't like me. That helped me in my life period and when I came back to the states it carried over. When I go to unfamiliar territory as far as different cultures or something that I'm not culturally used to I'm able to adjust. Like, "what's this? How is this?" I was able to interact with new people in the states like, "this ain't that bad." And then playing overseas, I feel like… "put me anywhere and I'll be okay." I really enjoyed the down time that we did have, just going out on our own, walking around and experiencing the difference between life overseas and back home domestically.

In Australia, I saw many different people for sure, but still, for me, and this may be my opinion, but I was still looked at as a Black. Still, "nah, you're different." And of course because I'm tall I may stand out but just the way the people looked at me. Now are you looking at me because I'm tall, or are you looking at me because I'm black? It was like an elephant in the room, because it's all White people in there and I am the only Black person in there, so it was kind of like, hmmmm. But is not as bad as in the States. I feel like in Australia or even overseas, you know, of course some people are looking at you crazy, but I feel like Australia wasn't as bad as it was in the States, if that makes sense.

I feel like in the State's when I go to an all-White place, I'll get more dirty looks there than I did in Australia. Sometimes people interacted with me before I even said anything, like they would ask me how I was doing. I'm not saying that this is the only thing but I could just feel a person's energy and know they're not worried about the color of my skin, you know? In the State's, you sometimes you sit down to eat somewhere, you go somewhere, you might not get seated even if it's not a busy place. I'm not saying this about all places but you know what I'm saying. But in Australia, I would say for the most part, they interacted with me well. But I also feel like sports had something to do with that, so I'm kind of biased on it, because people would

come up to me like, "you play basketball?" Or "wow you're tall." So they were talking to me because they were interested because of my height and what I do. They didn't have time to really look like, "oh he's Black, so i'm not gonna…"

It was slim, but it was still there, like, racism is everywhere, whether it's a little or a lot. Like over here in japan, it still exists. Sometimes I can't tell if they are looking in amazement because I am tall, or if they are looking at me because I am Black and I don't be belong. Like, "what are you doing here?" It's hard to judge, because of course I'm tall and big, but when you take it beyond a look of amazement, and you look in disgust, that's when I know it might be racial, you know what I'm saying.

Going out there at a young age was great, many of us are still trying to find ourselves as far as what to do with our lives, so it was a confidence builder. Just learning how to interact with anybody, I think it jump started me as a man. I have been in some places where people didn't' speak English but I'm still able to engage people. I can go to the grocery store here and there and I can guarantee I'll still be able to interact with the cashiers and find what I need to find. I just stay cool and just be myself. Even in Australia, they speak English but at the same time the people and the culture is still different, and I was able to adapt.

As I'm looking back on it now, hmm, when I came back, it was a great experience, like I enjoyed the stuff I did over in Australia. I was like, "yo that was cool, that was great" but I feel like I didn't feel the full effect of it until I started to play abroad. I base it back all on that Australia trip, because every day in a different country is something different. Each country has something different to adjust to, and so being in Australia, starting off with something different, you know as far from the states helped me adapt at a young age. I feel like it's easier for me to start to accept things when I go to different context and when I'm faced with something different

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that I may have not done before.

To be honest, how I am overseas is definitely different than in the states. I have to be because I can't' do as many things that I could do in the states. Early in my professional career abroad, I started reading more, you know what I'm saying? Because when I was in the house I couldn't watch TV so I had to do other things. I went out every now and then, but how long you are going to be out with people that don't speak English at all and you don't understand nothing? Here, the entertainment is more natural, if that makes sense, I do more things in nature. I can't go to a water park, or like a Six Flags, so I have to find different ways to have fun. Like, for example, I grew up with a singing family, you know we sung a lot. We didn't go to Karaoke though. Here, they do that and they have a great time with it. The first time I did it with the Japanese, it was like, alright, hmmm, I'm not going to do this, but I would hear people singing, and some people sounded terrible, but they didn't care because they were having fun. This is what they know, and they enjoy themselves and I learned to enjoy myself too. Even when someone sounds terrible, ain't nobody clowning him or joking on him, nah, they encourage them, like, "go ahead." This helps out in life, like everything aint going to always be perfect and you got to sometimes encourage somebody even when you know they bombed, you just have to be there for your friends. I like that, because the culture over here is all about positivity, and that's big you know. Those are the things that they do here. Every team that I've been on over here, we've done karaoke. They be like, oh do you karaoke, do you sing? Yeah, I do, I do.

Being abroad, it opens you up, like for me, it opened me. This may sound cliché but interacting with people over here and just like, being able to talk to them and just, to some level communicate, it opened up another level, like "yo man, I can some interacting!" If' I'm interacting with these Japanese people, as to where I am able to be in a room for an hour, hour

and a half with these people, imagine what I can do in the States as far as like, communicating and interacting. I don't get embarrassed easy, I can come up and talk to people and get information out of them or give them information that I'm trying to give. I feel like that helps in the business world. Say I have to give a presentation in a room full of people that I don't know, but I have to get my point across, for me, being overseas and talking to people that I don't' know every day helps me express myself more and in detail. Over here you got to express yourself.

I feel like it definitely opens people's eyes to more than just basketball. Being overseas, you will see people doing different things and realize there is other stuff you can do. For instance, some of the guys that we played against, all professional players, but they don't just play basketball, they actually work. I met a dude, he got his own business, you know what I'm saying, so it isn't just basketball.

X's Portrait

When I was in college, I was able to go to Australia, Italy, Russia, Austria, Germany, and Mexico. I went to Australia with my basketball team and played about five games. Once every four years, teams can take a trip overseas, anywhere from nine to 30 days is kind of the structure. I took that trip before I even got to campus because I just graduated high school, I wasn't even 18 yet. We went to Australia for about 14 days. It was interesting because in Australia they speak English and their culture isn't terribly different, but for a 17-year-old there's a lot of little things. Like I remember going to McDonald's and the food was a lot different. So I think for me especially as a 17-year-old, I do think that that was probably a good first trip overseas just because I wasn't in embattled with these major culture differences that maybe I wouldn't have been able to process. That was really fun though. I got to play with koalas and things like that,

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but even though we did do certain things to experience the culture, it was always friends around us to play basketball, reminding us we are here to get better. Those were games to get us ready for the season and so on and so forth. That made my experience a little bit different, and I guess I'll get to that a little later. So that was my freshmen year.

Then my sophomore year, I went to Mexico for spring break with one of my teammates after a very frustrating season. My mom convinced me to go. It was nice to get away from the constant grind as a student athlete. I guess as an African American athlete, there wasn't a lot of us out there. It was mostly frat guys and gals basically on vacation so we didn't see a lot of people that looked like us taking part in the festivities. I think as a sophomore, that was kind of an indication of the two different experiences students can have even though were all going to one school. I remember before going down there, I put on Twitter that we were gonna go, you know, "bout to go to Cabo, just packed my bag I'm away to the airport." I got to Cabo and I see people out there, and they were like, "oh you really came! We thought you just balled, we didn't know you guys did stuff like this." So I think sophomore year was definitely an incarnation of the two different lives that were being lived. The difference between students and student-athletes, especially African American student athletes.

I think because for a lot of us African American student athletes, if they're giving us a stipend, there's a good chance that we aren't the only one whose mouth is being fed with that stipend. And a lot of African American student athletes, they are so..... the identity of an athlete is so heavily ingrained. I don't know if they allow themselves to have a step back from that and experience kind of normal parts of being a college student. For an African American student athlete especially, that identity is tied together tighter than an athlete of another ethnicity. So that was my sophomore year.

I was lucky enough to get a graduate position upon graduating a couple years later. It just so happened to be the year of the next round of trips and we went to Italy. So now I'm going to Italy which is definitely a bigger shift in culture than going from America to Australia when I was 17. Now I'm going on 22, I'm four years older and four years wiser. I think looking back, I realized how little I appreciated going to Australia. I think I appreciated it, but I wasn't in a mental state of mind to take in the culture. Now being 22 and being with a lot of 17 and 18-year-old's, I kind of realized how little they appreciate it. They didn't realize they've been blessed, if that make sense, we are in Italy and they're complaining about not having enough Wi-Fi and they're ready to get back on a plane and go back to the States. When I was 17 or 18, I remember being in Australia and missing campus. I was seeing videos of the sorority girls showing up on campus and I was ready to get back to campus you know. But as a 21-years-old, I looked at them like they're crazy, they don't really understand what's going on. Especially a lot of them being African American and not allowing themselves to step out of that athlete persona which we feel we have to have on at all times. They felt like that's what people valued about them the most, which in some cases is true, but that shouldn't necessarily dictate how we value ourselves. Then again, we were always in a vacuum, we were there to play basketball.

As a coach, I understand that this is my livelihood and it's a business at the end of the day. It's about basketball, that was pretty much the focus of us being on that trip in Italy. We're here to play and we're here to practice and we're here to watch film so on and so forth. We came here to play basketball, but I think as a 21-year-old, I kind of realized how much of a detriment that might have been for fully immersing in the experience. Nonetheless, that was amazing, and I wouldn't have been there if not for basketball.

When I went to Italy, I was a coach and I didn't have to worry about being on my legs

and I was an adult. So the things that I really wanted to do, for the most part, I could do, but the younger guys, the team, they couldn't. We went to the Vatican and when we got to Saint Peterson Cathedral the coaching staff wanted the players to go home to get off their feet because we had a game that night. So the rest of us went to Saint Peterson Cathedral and it was one of the most beautiful things I've ever seen in my life. I remember that it was really sad that they couldn't also experience this part of Italy, which to me was my favorite part. They couldn't experience it because they were there to play basketball so they had to go home to rest their legs.

Being there to play just changes things. Like, even on the bus, when we are about to go experience a site or something, if we have a game that day or the next day, you are already starting to visualize what you have to do… your assignments. So we're getting off the bus thinking about the game even though the coach might be saying go have some fun. You're not really thinking about where you're at. Your head is not really in a space to take in all that culture and appreciate where you're at of how far you've come.

During my graduate program, I took a two-week trip overseas on a business immersion study abroad trip. On my way to Russia, my flight kept being delayed, and I ended up having a nine-hour layover in Munich, Germany. I got to the airport, I just grabbed my backpack and that was really it. I felt a real difference not being there for sport. I had a lot more free time to explore, and my mind had a lot more capacity to really take this stuff in. I felt a real difference being there not for sport. I think that really just affirmed a lot of things I was feeling on my previous trips. In Russia, we spent a week in Moscow and a week in St. Petersburg. Technically, we were there to tour business fairs and look at the business practices in those countries. We were focusing on international business so on and so forth. It's not the same being there to compete. There's really no comparison in terms of the mental capacity and energy it takes, so it

was a totally different experience. I just felt so much freer to really immerse myself in the culture. That was a real blessing. I never saw myself wanting to go to Russia but I loved it. I want to go back one day.

Then on my way back, I chose to spend two days in Vienna, Austria. I just booked a hostel, I think for like 15 dollars and just hung out with random people and explored the city. It was amazing, just being able to be there and experience it without thinking about competing. To me it is a totally different experience, but at the end of the day, I will always be indebted to basketball because it gave me all that. So I'm very appreciative and now I know that there are modes to get overseas even though we can't really study abroad like everybody else. We made those sacrifices but if you're smart and you're a hard worker and persistent, you can do more than a non-student athlete is able to do, it just takes more hard work. There are ways to get that experience.

It's very different to compete abroad because as an athlete you're constantly in self-evaluation. Watching film of the game… in practice your coaches are always giving feedback whether negative or positive. I think when I was abroad competing, even when I was coaching, I think that was my primary identity. The self-awareness and self-learning that was going on, especially on my first trip when I was 17, was in relation to basketball. I'm trying to figure out how I can get minutes… how prepared am I to play at this level… is coach liking me? I had more time when I went the second time as a coach but even then, it was my first time coaching at the college level. I think when I was not there for basketball, I think I was able to look at myself as a human. Look at the culture I come from, how it's applied here, and I think it was just a way more cerebral look at myself and where I come from, outside of the context of basketball. It was a totally different experiences as far as what I learned about myself and how I looked at the

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world and different countries.

In terms of bridging my different experiences, I think it depends on who is in charge of the trip, who is the coach and who are the other mentors. As a player we definitely had people on the staff who did what they could to help us think about things like that. "I really want you guys to take note of the culture, how is it applied, how things apply to back home." Just giving tidbits of relevant information. I think that's one way to try to bridge the two. But when you're there to compete, you are there to compete. Even to get to that level, you're just so used to going into this competitive vacuum to compete at the highest level because you are there to win. It's a difficult thing to balance. Maybe there's a way to totally bridge the two, but a lot depends on the adults who are on the trip, who a lot of times have been already been overseas, they definitely could help.

During the prep meetings, it was all just what to bring for basketball. When I was going to Russia, during my graduate program, we did do a little bit of cultural prep. So that was another big difference. When I went to Russia, I filled out my own visa application; I was in charge of all that, myself. We didn't need a visa for Australia or Italy but for Russia I needed a visa, so that helped me a lot. I'm not sure when and how I really learned to travel. When I went to Australia, I think I did get a feel for travelling abroad and how that works. But really I think traveling with the graduate program, I met people who had studied abroad or traveled in Europe and they taught me about hostels and backpacking. I think that's when I got a lot of that cultural education, as far as how to travel.

When I was in Australia, I didn't really feel anything specifically related to my race. I was only 17 so I might not have noticed anything. When I went to Italy, I'm a 6'7 Black dude and I was with other tall Black dudes, they assumed that I was a basketball star, like I played in the

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NBA. It was the same in Russia. They all assumed I played in NBA. That was interesting, just realizing they have one thought about Black people from the states. That we all must be amazingly good at basketball. It was interesting especially when I was in Australia seeing how they're less discriminatory against people of color, not to say they aren't, because most people in the world are, but they're more discriminatory towards other countries. For example, I told some people from Lithuania that I was going to Russia and they were like "disgusting." I didn't know what was going on. They started explaining to me about Russia and how pretty much every country used to be a part of the Soviet Union. They don't like Russia, they hate Russians. Then, I was in Vienna and I met a girl from Slovenia. She was like people don't really care if you're Black here, but they really don't like people from certain countries like Slovenia. That was interesting just seeing how similar some experiences are related to discrimination, even though at first, I didn't think we'd be able to relate. They experience similar things but for different reasons. Just realizing that there's other parts in the world who deal with their own differences and challenges.

It was also interesting to see dudes from Congo living in Russia but speaking French. Then in Italy, there were dudes that were from Greece but they were Muslim and speak Arabic. I think on that front I kind of realized the immensity of Blackness throughout the world. To me, that was really impressive and that was fun to me to see throughout my travels.

In Italy, I was surprised seeing their dietary habits, like how small the meals are. But dinners were like seven hours long and they really take time to commune. They take naps in the middle of the day and go home to be with their kids when they get home from school. There were a bunch of little things like that, that I really appreciate about certain parts of the world. Even their stop signs or the crosswalk signs were different. Instead of just a man walking, it

would be like two women holding hands or like two men holding hands. It's always cool to see little things in different parts of the world and really appreciate the messages they send. I want to implement some of those things in my life.

I want to get back out there and I want to keep exploring. My first trip made me want to experience more cultures and immerse myself in more different ways of lives and meet more people. I think that's probably what it's done for my goals which is the beautiful thing.

Conclusion

Writing these portraits was a reminder to me of just how important this work is. As I reworked and retold these portraits, I felt like I was living out their experiences. While I was never a collegiate athlete, I have had profound experiences abroad that have shaped the trajectory of my life. Those experiences, those memories are dear to my heart. They are central and salient in my identity as a Black man. It felt like an honor to write and share these portraits, as I know these memories are dear to their hearts as well. Finishing up my final portrait, I read over the last page of Malcolm's transcript and suddenly had a moment that brought me back to why I began this project. Malcom stated, "I'm glad to know that you're doing this work. It's meaningful and it's important." His comment was one of many similar comments I received while working with the consultants on this project. They were excited to tell me their stories, they were excited that I wanted to listen, yet they were most excited at the idea that their stories might lead to other Black student-athletes being provided with similar international opportunities. However, due to the things Malcolm has accomplished, his comment hit me differently. Malcolm took a huge risk by going abroad against his coaches' wishes and when he came back, he not only worked himself into the Captain position, he organized on behalf of all football players and pushed the

University to provide study abroad opportunities for all athletes, including Black football

players. Telling his narrative reminds me of the importance of this work.

Chapter Five: Results

The purpose of this dissertation research study is to explore how the phenomenon of international education impacts the self-identity and future orientation of Black male student-athletes. This study used qualitative data collection methods to better understand how students made sense of their experiences abroad, and how their experiences influenced them as they transitioned back into the collegiate environment and furthermore, as they transitioned out of the collegiate environment. In this chapter, I present four themes that emerged from the relevant data sources: 1) Bursts the athletic bubble, 2) Racial Awakening, 3) Career Influence, and 4) Cohort Matters. Utilizing CRT and Figured Worlds as my theoretical frameworks, themes were developed by coding all relevant data, including interviews, focus groups, memos, and artifacts. Initially, I examined the interviews and memos to produce a set of preliminary codes. After conducting member checks and peer review, I further developed codes into the most prevalent themes. I developed questions for the focus groups based on these themes to verify if they were indeed central to the experiences of the consultants for this study. After focus groups were completed, I used that data to corroborate themes.

After the themes were corroborated, I began developing sub-themes by using direct quotes from the consultants for this research. CRT encourages researchers to re-think whose voices are valued in the research process (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002), as utilizing direct quotes from traditionally marginalized groups, as themes, challenges hegemonic research processes. Very often, Black male students, and Black male student-athletes in particular, are not recognized as holders of knowledge within school or research settings. This study values the voices and perspectives of the research consultants and attempts to honor their voices, by using verbatim quotes, while providing enough social and cultural context to the quotes, so they are not

taken out of context. At times, brief profiles of the student-athletes are provided to provide "thick description," allowing the reader to visualize the context of the quote.

Theme: "Burst the bubble: I'm more than an athlete"

Literature on Black student-athletes suggests that they are socialized into athletic "bubbles" (Menke, 2016) on college campuses, often times at expense of their holistic development (Beamon, 2012; Bimper & Harrison, 2012). In his article, "Lifting the Veil," Bimper (2015) highlights how pervasive colorblind discourses about Black student-athletes within larger society, but specifically on college campuses limits the identities these athletes are able to figure for themselves (Urrieta, 2007). A central question to this research study was trying to better understand how international education influenced the identity production and negotiation of Black student-athletes, due to the way their identities are stifled within the figured worlds they occupy on college campuses and within American society. Literature on study abroad suggests that international education can be powerful in helping students, specifically students of color, "leverage and *build capital*, negotiate their intersecting identities, and *develop agency* that guided them in their future" (Wick, 2011, p. 63), which aligns with CRT's mission of conducting research that leads to social justice in education for marginalized groups.

As I engaged the students with questions about how their identities were impacted by their international learning experience, the most prevalent theme was that it provided them space to negotiate their identities in a way that "burst the athletic bubble." Students developed more confidence and agency and began to figure their self-identity as "more than an athlete." Black Jack studied abroad in Jerusalem the summer prior to his senior year of college. Black Jack had desires to travel internationally since attending an international middle school, however, the first

few years of his college experiences positioned him to think that studying abroad would be more of a dream than a reality. Speaking about the "bubble" he was in prior to his study abroad trip, Black Jack stated,

> Beforehand I was being very socialized like, I was with football players, football players is what I'm constantly around, so I used to struggle having a conversation with people that was outside of football because my bubble was football and then you do a trip like that and it just bursts the bubble and it just blows everything up.

Black Jack's comments support Bimper and Harrison's (2012) assertion that athletic identities can be *nearly* "totalitarian", as he admitted that he struggled having conversations with people who weren't associated with football (p. 284). Furthermore, he stated that his international experience burst his bubble, the world he previously occupied on his college campus where he spent most of his time affiliated with other football players. This theme, "Bursts the bubble: I'm more than an athlete" is highlighted by Black Jack's comments but further detailed into five sub-themes, which highlight the various ways in which the bubble burst due to the influence of the consultants international learning experiences. The sub-themes are: 1) Accessing social capital: "it had been a while before I've been acknowledged for something that wasn't football" 2) "best experience I had in terms of scholarship" 3) "This is something I do, it's not who I am" 4) "opening doors for the other guys" and 5) "not being afraid of the unknown."

Accessing social capital: "It had been a while before I've been acknowledged for something that wasn't football"

Howard (2013) argues that Black males are "seasoned" into being athletes through a variety of socialization factors starting in their youth, as their primary form of recognition and

acknowledgment comes from their athletic exploits. Smith's (2015) dissertation on the academic and athletic identities of elite Black male middle school basketball players supported Howard's assertion as his results found that the Black teenagers in his study were acknowledged for their athletic accomplishments at far higher rates than their academic accomplishments. These findings suggest that by the time by the time Black males are college athletes, they are receiving acknowledgment primarily for their athletic accomplishments. Batman, who studied abroad in Italy through the business school at his university during the winter break of his junior year, suggested that his experience abroad brought him acknowledgment that he was not used to receiving. He stated, "It had been a while before I've been acknowledged for something that wasn't football." Batman's comment highlights how his international educational experience shaped how he was received by others once he returned to his campus. When I asked Batman, how did that feel, he looked me right in my eyes and stated, "It felt good, honestly. Really good."

Lebron's comments echoed those of Batman. Lebron went abroad with his college basketball team during his junior year of college. They went to Italy for about two weeks and competed against professional Italian teams abroad. When I asked him how his experience influenced how his interactions with students back on campus, he stated that the experience provided he and his teammates with "new little conversation starters." More importantly, it forced their campus peers to see them as more than athletes, as Lebron stated, "more multifaceted" beings. Being considered multifaceted was not an experience that these student-athletes were used to experiencing on their college campuses, and their experiences abroad provided them the social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1985) to resist such narratives.

Black Jack's experience abroad provided him with the capital to resist majoritarian racialized narratives (Nasir & Shah, 2011) that positioned him as a Black student athlete, as one-

dimensional and anti-intellectual (Edwards; 1984; Logan, 2017). He stated,

> When you can see that someone sees you in a certain light, and being able to flip it on
>
> them and realizing oh wow, this dude is so much more than playing football, like he just
>
> hit me with something that I've never even thought about.

By gaining a level of global competency, Black Jack developed a sense of confidence and capital

to defy stereotypes commonly associated with Black student-athletes and

> talk about more deeper things…Like I need to be able to have a conversation about oh,
>
> you heard about the stuff that happened over there in the Gaza strip and what do you
>
> think about certain things or... It gave me the confidence to do that.

Black Jack's experience provided him the opportunity to engage people on a different level. The

experience abroad provided him with an avenue to engage students in a way that made him feel

like more of a whole, dynamic student, rather than simply an athlete. Bird built upon this idea

when he suggested that his experience abroad put the student in student-athlete. Bird went

abroad on a service-learning trip with about 15 other student-athletes from his university for

eight days to the Dominican Republic. He stated,

> I felt like I became more of a student athlete. I was saying like everyone's going abroad
>
> for the summer, everyone's taking a term off and that's something I couldn't relate to
>
> although we can have almost two weeks like I felt there's something I could connect with
>
> them about, and I just didn't feel like... you kinda feel like an outsider because people
>
> don't understand you all the student athletes, but at the end of the day I felt like I had
>
> something in common with those people which is awesome. We can talk about our
>
> abroad experiences and things that we learned, and it opened up some dialogues that I

didn't have with certain people before. Before I talk about this class or maybe a party, I

can't remember talking about football because they're not in that world, but we had

another common ground which was being abroad and seeing something internationally.

Bird's comment highlights many of the challenges that student-athletes, especially Black

student-athletes, face in revenue producing sports as it relates to connecting with their campus

peers who are predominantly White. Bird suggested that he typically felt like "an outsider" and

referred to other students as "those people," highlighting a clear disconnect with the general

student body. In addition to feeling like "an outsider", such social isolation from the general

campus community can have negative long-term effects on these athletes because they miss out

on valuable networking opportunities (Singer, 2008). While international education does not

completely remedy this issue, it is clear from Bird's comments that his experience provided

"common ground" or a platform, for which he could engage with other students.

Similarly, DJ felt like his international experience gave him more of a true student-athlete

experience. DJ went on a service learning trip to Costa Rica for seven days with all of the juniors

and seniors on his football team. This trip was the first of its kind at his university. It was

instituted earlier that year after two other football players came back from studying abroad the

year prior and advocated that football players should get the opportunity to travel abroad like the

rest of the general student body, who went abroad at over 60%. Not only was the institution

known for its study abroad program, according to DJ and other consultants for this research that

attended the same institution, the football team was the only athletic team that did not have

consistent opportunities to travel abroad. Prior to this program being instituted, DJ expressed that

he was being denied educational capital that was made available to all other students.

So, going to school with these people who travel a lot and they brag about it, so like

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coming into the semester like what do you do for the break and stuff like that. It was

kinda cool to be able to share my experience like I've travelled out the country too. So

when you're around people who've travelled they've gone to like Norway and stuff like

that, you feel like you were missing out. I know me and my team... I don't know if you

have experienced that, just to have that going into class in the first day of semester, it was

just in the whole experience it was just crazy.

In this comment, DJ expressed how traveling out of the country provided him with social and

cultural capital, assets that provide people with access, power, and opportunity (Bourdieu, 1985),

that he felt he was previously "missing out" on. His comment also suggests that this is an

experience that he had longed for, however, one that was systematically denied to him. When he

stated, "like, I've travelled out the country, too" it is as if he wanted to prove to his peers that he

deserved to be there and that his identity as a college student was just as legitimate as theirs. DJ

went on to say, "That was the biggest thing, just being able to come back and share what I've

done for the first time. To me it was big and I was able to share it with my peers." Bimper (2016)

argues that universities need to nurture opportunities for students like DJ, to gain access to

capital that will serve them outside of the athletic arena. It is clear that studying abroad can serve

as far more than a conversation starter; it provides students with access to academic identities

that have been previously been denied to them, within the confines of their collegiate institution.

"The best experience I had in terms of scholarship"

Black student-athletes often face deficit-oriented stereotypes about their academic

capabilities within the collegiate environment from their collegiate peers and faculty (Carter-

Francique et al., 2015; Edwards, 1984; Eitzen, 2009; Engstrom, 1995). These scholars found that

faculty often hold stereotypes about Black student-athletes that lead to low expectations and

disengagement. Brotha love's narrative supports this body of scholarship as he argued that he was perpetually underinvested in at his institution, due to his intersectional identity as a Black student-athlete. Brotha love's sentiment is similar to the assertion that Cooper (2016) makes about the treatment of Black student-athletes,

> The academic trends associated with Black male student athletes are less reflective of individual efforts and academic motivation, but rather are a byproduct of systemic inequalities and the devaluation of educating and preparing Black males for success in life beyond athletic contexts in the broader U.S. culture. (p. 268)

As an international studies major, Brotha love expressed that he wanted to study abroad, however, he was told that his application would not be supported by the Dean of his department. They told him he could get around the study abroad requirement for his major due to his athletic status, even though he majored in Chinese because he wanted to immerse himself in the culture. He stated, "I had this interest that was outside of just learning the language. I wanted to really absorb something at a deeper level." After being discouraged from applying, he went outside of the university and applied to the same program in China, through a different institution and was accepted. He vividly remembered the moment he ran into the university's program at the same welcome event in China, he recalled, "My professor from my home university sees my black ass there she looked like a ghost… I was like, I'm not fucking with you at all. I'm studying their stuff." Referencing his academic experience thereafter in China, Brotha love stated,

> That was the most Chinese I learned, the best experience I had in terms of scholarship and when I returned back to school. I had my best performance in terms of academic semester in my Chinese studies.

Brotha love's academic experience abroad in China motivated him to study abroad the following summer in Turkey, where he conducted research that laid the foundation for his senior thesis, and his career trajectory, which is further explicated on in the theme of career influence.

Similar to Brotha love, Barack had an "incredible academic" experience abroad that influenced his academic trajectory. Barack attended the same institution as DJ, and is one of the student-athletes that went abroad prior to coming back and advocating that all football players be provided with an opportunity to get abroad. Barack's month-long study abroad experience in South Africa encouraged him to take advantage of other study abroad opportunities, which also influenced his academic orientation. He recalled,

> Through that program, I got a chance to study abroad again in Shanghai and Honk Kong. Based on those experiences, those were the most incredible academic experiences for me and a large part of why I decided to go to law school based on some of the people that I met here in Hong Kong.

Barack highlighted how education abroad is not simply about the classroom experience, but rather, those who they meet and engage with while experiencing international education, as Urrieta (2007) argues people come to understand themselves and "come to ''figure'' who they are, through the ''worlds'' that they participate in and how they relate to others within and outside of these worlds" (p. 107). The people that Barack met during his "incredible academic experience" in China, influenced the identity that he figured for his future self .

Bird's experience abroad was similar in that it influenced him to figure his identity as more of a learner and researcher. While it did not directly push him to seek out a graduate degree, he suggests his experience abroad, provided him with the experience to develop a more

academic identity. Bird's experience in the Dominican Republic pushed him to want to seek out more knowledge, to help him better understand his experience. He stated,

> It forced me to do research who migrated this way, why are these people this skin color, why do they look like this? It got me curious like how do we get everywhere? We're just so connected as one people. It helped me doing a lot of reading.

When Bird got back to his academic institution, he continued to develop his research interests around the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, which was ignited by his experience abroad. Bird was compelled to learn more about how his history is connected to the history of the Dominican Republic and the entire African Diaspora. Nasir (2002) argues that in traditional academic setting, racialized narratives about Black males often make learner identities challenging to access. Having the opportunity to self-actualize outside of figured worlds that can be academically limiting, provided new space for Bird to author his own identity (Holland, 2001) as a learner and a researcher. International educational experiences provided these students the opportunity to further develop their academic interests, and in some cases, activated aspects of their identities that were previously inhibited on their collegiate campuses.

"This is something I do, it's not who I am."

Stepping outside of the figured world of collegiate athletics, where one is commonly recognized as an athlete, provided these students with an opportunity to see the world and themselves through a more nuanced lens. In life, we are all more than what we do, but for some, especially athletes who occupy multiple worlds where they are positioned and recognized by a singular aspect of their identity, it becomes easy to become engulfed by that role (Adler, 1991). Stepping outside of these worlds provides student-athletes an opportunity to reflect upon their

multifaceted identities. Stones participated in a service learning trip for seven days to the Dominican Republic with other student-athletes from his university. As a football player at a prominent football institution in the northwest located in a smaller city, Stones felt that he was often recognized both on campus and in the city for his football status. He even suggested that his Black friends who weren't athletes were often presumed to be football players, due to the lack of diversity at the school and in the community. In regards to his international experience he stated,

> It's interesting when you go to another country and you have a chance to distance yourself from that because these people don't know that you are a football star, these people don't know really anything about you they just know you are here to build this court for them, it gives you the opportunity to kind of see yourself in a different perspective and almost, you know, take yourself out of this football or this athletic world and put yourself into their world.

He highlights how powerful it can be to step outside of the world in which you have been socialized into and "distance" yourself from the identity of a "football star." Holland et al. (1998) argue that people often subscribe and assume to the roles and norms that are expected of them within the figured worlds they occupy. Beamon (2012) argues that one of the reasons Black student-athletes suffer from athletic identity foreclosure at rates higher than their white peers, is because of the ways in which they are socialized into that role by others. In the figured worlds that Stones occupied, a small college town, an institution known for its football prowess, he was used to being "recognized" as "a particular sort of actor," (Urrieta, 2007, p. 108), a "football star." Urrieta goes on to suggest that at times others have "strong emotional attachments" and expectations of these "particular actors" which seems to be the case for college "football stars" in

small college towns. These strong emotional attachments and expectations limit the identity production of these students. However, stepping outside of this world where they are both figured and figure themselves as "football stars" into a small rural community in the Dominican Republic, where "people don't know" and don't care about football, Stones was able live outside of those expectations. In that particular context, what the community valued was a basketball court, and they valued Stones because he was helping to make that court a reality. Although still within the athletic realm, Stones realized his worth was far more than what he was able to offer on an athletic field as he was contributing to the development of a community. Furthermore, he learned that he should not be defined by other people's values and expectations. Black Jack similarly reflected on his study abroad experience in Jerusalem,

> It really helped because it made you realize like yo, this is something I do, it's not who I am. Especially in like revenue producing sports like football and basketball it's so much more, you get this ingrained in you that it's so much a part of who you are. A student might see and just realize it was kinda more so a piece of me, it's not who I am, it's just what I do and now, I think going abroad, they may realize more of who I am, Black Jack, not Black Jack the athlete, Black Jack the person.

Black Jack had a transformational experience abroad where he was able to realize that he was far more than an athlete. Within the figured world of collegiate athletics, the athletic bubble, there are numerous socializing factors that ingrain the idea that Black student-athletes best opportunity for success, is through the athletic realm (Beamon, 2012). The figured worlds that Black student-athletes occupy, both as college students, but also as Black athletes in America suggests to them that "sports is more than a game to play, it's a means of defining self" (Bimper & Harrison, 2011, p. 275). Black Jack's experience abroad showed him otherwise; it showed him that he was

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more than an athlete, and that sports was just one of the many things that he did. Many of the consultants who came to the understanding that sports was simply something that they did, but not who they were, felt compelled to share their experiences with their teammates. In this way, not only was their personal athletic "bubble" blown up, they wanted to blow up the "bubble" that limited the identity production of their teammates as well.

"Opening Doors for the other guys"

One of the noted challenges facing Black student-athletes is their isolation from the general student body and over-socialization with one another (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011). This is seen as potentially problematic because they can reinforce the importance of athletic goals often times at the expense of their holistic development. However, Urrieta's (2007) study on the development of activist identities in Chicano/a educators highlights the positive influence that peers can have in resisting hegemonic narratives about Chicano/a communities and embrace "revisionist" and "activist" identities. He goes on to state, "peer groups also helped socialize some participants to the politics of the Chicana/o worldview" by challenging their peers "prior understandings of the world" (2007, p. 125). The findings in this sub-theme highlight how the consultants' experiences abroad influenced their teammates in ways that disrupted the expectations and cultural norms of their shared figured worlds. These findings also align with Jackson's (2006) findings that role models and peer networks are essential for increasing access to study abroad for students of color, especially Black students.

Stave participated in a service learning trip to Bolivia during the summer after his first-year in college. Stave was on the track and field team, and at the time of this research study, he was an undergraduate student at his institution. Stave talked about the influence that his experience abroad had on his roommate, who was also a student-athlete,

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I had dialogue with him and we talked about just it what was like being abroad. When they nominated him for the next trip, he was like so shocked. It was his first time going abroad. Having that conversation, I don't think he was really aware of just what was out there, what experiences he could have while being abroad. I don't think he really ever thought about what he would want to do. I don't think that the he would've signed up for it on his own.

Stave shared his experiences with his roommate and also nominated him for the trip, which his roommate accepted. Stave's experience abroad provided a gateway for his roommate to experience the world outside of U.S. borders for the first time. Stave's comment aligned with Dolby's (2004) declaration that "study abroad is not simply a private good or individual experience" (p. 173), rather, it has the potential to positively impact communities. Stave' experience not only impacted his roommate; his experience abroad impacted others on his team as well,

Even just like him seeing my pictures or the experience that I had. So, when I came, I talked a lot to my teammates about it. A lot of my teammates were asking me just about how they can get involved, can I sign up for it. This was for the first couple of weeks when they came back to school. It was really eye-opening because I didn't realize just a week trip, even through pictures that I had posted through my social media, like would have such a huge effect on my teammates and even start a dialogue and interests spark between all of us.

Stave's experience extended well-beyond himself and had a "huge effect" on his teammates. Comeaux (2007) argues that one of the keys for Black student-athletes to developing themselves academically and in other areas outside of sports, is to learn from successful student-athlete

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exemplars. This narrative suggests that when Black student-athletes are provided with opportunities for holistic development outside of sports, their experiences extend beyond themselves and positively impact those who they spent the most time with, other Black student-athletes.

Batman suggested that when he returned from his study abroad experience, he was intentional about sharing it with his teammates, as he "was the first football player ever" to go on a study abroad trip and wanted his teammates to explore the possibilities. He explained,

> This is a once in a lifetime opportunity, an open door shown for other guys that hey, there is more than life than football and we can use this mode of transportation in terms of scholarship and these four years to the max

Batman went on to talk about the actual influence he had on his peers,

> My teammates, they were interested in it and they wanted to hear about it and they were definitely excited for me and it kind of opened the door, they wanted to do the same, you know?

Being the first football player to participate in a study abroad experience, Batman disrupted the cultural norms and expectations of the figured world he occupied as a student-athlete at his institution. However, he also understood the importance of leaving a legacy for others to follow. He stated, "I hope the next time that someone else gets to go!" Validating this statement, about an hour after our interview, Batman walked back up to me and introduced me to one of his teammates who had also expressed interest in studying abroad. He told his teammate, "talk to him, he understands how powerful it is, especially for us." Then the three of us sat there for the next 15 minutes talking about the value of international education, while also acknowledging the

challenges they faced accessing such opportunities as revenue-producing student athletes. The students valued their international learning experiences and wanted their "brothers" to have similar experiences.

"Not being afraid of the unknown"

Literature on high-achieving, revenue-producing collegiate athletes suggests that as their collegiate careers begin to come to an end, there is a fear of the unknown (Beamon, 2012; Bimper, 2014). What comes next can be a scary proposition for someone who has dedicated most of their life towards being the best athlete possible. While abroad, the consultants were challenged to grapple with the unknown as they had to navigate spaces and places that were completely unfamiliar to them. Making it through these experiences gave them confidence in themselves, a certain amount of comfort in uncomfortable positions. This self-confidence extended beyond their confidence in themselves as athletes, suggesting that once their athletic careers do come to an end, they will not be as "afraid of the unknown."

Shaq played football as a student-athlete at the same football powerhouse in the northwest as many other consultants for this project. He graduated from college in 2017 and suggested that his service learning trip in the Dominican Republic provided him a foundation for understanding himself after sports. When talking about the influence that the trip had on him as his athletic career ended, Shaq stated,

> I mean, the transition it's hard in itself but the trip definitely gives you something to fall back on, it gives you a sense of, you've done this before; the trip gave you an avenue that you can just go back down.

Shaq referred to the fact that when he was abroad, he was outside of worlds that figured him as

primarily an athlete. He was able to reference his international trip as a time where he was able to develop confidence in himself in areas outside of athletics, which served him well as he transitioned out of sport. Lallys' (2007) research on career retirement of student-athletes suggests that they are better prepared for their transition out of sport when they develop confidence in aspects of their identities that are not sport-related.

Batman's experience in Italy similarly highlights how he was able to gain confidence in himself outside of his athletic identity,

> in the sense of getting a sense of how the world works, because they gave us a lot of freedom, but also a lot of responsibility in terms of the side trips and we had to set up the flights, we had to book up the hotels, we had to figure out a way of getting water in countries where they spoke no English, so we were on our own for the half of the trip and with the school for half of the trip, and it was really good for me, to grow up.

Batman referenced the fact that his experience allowed him to "grow up" because of the freedom and responsibility he had to navigate while abroad. While student-athletes have very demanding schedules within the figured world of collegiate athletics, many of their logistical challenges are taken care of for them, such as booking travel arrangements, picking classes, time management, which can result in delayed identity development (Bimper & Harrison, 2011; Singer, 2008). Although Batman had already spent three years in college by the time he went abroad, he gained new levels of self-confidence on this trip as he engaged the unknown,

> It's like surreal, but it also gave me a sense of purpose, like man, I can do I can do whatever I set my mind to. I can, achieve what, like I said I set my mind to, and then, I don't' know, like I said, like we talked yesterday, about purpose, because it was the first

time I've really been on my own, and like to set things in motion and accomplish them so that was a really good feeling.

Batman talked about coming into his own based on accomplishing things himself for the first time, like booking flights and finding hotels. While he traveled often as a football player, all of those travels were with his team, thus he did not have the opportunities for "freedom and responsibility" that he alluded to, as he was positioned differently when he was with his team, compared to when he was with non-athletes in another country. Other students had similar experiences simply by walking around cities that were unknown to them. When reflecting on his experience with his basketball team in Italy, Lebron posited,

Just not being afraid of the unknown. Partially, for me, it's like... Stuff will get figured out, like... It'll work out. I'll just persevere, and... Ask questions, ask for help. Like... You could figure it out in a foreign country, you could figure it out here. Or like, if you could travel in this foreign country, you could travel in this country.

He went on to suggest,

Everything was a building block, where it's like: I could be in a foreign country, I'm gonna figure it out, I'm not intimidated by any situation in a foreign country, I'm not worried about this, I'm not worried about that, I'm not worried about the language barrier, I'm not worried that I can't understand people.

This experience was pivotal in Lebron's development. When his collegiate playing days were over, he felt that he had opportunities to play professionally abroad, but instead, he decided to transition out of sport into the unknown, a decision that was mocked by many of his peers. He enrolled in a Master's program a year later and took another study abroad opportunity to Cuba,

another "building block" into the unknown. Although he admitted that his Spanish was sub-par, he was confident that he would "figure it out." Lebron has now traveled to 5 continents, lived and worked abroad, led basketball camps in 5 different countries. He vehemently argues that if he had been afraid of the unknown, he would have struggled letting go of his athletic identity, and would most likely not be the professor that he is now.

The consultants for this study experienced international education as new figured worlds where they were able to see themselves as "more than athletes," as the athletic "bubble" and all of its norms and expectations were busted. In highlighting the space for self-authoring, the consultants found while abroad, their comments often juxtaposed international spaces with their experiences being positioned as one-dimensional "football stars" in and around their college campuses. Urrieta stated, "when positioned, people are not so much engaged in self-making, but rather are limited to varying degrees of accepting, rejecting, or negotiating the identities being offered to them" (2007, p. 111). A key aspect in these students coming to see themselves as more than athletes was meeting and engaging with Black people from around the world who experienced Blackness quite differently than in the United States. The next theme highlights how these Black student-athletes engaged with and came to understand Blackness on a global level, including their own.

Theme: Racial awakening

Bimper and Harrison's (2011) piece on the intersection of racial and athletic identity in Black student-athletes highlighted how these students' strong athletic identities delayed the process of their racial identity development. On college campuses and the surrounding communities, these students are often positioned as "stars," which in many ways shields them

from some of the challenges of being a Black man in America, at least temporarily. Bimper and

Harrison (2011) argue that within the figured worlds that Black student-athletes occupy on

college campuses, they are not offered opportunities to develop strong racial identities,

> embedded methods of control in the daily schedules and expected commitments for
>
> athletes, particularly of African American athletes, may bring about athletic identity to
>
> the forefront of one's self-concept. The consequences of these control methods are
>
> possibly that athletic identity overshadows racial identity and creates a more docile
>
> African American nationalist ideology. (p. 283)

These authors understand a nationalist ideology as one that "emphasizes the significance of race"

(p. 282). Here, I bring back in CRT to highlight not only its emphasis on race, but its goal of

disrupting majoritarian narratives that suggest that we live in a colorblind society and that race is

not as central and salient to American society as it truly is. Thus, with CRT as a framework, and

the findings from Bimper and Harrison's research, I argue that college institutions attempt to

limit the racial consciousness of their Black athletes as "cultural resources of within figured

worlds are tied to the powerful trans-local institutions" (Urrieta, 2007, p. 110). International

education provided these students an opportunity to step outside of this figured world, and the

findings suggests that they experienced a racial awakening.

The theme of racial awakening was the most prominent and talked about theme of this

research. In large part, this is due to the theoretical framing of this research project as well as the

research questions, which sought to explore how Black student-athletes are influenced by

international education experiences. This theme had five subthemes which speak to the idea of a

racial awakening: 1) "It made me more comfortable in my own skin" 2) "Home that I've never

been to" 3) "What is Blackness" 4) "Racism is everywhere" and 5) "There's a need to grow

together as people."

"It made me more comfortable in my own skin"

The consultants for this study traveled to various countries, all with different understandings and perceptions of Blackness. However, one sub-theme that was prevalent throughout the data was the idea that traveling abroad made these Black students more comfortable in their own skin. When asked about the influence of his international trip, Black Jack spoke about how he became more comfortable and confidence in his upbringing as a Black man in a poor neighborhood,

> it made me more comfortable in my own skin, gave me a broader world view and it made me understand that the world is so much bigger that being an American or being a black American and what that means in regards to being black or American or poor or being impoverished.

Black Jack, who grew up poor, admits that he previously struggled taking ownership of that part of his identity because he didn't like falling into a stereotype. His experience abroad broadened his view of the world, and provided him more confidence in his racial identity. He went on to say,

> It's just that confidence, like yo, I am who I am and how you perceive it, how much you think, that's you, but I am who I am, I can walk into a bunch of white people and don't feel no kinda weight because I'm confident in being me.

Shaq, who participated in a service learning trip in the DR, also recalled the experience positively impacting his sense of self, especially related to the intersection of his racial and economic background,

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It gave me a sense of, what it is, to just be black in America. It gave me, a sense of pride that, I hadn't really thought about just because, just cause where we come from. I come from a low-income household… and it just showed me how although I'm African American, I can make changeups on a big scale to a little kid in the Dominican Republic.

Shaq's experience gave him the space to find pride in racial identity that had seemingly previously evaded him. Majoritarian narratives in the United States often paint Black communities as pathologically impoverished and unable to help themselves, so how would they be able to help others? Shaq's usage of the words "it just showed me how although I'm African American I can," highlights how prior to his trip, he had been socialized into seeing being African American as something less than, or deficient. Ultimately, his trip, led to a more positive and renewed sense of his Blackness, which aligns with the findings of Jackson's (2006) study on how international education influences Black students' racial identities.

Similarly, Texas began to embrace his "big black body" while on his service trip abroad in Panama. Texas was a disc thrower on the track and field team and his body was a salient aspect of his identity. His experience abroad allowed him to get more comfortable with an aspect of himself that was at the forefront of his identity. He recalled, "The people of Panama didn't question me. They just accepted me for who I was and the words I was saying and my gestures. They didn't judge me off of being a big black dude." When Texas was asked how that experience impacted him moving forward, he stated,

I think mostly what it did was it just told me that I need to embrace myself. I go back to what I said before. It told me to just embrace my actions, embrace my words. I worry so much about the things that I can't control. Maybe my actions and my words and the way I go about things are perceived in other people's eyes as being Black and that's totally fine,

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and I'm still gonna be me, and I'm still gonna embrace me. I love black color I love black history I love everything about it. I'm not gonna keep that suppressed. I guess the trip did help me realize that in a weird way now that I'm explaining it out loud. It kinda did because it just forced me to be myself and embrace my culture because everybody down there embraces their culture. They got so much history in those towns and generations of families. That's something that I think we all are getting away from a little bit.

Texas was moved by the self-adoration the people of Panama had for their cultural identities, despite the challenges and immense poverty they faced. His experience emboldened him to be more open and vocal about the aspects of being Black that he appreciates.

Brotha love had various international experiences and recalls grappling with his Blackness in different ways depending on where he was. However, he recalled his experience in South Africa being particularly impactful, making him feel like his blackness was a superpower,

Then experiencing blackness in blackness, I was turbo charged, I felt like Superman coming from Crypton and walking in and then you put them on earth. In that environment, he's feeling so empowered, I'm just like imagine what would he be doing as black American if we had that chance and that opportunity to freedom.

The reflections of these students aligned with previous research that suggests international experiences can lead to a sense of pride in one's racial and ethnic identity (Comp, 2008; Dinani, 2016; Jackson, 2006). These findings also align with Cross's ideal understanding of Black racial identity, that of internalizing a positive sense of one's Black identity.

"Home that I've never been to"

Most of the consultants who participated in this research had their international

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educational experiences in predominantly people of color countries. Those who did were often surprised at how welcomed they were. A big reason for this was due to the participant sample and that all of the service learning programs took part in the Caribbean, Central or South America.

Bird was one of the students who participated in a service learning trip to the Dominican Republic. When I asked Bird to share one of the pictures that best spoke to the impact that the trip had on him, he introduced the picture by stating,

> It's a picture when we first got there like these kids like love me and they're like my skin color. I was picking them up. I remember picking them up they're were all smiling like big smile. That speaks to my trip because that was the first moment when I'm like why we're connected in some way although we don't even speak the same language. We're all connected in some way because I can see myself in them, and it just opens my eyes to the world.

For Bird, this picture served as an artifact that reminded him that his identity as a Black American, was connected to a larger Black diaspora. Bird's statement aligns with Urrieta's (2007) framing that "artifacts can also offer possibilities for becoming, possibilities to expand the possibilities," as he expanded his sense of self, and subsequently his sense of self-worth.

Malcolm also had a powerful experience of feeling at home even though he was thousands of miles away from where he grew up. Malcolm was a football player at the same university as DJ and Barack on the East Coast with less than 10,000 students. He and Barack were the two football players who were so influenced by their study abroad experiences, they returned and advocated that football players get an opportunity to study abroad, due to the

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institution's focus on such experiential learning experiences. Malcolm studied abroad in Ghana for just over three weeks. He wanted to experience the "home" that he had never been to, an opportunity that had evaded most of his family since his ancestors were stolen from African land,

> I think that for me the way that I kinda rationalize, it's just three to four weeks of my life that I get to spend back home, home that I've never been to and be able to immerse myself in culture and enjoy that experience, soak up that history and that time.

Malcolm's intention of experiencing a home in Africa is a common experience among Black Americans who choose to study abroad. These trips are often referred to as "heritage trips," programs that are designed around going back to the lands of one's ancestors. Research has shown that these trips can at times be challenging for such students as many find that they are also seen as outsiders in these countries due to their American identity (Day-Vines et al., 1998; Landau & Moore, 2001). Malcolm's experience in Ghana challenges some of the literature, however it is important to note that Malcom was the only Black student on the trip and admittedly spent a lot of his time with the professor leading the program, who was born in Ghana.

Snoop found a similar connection in Jamaica, although he was only there for 10 days as part of a service learning trip with other student-athletes from his university. Originally from Long Beach, Snoop often felt his race at his institution due to its location in a predominantly white small town in the middle of the United States. When referencing how race impacted his experience in Jamaica, he stated,

It's funny because I tried to say a ton of times, being like, being black is kind of like being in an unspoken fraternity, everybody kind of like, gets each other, you fight for

each other, and that's really kind of what it feels, you could say like, it was home in a sense, everybody, you know, even though we come from two different completely backgrounds, you always can you just relate to em, you just feel them on a great level, and we had a good time, and that's how it was, when I was there with a lot of the younger kids, even though we didn't grow up watching the same TV shows, they grow up dealing with the same things, we didn't play the same sports, or even have the same sports, but, but just, I don't know what it even is but just the blackness, when you get around other black people, it just feels good.

While acknowledging the many differences between being Black in the U.S. and being Black in Jamaica, Snoop felt that their shared Blackness provided them a unique and powerful connection. Similar to Malcolm, Snoop felt that his blackness provided him with capital that his white peers were not able to access,

> With the black students, I know a lot of those, we felt like we were a home for the most part, while the white students I think they kind of had to adjust a little bit and adjust to be, minority in the group.

Stave, who spent his time in Bolivia on a service learning trip felt like he was "never felt out of place" due to his Black skin. When asked to share a particularly meaningful picture that spoke "to the essence" of his trip, Stave shared a story about a picture he took with some students, and how their Blackness reminded him of people in his family,

> I'll say the beauty of it. I remember we went to one school, we saw I think it was like three black kids there. Within the whole community, I saw seven. Within the school, it was maybe 2-3 at least that I pointed out. Just looking at them, they were just beautiful

kids. I saw resemblance of them within my own family. I was thinking, he looks like my

cousin. It's like his hair pattern, and then his skin color just remind me of x person back

home. It was just so crazy. It's like we really are connected in so many different ways. It's

just language and culture differences, but at the end of the day we're one community.

That was just really amazing to see. We bonded, the four of the Black student athletes on

the trip including myself. We got a chance to take a little picture with one of the students

that stood out to us. He was so happy to see us; that was just amazing. That was one of

the moments when I truly saw the beauty of being black especially abroad.

Similar to other consultants, photos served as artifacts that allowed these students the opportunity "to position themselves" (Urrieta, 2007, p. 110) as members of a global Black diaspora. The international learning experiences of these students allowed them to feel connected to something that was larger than themselves. They began to recognize the global nature of Blackness, and the fact that they were a part of it.

"What is Blackness"

One of the most prominent themes of this research study was the research consultants' recognition of the heterogeneity and diversity within the global Black community. Racial theorist Stuart Hall (1990) asserts that an essential element of developing a strong Black racial identity is the recognition of the diversity of Black people around the world, which disrupts hegemonic racial narratives about what Black people are and what they are not. Batman was traveling throughout Italy and came across numerous Black men who identified as African. He found it particularly impactful to meet and engage with Black men from other countries as it encouraged him to think more broadly,

As black males we need to be more aware of the world and a general sense that's bigger than just America, hmm, and then there are a lot of black, black males do great things in other countries too, so, just, being more, hmm, how do I say this, just culturally aware of other cultures.

Reflecting on the role that athletics plays within the Black community in America, Barack found it quite powerful to meet Black people from other countries who had a different orientation to the world. As Howard (2013) argues, Black males in the United States are taught from a very young age that sports is not only something we can do, it is something we should do, especially if we want to be successful. Batman's understanding of Blackness was nuanced and extended while he was abroad,

I think that being able to have that, meeting new people, talking to people, especially see other black people abroad doing things that you hadn't thought or that you hadn't really heard of before, I think it's just great to expand the minds.

He went on to share a specific example of a Black man he met abroad who pushed his thinking,

When I was in Hong Kong, I met this black guy who was from London and he was doing law just like restructuring the financial sector, doing transactional law. Talking to him and being able to see him, I talked to him about what he was doing, it was cool to kinda put that as a framework for myself like okay, he's made it throughout his career these are the things that he's thinking about, and he looks like me, which is nice to see.

Similarly, Black Jack was particularly impacted by both the similarities and differences he encountered when he met Black people from other countries while studying abroad in Jerusalem. While he felt in community with them due to their shared Blackness, he also realized how stark

the cultural differences were,

> it was interesting because although we might both be black, the Ethiopian and me but the cultural thing of being black is totally different, I mean….it made me more aware that like there's different experiences, like that black experience isn't the same, like it broadened my view of blackness or what do we call blackness, so what is this conception, what is blackness? and I think that's what it helped me do, just because there's a piece of me, it doesn't make me who I am, so I think that.

John was also pleasantly surprised when he met Black people from around the world who spoke with accents or whose first language was not English. John, a football player, earned a Fulbright scholarship during his sophomore year in college. His study abroad trip to Ireland afforded him his first opportunity to travel out of the country. He recalled,

> To hear black people speak with a British accent it's like -- it like threw me off, I was like "They're black but they're not African-American, what do you consider yourself?", "I'm Afro Caribbean" and this is like, there's different types of black people in different ways like you don't experience that or really think on that as much and then they come to find out you exchange student, he's black but he speaks French with a Spanish accent, you're like "Damn, where are you from?", "Oh, you know, Venezuela, Colombia" or something, "Oh there's black..." asking a question, "There's a lot of black down there that speak Spanish?", "Yeah, everybody", you know?

Similar to John, X was surprised by how many Black people he encountered in the various countries he traveled to, specifically Black people speaking in multiple languages. X had the opportunity to compete abroad with his college basketball team and also travel abroad as a coach

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and a graduate student. He recounted an experience from his time studying abroad as a graduate student in Europe,

> It was interesting to see dudes are from Congo living in Russia but speak French then in Italy and there was dudes in Italy that lived in Greece they're Muslim and they speak Arabic. I think on that front you kinda realize the immensity of blackness throughout the world. To me that was really impressive and that was fun to me to see throughout my travels.

Hamilton had the opportunity to travel to the U.S. Virgin Islands at the age of 17 for a basketball tournament with his collegiate basketball team, and was also surprised by the immensity of Blackness he encountered. A few years later, he had traveled through Europe as part of a Big-Ten Conference All-Star team, competing against professional basketball teams in Europe. Hamilton received very little cultural preparation for his trip, and was thus amazed to see that the Virgin Islands were full of Black people. In his interview, he mentioned being surprised by the fact that the island was mostly Black 5 five times,

> the first thing that opened my eyes, was all the black people there are in the Virgin Islands, and had no idea You know, it was really a black island, the US Virgin Islands, so, yeah, that really surprised me.

Brotha love also had the opportunity to travel to a predominantly Black country and really appreciated his experience. Unlike Hamilton who went abroad on a basketball trip to compete, Brotha love went abroad as a graduate student and had more of an opportunity to actually engage with the people. He was impressed with the diversity within Blackness that he saw,

> In grad school, I travelled to South Africa and that was the first time I ever felt freedom. I

would love to go back and move to South Africa because my blackness as the first time wasn't politicized. You can see another nigga in J's and a fitted, they can be an accountant, they can be a lawyer, they can be this, they can be that, they can be homeless, they can be rich; it didn't matter. Black skin black culture identity did not have the same negative stigma in way that we are just so accustomed to feel.

Brotha love wished that he could experience Blackness in America the same way he did in South Africa. He felt that Black people could be authentically themselves without the fear of being judged by a dominant White culture. His comment suggests that people in the U.S. must follow certain respectability politics (White, 2010) which at times can limit the true diversity within the culture.

Snoop was particularly impacted by an experience he had in Jamaica where he saw Black men swimming and diving off cliffs, defying a prevalent stereotype and stigma of Black people in the United States. Just before telling me the following story, he stated, "I know it might sound funny but," which indicates just how powerful this moment was for him. He stated,

I hear black people, quote on quote don't swim…when we were in, it was in Montego bay, we want to something cafe, they had a place where you can dive into the water, and I'm seeing black people doing like that form like, 50 60 feet up in a hill, and head first, swimming, having a great time, you know, you seeing people line around, even some for the little kids, like, following the example, but you don't see that like, here in the states, nothing like that, it's more so because of island culture or whatever, but, like I said, that's different from what I'm used to seeing black people do, so that was cool was well.

Snoop suggested experiences like his, simply seeing Black people swimming and diving into the

ocean, could be particularly impactful for Black student-athletes, as it disrupts the limitations and expectations of Black people in the United States. This experience was pivotal for Snoop, and influenced him to seek out more diverse representations of Blackness once he returned back to his college campus.

> I a hundred percent think it's beneficial and that more black students should have the opportunity because, a lot of times, where a lot of those guys come from, when they say black success, it has a lot of to do with their physical ability or in rapping, or, you know, something else but it's not, hmm, I guess you could say on a business side or educational side so even just getting out of, because like with me one thing that I know that I got, that I wouldn't have got but because of this trip, I joined this group here, called United Men of Color. And in United Men of color, me and another guy, we were the only two there, who actually played a sport, everybody else, they were like engineers, they were studying to be doctors, they were studying to be, musicians artist, whatever it was but it was so cool to see all of those black men that go to this school, from, completely different perspectives. Like I'm studying liberal arts, we had like a few ones that were studying engineering and I was like, that is dope I don't' really normally see that so any time you can, be able to see somebody striving to be successful at an avenue other than yours, but that, has similarities to it as far as being black, I think this is a phenomenal thing because it turns your perspective on who we are as people. You don't just see an athlete, you don't just see the rappers, you see engineers, doctors, lawyers and to me, being able to see that, it's like, damn that's pretty cool. To place their, their value, their thing that they do outside of what you could consider the norm for black people, just being able to change that and not aiming to be an athlete, or being a rapper, something like, is the norm,

because it really shouldn't be.

Snoop's experience epitomize the potential of international education. His experience coming back to the states substantiates Lowe and colleagues' (2014) findings that when returning from abroad, students of color seek out and join diversity-oriented organizations to continue building upon their experiences abroad. His comments also highlight how within the figured worlds these students occupy, there are spaces where they can enact agency and resist the positioning of them as one-dimensional athletes. However, for Snoop, it took an experience like international education, to disrupt aspects of his worldview and influence him to seek out such spaces on his campus. According to Hall (1990), seeking out and accepting diverse representations of Blackness is one way to develop a positive Black racial identity and resist hegemonic racism.

"Racism is everywhere"

CRT stands on the foundation that race and racism are central and endemic to American society. The findings from this study suggest that race and racism are not only central to the United States, they are central to the world. One of the challenges that the consultants of this study grappled with while abroad was making sense of the global nature of racism. Snoop came to this consciousness based off of his experience in working in small rural community in Jamaica,

> It made me realize that people, it's so weird that I noticed this late, but I noticed and now there is kind, almost everywhere you see the majority of people who are living, I guess you could say substandard conditions are usually people of color. They are either black, or like if they are in the light communities they are the darker ones, so they are kind of shunned, and it is, I don't know, I guess you could say colonialism is a reason why….it's

always hurts me to see that, like, almost every, everywhere you go, the majority of people who are living in these conditions are the people who have a darker skin tone.

Snoop was deeply impacted by the fact that even in a country full of Black people, it was the darker skinned people who lived in the worst conditions. However, instead of using a deficit-oriented discourse to frame these communities, which Zemach-Bersin (2007) claims is typical of American students who study abroad in systemically oppressed countries, Snoop identified the historical roots of the problem with colonialism. During our interview, about nine months after he returned from his experience, Snoop told me how his experience in Jamaica pushed him to research aspects of the IMF and the World Bank to better understand how the legacies of colonialism still oppress the country.

Stones' experience in the Dominican Republic also made him more aware of the global effects of racism.

Basically, in the Dominican Republic, there is kind of two classes, so, people in the DR they are known to be from Spanish descent, and the Haitian are seen to be from African descent, so there is so kind of power trips at play you know what I mean. There is some kind of discrimination and they think, over there, Spanish European descendants were better.

Stones found this particularly hard to digest, because from his viewpoint, the people in the community he worked in, whether of Dominican or Haitian descent, looked relatively similar.

The Guy came to a similar understanding. The Guy first traveled abroad with his college basketball team nearly 17 years ago. He went to college in the same state that he grew up in so his experience abroad was quite eye-opening. Australia was the first country The Guy traveled

to, which he felt was less racially hostile than America. However, The Guy has now traveled to 13 countries due to his professional basketball career overseas, and has come to terms with the fact that racism against Black people is a global phenomenon.

> Racism is everywhere, whether its little or lot, like, over here in japan, it still exist, they don't look at you, I can walk around sometimes and the people in, in japan for me, people will look at time, and they all be like, you can tell at people, oh he is tall, because they are looking amazement, or you see people that are looking at you because you're black you might not belong and they kind of looking you act like, what are you doing here, it's the same reaction for everything and that's a hard judge over all, but of course, I'm tall and big guy, so of course I'm gonna get looked at regardless, so I get like, yeah, I'm tall big, but, when you take it beyond and you don't look like in amazement, when you looked like in disgust, that's when I'm know this might be racial, you know what I'm saying, for me.

The Guy came to understand that racism was a global phenomenon through what he saw and what he experienced abroad. He was one of many participants in this study who felt like they too, faced discrimination and microaggressions while abroad. The most prominent microaggression was people assuming they were professional athletes or celebrities. Recounting an experience when he was walking through a tourist area in Jerusalem, Black Jack stated,

> I was the only person that was like really a black person and people come up to me and take pictures and it was interesting and it was weird, like I remember walking through the old city of Jerusalem and people kept coming like oh my god and they automatically thought that since I was African American, a black dark skin person and I had to play soccer or basketball or something and they weren't used to seeing an African American,

they had seen an African but never an African American, and it was just like interesting

because I was speaking in English, I'm American, it was just really interesting cuz I

never thought of it like that but it's just how they perceived me.

Black Jack's experience seemed to be reminiscent of some of the consultants who felt that they

were automatically judged as student-athletes and "football stars" in the college towns where

they went to school. While Black Jack was in a different country and thus a different figured

world, the power of American media and propaganda highlights how figured worlds are

"mediated by relations of power" (Urrieta, 2007, p. 109). Urrieta argues that powerful

institutions can frame narratives that are "durable and socially reproduced" (p. 109), like that of

sports being the primary and only mode of success for American Blacks. X, who had multiple

international experiences, as a competitor, a coach and a graduate student, had a similar

experience,

They always assume that I was a basketball star like I play in NBA. The same in Russia

they all assume I play in NBA. That was interesting just realizing they have one thought

about black people from the states is that we all must be amazingly good at basketball.

The consultants who felt like they were stereotyped as athletes all had these experiences in

predominately white countries, either Europe or Jerusalem. Dominant narratives about who

American Black people are and what they represent internationally, especially in White

European countries, seemed to align with their worldview. These findings align with Mills

(1997) theory of the racial contract, which suggests White and European people and institutions

develop stories to tell about so-called "others," that ultimately reinforce the idea that White

people, society, and culture are superior. The narrative that Black Americans only travel if they

are famous athletes underscores the idea that these people are lacking skills in all other areas,

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such as business, trade, banking and more importantly, that athletics is the only means by which they would accrue enough financial capital to travel abroad.

Consultants of this research project were able to identify the global nature of racism, however the findings also suggest that their experiences abroad helped them recognize just how prevalent racism is in the United States. This finding corroborates the CRT tenet that race and racism are central to the inner workings of American society and culture (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Ladson Billings & Tate, 1995), however, it is often masked through majoritarian narratives that mystify the way that racism operates as a mechanism of control and oppression. DJ, who studied in Costa Rica with the other juniors and seniors of his football team, shared this experience,

> If at 10 o'clock over there you're walking down the road instead of people moving over to the side, that's the opposite race from you, they say, hey what's up. They speak to you instead of walking across the street even if I can wear my football gear on my own campus people who can just dare do that. That's really the difference. I will say those people are more welcoming and will have to see you and get to know you rather than being afraid of you.

DJ's experiences aligned with Dinani's dissertation findings on the ethnic and spiritual identity development of Black students abroad. She found the African-American males in her study felt specifically liberated from the pervasiveness of negative Black male stereotypes they faced while in the United States. Dinani summarized, "Students experienced a sense of freedom...they were no longer seen as Black or African American, and subjected to the stereotypes associated with their race or ethnicity" (2018, p. 246). DJ was able to make sense of this experience based on the way he believes American media frame Black men compared to media outlets in other countries.

I took communication class and you can just figure out how the media portrays African American. So, if you grow watching like African American or black people they were a bad thing, if you grow up seeing it all your life, obviously you're going to be scared or have some type prejudice in your mind. When you're over there, I don't think they see those types of things on their TV. You don't see African American killing people on TV all day, so you're not gonna be afraid of people like this. I feel like the media in America is... like I said, it's total opposite from the media in Costa Rica.

DJ suggests that the media in Costa Rica is the "total opposite" of the deficit-oriented portrayals of Black people in the States, however it is important to note that he was only in Costa Rica for 10 days and thus his experience with their media was limited. With that being said, The Guy, who has traveled to numerous countries, acknowledged the globalized nature of racism but felt that he too experienced more racism in the United States than in any other country he had visited. Speaking specifically about his experience with his collegiate basketball team in Australia, he noted,

For me, and this may be my opinion, you are still looked as a black, and still nah, you're different, you know what I'm saying, and of course because I'm tall, you may stand out but, just, just the way the people look at you, you are now looking at me because I'm tall, you are looking at me because I'm black, and so you know, you definitely, we see this like, an elephant in the room, and it's all white people in there and you are the only black person in there, so it was kind of like, hmmmm. But is not as bad as in the states I feel like, I feel like in Australia or even overseas, you know, of course some places, looking at you crazy, but I feel like Australia wasn't as bad as it was in the states, if that makes sense to you, I feel like in the state's you go at an all-white place and you'll get looked at, you

will get more dirty looks there than I do in Australia.

Research suggests that one of the barriers facing Black students engaging in international education is the fear of the racism they will experience abroad (Picard, Bernardino, & Ehigiator, 2009; Willis, 2016). While some of these students did face acts of discrimination abroad, a more prevalent theme found in the interviews and focus groups was the global nature of systemic racism. In many ways, although Black, their American identity and affiliation as American college students provided them with privilege abroad, privileges that shielded them from the systemic racism that negatively impacted the darker-skinned people of the countries in which they visited. As they gained consciousness about the privileges that their American identities provide them, many of the students articulated a desire to be change agents. This consciousness led to the final sub-theme of Black racial consciousness, which is a commitment to the uplift of Black people both globally and locally.

"There's a need to grow together as people"

Cross's fifth and optimal stage of Black racial identity development suggests that once Black people have internalized a positive sense of self, they will become committed to the uplift of their community. This finding also aligns with the social justice tenet of CRT which argues that research should both lead to more social justice and share narratives of marginalized people who participate in social justice work (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). The idea of becoming more committed to Black communities locally and globally became apparent in the interviews with the research consultants for this project. Although still a student, Staves' experience in Bolivia provided him with a vision for the impact that he wants to make with his life's work.

Within my career, I do see there's a need to grow together as people. I'm not really sure

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exactly how I want to do it, but I know that is something I do wanna do within my career. I wanna be able to change any type of differences that separate Africans from Black Americans from Afro-Latinos from even black people who are in the Middle East or Europe. I think that we all should embrace who we are as black people.

Staves' feeling of connection to the people of Bolivia encouraged him to not only see the world differently but to help break down those barriers for other people as well. Brotha love came to a similar understanding, stating,

> I became self-actualized by being able to see myself in this broader context in China, in Turkey, in South Africa understanding and playing with it that the sense of what I did and it is. Ultimately realizing self-actualization, and self-actualization realizing the conditions of black and brown people across the world is fucked up. We have an opportunity to redirect resources to humans to our people.

Stave and Brotha love speak to what Reilly & Senders (2009) have suggested as the ideal goals of international education - creating increased understanding between global cultures which should lead to more empathy and stability.

Malcolm, whose narrative in one of the case studies, explicates upon how his experience in Ghana also pushed him to be more committed to the Black community locally and globally after recognizing some of the shared challenges,

> I think one of the biggest things for me was realizing that the problems that we have here are just like the problems they have there and there's such a disconnect, but that's our home and like feeling like I have this creative sense of okay. I have family I have brothers and sisters that are abroad that made me feel like family like what can I do to

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better improve their situation but also take what I learn from there and better improve the way things are here. I think one of the things that I really appreciated from my experience there was the sense of community and the accountability one and other and the love that they share one and other was like nothing I really ever seen before in the States. So, I really wanted to create environments for young people black people in general like children so they can feel like that. So, they can feel loved and appreciated and supported and valued and deserving of all the same things. I think it has really allowed to have a much bigger world view of perspective and realize that the biggest piece was feeling connected to something bigger than myself. That's kinda what formulated, a sense of self, if that makes sense.

Malcolm gained consciousness and "a sense of self" while abroad which influenced him to be more committed to Black youth in the states. Similar to Brotha love who identified it as "self-actualization," These students came to understand that despite their American identities, they were Black men, and it was part of their duty as Black men to see themselves in community with Black people across the globe, and do something to improve the conditions of Black people, whether locally or globally.

Snoop shared a similar reflection about how his experience in Jamaica impacted his commitment to the community,

it made me realize that what I am, who I am as a black man, I need to, try to find ways to kind of flip the script,

He went on to articulate exactly how he wants to "flip the script,"

I think that's something that I've taken home too because that's what I want to get into.

As far as, one being able to be an entrepreneur, with entrepreneurship, creating jobs, and getting money from those jobs that are putting jobs in areas for the black community. And creating wealth within the black community, creating dollars that circulate through black communities instead of being outsourced somewhere else.

Many of the consultants for this research project noted that their international experience influenced them to get more involved in their communities and in one way or another to give back.

This theme was identified as a racial awakening because the students not only came to understand and appreciate their own Blackness, they began to better understand what it meant to be Black within a global context. They realized that as Black Americans, while they faced racism and oppression in the United States, they were also provided with certain levels of capital and privileges that many darker skinned people around the globe are not afforded. Ultimately, the consultants saw themselves in community with these people and made personal and career-oriented choices that committed them to working on behalf of uplifting Black communities locally and globally, aligning with Cross's ideal level of Black racial identity development: internalization -commitment.

Theme : Career influence

The international learning experiences of the research consultants for this study had an indelible effect on their career trajectories. Research on Black student-athletes suggests that the figured worlds they occupy on college campuses and the surrounding communities delays their holistic identity development, making their transition out of sport and into their professional lives quite challenging (Beamon, 2010; Bimper & Harrison, 2011; Cooper et al., 2017; Singer, 2011).

Stepping outside of the athletic bubble, where they spend most of their time with other athletes focusing on oftentimes shared athletic goals provided space for these students to reflect on the fact that "balling won't be there forever" and encouraged them to think about "what's my next move." Similar to framings of figured worlds, psychological literature which focuses on future orientation and the "future self" suggests that how adolescents come to understand their future selves is strongly influenced by one's social context and social relationships (Kerpelman, Eryigit, & Stephens, 2008; Syed & McLean, 2018). This framing suggests that student-athletes' understandings of their future selves and career goals would likely be influenced as they move from out of figured worlds and into others, due to the various socializing factors in the different worlds.

The theme of career influence has four relevant sub themes a) "What's my next move?" b) "I got the experience" c) "I can literally do anything" and d) "I would be able to live just about anywhere." These sub-themes speak to the ways in which these students' minds and futures became more open to various career opportunities, disrupting the process of athletic identity foreclosure that negatively impacts Black student-athletes at alarming rates (Beamon, 2012). The influence on these students' career trajectories was not limited to the United States, as one of the sub-themes suggests, "I would be able to live just about anywhere."

"What's my next move?"

Batman admittedly entered college with a fair amount of cultural capital as his mother graduated from an Ivy League institution, and was "heavy on the academic side." He remembers both his parents telling him, "don't let the university eat you, you must get the most out of it." He decided to take on a challenging major in business because "it was different from the norm," referencing how many Black student-athletes are clustered into certain majors (Howard-

Hamilton & Watt, 2001; Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2011). He had seemingly put himself in position not to fall into the trap of identity foreclosure that affects so many Black student athletes. Yet, still "plan A was the NFL" and it wasn't until he got injured that he actually started accessing resources outside of football and doing things "like a regular student." After his injury, he decided that he wanted to try something new, and study abroad. He decided to study abroad in Borgona, Italy, where he saw "just how big the world is" which pushed him to reflect on the fact that he "needs to pursue things outside of sports." He went on to say,

> In the sense that, I need to figure out my next move, because my whole life I've been, like, football is going to get me the school, I need to stay in school, and get the grades, but what's next? What's next after my degree? What do I want to do? I think that definitely got me in the direction of going about that, just because I saw all these different people trying new things, knowing these different languages, exploring, travelling to all these different countries.

Seeing and meeting people who had different goals, who knew multiple languages and wanted to explore different things about themselves and the world, encouraged Batman to do the same. Reflecting on how his experience impacted him upon returning to the states, he said, "I gotta go out, I gotta try different things, I have to step out of my comfort zone." Trying new things did not mean that he no longer committed himself to football, he recounted, "as soon as I was back I jumped right into it." However, after coming back, he realized that "all the resources are here, you just have to push a little bit." In fact, his pushing is what led to our encounter as he attended the Black Student-Athlete Conference in Austin, Texas over the last two years while on his winter break. In our interview, he stated that his study abroad experience provided him his "network skills for events like these, where I don't know too many people." Batman's study

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abroad experience pushed him to step outside of his comfort zone and get comfortable with the unknown, so he could truly figure out his "next move." These findings are consistent with Henderson's (2013) dissertation study which found that studying abroad positively impacted Black female student-athletes career readiness and transition out of sport.

Black Jack was also motivated to figure out his next move when he returned from his study abroad experience in Jerusalem, however, it didn't take him too long to figure it out. He recalled his study abroad experience being "the most transformational thing" which made him grapple with the fact that "universities have to do a much more better job of trying to create opportunities for student athletes to study abroad." He saw himself as a person who could help make that happen, stating,

> Hands down, I think the experience is what drives me to work with athletes because you realize that they can take advantage of everything and all the opportunities that they have that comes along with being an athlete. It can literally just change lives, and it impacted me enough that I wanted to lend that to other people, so that's why I work with student athletes to see if they can hold that and then put these different types of experiences in front of them so they can take advantage of it, because I know how impactful it is and how it was for me.

Black Jack studied abroad because he wanted to experience a part of the world he had read about in history books "since middle school." Heading in, he was unclear about what he wanted to do with his life after football, but in his experience, he found himself, a man that wanted to create similar opportunities for other Black student-athletes. Black Jack and Batman highlighted how their international experiences challenged them to face the urgent reality that their athletic careers would likely come to an end soon.

"I got the experience"

International education provides students opportunities to gain experiences that they would not be able to have in the confines of their home institutions (NAFSA, 2003). In the two study abroad programs I work with here at The University of Texas at Austin, we intentionally provide our students with learning opportunities abroad that they would be unable have here in Austin. In our Maymester to South Africa, students don't just learn about urban and economic development in Cape Town; they work hand in hand with organizations that are on the ground working in sustainably developing their communities. These opportunities can provide them with real life experiences, which may aid them in their future work. The sub-theme of "I got the experience" speaks to how some students gained experiences abroad that directly translated into their current careers.

Brotha love studied abroad twice during his collegiate career after have an amazing first experience in Beijing, China. During his second study abroad trip in Turkey, he began thinking and researching about the various ways countries go about development. He recalled,

> I used those to study abroad trips to think comparatively about what is developing, what means for people what means for society, what happens when you try to embrace a global view. That viewpoint on how societies develop was intrinsically based in my study abroad experiences. If it weren't for that, if it weren't for the ability to go on walk on the streets and feel people and feel the history, I wouldn't have had that kinda appreciation of me thinking with that kinda of viewpoint.

He went on to suggest,

> All that studying that I did, study abroad, I started to see the world start off these big

international global issues and topics. I started to see the world as a series of interconnected links. So going back to it, my studies and looking at development and looking at what Turkey and China were doing on the ground with these people. I got experience of doing grassroots work, both entrepreneurship and working on a campaign, knocking on doors throughout the country. Fundamentally shaped my worldview. I thought I was gonna be on a path of being a diplomat.

Brotha love was able to translate his grassroots experience abroad into a similar position with President Obama's campaign in 2008, where he traveled around the country doing grassroots organizing. Then, he began working for the mayor of DC doing economic development for the city, and has been doing similar work for his entire career. He credited his study abroad trip with providing him the opportunity to gain the experience that has translated into a successful career. This finding aligns with Braskamp and colleagues' (2009) findings that those who participate in international education develop skillsets and confidence in their ability to adapt to new situations which serve them well in their professional lives.

Similarly, Malcolm's experience learning about South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Committee while in Ghana, directly translated to his current position as a Restorative Justice Educator in Chicago Public Schools. When I asked him if his international learning experience in South Africa influenced his career, he stated,

It meant a lot for me coming back home. I think also it really increase my world view in terms of... or perspective on how I want to attack issues. I think at first, I was really interested in direct service being a counselor some sort. I think after that, I really wanna do create more of... looking more of a macro perspective and figure out how I can tie some of the things that I learned back to a larger group of people here. I think one of the

things is open my own school one day. I really want opportunities to be able to get black

students to travel abroad but especially to Africa. I think that would be a dream come true

and such an impactful experience for students to have. I think ultimately those are

probably things I feel carried over from my return.

Malcom clearly had a desire to give back, as he acknowledged that he previously wanted to do

direct service as a counselor, however, his experience challenged him to think about how he

could "attack issues" from more of a macro perspective. As a restorative justice educator, he

goes a step beyond working directly with students, and instead works with individuals and

communities to restore justice. He believes that by teaching students to not only hold themselves

accountable but to hold their communities accountable, his influence has the power to be

exponential. He stated,

> I think second, to that, the sense of community and like community accountability is one
>
> of the things that I definitely try to make, that I bring it to the world. specially with the
>
> story of justice because that's the work, about like, developing relationships and holding
>
> each other accountable to those things and find any way to not be punitive and love one
>
> another and learn from conflict.

Malcolm learned about restorative justice in South Africa and his experience has not only given

him knowledge to do his current job, it has provided him with an opportunity to make the

difference that he wants to make in this world, on a macro level. Malcolm is also a law school

student, where his goal is to find ways to implement restorative justice into the American legal

system.

"I would be able to live just about anywhere"

Most Americans do not study abroad. In fact, less than 10% of college students engage in some form of international education (IIE, 2016). Americans are raised to believe that they live in the best country in the world, the most powerful, the richest, the most developed and civilized, so why would we travel unless it was for a vacation? Rarely do we think of countries outside of the United States as potential career building opportunities. We often limit ourselves to what we know and understand. International education provides students opportunities to disrupt this limited view of the world, and reframe the world outside of the U.S. as places for potential employment. The sub theme of "I would be able to live just about anywhere" speaks to the ways in which the international learning experiences of these students broadened their career opportunities by learning to see the world as a place of potential employment.

Hamilton, who went abroad twice as an undergraduate to compete overseas, suggested that his education abroad experiences gave him the perspective and confidence that he could live anywhere. While he had not thought much of playing professional overseas prior to his trip, his quick adjustment to the culture repositioned his professional opportunities,

> I think I was more open to play overseas after that trip. I think I was a lot more
> comfortable. I realized there and I realized that I would be able to live just about
> anywhere in the world because you know, I wasn't uncomfortable when I traveled abroad.

Hamilton spent four years overseas as a professional basketball player in two different countries. Similarly, The Guy also had a very successful international playing career, spending 16 years of his life playing abroad professionally, from Europe, to Australia, to the Middle East, to Asia. He credited his international learning experience in college with jump starting his career,

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Australian trip it jump started me being because you know, I thought I was going to be in the NBA, like, that's my dream, being in the NBA, but being over there, it was like you, what if I don't make the NBA, I feel like man I could play overseas, I can do something like this.

What really stood out to The Guy was that they too, shared a passion for basketball. "Being over there, we was playing in the games, like seeing the crowds, like, it was like yooooo, they actually love basketball." He was surprised because "all you see in the USA, back then, you were seeing like the NBA, like the international wasn't like that yeah, so all you know is the NBA." The Guy's comment suggests that the NBA may have a monopoly on how young basketball players see their professional opportunities, as it is "all you know." The Guy continued, "when you over here, and I see how they do it, because you now, beating the drum, the people, you got sold out crowds there, and you're like, yooooo this is cool, I need to film man so people can see this." Not only was The Guy enthralled for their passion for the game, he wanted to be a part of it and he wanted to share it with his people back home so they too could be exposed to "how they do it."

While The Guy played in 13 different countries, it was the Australia trip which he credited for his "ability to have a career" because he "was able to adapt at a young age." He believes that a big reason why a lot of college athletes don't attempt to play overseas once their collegiate careers are over is because "they have never been exposed, they don't know what it's like. The older you get, the harder it is to try new things." The Guy followed up this comment by stating that the flexibility he developed while still young was the key to his international success, "it's more easy for me to start to accept things when I go to a different context and when I'm faced with something different that I may have not done before." He claimed that he tried to teach these skills to younger guys he met who were playing abroad, but admitted it would have

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been more challenging for him if he never got the experience while still in college.

While others did not have international careers at the time of the study, many of them claimed that they wanted to do so. Batman who was earning a business degree and went abroad with the business school stated, "after studying abroad I definitely wanted to do something in the international business field." DJ, who recently graduated and hit the job market claimed that he had already been "looking for jobs that incorporate trips and really want their employees to travel a lot." He had been "looking for different careers and opportunities where I can do that to get out the country. Similarly, Bird referenced his international learning experience as having a powerful impact on him and his global aspirations,

> it changed me. I'm working towards these days like getting my PhD and everything like that and kinda changing the scope of athletics before I would've been thinking about America. Now from a larger scale, I'm thinking about changing it from an international scale. I don't think I would've thought that if I didn't go on that trip.

Bird's international experience broadened his worldview, the impact that he wants to make, and the possibilities for where he can make his impact. Not only did these students' experiences push them to think about the possibility of "living anywhere," they became more confident in themselves and their abilities, and realized they can "do anything."

"I can literally do anything"

The international learning experiences of the students in this study resulted in an increase in confidence in a multitude of ways, as they experienced and accomplished things that they had never previously done. This finding aligns with Wick's (2011) study on the experiences of students of color abroad. He asserts, "The interplay of identity and capital in the Third Space of

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study abroad gave many participants confidence and agency to achieve their goals. Frequently, this interplay took place because of new experiences abroad" (2011, p. 159). Wick uses the idea of Third Space, as proposed by cultural theorists Bhabha and Rutherford (2006) similar to the way this study uses figured worlds. This third space or new figured world facilitated the development of self-efficacy and confidence which translated into their careers, exemplified by the sub-theme "I can literally do anything."

These students gained skills and a self-awareness abroad that directly translated into their careers upon return, and for the consultants who had yet to return to the United States or graduate, the perception of their future careers. The Guy, who lived abroad as a professional basketball player overseas for 16 years, felt that the communication skills he developed abroad, prepared him for any environment once his athletic career was over. He stated,

> This may sound cliché but interacting with people over here and just like, being able to talk to them and just, to some level communicate, it opened up another level, like yo man, I could do some interacting, interacting with people just period. If' I'm interacting with these Japanese people, were imma able to be in a room for an hour, hour and a half, with these people, imagine what I can do in the states as far as like, stuff with communicating and stuff with interacting.

The Guy effectively learned how to communicate, even when there was a clear language barrier. Williams' (2005) study on the impact of international education on interpersonal communication skills also found that students developed an ability to communicate across difference while abroad that served them later in their careers. The Guy suggested that the differences in language challenged him to think more creatively about how to communicate, including reading body language and other communication skills he considers invaluable.

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I can come up and talk to you and get information out of you, or give you information that I'm trying to give you. And I feel that helps in the business world, like, say I have to give a presentation in a room full of people that I don't know, but I have to get my point across, I feel like that for me, being overseas and talking to people that I don't' know every day or who may have different ways of explaining stuff and I have to break something down to you to know, you can comprehend what I'm trying to tell you. It helps me express myself more, I'm able to express myself more, and in detail because over here, you got to express yourself.

The Guy not only developed better communication skills abroad, he has developed confidence in himself because of those skills as he knows he brings a set of unique experiences.

Stave, who participated in a service learning trip, felt that he too developed invaluable skills abroad that positively impacted his ability to work well with others. When asked about his biggest takeaway from his international learning experience, he stated,

It's very beneficial to have an open mind just about other people and other cultures. There's gonna be disagreements along the way, but as long as you respect them and you respect what they believe in. You can continue to move forward with whatever you're doing in terms of like if it's a project or if it's just a dialogue or work or dialogue in general, just to be able to get over and be like I understand we don't agree on this but we can get passed this. I accept you, you accept me as we are. That was a really big thing. I'm just being open-minded when I came back here.

When providing an example of how having a more open mind served him, he immediately referenced working on "a project" or "work dialogue," suggesting that this skill had served him

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professionally. This can be a particularly important skill for Black student-athletes as they are socially isolated from most of their non-athlete peers (Singer, 2008) during their college years, which is commonly seen as a time where young adults become more open minded in regards to dealing with other people, due to the various people they encounter during this time in their life (Astin, 1977). Stave, one of only two consultants for this project that was still in school, felt that having a more open mind helped him work with other students and professionals during the summer internship he took part in the year after he studied abroad.

Texas felt that the things he accomplished while abroad during his service learning trip in Panama served him professionally and that his experience "comes up in conversation probably every day." He went on to provide an example from his current workplace,

> I work in Portland I sell photocopiers and I sell IT services for a big company out here. Even then talking about photocopiers, I still find a way to integrate my experiences in Panama literally every day in some sort of way. It's just crazy it just changed my mindset, it changed the way I view the world, and it just changed my whole philosophy about living obviously.

In response, I asked him, "Well, what changed? What did you learn about yourself?" He responded,

> I can literally do anything. Let me tell you. I did not think that I would be... I have high doubts that I was gonna be able to... I'm a neat person I'm clean-freak honestly. I shower twice a day. In Panama you're lucky to shower every three days. It just taught me that I can do anything honestly. I can go build a concrete basketball court in the middle of the jungle. I can hike miles to the nearest river just to get clean water. Or you know, I

literally think about it every day, like I can go to this office and convince decision maker that he needs more technology to make his office work efficiently. It was a confidence booster because I was terrified being out there like I have no idea what's going on, and I just put my faith in my friends and my family, and everything worked out great. That also just kinda solidified that I needed to put more faith in people around me and god as well. That's how it changed me.

While abroad, Texas had to confront his fears and not only did he confront those fears, he was able to apply what he learned, and the confidence he gained in himself, to his professional life. His experience was so powerful, that he thought "about it every day." When Texas needed to dig deep and find confidence within himself, he went back to his experience abroad. When I followed up later in the interview by asking him how the trip affected his goals, he responded,

I think it more affected the way that I go about my goals. It affected the way that I go about my goals because my goals are always the same. I tell myself every single day it's the screensaver on my phone it's 1%. Every day I try to get 1% better at everything I do. I remember getting to Panama and I saw the field that we were gonna build this basketball court in, and I was like, there's no way in hell we're gonna be able to get this done in five to six days. There's hundreds of bags of concrete, but there's rocks there's weeds there's a dead animal over there like how the hell we're gonna be able to build this court in enough time while we're here. I thought about that once and I was like, we have to work for it... it gave me a visual representation like if I want something, all I gotta do was just relying on the people around me and just push myself to all I got, and then it's gonna happen. That's kinda how I lived my day-to-day now. I just push myself as hard as I can every day. Some days it's easier than other, some days it's impossible but I'm still gonna push

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because even though I'm not as good as I will be tomorrow, I'm better than yesterday. That's kinda how the trip changed my views.

Not only did Texas conquer some of his fears while abroad, he developed a confidence in himself that he was yet to experience. Zamani-Gallaher, Leon, and Lang (2016) argue "study abroad entails self-authorship, which translates into an exceptional kind of readiness for college and career that is important, particularly for racially/ethnically diverse groups" (p. 112). This assertion seems to be especially true for Black student-athletes, who often struggle with delayed identity development due to the restrictions placed on them as student-athletes (Bimper & Harrison, 2011).

While student-athletes are seen as goal-oriented people, typically their goals revolve around getting better, faster, healthier, smarter, more connected; essentially, the goals are about doing things they already know how to do, just better. In Panama, Texas was challenged in a different way. He was part of a team that had six days to accomplish a task that seemed undoable. He had no experience ploughing fields, removing dead animals, pouring concrete or building courts. However, by taking it step by step, he was able to accomplish a task in six days that he previously knew nothing about. He credits his experience in Panama with providing him the confidence and proof that with his work-ethic, he can "literally do anything." The narratives shared in this theme highlight the positive influence that international learning experiences can have on the career trajectories of Black student-athletes.

The three themes highlighted thus far in the findings were consistent across and prevalent across all interviews and data collected. The last theme highlights the varying basis for the consultants' educational experiences abroad, and thus nuances some of the unique differences between athletically oriented competition trips, service learning, and study abroad.

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Theme: Cohort Matters

The theme of cohort matters refers to the fact that consultants for this project participated in various international educational experiences. Based on the concept of figured worlds as well as the data, I grouped the consultants' international experiences into three main sub-themes: 1) Study Abroad, 2) Competition Abroad, and 3) Service Learning Abroad. Studying abroad refers to when a student left the confines of their institution, took classes abroad and received credit. Competition abroad refers to when students travel with their team to compete abroad. Service Learning refers to when students travel with other student-athletes from their athletic department and participated in a community service-oriented project while abroad. Each of these sub-themes is broken down into more sub-themes which use the students' words to highlight their experiences.

Study Abroad

This research consulted eight Black student-athletes who had study abroad experiences. When looking at these students collectively, there were three sub-themes that were unique to their experiences. The sub-themes related to: capital the students had prior to the trip, how injuries influenced their decisions to go abroad, being one of the only Black students and the only Black athlete on the trip, and resistance from the coaching staff. The sub themes are: 1) "I always had a love of cultures" 2) "The only Black student" 3) "That ankle injury, that was a big wakeup call" and 4) "If you go, I can't promise you you're gonna have a scholarship when you get back."

"I always had a love of cultures."

Research on Black students within the field of international education often focuses on

the barriers these students face in accessing such opportunities (Hembroff & Rusz, 1993; Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2015). One of the primary barriers is that Black students don't come into college with the knowledge to navigate study abroad opportunities. Jackson (2006) found that most of the Black participants in her study already had international experiences prior to them engaging in her study. The consultants for this project who studied abroad came in with various forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1985; Yosso, 2005) that positioned them to take advantage of such resources.

Black stated, "I always had a love of cultures" as he had the opportunity to go to an international middle school that provided the students with a global understanding of the world. He went on to describe aspects of the curriculum,

> We had students that were there from like all over the world and they had different languages other than like a basics, we had Swahili, we also had, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, German, and we could have took different languages and that was like the emphasis of the school and they used to always have this big cultural celebration type thing or as I remember always being fascinated by other cultures in middle school there was something I was always around.

Thus, Black entered college with the cultural and aspirational capital (Yosso, 2005) to take advantage of study abroad opportunities. Learning about other cultures in middle school provided Black with aspirations to travel the world himself one day. Barack, who studied abroad in South Africa had been sent on a two-week trip to Europe when he was in high school, so when looking at his college options, he wanted to study abroad and chose his college "based on this type of infrastructure." Malcolm, who attended the same institution as Barack recounted, "I selected Biko because the studying abroad opportunity." These students entered college with an

understanding of the resources available and were determined to take advantage of them. Brotha Love, who received both an academic and athletic scholarship, chose his institution because the international studies program was nationally ranked and there was a requirement to study abroad. These outcomes align with Wicks' (2011) dissertation findings that students of color who study abroad often come in with the cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) to demand, and take advantage of such opportunities.

"The only Black student."

While Black students make up 13-14% of the college student population, they make up less than 5% of those who study abroad (IIE, 2016). Such low numbers partially explain the gap in literature on Black students and international education. Goldoni (2017) wrote one of the few peer- reviewed articles that focuses on the intersection of being Black and a male while abroad, and her study focused on just one student. The experience of being "the only one" was echoed in data collected on consultants who had study abroad experiences. Not only were these students often times the only Black person, they were also the only student-athlete. Batman's narrative in particular highlighted both the challenges and opportunities that being the "only one" presented. Batman was the first football player at his university to study abroad that he knew of and he was also the only Black student on the school's business trip to Italy. When thinking about how he was first treated he reflected,

> They first though I would have a big ego, like typical football player stereotype, hmm, and they were like surprised that I was just down to earth, just, just like them, you know what I'm saying? And I was the only black student to go.

Batman had to deal with the stereotypes of being a student-athlete, as well as stereotypes of

being Black, and often struggled navigating which direction the stereotypes were coming from, or if the stereotypes were based off of the intersection of being a Black student-athlete. Once abroad, Batman recalled feeling more accepted by the Italians.

> I was really most welcomed with the Italians than I was with the Americans just cause if I'll like they saw me at differently, they were more used to being around other cultures, just because they travel way more than we do.

Batman suggested that Italians were more used to being around other cultures, and thus judged him less on his Blackness than the White American business students he traveled with. He credited this openness to the emphasis on travel within their culture, unlike in the United States, where traveling outside of the country is far less common for college students (IIE, 2016), especially compared to European countries.

While Batman did face some challenges with his cohort, he also appreciated being "the only one" because it provided space for him to negotiate different aspects of his identity,

> they just focused on other things besides just sport, not to say that athletes just talk about sport, I mean its locker room talk you hang around with your boys, it's a comfort zone and I, really not, made too many friends outside of the locker room, like I knew a lot of people, but it's a difference between knowing people and actually having friends, and I bonded with a lot of, or 4 or 5 guys, on the trip that I keep in contact with now

Batman's comments suggest that while he did socialize with some non-athletes at his home institution, he rarely made friends outside of other athletes. The worlds he occupied were often determined by his affiliation with sports and more specifically football. Participating in new figured worlds abroad provided him the opportunity to make lasting friends outside of the

athletic context. He considered this a positive,

> it was just nice to be around a different crowd, the conversations are different, the topics
> are different the language is different from just being in the locker room all the time, you
> know.

While Batman admittedly cared deeply for the relationships he had with his teammates, he was excited about the opportunity to participate in a world that was not overdetermined by athletics, as it allowed him to engage in different conversations and navigate different aspects of his identity. Batman's comments reminded me of a presentation I did at a conference with a current student-athlete at the University of Wisconsin, my alma-mater. I met this student the day before my presentation and we engaged in a conversation on international education. He said that the University of Wisconsin was offering a service learning trip for student-athletes to go to the Dominican Republic in the upcoming summer. After encouraging him to participate in the experience, he responded "I am already Big and Black. Everyone knows I am an athlete. When do I get an opportunity to just be a regular student?" This student was interested in studying abroad, however, he wanted to go with regular students because, as he noted, "I already spend all my time with other football players." After his comments, I invited him to present with me the following day, and he did. One of the assistant athletic directors from UW approached us both after the presentation and thanked him for using his voice, and sharing his perspective, as he had not thought that perhaps, at times, these students may want to be "the only one."

"That ankle injury, that was a big wakeup call."

An interesting finding when looking specifically at the students who studied abroad was the prevalence of injuries incurred prior to them deciding to go abroad. Suffering injuries were

often the catalyst that motivated these students "to pursue other areas outside football" and explore their study abroad opportunities. They became positioned as "injured," an identity that had a decreased value within their figured worlds. Urrieta states, "different elements within the figured world take on variations of rank and status according to widespread relationships of hierarchy, and even figured worlds themselves are organized around positions of status and influence" (p. 110). This re-positioning, and loss of status and influence pushed them to call into question the power they allowed such figured worlds to have in determining their identities. In many ways, their injuries provided them the opportunity to become more agentic and self-author their future selves.

When Batman hurt his ankle, he recalled, "that was the first time where I had no football identity, so it was kind of like, a self-check, like who am I, you know?" Batman highlighted an interesting yet disturbing trend. It wasn't until football was taken away from him that he realized the need to explore "other areas." The injuries served as a form of capital in that they hastened the pace of identity development in these athletes, providing them with agency to resist some limitations of being a student-athlete.

"If you go, I can't promise you you're gonna have a scholarship when you get back."

Making a decision, like studying abroad, can be challenging for student-athletes due to the pressure on them to focus exclusively on athletics. While student-athletes don't get paid, their coaches often make more than their University presidents, and thus are highly invested in their student-athletes' commitment to sports, often times at the expense of their holistic development. As Holland and colleagues argue (1988), figured worlds are sites of identity exploration and possibility, however, there are also social realities mediated by relations of power within figured worlds. When Barack wanted to study abroad, his coach threatened to take away his scholarship.

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Malcolm recalled his experience with the same coaching staff,

> Right before it was time for us to go on our trip, a new coaches staff came in and the head coach was pissed like pissed of the idea of us going abroad told the whole team that were sellouts that we're bad teammates for going especially the guy who was a leader on that team. It took a lot out of me to feel like I couldn't do the opportunity like, I was letting my team by doing so.

Not only did the coach threaten and intimidate these students for wanting to get the most out of their collegiate education, he attempted to turn their teammates and friends against them. Malcolm admitted that he nearly withdrew from the study abroad program, because he felt bad about letting his team down. When referencing student-athletes opportunities to engage in academic activities, Simons, Van Rheenen & Covington (1999) state,

> The coach's potential disapproval weighs heavily in the student's eyes. Because coaches possess the power to decide which athletes will play or start in the games, many student athletes believe, correctly or incorrectly, that they will be penalized by their coaches for choosing academic commitments over athletic ones. (p. 158)

Although the NCAA suggests this is an illegal practice, how does one determine if they are being punished for their non-athletic pursuits or simply because they don't deserve to be on the field? Batman struggled with this question but ultimately came to the conclusion, "I feel like it was an example that was trying to be set as far as, theirs consequences for not, being fully invested, that type of thing, you know?" While Batman believed he paid the consequences for studying abroad, some of the students were encouraged by their coaches, even if it was to their surprise. Black Jack recalled:

I was kind of a little bit nervous about going, nervous because about what he was going

to say but he actually was supportive once he found out that I wasn't really going to miss

too much training

Black Jack was supported by his coach, however, his comment about being "a little bit nervous"

speaks to the ways in which the environment of the student-athlete is controlled offering them

very little agency (Harrison, Bimper, Smith & Logan, 2017; McCormick & McCormick, 2006).

Ultimately, the coaches played a prominent role in these student-athletes process of engaging

study abroad, begging the question - how often are student-athletes dissuaded from studying

abroad from their coaching staff?

Competition

One of the most prominent ways that Black student-athletes in revenue-producing sports

get opportunities for international education is through competitive team trips abroad. While the

primary purpose of these trips is "to play ball," universities and athletic departments often tout

these trips as educational. As these trips are developed and facilitated by institutions of higher

education, I too, have framed them under the umbrella of international educational experiences.

Of the consultants in this study, four participated in competition abroad. All four went with their

collegiate basketball teams as part of their international learning experiences.

Of all the cohorts examined, the figured worlds on these trips seemed to re-create

themselves overseas as figured worlds are made up of "cultural genres" that are "durable and

socially reproduced" (Urrieta, 2009). Many of the actors, coaches, teammates, trainers, etc., who

were influential in the student-athletes figured worlds on campus, also participated in their

figured world abroad. Within figured worlds, certain actors have more power, thus setting up a

hierarchal system of agency for some, and little to none for others (Urrieta, 2007). The sub

themes that separated these experiences from the other forms of international education are: 1)

"College Basketball, it's still like a business", 2) "I think I would've benefitted from, you know,

an educational class or something," and 3) "Dictator role, like I'm the coach!"

"College Basketball, it's still like a business."

For many of the students who participated in competitive trips abroad, it was their first

trip outside of the country. While the students had some opportunities to engage in tourist or

cultural activities, they recalled their trips being focused on playing and getting better, as that

was the cultural production that was valued within this world. Urrieta (2009) argues that identites

"are formed in the processes of participating in activities and practices organized by figured

worlds" (p. 30) While abroad these students spent the majority of their time participating in

basketball. Hamilton recalled,

> At the end of the day, I was there for basketball, so you know, in college basketball it's
>
> still like a business, so we had time to play and stuff and enjoy it, you know, but the
>
> focus was still on basketball.

Hamilton recognized that while he was being provided with a free international trip, he did not

have the agency to determine his experience abroad because the focus was basketball. As this

was many of the consultants' first experiences out of the country, they felt torn when reflecting

on their experience. Lebron stated that his experience in Italy "opened up a whole new world,"

while at the same time, the focus on basketball limited their interactions with the community.

Hamilton stated,

> I didn't get a ton of time to interact with the people, we are on buses, and just went on

base to base, and just kind of went with our teams, and it's more, you know, we enjoyed

the sights, you know. But learning the culture and being able to interact to people, you

don't really have a chance to do that, we didn't' have a chance to go into the center of the

city, and interact with people, we just kept to the team, and you know, focus on winning

games.

Cultural immersion was not something that was valued within the figured worlds these students

occupied while competing abroad. The Guy shared a similar sentiment about how the goals of

the trip limited their opportunities to engage in the host countries culture.

We didn't learn about culture, they just told us the laws, and you know, the basic dos and

don'ts over there, and, we just got it how we lived, because when we were there, we was

over there for Basketball.

While there was a near exclusive focus on sport for the students while abroad, which fed their

athletic identity, most of them shared the sentiment of X who stated, " I wouldn't have been

there if not for basketball." The near exclusive focus on basketball speaks to the second sub-

theme of the trip which focused on the students' reflections that they wish they would have had

more educational and cultural experiences.

"I think I would've benefitted from, you know, an educational class or something."
Though considered an international educational experience, most of the consultants don't feel

like they were educated on the countries prior to going abroad. When asked about their cultural

and educational experiences abroad, Hamilton emphatically replied,

Culturally, no! We didn't have any educational things on the Virgin Islands and how it

came to be. I still don't' know everything about exactly, of the people they've got there an

anything like that.

Hamilton referenced the fact that he "was really surprised" by how many Black people lived in the US Virgin Islands, especially traveling there at the age of 17. He wanted to know more about the country, the culture and the history, however, he did not feel like he was provided those opportunities. When he wanted to learn more he stated, "I had to kind of observe the stuff for myself" which he found challenging because there was not much free time to engage the local people. While in one aspect, he was in a new world, a new country, he was still stuck in the world of basketball and limited to the identity of student-athlete, which typically emphasizes the athlete part of that identity more than the student part. The identity of student and learner were not made readily available within the figured worlds of competition trips abroad. He went on to state,

> I think that I would've benefited from, you now, educational class or something before we went, so we could understand, how the island came to be…We had like I said a couple of different activities on that island for pleasure, but other than that. I mean, I didn't get a ton out of the trip, in terms of having an understanding.

Hamilton suggested he did not get much out of the trip in terms of learning about the environment, although he did state that it gave him the confidence to later pursue an international career. Similarly, Lebron suggested that his trip served as "a building block" towards his future. As a professor, Lebron now leads university affiliated study abroad trips with students at multiple institutions and reflects on what could have been.

> I think it would've been cool to like, focus on the language before we went. Or even take, like, an Italian class over there. Like... I mean, obviously you can't become fluent, and

you might not even remember anything after a week or two, but... I think that would be

cool because I think language is so big: It's like, language and culture aren't the same...

They have, like, a symbiotic relationship. And so... I think that would've given us more

emotion and immersion and exposure, and then... I think it would've just opened doors: I

think it would've just been a good experience. I think language is critical.

As an international educator, Lebron saw the potential in trips like the one he experienced as a

collegiate athlete. With that being said, he also realized that he is a different person today than

when he was in college and perhaps he would not have wanted more of an educational focus at

that time in his life.

We didn't know anything about Italy. Now, I probably wouldn't have wanted to read a

book, and I would've been touched if they would've been, like... "You need to read this

book". Where I am now, I think it would've been beneficial, but... I wouldn't then.

The reflections from these students confirmed that there were some missed educational

opportunities on the trip, while also acknowledging that not all student-athletes were interested in

taking advantage of such educational opportunities. More importantly, they highlighted how they

had little agency in determining the amount of cultural immersion or education they were able to

access while abroad, due to the identities they were offered, when they traveled as a member of

their college basketball team.

"Dictator role, like I'm the coach!"

This sub-theme highlights the influence that the coaching staff has on the environment

and experiences that the students took part in. On these trips, students felt an added sense of

freedom, while also, at times feeling controlled. Lebron felt that his coach provided them with a

lot more independence on their international trip than the experienced on their typical trips in the United States. He stated,

> Like, they let us go out, they didn't really harass us, they gave us a lot of per diem and what I mean by that is like, if we were playing in the Pac-10, or travelling for a game during the regular season... They micromanage everything: They will always stress, they will always worry — I'm talking about the coaches.

In attempting to highlight the "freedom and leniency" he and his teammates had on this trip, he juxtaposed it with the sense of control and restriction that he typically felt when traveling with the team. Urrieta (2009) argues that "regardless of the hopeful agency, creativity, and imagination available in figured worlds" that are still shaped "in unequal structural power relations" (pp. 30-31). Due to the fact that Lebron and his teammates were used to being so controlled, it appeared to him that he had "freedom" when in actuality, it was more "leniency." While summer international trips are important for team building and chemistry (whether they win or lose does not affect their regular season win / loss total) likely influences why the coaches seem to provide the students more agency in decision making. While in one sense, Lebron felt more freedom, he also felt a similar sense of coaches controlling the environment.

> They wanted to micromanage and like... Sometimes — Maybe they saw it as protection, like... Deleting the film, but... I don't know: Sometimes, I think that kind of handicaps people... Because they always want to be in control of... Control the environment.

While they had some freedom at night and could eat what they wanted, in general, the environment was controlled by the coaches, which he felt "handicapped people" and limited their growth.

The Guy, after acknowledging how much fun he and his teammates had on the trip, went on to suggest that the coach played a "dictator role" and had to "let the team know who is in charge" during their trip to Australia. While the student-athletes who competed abroad physically stepped out of the figured world of their collegiate campus, in some ways, they took the values, characteristics and positional identities (Holland et al., 1998) that defined their identities on those campuses, with them abroad. The coaching staff still yielded the power and the students were forced to negotiate their identities based off the coaches' desires.

Service Learning

Service learning trips in this study were defined as international trips that student-athletes took with their athletic department to participate in a community service project. Eight consultants took part in service learning experiences. In most cases, the athletic department partnered with organizations, who had relationships with non-profits abroad, allowing students an opportunity to engage the communities abroad. The names of the organizations have been withheld from this research study to protect the anonymity of the research consultants. All of the service trips took place in the Caribbean, Central or South America. While there were various service trips in a variety of countries, there were some themes that were prevalent within the data. The sub-themes were 1) "I'm way more grateful for what I have," 2) "You go to a really rural area, a really, really bad area," and 3) "Just like filling each other out before we got down there."

"I'm way more grateful for what I have."

Participating in service trips abroad provided these students with an opportunity to reflect on aspects of their privilege, which many articulated as being "grateful" for what they had. When

thinking comparatively about the United States and the Dominican Republic, Bird asserted,

> Things over here in the United States is nothing compared to what other people are
> accustomed to. We're in a very rural area, so we're bathing like in a water well. We had to
> get water shipped to us and stuff like that. We take this for granted over here. We
> complain about losing our iPhone chargers or something very minimal, and over there it's
> kinda life or death. It really just changed me like what really matters. I'll always take
> from that trip like does this really matter, shall I be really upset about this.

Experiencing some of the challenges of living in an impoverished rural area in the Dominican Republic, Bird referred to as "life or death," provided him the opportunity to reflect on things he takes for granted, and what really matters in life. Bird raised the example of a material item, like an iPhone charger, to highlight the relative challenges he faces in the United States, compared to the challenges people in this community faced, such as having fresh water to drink and bathe in.

Charlie's experience abroad similarly conditioned him to be more appreciative of the resources he had in the United States. Charlie, a football player who participated in a service learning trip in Nicaragua, was influenced by how content people were with what they had.

> Just how happy they were regardless of their shoes on their feet. If they were alone if they
> were together, they were just super happy what they had, and that kinda just made me be
> more appreciative for what I had in my life being so fortunate in that situation where I
> have shoes on my feet stuff like that.

Charlie, along with other students who participated in service learning trips in low income areas who were lacking material resources, were challenged to reflect on things they had taken for granted up to that point in their lives. As articulated in earlier themes that highlight career

influence and commitment to community, many of these students walked away from their experiences thinking not only about their privileges, but how they could use their privilege to make things better for others. With that being said, many of the students conflated privileges of being American with a deficit-oriented perspective of these other countries.

"You go to a really rural area, a really, really bad area."

While many students came away from their experiences being grateful for what they had, in many ways that was related to the deficit-oriented discourse in which they framed many of these communities. In recounting a story of when he got sick in the Dominican Republic, Stones highlighted the pervasiveness of such deficit-oriented perspectives.

> It was kind of scary, to the point, where you know, it all my mamma and said, well, yeah, I feel pretty sick over here, and you know, I didn't really had medicine, there was not really, a place where I feel comfortable having a needle put in me over there, you know what I mean, it's just you don't know, it a foreign country, it's a third world country with a lot of poverty, so it was kind of scary getting that sick over there.

While it is understandable that getting sick in a foreign country could be scary, especially in a rural area, numerous comments offered up by the consultants who participated in service-learning projects reinforced this perception.

The terms "unsafe" "bad" "really really bad" "third world" were often used when I asked them to describe the program that they took part in. In listening to their comments, I wrote in my memo that their tones did not seem malicious in nature, rather they were using language, terminology and frameworks that they had learned to associate to low income communities of color abroad. An example is when Bird stated, "We went to the Dominican Republic. What the

program basically is, is you go to a really rural area, really really bad area somewhere internationally." Bird framed this community as a "really, really bad" however. However, When Bird talked about his specific experience abroad, he often highlighted positive aspects of their community and culture. He told a story about being impressed with the confidence and capabilities of a small toddler and suggested that he "couldn't see a baby in America doing that." He also stated "they have a strong system of community and they have a strong system like family values that I truly admire," and asserted that the way that he learned to do things in America "aren't necessarily the right ways." Bird and others who participated in the service learning programs made me question the institutional logic of the organizations that facilitate the program, and how they frame what the students are going to experience, prior to them going abroad. It is outside of the scope of this research to conduct a thorough analysis of these programs, which also contributed to my decision of not naming these organizations specifically.

Reilly and Senders' (2009) suggests that international education programs "should deliberately address issues of economic injustice and disparity, and that we should push our students to analyze their own relative 'wealth' more critically" (2009, p. 249). The comments of the consultants in this study regarding being "grateful" for what they had in America, coupled with the prevalence of deficit-oriented discourse throughout the data suggest that few were challenged to analyze their relative wealth and "civilization" in a critical manner. Here, Mills' theory of the racial contract (1997), which argues that global racism on behalf of European people and nations is intentional in maintaining a world order based in White Supremacy, provides a framing to understand some of these comments.

Mills argues that European standards of civilization further purport the idea that non-White people are essentially less-human than Whites, which is proven in the sub-standard of

living. Doerr (2013) connects these arguments to international education as she claims that the development of international education programs outside of Europe, often frame these non-European locations and people as deficient "others" in need of Euro-Western culture and development. In Williams' (2008) piece on "Ghettourism and Voyeurism," she argues that though framed as service learning, development and cultural exchange, many programs are more a "voyeuristic desire to 'observe' and 'help' disadvantaged communities," than a true exchange of culture and values (p. 485). These findings suggest that White people of European descent are not the only ones who buy into the idea of the racial contract. Racism is endemic and hegemonic in the United States and the world at large, not simply because White people buy into the power structure, but because people oppressed by Whiteness (i.e. people of color) also buy into it (Lears, 1985). In order to disrupt such pervasive hegemonic narratives, international education programs, specifically short-term study abroad programs, must engage in critical conversations before, during and after students travel abroad (Hartman & Kiely, 2014). The next sub-theme highlights what the importance of such pre-departure meetings.

"Just like feeling each other out before we got down there."

Another theme specific to those who participated in the service learning trips was the value of the pre-departure meetings. Unlike the competition-oriented trips where the team was already familiar with each other and they focused mostly on logistics, the prep meetings for the service-learning trips served as an opportunity for the students to get to know each other and learn about cultural aspects of the country they were going to visit. In reference to the pre-meetings, Snoop stated,

That was a very cool thing that we did just because for me, I was able to get into other

people perspectives on different things, and then also kind of check myself for the, for

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the, the assumptions that I had about the place.

Snoop was referring to a specific meeting where there were a bunch of words on a paper, such as *politics, money, community, trade, race, tourism, development, etc*., under the heading, "What must we learn and unlearn as it relates to these words?" Snoop recalled this meeting in particular because some of his assumptions about Jamaica were challenged, which made him more excited in anticipation of what he was going to experience once he got abroad. While most of the consultants within the service-learning cohort had pre-departure meetings, Snoop was the only consultant who identified engaging with his own pre-conceived notions prior to going abroad. Instead of learning to frame these countries through a deficit-oriented perspective, Snoop was challenged to understand why deficit-oriented perspectives about these countries were so prevalent and how they operated as part of a larger hegemonic discourse that influenced his own thinking.

Snoop also spoke about the opportunity the meetings provided to connect with student-athletes from other sports, many of whom he had never met before they participated in the program,

> Also the ones that we had, was kind of like, team building type activities and we did a number of different activities and we had to, work different, problems out, just like kind of problem solved as a group. I think that was good because it was just, allowing ourselves to get closer before we got into the trip, to get engaged on like, what type of person this person is, and just like filling each other out before we got down there.

For Snoop, it was important that he got the opportunity to engage and get to know the other program participants because it helped him open up about the experiences he was having once he

was abroad.

Stones also appreciated the educational and team building aspects of the pre-meetings. He recalled the team-building meetings as an opportunity to get "closer with the team we are going to be going with….kinds of build these relationships as we were going in to the trip." Their comments align with literature on service learning abroad which suggests pre-departure meetings and orientations have the capability to help students navigate intercultural encounters abroad as well as negotiate aspects of self (Holmes, Bavieri, & Ganassin, 2015). These authors suggest that critical conversations abroad are essential to getting the most out of the trip, however, students will only be able to bring their authentic selves into the meeting spaces if they have developed a previous level of trust. Without the trust developed in the pre-meetings, the meetings during the trip will likely not sustain the level of depth needed to genuinely navigate how hegemonic discourse about oneself and "others" is manifesting on the trip.

Chapter Six: Implications and Conclusions

Introduction and Summary of Findings

Utilizing CRT and Figured Worlds as theoretical frameworks, this phenomenological study explored the international learning experiences of 20 Black male student-athletes, providing counter-narratives to majoritarian narratives about Black student-athletes that suggest they are one-dimensional 'dumb jocks' (Edwards, 1984; Logan, 2017) and thus unworthy of equitable education opportunities. The Black student-athletes who served as research consultants for this study were highlighted in a way that humanizes them beyond their athletic capabilities and provides them a platform to self-author their multidimensional identities. The findings from this study focused on four themes: 1) Bursts the athletic bubble, 2) Racial Awakening, 3) Career Influence, and 4) Cohort Matters. This study is significant for numerous reasons. First, it speaks to a gap in the literature related solution-oriented remedies for the prevalence of athletic identity foreclosure found in revenue-producing Black student-athletes. Second, it fills a gap in the international education literature by highlighting the intersection of being a Black American male abroad. Furthermore, there is currently no peer-reviewed literature that focuses on the experiences of Black student-athletes abroad.

Frame through the lens of CRT, this study has significant implications for practitioners and researchers who are concerned with the plight of Black student-athletes. While this study focused on their experiences abroad and how their experiences impacted their identities and future orientation of self, the theoretical framework of figured worlds provided me a lens from which to ask questions that led to responses that contrasted their experiences on college campuses, to their experiences abroad. While most of the research consultants felt indebted to the opportunities that sports provided them, they also felt that sports in some ways was limiting to

their growth or the growth of some of their teammates while in college. Results from this study suggest that Black student-athletes believe that international education is important for other Black student-athletes. Many of the consultants committed aspects of their future to providing such opportunities for other Black student-athletes or Black youth in general. This study provides readers who work with Black student-athletes an opportunity to learn directly from their experiences and reflections.

Identity negotiation: From Enclosure to Exposure to Enactment

Research focusing on the intersection of racial and athletic identity in college athletes (Bimper & Harrison, 2011; Bimper, 2016; Beamon, 2010, 2012; Comoeaux & Harrison, 2011; Singer, 2008; Singer, 2011) consistently suggests that there are limited opportunities for Black student-athletes to negotiate and engage aspects of their multidimensional selves, due to the constraints of being a revenue-producing athlete. As identified by the comments of Black Jack, studying abroad "just bursts the bubble and it just blows everything up." These students have been conditioned since they were young to focus on and excel in athletics (Beamon, 2012; Howard, 2013). While many of these influences come from their family and community (Beamon, 2012), there are other majoritarian racialized narratives (Nasir, 2011) that socialize Black youth into thinking that their best opportunity for success, is through athletics (Howard, 2013). While collegiate environments should expose these students to the world outside of sports, in many ways, they limit the identity production of these athletes, pushing them towards athletic identity foreclosure (Bimper & Harrison, 2011; Brewer & Petitpas, 2017).

More than an athlete

Research consultants for this study often identified their international learning experience

as one the most pivotal or transformational experience they had in college. This finding is consistent with study abroad research on students of color (Wick, 2011), however, I argue that international education is specifically transformative for Black student-athletes due to how systematic and controlled their collegiate experiences are. One of the more powerful quotes in this study comes from Batman who states, "It had been a while before I've been acknowledged for something that wasn't football." Batman's comment provides readers with an entry into the troubling ways in which Black male adolescents are celebrated only in specific contexts. Ladson-Billings (2011) argues that while we praise Black boys for success in certain avenues like sports and entertainment, they are denied similar recognition and even rejected in academic settings. Batman's experience abroad provided him recognition outside of athletics, a form of social and cultural capital within the collegiate setting that needs to be nurtured and developed instead of denied (Bimper, 2016). In discussing the concept of identity within figured worlds, Urrieta (2007) states,

> Identity is always a dynamic co-constructed cultural phenomenon. Even when more durable identities are formed, how these identities are understood and how their meanings change over time become life-long processes. (p. 118)

This framing of identity, as a "co-constructed phenomenon" suggests that other people's understandings of Black student-athletes' worth influences Black student-athletes self-perceptions. Batman's comments suggest that he was only valued and recognized for playing football prior to studying abroad. However, as Urrieta notes, even "durable identities" like the salient identity of athlete, can "change over time." The following quote by Black Jack highlights how his international trip influenced the negotiation of his identities and allowed him to better decipher and resist when other people attempted to box him into the identity of an athlete.

I think when you do a trip like that, you learn more about yourself, so you realize that some conversations are just around sports. Are you gonna be ready to be Minnesota? No. Versus like oh, what things do you really enjoy or who are you as a person? And you realize that this person sees me as an athlete, they don't really see me as the deeper, the more analytical, the more... you know, we don't have conversations on that end because all they see me as is as I can run, I can jump you know and I think that's the depth of who I was and now there is so much more to me than just that.

Black Jack came to identify as "so much more" than just an athlete, highlighting how self-perception is fluid and in a constant process of change and negotiation based on the various contexts one finds themself (Holland et al., 1998). Holland and colleagues go on to argue that some figured worlds provide space for agency and self-authoring, while others limit agency and rather position individuals into certain roles and identities. Before his study abroad experience, Black Jack suggests that his "depth" was related to his football identity, but now, he sees himself as more "than just that" and he won't allow himself to be limited by other's people's perceptions of him. Paraphrasing Calhoun (1994) Urrieta argues, "whether as individuals and or as collectives, people make sense of who they are personally and politically and they convey these meanings to others" (p. 118). The findings from this research implicate that international experiences provide Black student-athletes a sense of agency where they no longer comfortable being identified or identifying as solely athletes. They began to self-author themselves as multifaceted human beings, with the role of athlete making up an aspect of their overall conception of self.

Peer to Peer Influence

Beamon's (2012) study on the influences that led to athletic identity foreclosure in 20

Former D-1 Black student-athletes, highlights the powerful socializing role that Black student-athletes play in shaping other Black student-athletes identities and goals. This is to be expected due to the amount of time they spend together, and how they often have shared values and goals of playing professionally, which can lead to them reproducing their social status (Singer, 2008). Building off Singer's argument, Comeaux (2007) suggests that the biggest influence on Black student-athletes developing alternative salient identities, such as academic, are there Black student-athlete peers. For better or for worse, Black student-athletes are highly influenced by other Black student-athletes. While this may often be seen as a detriment to their holistic development, the findings from this research study implicate that when Black student-athletes participate in international educational experiences, their student-athlete peers are the ones they share their experiences with the most. Being as that these student-athletes who go abroad come back identifying as "more than athletes" the can be a positive factor in helping the rest of their teammates think about life outside of sports.

Career Readiness

Coming to realize that they were "more than an athlete" provided consultants of this study the space and opportunity to think more critically about their future orientation once their playing days are over, ultimately, as Batman asked of himself, "What's next?" The students met and were influenced by people abroad that expanded their conceptions of what was possible for their future selves. John was so heavily influenced by the "movers and shakers" he met abroad that he immediately began setting tangible goals that he accomplished, such as starting multiple non-profit organizations and authoring his own book, while still competing as a student-athlete. Others used their time away from sports to gain confidence in aspects of their identities that made the transition out of sport less daunting. The consultants experiences abroad exposed them

to the various international careers that were available to them, while others gained skills and experiences that directly translated into successful careers. This is critical to this group because previous research suggests many Black student-athletes are not graduating from college career-ready (Brewer et al., 1993; Henderson, 2013; Singer, 2011). Ultimately, their experiences abroad coupled with the people they met and engaged with while abroad, better prepared them for their life as their athletic careers come to an end.

Expanding conceptions of Blackness and community

The findings from this study suggest that the international educational experiences of the Black student-athletes in this study led to a racial awakening that positively impacted their racial identity and ultimately led them towards a more global understanding of the communities in which they were committed to. Fanon (2008) and Hall (1990) both suggest that through recognizing and appreciating difference, we begin to understand the true and heterogeneous nature of what it means to be Black. Meeting Black people from other countries and understanding Blackness through the lens of another country broadens one's definition of race, racial categorizations, racial narratives, and ultimately, Blackness. Experiencing international education through a critical lens helped these Black student-athletes challenge the hegemonic racialized notion that Black men are destined to be athletes (Beamon, 2012; Bimper & Harrison, 2011), by unveiling the heterogeneity and fluidity of Blackness on a global scale (Hall, 1996). Their encounters with Blackness abroad provided them with opportunities to author global identities as they recognized that their Blackness connected them to a diaspora of people around the world. Their experiences reinforced the notion that they are more than athletes.

Community commitment: Enacting social justice

The confluence of coming to understand themselves as more than athletes, developing a career-oriented identity, and developing a greater understanding of what it means to hold the global identity of a Black American, influenced many of the consultants of this project to dedicate portions of their life's work to uplifting Black communities locally and globally. Two of the consultants, both under the age of 25, have gone on to write books, both of which should be published in 2018. Other consultants for the project have started non-profit organizations, while some have dedicated their careers to uplifting marginalized communities. While others have yet to enact their community-oriented visions, engaging them around their personal goals as well as their community-oriented goals was truly a humbling experience. Snoop, for example, followed up with me a few weeks after our interview asking if I could support his most recent community-oriented project. He successfully held an online fundraiser where he raised over $2,200.00 to purchase movie tickets for underserved children in South Los Angeles to see *Black Panther*. Many of the consultants of this project came to enact their identities as change makers in their communities.

There is a long history of Black athletes going abroad and either gaining consciousness for later social justice work or using the international platform as a space for social justice. Here, I briefly describe two historical cases to contextualize the how international spaces provide a platform for socially justice oriented work.

Paul Robeson

Paul Robeson, once hailed as an American hero by the likes of both Black and White Americans, was one of the most dynamic personalities of his day. He was an outstanding football player at Rutgers and played in the NFL while simultaneously earning his law degree at

Columbia. He then went on to have an international career that included singing and acting. In the late 1920's, Robeson began his international acting career by starring in plays in London. While abroad, Robeson traveled extensively throughout Europe and after trips to the Soviet Union and Spain, he began to reassess his political neutrality. Thomas notes that "after his experiences abroad, Robeson evolved from an artist with a conscience to an artist committed to political action" (Thomas, 2012, p. 24). He used his immense status to become an outspoken critic of racial segregation and injustice.

At The Paris World Peace Congress in April of 1949, Robeson testified and charged that he was not afraid of communists, and had no desire to go war with them. Furthermore, he denounced racism in the United States and Euro-Western imperialism abroad. The State Department's response was to deny him a passport so that he could no longer challenge American exceptionalism on the international stage. His story highlights the transformative power that international travel as well as international platforms can provide those concerned with social justice.

1968 Olympics

Aware of the growing importance of sports to America's international image, Black athletes and activists, led by Harry Edwards, used the 1968 Olympic platform to subvert American diplomatic interest and bring awareness to the racial atrocities facing Black people in America and across the globe. Harry Edwards and other leaders of the proposed boycott were heavily motivated by the international platform the 1968 Olympics provided and "the enormous attention engendered by any attempts to disrupt the sacred institution of sport" (Wiggins, 1997 p. 108). In 1967, Edwards initiated the Olympic Project for Human Rights (OPHR), namely to protest the International Olympic Committee (IOC) decision to let South Africa into the games

as well as the "United States seemingly indifference to treatment of black people in that country" (Wigginton, 2006, p. 66). The OPHR placed continual pressure on the IOC and eventually over 30 countries withdrew from the games in protest of South Africa's participation (Thomas, 2012; Wigginton, 2006), a country which vehemently discriminated against its Black population through de jure Apartheid. While the IOC eventually denied South Africa from participating, the issue of racial injustice on an international scale was now at the center of the Olympic Games.

The OPHR brought a new-found awareness and consciousness to Black athletes and Black America. The buildup to the 1968 Olympics and the hypocrisy surrounding the games fed the consciousness of Black athletes, allowing them to make connections between the racial injustice they faced at home with imperialism and racial injustice on a global stage. Lee Evans, one of the spokespersons of the proposed boycott stated, "A few years ago I didn't know what was happening. My white junior college coach used to tell colored boy jokes and I'd laugh. Now I'd kick his ass" (Scott, 1971, pg. 59).   Black athletes became more outspoken against inter-personal racism as well as institutional and systemic forms of oppression. In his book, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete (1969)*, Edwards argues Black athletes of the day were coming to recognize their individual success had little impact on the oppressive conditions of the Black communities locally and globally.

While a complete boycott was avoided, Black student-athletes, Tommy Smith and John Carlos, used the world biggest stage, the Olympics, to raise awareness about the injustices faced by Black Americans and darker skinned people all over the world. Conducting the Black power salute during the National Anthem put America's issues with racial injustice on center stage for the world to see. Some, like Jesse Owens, railed out against the protest and its organizer Harry Edwards for dismissing the positive role that sport had played in American race relations. Owens

believed, like most of White America, that while discrimination did exist, sports served as a sanctuary from racism. Thus, the protesting athletes should be ashamed for antagonizing an institution that has provided them with so many opportunities (Thomas, 2012). While many in the Black conservative ranks agreed with Owens, for most Black Americans, the iconic image of John Carlos and Tommy Smith raising their hands in defiance, served as a rallying cry against racism, while inspiring future generations to stand up in the name of justice.

The two examples above highlight how gaining a more global understanding of the world, and ones place in it, can lead to a deep commitment towards community oriented social justice.

Theoretical Implications

CRT in international Spaces

This study utilized the frameworks of CRT as well as Figured Worlds to provide depth and insight into the process of identity negotiation, development and formation that Black male student-athletes experience due to their international learning experiences. CRT asserts that race and racism are endemic to American institutions and society, which was echoed throughout the data collected in this research. Consultants talked about how they were exploited as Black student-athletes due to the value they brought to Universities and athletic departments. This research informs CRT by asserting that racism is a global phenomenon, which provides Black Americans with a unique set of challenges and privileges while abroad.

Most of the participants in the study came to the realization that racism extended far beyond the borders of the United States, and was deeply imbed into global relations of power. Colonization not only impacted the Western world; it impacted the world at large, setting up a

global racial hierarchy with White and European countries on top. Thus, when abroad, many of the Black student-athletes faced aspects of discrimination, most notably microaggressions suggesting that Black people could only be successful through sport. However, due to their American national identity, many of the Black student-athletes accessed aspects of privilege that they were previously not privy to. In a sense, these students gained access to aspects of Whiteness. While racism oppresses Black people in the United States, racism is a global phenomenon, so when abroad, the American identity of these Black men often became more salient and they started to recognize aspects of privilege in their lives due to a global system of racism that oppresses non-European countries. These countries are still stuck in power relations based in colonialism and the development of the United States as a super power, which provide all Americans certain privileges when they travel abroad.

Many of the consultants for this study developed a sense of self that connected them to Black people across the globe. An aspect of developing this sense of self was being confronted with and reflecting upon the privileges and opportunities they have in their life. For example, Snoop, who participated in a service learning trip to Jamaica, came to understand how systems such as the IMF and the World Bank privilege countries like the United States and Great Britain while continually oppressing countries like Jamaica. While perhaps not directly, Snoop acknowledged that he likely benefits from these colonialist power relations due to his identity as an American.

> "It made me realize what I am, who I am as a Black man. I need to try to find ways to kind of flip the script, try to change the culture and help at least the other black people who are around that are less fortunate….as far as talking about systematic, systematic oppression."

Once abroad, Snoop was better able to understand how he was both oppressed and privileged by a global system of White Supremacy. These findings nuance and complicate CRT and its understanding of racism and encourage more analysis of CRT within an international framework.

When highlighting the endemic nature of racism in the U.S., Solorzano & Yosso (2002) cite Audre Lorde's' definition of racism as, "the belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby the right to dominance" (Lorde, 1980, p. 17). Lorde goes on to suggest that racism benefits the superior group (White) while negatively affecting other racial/ ethnic groups (POC). While this may be true in this country, how does a global system based on White superiority, impact the global status of Americans of color? Black student-athletes? Do Black Americans benefit from the unequal allocation of global resources, trade deals, etc.? Do people of color in America also receive privileges, based on a global system of White Superiority? How does inhabiting figured worlds outside of American, impact Black Americans positionality related to privilege status? The findings of this study suggest asking oneself these questions can lead to what psychologist William Cross identified as the optimal stage of Black racial identity development, a commitment not only to one's own racial group, but to other marginalized groups (Cross, Parham, & Helms, 1991), creating a web of international resistance to global White supremacy.

Blackness as capital: The Global Majority

Yosso (2005) uses CRT to challenge the idea that people of color are in need of the social and cultural capital of the dominant group. She argues that instead of focusing on what communities of color lack, educators and researchers should focus on the cultural wealth within these communities. She highlights six forms of capital that students from minoritized communities possess: social, familial, aspirational, navigational, linguistic and resistance. As

most of the consultants from this study had international learning experiences in countries of pre-dominantly people of color, they found that their Blackness provided them multiple forms of capital. Students came to realize that globally, they were part of the majority and that people in other countries identified with them due to the color of their skin, and the assumed shared experiences that comes with shared skin tone. Students with Black skin felt accepted and connected to the communities in which they visited. Furthermore, Black students who traveled in groups with Whites students experienced levels of access and community acceptance that their White counterparts did not.

Figured Worlds in and out of the schooling context

This research utilized the lens of Figured Worlds as summarized by Urrieta (2007) to highlight the ways in which some spaces provide Black male student-athletes space for authoring of self, while other spaces limit such agency and position Black student-athletes into prescribed roles. Black student-athletes' identities are often influenced by the worlds in which they occupy, as identity is dialogic in nature. This research study highlights how pervasive deficit-oriented narratives about Black males in society influence their identity formation. Black male student-athletes' experiences with identity negotiation are unique because of their recognizability and importance within American culture and society. College sports are foundational to American society and culture, thus, Black student-athletes are forced to navigate others people's expectations of who they are both in a local and national context.

Black student-athletes occupy figured worlds locally and nationally because they are recognized and talked about on a national level. For example, early in 2018, Laura Ingraham, a Fox News analyst, suggested the role of athletes in society was to "shut up and dribble" (Sullivan, 2018). While she was talking about Lebron James, a professional athlete, her

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statement was also a direct message to Black student-athletes. Messages like this are a direct assault on the identities of Black student-athletes, who are trying to navigate what it means to be both a student and an athlete at the same time. Majoritarian narratives about Black males in American society suggests that being an athlete is their best avenue for success, while also suggesting that if they do achieve athletic success, their role is to compete athletically while having no political or agentic voice. Black student-athletes are also forced to navigate this locally as they are socialized and conditioned into over-identifying as athletes (Adler, 1991) on their campuses and the surrounding communities. University administrators as well as Faculty often reinforce these narratives by having lower academic expectations of Black athletes than they do for the general student body as well as their White athlete peers (Comeuax, 2010). Thus, Black student-athletes identities as athletes and students are shaped by figured worlds both locally and nationally. While Black student-athletes have the opportunity to resist such narratives locally through their agentic actions, how do they resist these hegemonic narratives nationally, within figured worlds where they are lacking agency and voice?

Practical Implications

This study has significant implications in the realms of student-athlete development in higher education that should lead to praxis (Freire, 2000) and more equitable educational outcomes for Black student-athletes. Much of the literature surrounding Black student-athletes identifies the unique challenges related structural and perceived racism that negatively impacts identity development and educational outcomes of Black student-athletes (Bimper & Harrison, 2011; Beamon, 2012; Comeaux & Harrison, 2011; Cooper et al., 2017; Singer, 2008; Singer, 2011). This body of literature emphasizes the need for these students to find spaces where they can produce salient identities that work in collaboration with their identities as athletes being as

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that it is their athletic identity which got them to their place in life (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011).

This is the first empirical research study that examines the influence of international education on the identity production and negotiation of Black student-athletes, offering up a praxis-oriented response to previous scholarship. The findings from this study suggest that international education provides spaces for these students to author new self-understandings and identities that positively impact their identity development, transition out of sport and future orientation. While this dissertation focused on the influence of international education on Black student-athlete identity production, the implications of this study extend beyond that particular scope.

Using transferable skills to expand identity

Black student-athletes need to be provided with opportunities to showcase the skills they develop as athletes, and how they can be applied and transferred to spheres outside of the athletic arena. During my interview with Stones, who participated in a service learning trip in the Dominican Republic, I asked him, "Do you feel like being an athlete, like that part of your identity impacted the trip if at all? He responded,

> I definitely think it also allowed us to complete the project and go about it in a different way, because most people don't' face the adversity that athletes face you know, I mean, I've performed in the classroom, I've performed in the field, I wake up at 5:45 every day, I get home and finish with all my activities, you know, at like 8 pm and then I get homework and have to do this and that, so todays are chock full, you know, if not in class, where I practice, when I had practice or in class or in the treatment center or the filler room. So I think it just allowed us to have a different mindset in the way we go about challenges, challenges and the way we attack things to, because we have aloft of

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adversity whether it's on the field or in the film room and all that stuff, so I think it just

allow us a different perspective when handling challenges some think that helped.

When Stones stepped outside of the collegiate environment to build a basketball court in the heat

of summer in the Dominican Republic, he had the opportunity to reflect on the skillset, work

ethic, and diligence he developed as a student-athlete and apply all of that in another setting.

Using the lens of figured worlds which suggests that people come to know and understand

themselves in relation to the spaces in which they occupy (Holland et al., 1998), it is logical to

assume that many student-athletes downplay just how many transferable skills they have because

they spend so much time with other athletes, participating in their sport, that they come to

normalize, what is truly extraordinary.

Part of the problem is that the NCAA prohibits student-athletes from making money off

of their namesake and their brand. If a student-athlete wanted to develop a nutrition business, a

fitness business, a motivational speaking business, a time management business, a life coaching

business, a youth sports business, they would not be allowed to due to current NCAA

restrictions. Instead of helping student-athletes find opportunities to develop and monetize their

transferable skills, they are prohibited from doing so. Until these abhorrent and oppressive rules

and regulations are changed, it is incumbent upon practitioners who work with student-athletes to

find opportunities for them to showcase how their skills can be transferable into other areas. The

findings from this research study, suggest navigating studying abroad and service learning

opportunities are one of those many opportunities.

Enacting the 'student' in student-athlete experiences

Nasir (2011) argues that as a society, we tell stories, racialized narratives about people

and groups that help us make sense of the inequities we see in society. CRT also encourages storytelling, however, these stories should serve as counter narratives to disrupt hegemonic practices of inequities within schools. Recounting a guest lecture Nasir delivered at the University of Texas at Austin on March 22nd of 2018, she explained how racialized narratives about students of color often excuse and relieve institutions from accountability regarding educational equity. After framing her discussion around racialized narratives, she detailed a research project she conducted at a high performing high school in the Bay Area, that was made up of majority students of color. As her research team sought to better understand the dynamics of the school, they began to uncover that the most rigorous program in the school, was made up of predominantly white students and Asian students, with only 5% of the students identifying as Black, while Black students made up over 40% of the school. During an individual interview, a research assistant for the project asked one of the teachers to help explain this finding, the teacher (my paraphrasing here) acknowledged the issue and suggested that they have trouble recruiting Black and Brown students with high enough scores to compete in the program. The teacher went on to identify the issue as a pipeline issue, suggesting that more work needs to be done in elementary and middle school to prepare these students. In first hearing these comments, one might find themselves agreeing with the majoritarian narrative that identifies the problem within the student, rather than the institution itself. These students are not coming in with the test scores or the critical thinking skills to compete in the program. This is an example one of the many narratives, or racialized storylines, we use to make sense of the inequities we see in society and within educational institutions. Instead of reflecting on the practices or lack thereof at this high school that contribute to the severe underrepresentation of Black students in this program, she told a story, to make sense out of this inequity.

As a society, we have created racialized narratives around Black student-athletes to make sense of institutional and educational inequities (Harper, 2018). Narratives include the following. *Black student-athletes are more concerned with going professional then getting an education. Black student-athletes aren't getting paid, but their getting quality educations at top tier institutions. Black student-athletes don't have the time to engage in academically enriching activities like study abroad*. Referencing his study abroad trip, the following quote by Black Jack disrupts, distorts and dispels such narratives as he makes it clear that having a world class education is an essential part to being a student-athlete.

> To have a life experience like that, not only do I get the best of being a student and athlete at a university like this one and now, I get the chance to have this amazing college experience, it was like the best of both worlds. To me it defined, that was the ultimate, the epitome of being a student athlete. It was the defining thing because you got world class experience, literally a world class experience, not only just athletically but academically so I had much more appreciation for that, it was just like wow, it made me have so much more respect for the university because before I just thought that it wanted to use me and that it never really cared about my development outside of me just playing football but to engage in something like that and be supported on that, it just gave me so much more respect for the university.

Clearly, Black Jack's study abroad experience was transformational as it was the "defining" moment of his experience as a student-athlete. In the second sentence of the paragraph, Black Jack suggests that "now" he gets "to have this amazing college experience, it was the best of both worlds." Black teenage athletes and their families are sold on this dream that they are going to get to go to college, and get the best of both worlds, have a true experience as both a student

and an athlete, however, Black Jack's comment suggests that up until this point, until he studied abroad, that was not his experience.

What do we know about the experiences of Black student-athletes? We know that Black student-athletes are not seen as students or positioned as learners, instead they are positioned as athletes, Black Jacks comments corroborate. What we know is that revenue producing athletes in the Power Five conferences, mostly whom are Black, are graduating at lower numbers than their White peers (Harper, 2018), and those that are graduating are underprepared for the professional world (Beamon, 2012). What we know is that these students are stacked into certain majors, and discouraged and even denied access to their desired majors (Comoeaux, 2007). What we know is that these students are discouraged from engaging in extracurricular activities that may serve to broaden and expand their identities (Sack & Stuarowsky, 1998). We know that these students spend upwards of 40 hours participating in their sport during the season, although NCAA regulation cap their commitment at 20. We know that when The University of Texas's football team flies across the country to compete against West Virginia, they travel for three days, yet it only counts for three hours toward their 20-hour commitment. We know they are exploited. In his book, *The New Plantation*, Hawkins (2013) argues the only system that mirrors this type of exploitation within American history is sharecropping and slavery.

Black Jack states that it was the educational experience that 'defined' his time as his university as a student-athlete, as he finally got to take advantage of not only the world class athletic opportunities, but the world class academic opportunities. More importantly, Black Jack became more appreciative of his university and his experience as a student athlete, because prior to them supporting his study abroad experience, he thought the university simply wanted to use him and never cared about his development outside of football. Black Jack came to respect his

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institution not just because they supported him going abroad, but because to him, it proved that they supported his development as a full human being. His development as a student-athlete, not simply an athlete. Black Jack returned from his study abroad experience in better shape than he left, more committed to his identity as an athlete, more committed to his identity as a student, and more committed towards making a positive impact in his community. Black Jack has spent the last eight years of his professional career working with student-athletes helping them to identify opportunities within their institutions that will stretch their identities like international education, so that they too can develop a stronger sense of self while in college.

Interest-Convergence: The value of international education for athletic departments

The interest convergence tenet of CRT suggests that universities and their athletic departments can also benefit by providing life-changing study abroad opportunities for Black student-athletes. First, the academic and professional benefits of study abroad including higher GPA and graduation rates, and higher levels of career-readiness would obviously serve the esteem of the University and its athletic department. Second, the benefits of study abroad as well as the ability to market study abroad to potential athletes would likely have a very positive impact on recruiting. Not only would institutions be able to distinguish themselves from schools who are hesitant to offer these opportunities, they would also be better able to recruit the epitome of a student-athlete, one who is equally interested in their athletic and educational pursuits. For example, in 2017, Jim Harbaugh of the University of Michigan announced that he will be taking his football team abroad at the end of every spring semester for a week, and after the trip concludes, the student-athletes will be able to join a University based study abroad program for part of the semester if they take the necessary steps to do so (Murphy, 2017). In the spring of 2017, ESPN and other major sports outlets followed the team through their week trip to Italy.

Despite my own reservations about how the trip was conducted, the university was able to use the international experience as a marketing tool, to recruit students-athletes who want to experience "the best of both worlds;" collegiate experiences that reinforced both their athletic and student identities. Third, student-athletes are widely recognized by their peers on campus as leaders. Providing opportunities for student-athletes to study abroad would likely have a big impact on encouraging the general student body to take advantage of study abroad opportunities. This would not only develop the presence of a stronger international office on campus, but would lead to more global recognition of the University. International education would be especially impactful for Black student-athletes in revenue producing sports due to the challenges they face on PWI's as listed earlier in this paper, however, other student-athletes, athletic departments, and the University as a whole would also benefit from the development of such opportunities.

Primary and Secondary Education

This finding suggests that Black student-athletes from lower income backgrounds would likely have more challenges accessing study abroad because they often don't come in with the social and cultural capital to demand such opportunities. The case study on John highlighted the unique challenges he faced when attempting to study abroad as he acknowledged that no one in his family had a passport. All of the other consultants who studied abroad were exposed international opportunities during their formative years in primary and secondary school. It is incumbent upon teachers and practitioners working with Black student-athletes in the K-12 schooling context to provide them with opportunities to develop holistic identities so that they are not reliant upon their athletic identity as they transition into college.

Smith's (2015) dissertation on the intersection of athletic and academic identity in elite Black middle school athletes found that even when the boys had strong academic identities,

others such as coaches, teachers and peers saw them primarily as athletes. Howard (2013) similarly notes how Black male youth are socialized into believing that athletics is their primary mode of success from their communities and majoritarian narratives in media. Academic teachers, physical education teachers and coaches need to instill in Black boys that there is more to this world than being an athlete, because their peers, some teachers and the medial at large will attempt to position them as one-dimensional athletes. Teaching Black boys about the vastness of Black people is critical to them developing healthy understandings of themselves and expanding the realm of possibilities for their futures.

Recommendations

There are numerous recommendations that I suggest based upon the findings of this study. Most of the recommendations are aimed at universities and athletic departments to help them think about how they can institute international education for Black student-athletes in a way that best serves them as well as the communities in which they will engage abroad.

Competition Trips: An opportunity for transformative education

The findings from this study suggests that athletically oriented competitive trips can serve to broaden the minds and horizons of Black student-athletes. For all of the participants in this study, their athletically-oriented team trip was their first international trip. For Hamilton and The Guy, this trip served as the foundation for their professional basketball careers overseas. Both articulated that they had never considered playing professionally overseas until they had the opportunity to travel abroad with their collegiate basketball team. Lebron felt that his international experience with his college basketball team served as a "building block" for future travels and work experiences abroad. During the follow up focus group with Lebron, he talked

about having recently returned from leading a group of students on a trip to India. The case study on X also highlights how for the consultants in this study, trips abroad with their college basketball teams served to be the first of many. While all of the consultants acknowledged how impactful their experiences were, they all acknowledge that there were plenty of missed educational opportunities on these athletic foreign tours.

None of the consultants for this research study remembered getting any sort of cultural knowledge or educational preparation for the country prior to their trip. They did not learn anything about the language, the culture, the history, or the countries relationship with America. Through their narratives, it was clear that they yearned for such knowledge while they were abroad to help them make sense of their experience. Both X and Lebron, who had the opportunities to participate in study abroad trips after their competition abroad trips, talked about how different the experiences were. While they both acknowledged that the goals of a study abroad and a competition abroad trip are different, they also felt that there was an educational opportunity lost by not engaging in the countries culture prior to the trip or during the trip. Here, I suggest a list of recommendations to enhance the educational and cultural aspects of competition trips.

- o Have pre-departure meetings where the countries culture and history is engaged.
- o Challenge students to think about assumptions they have the country and where those assumptions come from.
- o Read a book written by someone from the country for cultural context.
- o Learn the basics of the language, such as greetings and common idioms.
- o While abroad, find opportunities to engage local people and engage in local customs.
- o Encourage or rather incentivize students to journal while abroad.

- Attend a lecture or community-oriented event while abroad.
- Lead small group debriefs abroad highlighting similarities and difference to American culture.

The findings also suggest that while these students athletes feel an extra sense of freedom while abroad, their opportunities for identity exploration will be heavily influenced by the coaching staff. Thus, it is critical to provide students with role-models on the trip who are going to encourage them to think critically about what they are experiencing. It is also important to provide these students with as much free time as possible to explore the city and cultural sites by themselves. For example, when organizing the trip, schedule multiple days where the students will have multiple hours to themselves, without the influence of the coaching staff. In order for students to learn about themselves and experience aspects of "freedom and responsibility" abroad, it is incumbent upon the coaching staff to release some of their control over the students schedules. Coaches must realize that if they want the trip to be more than basketball abroad, they must provide space for their students to have self-determination.

Service-learning Trips: Developing cultural competence prior to departure

One of the most essential parts of traveling abroad, especially when engaging with a community is doing the necessary research beforehand. Knowledge and cultural competency of the community can be established prior to departure "through guest lectures, readings, films, and pre-program group presentations, much of this can be accomplished and will allow service to be well-integrated with cultural learning" (Schroeder, Wood, Galiardi, Koehn, 2009, p. 145). While most service learning providers are aware of the importance of these pre-meetings, my interviews with athletic department staff as well as staff for service providers suggested that the unique time challenges facing student-athletes can sometimes lead to these meetings being left

out of the process. Due to the limited time they have, they are often only able to cover the logistical aspects of the meeting. As these types of trips are growing in popularity in athletic departments across the country, it is imperative that athletic department staff find the time to build out the programs, so that the students and the communities they are visiting get the most out of the experience.

Making space for these critical conversations pre-departure allows for students be reflect on their own identities, challenge assumptions they may have about the host country, and connect with their fellow program participants. During my interviews with students who participated in service learning trips, the way they experienced their pre-departure meetings influenced the way they framed these communities prior to departure. The prevalence of deficit-oriented discourses identified in the findings chapter often came from students who were taught about the country and the country's challenges. In attempting to paint a realistic picture about the challenges those communities faced, it seemed that those who facilitated the meetings positioned these countries as "really, really bad" at times. I, myself, know just how challenging this can be even when this is not the intention. When I led a trip to South Africa four years ago, I began to realize that in trying to prepare the students for what they were going to experience, I oftentimes fell into deficit-oriented framings of the people and their communities. However, the data from this study also suggests that there are pedagogical ways to engage students about the challenges facing these communities through a more holistic framing that does not position them in deficit-oriented frameworks.

Snoop recalled his favorite pre-departure meetings where the ones were he and the other program participants' assumptions were challenged as they got to better understand themselves, each other, and the country. Instead of being talked at, they engaged in critical activities that

highlighted some of the biases they were coming in with. This provided them an opportunity to think about where they learned such biases and assumptions. In their piece on creating sustainable travel practices, Schroeder and colleagues (2009) claim,

> Facilitating power/privilege simulation activities, conducting panel discussions with previous participants, engaging in frank group discussions, and requiring reflection/ reaction papers from the students before departure can all assist with teaching these important lessons before engaging with the host community (p. 146).

The more students think critically about the environment they are walking into, the more they will be able to develop authentic relationships while participating in their projects, and the more they will take away from their experiences. As important as the pre-meetings are, and often a missed opportunity when it comes to these programs, especially with student-athletes, is the post-trip meeting. Many of the student consultants for this research did not participate in post-trip meetings with the other program participants and staff to reflect on their experience abroad, however, those that did felt like it helped them re-adjust to American society. During my interview with Shaq, he mentioned that one of the challenges coming back "to civilization" was that he didn't have many people who could understand and truly engage the reflections he was having about his experience. Regarding the post-trip meeting, he stated, "we were able to, you know, come together once before school came back together and that was probably the best thing for us." It is important that athletic departments put the time and energy needed into these trips, so that students have an opportunity to have critical conversations before, during and after their trip.

Partnerships between athletic departments and international offices

Athletic departments can partner with the international office at their institution and create trips that bring together student-athletes as well as the general student body. These trips can both fit the time demands of student-athletes in revenue producing sports, while also creating opportunities where student-athletes get to influence and be influenced by students who they don't typically get to spend quality time with on campus. The University of Wisconsin-Madison led 17 students on a service-learning trip to the Dominican Republic in the Summer of 2017 (Baggot, 2017). Of the 17 students, nine were student-athletes, and three were football players, one Chris James, was competing for the starting running back spot. It is important to note the investment into such programming on behalf of the athletic department and more specifically the football coaching staff. It is understandable that coaches may not want their best athletes to miss time where they can be preparing for the season, however, there are often valuable lessons learned abroad that can positively impact the way a student-athlete comes to understand their status as an athlete. Upon returning from his trip, Baggot (2017) quotes Chris James as stating, ""I think Coach Chryst liked it when I said I'm not going to complain anymore about anything football-wise because I know the reality." James' sentiment was echoed throughout the interviews and focus groups in this study. While they realized there was more to life than sports, they also realized what a great opportunity and platform they had as student-athletes.

Partnerships, like the one between the athletic department and the international office allow all stakeholders to get the most out of the experience. When run through the international office, programs can recruit from the general student body while also having a professor lead the trip allowing the students to earn academic credit, as they did in this program. Athletic departments can influence the timing of the trips so they can target revenue-producing sports

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who are the most vulnerable to the negative impacts of athletic identity foreclosure. Student-athletes get the opportunity to as James stated, "be immersed in a culture… not just sit on a beach." Furthermore, they get a true student-athlete experience, they get an opportunity to step outside of their athlete role and learn about themselves while learning about another culture abroad, engage with non-student athletes, and be provided with the opportunity to author their identities as "learners" as college students.

Limitations

A hermeneutic phenomenological study is based largely on the consultants experiences as well as how the researcher interprets those experiences. For this reason, some call into question the objectivity of not only phenomenological research, but qualitative research in general. However, I as the researcher, epistemologically understand knowledge as a co-constructed phenomenon and reject the idea of objectivity and neutrality as necessary foundations for research. It is my understanding that the researcher always plays a critical role in the collection of data, both quantitatively as well as qualitatively, through the questions they decide to ask, the methods they propose, the populations they decide to study, and the theories in which they use to analyze their data. Thus, interpretations of research are always conditional upon time and place (Creswell, 1998). This study followed ethical qualitative data collection protocols to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. Findings were corroborated through multiple data collection methods, validated through interpretive member checks with research consultants, and reviewed by peers to acknowledge and limit the role of researcher bias. With that being said, there are numerous limitations to this study, which are outlined below.

Sample

The first limitation is the sample in which 18 of the 20 consultants for the project had already graduated from college, while only two were still students. As students mature and matriculate out of college, they are often more mature and reflective of their collegiate experiences. Having more current undergraduate students as part of the sample pool would have provided this research with greater insight into how students were influenced by their international educational experience while still navigating the confines of their collegiate institution as student-athletes.

Scope

Another limitation related to the sample and the scope is this study's broad understanding of international educational experiences. While initially interested in researching the study abroad experiences of Black males, this study broadened its scope to incorporate multiple forms of international education, which included study abroad, service learning and competition abroad. While there were eight consultants who participated in study abroad and eight that participated in service learning abroad, only four participants participated in competition abroad. Furthermore, I suggest that generalizations about this study be made with caution as the students came from a variety of universities, studied abroad in a variety of countries, participated in a variety of service learning programs, and competed athletically in different countries as well. As an exploratory phenomenological study, framed under CRT, this research was designed to tell the stories of Black male student-athletes who had international experiences. Their narratives and perspectives are valuable and can inform practitioners and universities about the challenges and opportunities related to working with and holistically developing Black student-athletes.

Gender

There were delimitations to this study as well, decisions that were made to create boundaries and limit the scope of the study (Simon & Goes, 2013). The most obvious delimitation to the study, was that the sample included all self-identifying males. During the pilot study, the decision was made to limit the sample pool to men for numerous factors. The primary reason I focused on males for this study was because the literature on athletic identity suggests that Black males over-identify with the role of athlete, at rates far higher than their female peers. In many ways, this is due to the lucrative professional opportunities that come along with being a male professional athlete. Another reason I focused on men is because I needed to narrow the scope of the project, and as CRT suggests, both race and gender are salient to the ways in which people experience the world. Research on international education and Black women, suggests that they face unique experiences abroad (Willis, 2012, 2016). Furthermore, most of my experience in terms of working with student-athletes has been with male student-athletes, which provided me partial insider status. Despite the reasons for choosing to focus specifically on male athletes, this is certainly a limitation to the study.

Future Research

Ethnographic case study

The first suggestion for future research, based on both the findings and the limitations of this study, is for ethnographic case studies to be conducted on both service learning trips as well as competition abroad trips. An ethnographic case study would highlight some of the unique experiences and interactions that these students are having while abroad and provide the researcher the opportunity to grapple with them in the moment. This methodology would allow

the researcher to conduct a longitudinal study where they could engage the students, before, during and after their international experiences. This would provide thicker description of the phenomenon and a better overall understanding of how these students are influenced by their international educational experiences.

Black female student-athletes

This research should also be extended to highlight the experiences of Black female student-athletes abroad. Henderson's (2013) dissertation study on the Black Female experiences in higher education that positioned them for their futures, commented on study abroad as an opportunity that had a positive impact on these students career trajectory. Though study abroad was not the focus of her study, her findings, along with my findings suggests that this would also be a particularly impactful experience for female student-athletes.

When I was collecting some pre-departure data on a group of student-athletes the day before they left for a service learning trip, a female basketball player stated, "this was the first time I backed a travel bag and didn't put my basketball shoes in first." While much of the literature on Black student-athletes focuses on men, there is a growing body of research focusing on Black female student-athletes (Francique-Carter, 2015, 2018), and that literature can be extended into the field of study abroad. Furthermore, Women's Basketball teams also travel abroad for competition and as Willis (2016) research on Black female travelers suggests, their experiences would also be quite unique due to their intersectional identities.

Concluding thoughts: Don't Shut up and Dribble

Freire (2000) states that "one of the gravest obstacles to the achievement of liberation is that oppressive reality absorbs those within it and thereby acts to submerge human beings'

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consciousness" (p. 51). Until the consciousness of oppressed people come to reckon with the fact that we are oppressed, Freire argues, people will not be able to enact praxis, the act of liberation. For far too long, docile Black athletes have served as the icon for Black youth and Black communities. Dominant narratives suggest that Black athletes should just "shut up and dribble" as echoed recently by a Fox talk show host in response to Lebron James outspokenness on racial and social injustice (Sullivan, 2018). While this Fox news host was widely condemned by some and applauded by others, her comments mirror the hidden curriculum being taught to Black student-athletes on college campuses across the country.

CRT argues that racism is fundamental to the operation of educational institutions. From this lens I argue that stifling and delaying the critical consciousness of Black student-athletes is an intentional act on behalf of the NCAA, its member institutions and their athletic departments to reinforce hegemony and limit the transformational leadership potential of said Black student-athletes. Black student-athletes must be provided with learning opportunities to self-actualize and realize their potential, because when they do, they have the power to change the world.

John Carlos and Tommy Smith were student-athletes. Their acts of defiance and self-determination have inspired millions and will be etched into the history of this country. They took the power, rather than waiting for it to be given to them. The University of Missouri Football team stood up for what they believed in 2015, by threatening to boycott their football game if action was not taken against the racial injustices on their campus propagated by the University President. They took a picture, posted on social media, made a declaratory statement, and took the power. The President was released within 24 hours. Their legacy will be etched into the history of this country. They did not shut up and dribble. Instead by using their voices and their platforms, they seized the power that they already had and changed the world. Sports has

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the power to change and transform the world, it also has the power to mystify and as Freire argues "submerge human beings consciousness."

Black student-athletes must embrace their collective power. I do not believe that international education is the answer to the challenges facing the Black community or more specifically Black male student-athletes. However, I do believe that international education provides Black Americans with a new lens to better understand themselves in a globalized world. I believe these educational experiences abroad can be healing in response to the sites of suffering they often experience within American schools (Dumas, 2014).

Appendix A: Participant Sample

Name	Sport	Cohort	Location	Duration
Barack	Football	Study Abroad	South Africa	1 month
Batman	Football	Study Abroad	Italy	1 month
Bird	Football	Service Learning	Dominican Republic	7-8 days
Black	Football	Study Abroad	Jerusalem	1 month
Blind Side	Football	Study Abroad	Australia	10 days
Bolt	Track & Field	Service Learning	Jamaica	10 days
Brotha Love	Fencing	Study Abroad	China and Turkey	1 month and 1month
Charlie	Football	Service Learning	Nicaragua	7-8 days
DJ	Football	Service Learning	Costa Rica	7-8 days
Hamilton	Basketball	Competition	Virgin Islands and Europe	10 days and 2 weeks
John	Football	Study Abroad	Ireland	1 month
Lebron	Basketball	Competition	Italy	10 days
Malcolm	Football	Study Abroad	Ghana	1 month
Shaq	Football	Service Learning	Dominican Republic	7-8 days
Snoop	Football	Service Learning	Jamaica	10 days
Stave	Track & Field	Service Learning	Bolivia	7-8 days
Stones	Football	Service Learning	Dominican Republic	7-8 days
Texas	Track & Field	Service Learning	Dominican Republic	7-8 days
The Guy	Basketball	Competition	Australia	6 weeks
X	Basketball	Competition	Australia	2 weeks

Appendix B: Semi-structured Interview Protocol

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Tell me Your Story

- Tell me your story as it relates to you being a Black student athlete and how that relates to your international education experience. I'll add in questions as you talk. You can start from college, your childhood, being abroad, wherever the story starts for you.

Student-Athlete Background

- What influential to your identity was being an athlete in your childhood?
- Describe your experience as a Black student-athlete at _____?

Trip Background
- When and where was your international educational experience? Year/ semester?
- Had you ever been abroad before?
- Did you face any challenges as you considered going abroad?
- Describe the preparation you received before going on your trip?
- Did you have any expectations for the trip?
- Why did you go on the trip?

Experience Abroad
- Do you have a photo(s) from your trip that you would like to share?
- Who did you go abroad with?
  - Do you think that impacted your experience?
- Describe the most influential people on your trip?
- What are some of your fondest memories?
- Did you face any challenges while abroad?
- Did this experience influence your views on yourself?
  - What did you learn about yourself while abroad?
- What did you learn about other people, countries, cultures, and the world in general?
- Did your trip impact your understanding of community? How?
  - How do you see yourself relative to those communities?
- Did the trip impact your identity as a student?
- Do you feel that your race /ethnicity played a role in your international experience? How?
- Did your trip influence your understanding of Blackness? How?
- Did people in the host country know you were an athlete? Do you think that influenced your experience?
- Did your experience meet your expectations?

Influence of International Experience
- Do you feel you have changed as a result of your international experience? If so, how?
- How did your experience abroad impact your identity as a student-athlete?
- Did your experience impact your relationships on campus once you returned?

- - What impact did your international experience have on your relationships with your teammates?
- Did your international experience influence future goals personally and professionally?
- Would you recommend international education to other student-athletes? Explain.
- Is there anything else you would like to address about your travels that we have not explored?
- Do you have any questions for me?

Follow up Interview - Individual Student Questions

- What did you think about the interview transcript? Are you comfortable with me writing a case-study portrait on you?
- Is there anything that you would like to clear up or expand upon?
- How have you changed since the last time we spoke? Is there anything you have discovered about yourself?
- In what ways has your experience abroad come up since we last spoke.
- Is there anything else you would like to address about your travels that we have not explored?
- Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix C: Interview Questions by themes

- Tell me your story as it relates to international education. I'll add in questions as you talk. You can start from your college, your childhood, being abroad, wherever the story starts for you.

Student-Athlete Background / Pre-trip

- What role did sports play in your childhood?
- Describe your experience as a Black student-athlete at _____
- When and where was your international educational experience?

- Did you face any challenges as you considered going abroad? (Financial, academic, family, social, etc.)
- Had you ever been abroad before?
- Describe the preparation you received before going on your trip?
- Did you have any expectations for the trip?

Cohort matters

- Do you have a photo(s) from your trip that you would like to share?
- Who did you go abroad with?
    - Do you think that impacted your experience
- Describe the most influential people on your trip?
- What are some of your fondest memories? Why?

Identity negotiation while abroad

- Did you face any challenges while abroad?
- Did this experience influence your views on yourself?
- What did you learn about other people, countries, cultures, and the world in general?
- Did your trip impact your understanding of community? How?
    - How do you see yourself relative to those communities?
- Did the trip impact your identity as a student?
- What did you learn about yourself while abroad?
- Did people in the host country know you were an athlete? Do you think that influenced your experience?
- How did your experience abroad impact your identity as a student-athlete?
- Did your experience meet your expectations?

Heterogeneity of Blackness

- Do you feel that your race /ethnicity played a role in your international experience? How?
- What did it mean to be Black in that country?
- Did your trip influence your understanding of Blackness? How?
- Did you meet any Black people that weren't from America? What was that experience like

Future goals and orientation / Confidence
- Do you feel you have changed as a result of your international experience? If so, how?
- Did your experience impact your relationships on campus once you returned?
  - What impact did your international experience have on your relationships with your teammates?
- Did your international experience influence future goals personally and professionally?
- When you came to college, was international education something you thought was possible?
- Would you recommend international education to other student-athletes? Explain.

Appendix D: Focus Group Questions

General/ Introductory
- Please introduce yourself, where you went to school and your international experience location and duration
- If you could describe your trip in one word, what would you say?
- How would you rank this experience in terms of your influential collegiate experiences?

Cohort Matters
- Who did you travel with abroad?
- How did the cohort you traveled with influence your experience?
- Did you get to accomplish the things you wanted to accomplish while abroad?

Racial Awakening
- Did being Black influence your experience? How so?
- Did being abroad change your perceptions of what it means to be Black?

More than an athlete
- Did people in the host country know you were an athlete? Do you think that influenced your experience?
- Did the experience abroad influence your identity on campus once you returned?
- How did your experience impact your relationships with your teammates?
- Do you think international education is important for student-athletes? Black student-athletes

Career Influence
- What influence did your experience have on your future plans?
- Did your experience abroad inform decisions you made after graduating?
- If you could go back to college, would you do anything differently?

Appendix E: Table of Themes

"Bursts the bubble"	Racial Awakening	Career Influence	Cohort Matters		
			Study Abroad	Competition	Service-learning
"it had been a while since I was acknowledged for something other than football"	"It made me more comfortable in my own skin"	"What's my next move?"	"I always had love for other cultures"	"college basketball, it's still like a business"	"I'm way more grateful for what I have"
"best experience I had in terms of scholarship"	"Home that I've never been to"	"I got the experience"	"the only Black student"	"I think I would've benefitted from, you know, an educational class"	"A really, really bad area"
"This is something I do, it's not who I am"	"What is Blackness"	"I can literally do anything"	"that ankle injury, that was a big wakeup call"	"dictator role, like I'm the coach."	"filling each other out before we got out there"
"Opening doors for the other guys"	"Racism is everywhere"	"I would be able to live just about anywhere"	"I can't promise you're going to have a scholarship when you come back"		
"not being afraid of the unknown"	"There's a need to grow together as people."				

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