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The One Dimensional Black College Football Player: A Mixed Methods Approach to  
Understanding Racial and Athletic Identity

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**The One Dimensional Black College Football Player: A Mixed Methods Approach to  
Understanding Racial and Athletic Identity**

**by**

**Alvin DeQuanta Logan, Jr., B.A.; M.Ed.**

**Dissertation**

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## **Abstract**

### **The One Dimensional Black College Football Player: A Mixed Methods Approach to Understanding Racial and Athletic Identity**

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The complex relationship between sports, representation and power is constantly being documented through modern omnipresent media. Daily inundation of various media images permeates social understanding to the point of realistic expectations. These expectations are often substituted for genuine physical interaction, as is the case for many Black male collegiate football players. Media often scripts Black males as successful by way of their athletic achievements, often misrepresenting their multifaceted potential. As result of that portrayal, many Black males single-mindedly pursue athletic careers at the degradation of the many other facets and gifts they possess. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine the effects of media consumption and character portrayals on the identity negotiation of Black male collegiate football players.

This study employed mixed-methods framework by surveying 226 Black college football players and conducting 16 interviews with Black collegiate football players and athletic administrators. The study found that media portrayal can negatively influence the negotiation of identities priming Black collegiate football players for athletic one-dimensionalism. The data generated five themes; Media Influence, Black College Football Player Politics, Athletic Industrial Complex and Football Culture, One Dimensional versus Multi-Dimensional, and What Schools Can do Better. Quantitatively, Cross Racial identity Scale (CRIS) and the Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS) were used to gauge



identity participant attitudes. Quantitatively, the study affirmed Black college football players have elevated athletic identity and a suppressed racial identity. There was a negative relationship between athletic identity and athletic classification. There was a correlation represented between a racial identity attitude and athletic classification. The implications of this study are to promote multidimensional beings and help elucidate the effects of media portrayals and consumption.

The study also contextualizes Black athletes' experiences at the juncture of sport and social justice. Furthermore, the study is contributing to current and future literature through a nuanced investigation of the experiences and identity negotiation of Black collegiate athletes.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Collegiate athletics has become a vast entertainment empire witnessed by billions of spectators. Different from other levels of sport, intercollegiate athletics is uniquely American and athletes are considered to be amateur but are bestowed with an iconic representation of their given institution. Given that intercollegiate sports are not separate from American culture, the same tropes that impact American society exist within collegiate athletics. The culture created by intercollegiate athletics is one of worship, fanatical and financial support for individual institutions, and idolatry of the athletes. Because of the large consumer base, many universities can consider athletics as one of the significant contributors to the overall institution in several ways (Melendez, 2008). As a major player in overall revenue of the university, football and men's basketball (revenue earning sports) have shown the ability to increase the number of applicants and overall zeal for the institution (Pope & Pope, 2008). Consequently, the revenue earning sports must attract the best athletes to sustain athletic success. In effort to recruit the best football and basketball players across the world institutions have been accused of disproportionately comprising teams of Black athletes (Lapchick, Fox, Guiao & Simpson, 2014).

The glitz and glamor of college and professional football and basketball has attracted many Black youth towards those sports. Of the youth that are able to play collegiately, Black males dominate the highest ranks of the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) Division-I (D-I) conferences and teams (Lapchick, 2015). Providing these youth with the opportunity to both attend college and play for a university is a tremendous accomplishment for the athletes. However, some scholars have attacked their

characterization as student athletes citing that they should reflect the term athlete student to emphasize the importance that is placed on athletics while in school (Krylowicz, 1999; Hakim, 2000; Yopyk & Prentice, 2005; McCormick & McCormick, 2006). The prevalence of the athletic departments to push a win-at-all costs mentality has drawn many athletes away from their academic responsibilities forcing them to donate more time to their athletic craft. This phenomenon has been described as academic exploitation (Gatmen, 2011), which stifles many of the athletes' college hopes of majoring in their chosen major, experiencing non-athletic endeavors, and eventually attaining a degree. On the other hand, athletic departments are also accused of athletic exploitation due to overscheduling athletic activities and not sharing athletic revenue with athletes (Van Rheenen, 2013). Academic and athletic exploitation have garnered a considerable amount of scholarship concerning the degradation of Black male's collegiate experiences (Hawkins, 2010; Melendez, 2006; Singer, 2005). The cycle of exploitation of Black athletes, however vicious, is still prevalent and is reproduced through the idea of a Black athlete's role on campus (Adler & Adler, 1991).

The concern for the role of Black athletes leading to athletic and academic exploitation at predominately White institutions (PWIs) has led way for scholars to examine the reasons for exploitation. Power, race, and identity are all influential parts of what informs exploitation in collegiate athletics (Harrison, Sailes, Rotich & Bimper, 2011). One of the most expansive and pervasive ways to help others understand predefined social roles, one's place in the world, and traditional systems of myths is the media (Kellner, 1995). Media attempts to lure consumers into an identity or understanding of an identity based on a product that they can draw on to create people's social roles, place in the world

or a system of myths. For Black athletes one of the social roles they are usually confined to is athlete. With the almost indissoluble social nature of “Black” and “athlete” many Black athletes experience athletic one-dimensionalism (Marcuse, 1964). Thus, a critical examination of the media and its impact on Black student athletes through the prisms of race, power, and identity may have major implications towards understanding their collegiate experiences. This study explores Black student athletes’ media consumption, experiences with media, and their perceptions of racial and athletic attitudes in an effort to understand media impact.

### **Why Study Sport**

The desegregation of collegiate athletics led to a new stream of research topics for scholars. Similar to the extensive amount of research that followed the Brown v. Board of education case’s efforts of desegregation, desegregation of collegiate athletics has produced interesting phenomenon dealing with race relations and sport. Investigation of race and athletic activity has established itself as early as the early 1800’s. Stewart (1823) examined the physical conditions of slaves in Jamaica suggesting that slaves have an increased physical capacity compared to other people. In American context, some of the first noted scholars include (Cobb, 1934; 1942; Metheny, 1939). Both Cobb (1942) and Metheny (1939) attempt to explicate eugenic genetic differences based on race. The false eugenic idea that people have advanced genetic ability based on their racial group has been dispelled through decades of research (Sailes, 1991; Wiggins, 1989). Through research we understand that race is a social construction (Omi & Winant, 1994; Stanfield, 1995; Montagu, 2001;) and there is not a plausible genetic variable enhancing the athletic achievements of Black athletes (Hoberman, 1997). Although theoretically we understand

race is not a contributive factor, many continue to view Black athletes through a psycho-social lens as the pinnacle of innate athleticism (Harrison, Harrison & Moore, 2002).

Harrison also postulates the further research untangling complexity of identity phenomena of 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).

Current research seems to surpass the notion of biological differences of Black athletes to now orbiting around intersectionality and diverse aspects of their experience. Scholars focus their research on Black athletes towards: socialization, stereotype beliefs, race relations, and exploitation (Logan, Harrison, Logan, 2015; Melendez, 2008; Sailes, 1998; Sellers, 1993; Singer, 2005). However, as inclusive as the many scholars and research on the phenomena the Black athletes is, there is still a paucity of research surrounding the media and its impact on the performance of Black athlete identity.

Thus, studying the Black athlete and media through the prism of power, racial identity and media will contribute to the knowledge of the many stakeholders in the lives of Black athletes. Black men have been misrepresented in the media in heinous and destructive ways (Jackson, 2006) and it may even be worse for star athletes as they are always in the lime light (Jackson, 2006). Hawkins (1998) contends that, “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). Because of the current paucity in the research the author has suggested examining Black athletes in the media to help diminish the



misrepresentations of Black men in America. Consequently, I assert that studying Black athletes, media, and identity will help to elucidate their experiences and assist the “perpetual opposition” to the misrepresentation of Black men and Black athletes.

### **Identity**

Identity “refers to who or what one is...to the various meanings attached to oneself by self and others” (Beamon, 2012; Gecas & Burke, 1995, p.42). Identity is made of two facets, internal and external. Internal identity represents one’s own categorization or grouping to a socially recognized group of people. External identity is society’s categorization of someone into a recognized group of people through a set of behaviors associated with the group (Isajiw, 1990; Sodowsky & Kwan, 1997). The conception of self, for a person, is constructed socially through interaction with others, evaluation, and metacognitive understandings (Cooley, 1902; Du Bois, 1903; Mead, 1934). The authors also forward the idea of internal identification suggesting, “To identify, an individual need not expend effort toward the group's goals; rather, an individual need only perceive him- or herself as psychologically intertwined with the fate of the group” (p. 21). Someone can also have multiple identities that exist as they may choose to align and represent different social groupings (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). The identities one embodies have social capital (Cote, 2005) linked to them which may result in a person having a hierarchy of their identities (Stryker & Burke, 2000). For Black athletes, their identity salience may be equally internal and external due to their social experiences In America.

Black athletes deal with two major identities that are hard to conceal from society, racial identity and athletic identity. These identities tend to become salient for Black athletes because they are visibly marked by skin color and physical stature. The struggle to

negotiate these identities roots from societal pressure. Society pressures Black athletes to deal with the various myths, stereotypes, and tropes often assigned to Black athletes before them. As Black athletes construct the meaning of their identities over time, many are also increasingly dealing with the media as they ascend through the ranks of their sports. Because Black and athlete have become almost synonyms, Black athletes deal with insidious stereotypes such as the dumb Jock (Edwards, 1984b). The stereotypes are often taken up by the Black community as well leading way to the triple tragedy (Edwards, 1988). The triple tragedy (lack of non-athletic careers, personal cultural underdevelopment, and overwhelming pursuit of athletic goals) is promulgated through the media largely impacting their identity development.

Black athletes' negotiation of their identities racially and athletically are both influential in their conception of self. The importance of this negotiation phenomenon has been widely researched (Cross, 1995; Helms, 1990; Sellers et al., 1998) and is important to the overall understanding of Black athletes in the sports domain because sports transmit understanding of racial differences (Carrington, 2004). The different facets of identity this study will explore are racial and athletic which will be discussed in detail in chapter 2.

### **Racial Identity**

Race as a social construction has many influences that help people arrive at their own perception and participation within a racial group. Racial identity is socially adapted by people who believe in their membership in a racially categorized group and is often a life-long process (Tatum, 1997). Tatum describes the process as, "...not so much linear as circular"(p. 83) because we are still encountering different experiences that will make us question and think about our group identity. Cokley & Vandiver (2012) informs us that a

majority of racial identity literature is published within the field of psychology and is conducted with Black and White participants. The first published study on racial identity was Parham & Helms (1981) which utilized Cross' (1971) Nigresence model to predict college student's preferences between White and Black counselors. Since Cross' 1971 model, the literature and research on Black identity development has been strong and steadfast (Cross, 1978, 1991, 1995, 2001; Ellison, 2010; Fanon, 2008; Helms, 1989, 1990a, 1990b, 1996, 1999; Jackson, 1975; Milliones, 1980; Thomas, 1971). The research around Black athletes and racial identity has also begun to form a solid body of literature (Bimper, 2012; Brown et al., 2003; Harrison et al., 2011; Jackson et al., 2002; Steinfeldt et al., 2010; Stone et al., 1999). Of the literature that employs studies many have utilized Cross' (1971) and (2001) revised Nigresence model, which will serve as the framework for the quantitative aspect of the study.

Originally, Cross (1971) outlines 5 steps that he calls Nigresence. The Nigresence theory details Black people's racial development through the stages ultimately reaching a self-achieved definition of Black. Since Vandiver et al., (2002) the most revised version of the theory has now been used in various studies and reflects the changes from the previous five stages. The original five stages included: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion/emersion, internalization, and internalization-commitment. The revised Cross racial identity scale model includes the following: pre-encounter assimilation, pre-encounter miseducation, pre-encounter self-hatred, immersion-emersion anti-White, internalization Black nationalist, internalization multiculturalist inclusive. The revised Cross racial identity scale architects my examination of collegiate athletics' culture as Black athletes develop their self-perceptions and behaviors.

## **Athletic identity**

Athletic identity is defined as the degree to which an individual identifies with their athlete role, within the conceptualization of self (Brewer et al., 1993). Adler & Adler (1991) also posit that an individual's role engulfment also impact their social identity. Role engulfment is considered when an individual's identity is based on their role. For collegiate football players that would mean they were consumed by their role as an athlete.

Henceforth, a Black athlete's participation in highly-visible revenue earning sports requires an extreme commitment to their athletic role and it then becomes a major part of their identity (Harrison et al., 2011). Previous researchers have concluded that identity socialization is a process that happens over time and parallels the experiences one has. Scholars have also concluded that Black males are more prone to this process because they are socialized into sport at a young age (McPherson, 1975; Lomax, 2006; Bemon, 2012).

Black males' socialization into sport as youths affords them more experiences with sport and thus, a heightened propensity to develop athletic identity salience. Collegiately, many Black athletes have athletic identity salience, as their role from youth to their current playing capacity is reflective better competition and time dedicated to their sports (Donnor, 2005). Beamon's (2012) study examined Black college football player's experiences with identity foreclosure. Identity foreclosure is when an individual makes a firm commitment to an identity without exploring other identities (Petitpas, 1978). The participants listed they experienced identity foreclosure due to early socialization, over-participation in athletics, and social objectification as an athlete resulting in difficult retirements for the participants.

The importance of college football to the Black community, Black athletes and the larger university and American community are apparent in the time we dedicate to sports. The importance placed on Black athletes from young ages is also apparent in the youth camps that attract the nation's top talent helping to socialize them into the collegiate recruiting process and pipeline. The Black athlete also learns about their own social capital and importance through the seductive, gregarious, and overzealous gawking from college coaches during their recruiting process. Their socialization continues once on campus as there are often treated as athlete solely by peers, faculty, fans, coaches, and administration. In these experiences, Black athletes are being informed by meaningful information from external sources that help shape their self-concept. This study's intention is not to demonize athletic identity because the best people in at any endeavor often dedicate more time to their craft and there are benefits associated with athletic identity salience (Horton & Mack, 2000). However, the study intends to expose the exploitation deployed by institutional powers ultimately negating the benefits of athletic identity salience. The study also plans to expound upon Harrison et al.'s (2002) study which advanced that racial and athletic identity development is almost indissoluble from each other for Black athletes. Utilizing both racial and athletic identity measurements the study will also show the interconnectedness of the two identities, how they impact each other, as well as the impact those identities have on the role of Black athletes.

### **Target of Research**

This study seeks to build off past and current research examining the confluence of race and athletic identity. The various studies such as (Brewer et al., 1993; Brown et al., 1997; Harrison et al, 2011; Hawkins, 1998; Johnson et al., 1995; Singer, 2008) have laid

foundational data and concepts to build from. This study reflects a combination Harrison et al. (2011) and Hawkins (1998) studies because they examine race and identity of collegiate level Black athletes and also examines the media's representation of Black males, however, this study will focus on Black college football players (BCFPs) and their prism of understanding. Harrison et al, (2002) included a section on popular culture and the effects of Nigresence explaining that,

... it is logical to hypothesize that the bombardment of African American youth with images of African American athletes in a few sports can alter, confound, and shape the racial identity development of these young minds, especially when entering or going through immersion stage... (p. 130).

Although Harrison et al.'s research involved young athletes, in conjunction with Johnson et al. (1995) they state a link between sports and entertainment with a hypothetical effect on the racial, athletic and educational attitudes on Black athletes in general. Thus, a mixed-methods approach will be utilized to account for the limitation of each method and to further investigate the suggested connection between media, sports and identity for collegiate Black athletes. Quantitative methods and data will provide a numerical understanding of the value Black athletes place on their athletic and racial identities. The intent focus of the quantitative data is to investigate the relationship between Black racial identity and athletic identity. The qualitative data will supplement the quantitative helping to elaborate on the athletes' experiences that inform the relationship between racial and athletic identity. Those experiences will help to explore the Black athlete's perceptions of their identities, college sport, the media, and common images of Black men. Through their qualitative perceptions and the quantitative relationship of identity the researcher will be

able to provide a healthier understanding of how race, power, and identity play into their experiences as a collegiate athlete.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The meta-cognitive ability to comprehend one's self often perpetuates how they behave and experience different phenomena during their lifetime. Within highly-visible collegiate athletics, their experiences have been engrossed within media as a result of the increasing media deals with the power five conferences (Atlantic Coast Conference, Pacific-12 conference, Big Ten Conference, Big 12 Conference, Southeastern Conference). Increasing media exposure may have a significant impact on Black athletes' athletic identity and racial identity essentially informing their self-concept. Self-concept is defined as an individuals' perception of self regarding how they interact with different situations (Marsh & Martin, 2011). Playing highly-visible revenue earning collegiate sports has resulted in high athletic identity (Harrison et al., 2011) but low-levels of racial identity (Brown et al., 2003) moving Black athlete's athletic identity to the forefront. This identity salience leads researchers to question: what causes the inflation of athletic identity and devaluation of racial identity? Are the causes correlated, associated, or even impactful on each other? The outcome of high athletic identity salience can also lead to identity foreclosure as a very minute number of Black athletes advance to the professional ranks. Beamon (2012) asserts that "Identity foreclosure" is as a commitment to an identity before one has meaningfully explored other options or engaged in exploratory behavior, such as career exploration, talent development, or joining social clubs or interest groups" (p. 196; Marcia, 1966; Danish et al., 1993). This is harmful because often Black athletes, their communities, the media among other forces push them towards sports from a early age rendering them

vulnerable to exploitation (Donnor, 2005). How Black athletes construct their identity is important to how they perceive success, career aspirations, and their role on campus. Hawkins (1998) emphasizes the impact identities have on Black men and athletes stating, ...[B]lack men have conveniently had their identities a pre-arranged for them. The current definition and identities have produced images that are consistently reproduced in various forms of electronic and print media. They are based upon certain historical roles of the sambo and the brute nigger that were ascribed to [B]lack men to maintain the social order during ante-bellum and post-ante-bellum periods. This safeguarding of the public order is continued today in the representation of [B]lack men in the mass media. (p. 39)

Therefore studying, the confluence of identity, power, and the media will allow the researcher to add to the dearth of research on media and Black collegiate athletes. The research will look to fill the void by addressing the problem of identity construction and institutional power (media, public order, etc.) through questioning the social identity development of Black athletes in respect to one-dimensionalism (Marcuse, 1964) and identity foreclosure (Beamon, 2012).

### **Justification for Research**

Historical discrimination against Black people in American society has been reflected in sports, which are a microcosm of society (Cokley, 2009; Eitzen & Sage, 2003). Thereby, the discrimination experienced, social segregation and desegregation, and the overrepresentation of Black athletes in football and basketball all call into question how power influenced Black athlete interactions. Since the famous 1970's USC All-Black backfield and Sam" Bam" Cunningham's imminent dismantling of the all-White Alabama



Crimson Tide, college football racial landscape has never been the same. Since the large influx of Black athletes in the 1970's the Black community has corralled their support behind NCAA collegiate athletics as a means of success and today it would be hard to find an athletic football, basketball or track team absent of a considerable number of Black athletes. Thus, the overrepresentation of Black athletes in revenue earning sports in NCAA D-I FBS athletics (Lapchick, 2014) has led to a societal belief that sports are one of the only ways Black males can be men (Harrison et al., 2002), become socially mobile (Rhoden, 2010), integrate White society (Harris, 1997), and receive a "prestigious" college education (Sailes, 1998). While Black males have had instrumental success in sports there still exists a myopic view of success and career aspiration perpetuated through their role engulfment on PWI campuses (Adler & Adler, 1991). Their role, as many Black athletes have self-defined, is athletic first and for some solely. The media often exacerbates this role salience by preordaining Black males as athletes and relegating them to athletic purposes through social reproduction.

Social reproduction refers to the duplication of societal institutions that produce a dominant ideology and its structures of knowledge (Giroux, 1983). For Black males in society they may receive information from these social institutions that reproduce the ideologies of the colonialism (Carrington, 2010), slave plantations (Hawkins, 2010) ante-bellum and post-ante-bellum periods (Hawkins, 1998) without understanding how they socially stratify them today. As a result, the many dimensions of racism exist today under hidden agendas and covert institutional practices and this research on sport helps people to understand that sports are not excluded from racism.

Through social reproduction the transmission of knowledge concerning Black athletes' identity provides a need to examine it in terms of power and race relations. There have been numerous scholars that have conducted studies on issues of identity and Black populations, however there does not exist as many studies on identity as it relates to just Black male collegiate athletes. To address Black male collegiate football players as a focused subset of the identity of Black males and Black male athletes would give their experiences the necessary respect and differentiation. This study utilizes previous studies investigating identity development process, identity intersectionality, relationship to self-perception, identity, power, as well as the media's influence on identity construction to capitulate the complexity of the Black student athlete's experience.

### **Significance of Research**

“If you can control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his action. When you determine what a man shall think you do not have to concern yourself about what he will do. If you make a man feel that he is inferior, you do not have to compel him to accept an inferior status, for he will seek it himself. If you make a man think that he is justly an outcast, you do not have to order him to the back door. He will go without being told; and if there is no back door, his very nature will demand one.”

(Woodson, 2005, p. 55)

This study is significant for several reasons. It will add to useful theoretical and empirical knowledge of Black collegiate athlete's experiences and project the marginalized voices of Black athletes. This study also aims to illuminate the media's social reproduction of dominant ideologies of Black male's role as athletes and Black student athlete's role as

solely and merely athletes. Finally, this study seeks to begin a stream of literature that may disrupt the discriminatory portrayals of Black collegiate athletes in the media.

Big time college sports are increasingly becoming more professionalized and commercialized. The amount of media attention big time collegiate athletes receive is increasing during actual game coverage. The reporting on 24-hour sports new channels has increased and the amount of attention Black athletes receive in the media for negative offenses is adding to the propaganda against Black males. The media acts as a hegemonic informative force that cannot be muted, and serves as some people's only contact with Black athletes. Using media as a proxy for contact with iconic Black athletes has shadowed their authentic experiences. Now instead of being able to be themselves there is a set of respectability politics (Higginbotham, 1993) they must adhere to for their experiences to be pleasant in terms of race and political relations. The respectability politics have casted an authentic way to be a Black collegiate athlete and an improper way usually described through ideologically violent negative descriptors (Hawkins, 1998). These parameters create a "box" in which Black athletes must exist within and a proximal zone that dictates their resulting treatment. Black athlete's experiences with the media as consumers may impact their self-perception similar to Johnson et al.'s (1995) participant's interaction with rap music videos. This process usually goes unnoticed as many are not aware of the cumulative effect of the media's image displays. Thus, one the most significant outcomes of this is finding a way to rupture the discriminatory image's impact on the Black collegiate athlete's self-perception and vision of success. The opening epigraph in this section wisely heeds warning of the power of education and self-perception. Allowing the media to dictate self-perception through consumerism results in controlling thoughts (Marcuse, 1964) and

through control, the power to implant deviant self-perception presents itself. Therefore, this study presents significant ideological tools to combat the inundation of hegemonically crafted knowledge.

There is a valuable amount of research associated with Black student athlete's experience both theoretically and empirically. In addition to current knowledge this study expects to add useful intelligence towards understanding the complexity of the Black male athlete's identity. This research's knowledge also benefits the Black student athlete's understanding of phenomena that could impact their identity. Utilizing a theory constructed specifically to study Black collegiate athlete's intricate experiences; this study is tailor-made to explicate the silenced voices of Black student athletes and their experiences. The examination of racial and athletic identities helps to capitulate relevant quantitative measurements of Black athletes and connecting with other data across regions and time periods. Although there is a significant amount of research on power and the media, identity and the media as well as Black males and the media; there remains a relative scarcity of information about how a Black male's participation in college football and media portrayals can impact their perception of self and role as a Black collegiate football player. With regard to collegiate sports culture, Black athletes, identity and the media, this study will provide data that can influence and create interventions, pedagogies, and classes dedicated to identity development and media.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

In effort to better understand the experiences of Black college football players, a newly constructed and tailored theoretical framework will be used. The One Dimensional Theory of Identity and Expectations emphasizes various parts of useful theories towards

understanding Black people, Black males, Black athletes, and the media's influence. The theory elucidates the uses of the Racial Contract, internal colonialism, scripting, and the innate complex of the other by forming the three key constructs (institutional, mind, body) to critically investigate various existing and future phenomena surrounding Black athletes.

Mills (1997) Racial Contract exhumes the misrepresentation of race in social contract theories of Hobbes, Locke, Mill, Marx, Rawls, and Machiavelli to name a few. The contract details the plan to divide people among racial lines by purposefully not addressing race and racial differences. The racial contract is a set of formal and informal agreements and meta-agreements between members of White society to categorize "others" as non-White and subordinate on the social hierarchy normed by White ideals. Mills' racial contract is a binding contract that shapes peoples' social being and opportunities which non-White people have no say in, and are controlled by, in White society. Those who have signed the contract and who benefit from it have the power to choose who it represents and who is does not based on the needs of White society. Accordingly, the agreement is malleable and seemingly unbreakable. The Racial contract is useful to investigating the institutional aspect of the Black athlete's experience.

Internal colonialism is a theory that has been widely applied to study ethnic and race relations internationally. Across several countries scholars have empirically discussed identity and ethnic relations (Hechter, 1975), post-colonial effects (Zureik, 1979), and citizen development (Havens & Flinn, 1970). Locally, United States scholars have used it to theorize different ethnic groups de la Garza & Cotrell, 1976; Martínez, 1982; Pérez-Torres, 1995; Cabán, 2003). The theory has also been widely used in examining the experiences of Black Americans as well (Cruse, 1967; Carmichael & Power, 1967; Blauner, 1969; Allen,

1990; Hawkins, 2010). Hawkins (2010) uses the theory to compare slave plantations to present day collegiate football and basketball for Black males. This part of the framework is useful for the understanding the Black body dialectical.

Jackson's (2006) ideology of scripting will be used to represent how the institutional (media) uses impacts both the body and the mind of Black college football players. Scripting is the act of prescribing one's understanding of someone else onto them. This will be useful in understanding racial and athletic identity and how they align with the representations of Black athletes. Lastly, Fanon's (2008) idea of the innate complex of the other will be used to understand the process which Black athletes undergo. Fanon alludes to being Black in a White society which extends to college athletics, which are largely controlled by White males. Essentially Black college football players are operating in a White society. Fanon's innate complex of the other roots from a psychiatric standpoint that Black people cannot be just Black, but they must be Black in relation to the White man and thus presenting a situation where they are between two worlds. Together, all the constructs make up The One Dimensional Theory of Identity and Expectations specifically designed for Black athletes. This dissertation will engage the constructs and their foundations to better understand Black athletes' experiences quantitatively and qualitatively.

### **Guiding Questions**

Black collegiate athletes are placed on an international stage and are often looked at as icons and heroes of the black community Black community (Sailes, 1998). Black athletes can be seen as paragons of Black men and Black people increasing the importance of their portrayal in the media. The process of understanding the complicated interactions and

experiences with race, power, and media for the Black athlete is difficult but necessary to challenge social positioning of the Black athlete and the role college football plays in their life development. Some scholars argue that the media presents a bevy of detrimental negative effects (Jackson, 2006; Marcuse, 1964). On the other hand, some scholars argue that the media can also empower Black people (Tomaselli, 1997). The media, as an educative curriculum, operates as a proxy to interpersonal interaction with Black athletes and thus provides the foundation for prejudice based on biased hegemonic ideologies of what and who the Black athlete is. Considering the importance placed on sports for Black college football players and the increasing media attention they are receiving, to better understand their racial and athletic identity development and experiences, questions pertaining to race, athletics, power and media are justified. To address these meaningful phenomena the author has developed the following questions to guide the study:

1. How does the media impact the racial and athletic identity development of Black college football players and how do they make sense of it?
2. What are the implications for Black college football players?

These two questions will guide this dissertation through investigating the Black male college football player's perceptions of their experiences with race, power, collegiate sports, and the media. This dissertation's tailored theoretical framework helps to uncover the counterhegemonic voice of the Black athlete in effort of understanding and rapturing the misrepresentation of Black people, Black males, Black athletes, and especially Black college football players.

Chapter two will provide necessary literature to support this dissertation's topic and methods. The chapter will explain the Black athlete's history in the United States,

detailed historical understandings of racial and athletic identity, a comprehensive illumination of empirical and theoretical gaps in the current literature as it applies to the Black athletes, media, and representation, as well as meticulous investigation of the author's theoretical framework. Chapter three will then provide an explanation of this dissertation's methodological approach to the research, research paradigm, researcher positionality, data analysis, and methodology protocol. Chapter four will cover my results of the study when finished, and finally, chapter five will eventually deliberate the results using the newly constructed framework in evaluation of Black college football player's experiences.



## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

The Black athlete's experiences have been riddled by battles on and off the field. The spaces that Black athletes occupy are steeped in legacies of racial hatred, stereotypical framing, and false acceptance of racial differences. Conversely, sports have been a mode of free expression of culture and one place Black men can be men. Of the existing literature pertaining to Black athletes there are a variety of different issues being addressed. The literature review serves a gateway to the research this dissertation is founded on and proposes to add to. The importance of examining Black male athletes is apparent through their experiences with power and media representation. Black athletes and Black males have been mischaracterized for hundreds of years fueling social reproduction and distorted "truth" about them.

The overrepresentation of Black athletes in football and basketball tends to ignite racial and cultural criticism of collegiate sport. This dissertation focuses on the experiences of BCFPs and pursues a goal of addressing the issues related to BCFP empowerment and multi-dimensionalism. Based on the criticism of collegiate sports and Black athletes, this chapter is dedicated to providing informative literature on: racial attitudes, stereotypes and myths in America; the Black athlete's experiences, voids in the literature pertaining to identity, power, and media representation; relative quantitative identity measurements, this study's theoretical framework- The One Dimensional Theory of Identity and Expectations; and the purpose and hypotheses of this research.

### **Racial Climate, Attitudes and Beliefs**

This section compiles research and subsequent literature on the Black male, the construction of race, the racial climate of the United States, Black racial identity, and

characterizations of Black males. This section provides the cultural basis to study racial identity of the Black male athlete in American society.

### **Racial Construction and Influence.**

Sports are the vehicle by which people test their inhibitions as applied to race. Understanding that sports are not separate from macro-American culture, Black athletes often experience the interwoven effects of the hundreds of years of hateful racial treatment. Race has been debated to have both a biological reality (Gravelee, 2009; Lieberman, Hampton, Littlefield & Hallead, 1992; Winther, 2015) and a social reality (Guo, Fu, Lee, Cai, Li & Harris, 2014; Lopez, 1994; Smedley & Smedley, 2005). Of the use of race a biological construction many have asserted biology as a measure to designate Africans and African descendants as deviant and inferior that resulted in stratification of a society. Smedley & Smedley (2005) posit, "In many multiracial nations such as the United States, there are profound and stubbornly persistent racial and ethnic differences in socioeconomic status, educational and occupational status, wealth, political power, and the like" (p. 16). The hierarchical categorization of society based on race bled into the other institutions forcing scholars to utilize a social lens to explain disparities. Omi & Winant (1994) insert, "Thus we should think of race as an element of social structure rather than as an irregularity within it; we should see race as a dimension of human representation rather than an illusion" (p. 55). However, race has become a distinguishable physical representation of skin color, physical attributes (chin, nose, hair texture and color, eye shape, etc.) in the United States (Zuckerman, 1990). The differences between races is mainly apparent by skin color and in juxtaposition to White people in the U.S. As a result, the conceptualization of White people and White privilege has created systems that benefit

them and disadvantage others in the U.S (Nkomo & Ariss, 2014). Racial conceptual beliefs both have intellectual and physical power in the ways they are carried out in society. However, understanding that race impacts all other institutions in American society, there must be attention given to the social construction of race and its changes over time.

The original ideological conceptualization of race span between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century as a folk idea in the English language similar to the any other categorizing term (Allen, 1994, 1997; Hannaford, 1996). In the 17<sup>th</sup> century race was used to differentiate between the Africans, Europeans, and Indigenous Americans (Barzun, 1965; Banton & Harwood, 1975; Brace, 1982; Fredrickson, 1988). At the turn of the 18th century race was used to deliberately falsify physical intellectual markings Africans (Negros) as inferior (Morgan, 1975; Smedley, 1999). Under White control, early American politics, policies, and slavery created the cognitive dissonance between White Christians and the “inferior” Africans, enabling slavery to be a “moral” institution (Haller, 1971). The institution of slavery also led way for the eventual social hierarchy in America founded by a Black-White dichotomy. Black being placed at the bottom of the race continuum and White on top with the other races and ethnicities sprinkled in between forced the presentation of Blacks as inferior. The inferior status was upheld through de jure segregation and out casting anyone who interacted with Blacks. The creation of the “one drop rule” denoted that one-drop of Negro blood made a person part of the Negro or Black race (Degler, 1971) helped to solidify that any contact with Black people could be harmful to a person’s social and physical perception. The classification of people also socially designated people as others in relation to a White European norm of culture, skin color, and heritage. This othering process enhanced the value of White skin and social capital entrenched within the

constructed White privilege. Once a person was labeled as a certain race there were no mechanism to change their race so many believed it was a biological creation, but it was ideologically created to separate people based on their utility to White society's colonial plans.

Through the physical and ideological battles to be recognized as people and as equal to people of different races scholars have exerted effort to resist hegemonic casting of Black people (Boas, 1940; Bond, 1928; Du Bois & Eaton, 1899; Woodson, 1922). Du Bois & Eaton (1899) attempted to re-conceptualize the idea that the Negro race is a problem and are indissolubly linked to crime and lower order. The work is important because at the time there were other racist biological "correlation" propaganda that linked Blacks to crime in major cities (Muhammad, 2010). Woodson (1922) inserted that Black people have been duped out of their history and as a result subtracted from the positive perceptions of self. Woodson's work sought to counteract the myth that Blacks were less than other races and had no intellectual or physical value outside of menial work. Boas (1940) asserted that there was less intra-racial group variation than in-group variation. Boas' work as an anthropologist helped to combat the biological differences between races, citing that people are essentially the same and asserting that tagging people as "inferior" was a social not biological practice.

Race relations would also be tested through the Jim Crow are which lived by a separatist belief forcing second class citizenship upon Black people (McMillen, 1990). This separatist ideology perpetuated a belief that Black people mixing with Whites would be harmful to the high esteem of White culture and privilege. The polarized nature of the continuum exists today as many scholars have written on the race issues still present in

2015 (Ellis, 2015; Gonzalez-Sobrino & Hughey, 2015; King, 2015; Love & Bradley, 2015; Winant, 2015). Today many different race riots have transpired because of institutional inequities. The murders of Black men and women at the hands of law enforcement across the U.S. has drawn attention to the racial tensions that American ideals of freedom, life and liberty hoped to silence.

Through the institution of slavery, racially hostile spaces, second class citizenship, and false social inferiority Black people have been confined to substandard manifestations economically, geographically, judicially, educationally (Oliver & Shapiro, 2006). The socially accepted inferiority of Black people, supported by extensive forms of erroneous research, brought “truth” to the false claims of innate racial inferiority. The underhanded racial treatment of Black people withstood all forms of resistance to date, however this study promises to add to the resistance. Thus, the sustained embedded racism and irresponsible racial treatment at the hands of White people have fostered the current racial climate to be as hidden and pervasive as ever before.

### **The “Black” in the Intersection of Black and Athlete.**

The same irrational beliefs that served White society on the racial continuum also found its way onto the sports field. In early American sports competitions, Black people were excluded on the basis that they were not fit to compete with White athletes. Although Black sports participation was abhorred, a handful of Black athletes rose to success in several different sports. The athletic talents and intellectual ability of early athletes: Major Taylor (cycling), Harry “Buck” Lew (basketball), Jack Johnson (boxing), Satchel Paige (baseball), Fritz Pollard (football), Isaac Murphy (horse racing), Paul Robeson (football) challenged the drivel of racialized scientific theories that Black were not capable of

participating with Whites in sports. During this period, Black athletes were understood to have natural abilities and innate physical gifts but lack the mental capacity to be competitive. The White community minimized Blacks' contribution to professional sports through segregation; even though Black people were often the greatest athletes in many touted sports (Rhoden, 2010). Accordingly, the Black community formed their own sports leagues most famously the Negro Baseball League and the Colored Hockey League of the Maritimes (Frosty & Frosty, 2008; Lanctot, 2008). The thriving nature of both Black athletes and Black owned and operated leagues sparked the interest of the exclusionary White owned and operated professional leagues.

Social myths about the abilities of Black athletes were disproved throughout history, however one historic event vexed the devious stereotypes directly. The 1936 Olympics were clouded with the blatant racism of Nazi Germany's reign complete through proposed boycotts, racial propaganda, and buildings and arenas draped in swastikas (Scapp, 2007). Hitler's Aryan beliefs of superiority were shattered when Black sprinter Jesse Owens won four gold medals and helped set a world record in the 4x100 sprint relay (Wiggins, 1983). Before the world's eyes the racial beliefs that Hitler boasted and Americans bought into were defeated, however Americans just dug deeper into their eugenic beliefs and discredited the Black Olympian's performance by accusing Blacks of having longer heel bones and tendons (Wiggins, 1989). Once again recognition of a Black sporting achievement was socially thwarted at the expense of their racial identity. The achievements the Black athletes in the 1936 Olympics were nationalistically valuable for Americans, but racially they were still invalidated (Wiggins, 1983) proving racial ideologies even truncate any sense of nationalistic solidarity. This phenomenon has lead scholars to examine the

anatomy and physiology of the Black athlete (Miller, 1998) as well as race relations and sport (Edwards, 1969; Miller & Wiggins, 2004; Wiggins, 2006).

The early studies of racial difference are still important as people conflate race with athletic ability (Hoberman, 1997). Early scholars' investigation of the differences between Black and White people's athletic ability proved to explain Black athletic dominance as a Black's additional anatomical benefit sparing the explanation of White's inability (Malina, 1969; Metheny, 1939). Metheny (1939) explained that there were structural differences in the bodies of Black and White male college students, although the differences were almost insignificant. At the expense of Black athletic achievements being discredited by racial beliefs, Sailes (1993) investigated pertinent campus stereotypes about Blacks' athletic superiority. Sailes study showed that racist stereotypes still drove Black and White students' beliefs, proving that Metheny's study and the myth of intellectual inferiority garnered ideological traction among students. A society that is unable to separate the understandings of race and athletic ability presumptuously will find a way to accept the valuable piece of the intersection (athletic achievements) but not the racial aspect (Black race and culture) (Beamon, 2008). Hence, the Black in Black athlete draws separate negative attention unless it converges with the interest of White society (Donnor, 2005).

### **Stereotypes and Myths of Black Males**

Stereotypes often dictate how a person views themselves, their interactions, and the perceived reaction they will get from people. The stereotypes reach across many disciplines because they are attached to both race and gender. A stereotype can be defined as a cognitive essentialist interpretation of a group's behavior based on old and new knowledge (Harrison, 2001). Perfect for a society that values efficiency; stereotypes

produce quick blanket-statement style knowledge that can be both negative and positive. In the experiences of Black males those stereotypes tend to be negative when located in the larger hegemonic ascription of people (Swanson, Cunningham & Spencer, 2003). Many scholars have studied the influence stereotypes have on Black males' social positioning (Welch, 2007), sexuality (Staples, 1995), academic achievement (Fries-Britt & Griffin, 2007; Harper, 2009), and image (Hutchinson, 1997). Towards the focus of this study, stereotypes about Black males in education and in the media will be drawn upon to illuminate the power of those institutions. They will also to develop a line of understanding towards Black athletes' experiences with education and the media.

Educationally Black males are often categorized as fatherless, athletes, troublemakers, and underachievers (James, 2011). This negligent essentialization of Black males has caused many people to believe that all Black males suffer from the same circumstances. The social prevalence of the myths forced Black males to engage with their omnipresence. Steele & Aronson's (1995) study on stereotypes has provided insight into the threat of fulfilling a stereotype. The authors' work draws on the intellectual test performance of Black people based on the threat of embodying negative stereotypes about intellectual ability of Blacks. The results of three different studies found that, "Taken together these experiments show that stereotype threat—established by quite subtle instructional differences—can impair the intellectual test performance of Black students, and that lifting it can dramatically improve that performance." (Steele & Aronson, 1995, p. 808). The findings of the study explicate that the academic performance of Black males can be impacted by stereotypes. Stone et al. (1999) and Harrison (2001) also find the same impact in the experiences of Black male athletes. The educational stereotypes historically



have severed to harm the connection between Black males and academic achievement leading scholars to appreciate the ways Black males are coping with them (Major et al., 1998). The next section will explore some of the images and positioning of Black males in the media to address the attitude and overall representation of Black males.

### **Exploring Media Attitudes and Black Male Representation**

This section offers the reader literature pertaining to the representation and attitudes towards Black males in the media. The subsections will irradiate the meanings of the Black male's stock images, characteristics and stereotypes in the media. The literature builds upon the Black male ascriptions to perpetuate the meanings of racial and athletic inscriptions of the Black athlete.

#### **Black Male Images, Characteristics, and Stereotypes.**

The media and Black males have a long history of destruction and lack of counter narratives. As a dominative force the media calculates it ways to present, coarse, and impact the future of Black male images to come. Historically, the images of Black males have embodied several stock characters as well as omnipresent scripts. These rigid descriptors have impacted the way Black males are seen, see themselves, and behave in public and private regard. The images have created a society that follows a dichotomy of: embraceable/unembraceable, good/evil, authentic/fake, house Negro/field Negro, and keepin' it real/sellin' out. This dichotomy has marked Black males as political texts in the contexts of White society, American society and hegemonic society. Jackson (2006) reminds us that, "...to be Black and to be American is to be forced to participate in a public game of charades in which all interactants are subjected to subliminal vagaries of the mind" (p. 51). The mental confinement of behavior directs Black men to either combat the images

in fear or being a stereotype or to embody them and become a stereotype (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Thus, the following stock images and characteristics described will illuminate the political landscape, which Black males must navigate in their quest to be themselves.

The images of Black males are much vaster and varied than the media informs. Since the institution of American slavery Whites have harbored a fear and anxiety towards Black people, males especially. Over time researchers have seen patterns of how they are reporting and portraying Black males. Through these images, Whites helped to establish a safeguard for vindicating their vulnerability and unacceptable behavior of slave masters, police officers, and others who have violated the Black body (Jackson, 2006). From African colonization, American slavery, Jim Crow, to the current display of Black male images several scripted images have withstood the test of time. The Black male as: coons, uncle toms, and bucks have held stout becoming a reality for many. The characteristics of Black males as sexual, violent, incompetent, uneducated, and irresponsible have also energized White society's fears and anxiety toward Black males. Mapp (1972) furthers the exercisable reach of the characteristics and images through his analysis of Black people in American films. His research found 19 stereotypes that are representative of Black people through film and stage plays: the savage African, happy slave, devoted servant, corrupt politician, irresponsible citizen, petty thief, social delinquent, vicious criminal, sexual superman, superior athlete, unhappy non-White, natural born cook, natural born musician, perfect entertainer, superstitious churchgoer, chicken and watermelon eater, razor and knife "toter", uninhibited expressionist, and mental inferior. These stereotypes have reinforced the characteristics and images believed by White society and they were mass-

mediated to populations which created a uniform ideology towards Black males. It is also important to note that the portrayal of White people was the polarized helping to create buy-in for the good and evil dichotomy. The stock images and characteristics will be discussed in the following sections to illuminate their connection to the idealized personification of Black males in American, White and hegemonic society.

### **Black Male Stock Images.**

The Black male is directed to fulfill the prophecy of one of the following stock images. The coon, Uncle Tom, and bucks are often used to categorize Black males in the compartmentalization of White scripts. The following sections will provide a historical synopsis of the stock images and consequently, a dichotomy of authenticity of the Black male in the media.

#### ***The Coon.***

The coon is a script that is often called sambo and symbolizes a Black person who is cheerful, subservient, and unquestionably devout to White people (Jackson, 2006). The coon is often placed in films to be to be silly, harmless, comic relief, foolish gambler, watermelon and chicken loving, loyal and most importantly White supremacists. The coon images embody some of the most hurtful stereotypes of Black men (lazy, inferior, shiftless, illiterate, and anti-Black) which is why the term is used as derogatory in the Black community when used towards another Black person (Bogle, 2001; Cripps, 1977; Means-Coleman, 2000). Pickaninnies, Rastus, Stepin' Fetchit and Uncle Remus film and stage play characters were all viable examples of coons that are usually cited. The pickaninny for example, was the first on screen example of a coon and was also usually played by a child. A pickaninny, "was a harmless little screwball creation whose eyes popped out, whose hair

stood on end with the least excitement, and whose antics were pleasant and diverting” (Bogle, 2001, p. 7). This character is commonly seen in many films, one film for example is *The Little Rascals*. In the film the character Buckwheat often supplies laughs, was an odd-ball (only Black character), quiet and the incompetent side kick (Jackson, 2006). This ideal of the coon is perpetuated with Black boys in a predominately White environment. Another example is Brook’s (2015) examination of White comedian’s coon-shouting. Brooks details the intertwined nature of a funny Black woman and the act was excluded from historical utterances of the coon, Blackface, and vaudeville. The coon thus, is utilized to manifest the stereotypical ideals of the usefulness of a Black males and females.

### ***The Uncle Tom.***

The Uncle Tom is a character that is often a derogatory name when used towards a Black person. It symbolizes that the Black person in question has departed from the Black community entirely. Jackson (2006) expands,

‘Uncle Tom’ is used to refer to a culturally unconscious, submissive individual who does not identify with any Black community, but instead prefers to see himself as a White-identified, cultureless, raceless, independent American citizen who can achieve the American dream without attaching himself to a Black community as long as he has God. (p. 32)

The Uncle Tom is commonly seen in films or plays to create distress racial distress between Black men and their ideologies of oppression, success, religion, and culture. In common media depictions Don Lemon, Clarence Thomas, Ben Carson and Shelby Steele are often socially alluded to as Uncle Toms. They are tagged Uncle Toms because they vehemently despise the notion of socio-political and historical factors impeding the American dream for

Black people as well as other ways of finding a social disconnect with the Black community's strong beliefs. The Uncle Tom is generally used as a proxy for the White community's beliefs and norms to be successful in American society. The ideal of an Uncle Tom directed White society to promote the "good Black" and the "bad Black.". The Uncle Tom is what we can refer to as embraceable (which will be discussed in the next section). Consequently, those Black males who opposed the Uncle Tom were usually thought of as a bad depiction of being Black. Starkey (2015) wrote a book dedicated to the history of the Uncle Tom. Starkey used Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas to construct his understanding that the new conservatives are Uncle Toms. Thomas, as a conservative, has proved to be harmful to institutions such as affirmative action. Starkey discusses Thomas' rough upbringing and his post-supreme court appointment labeling his as the new Uncle Tom for his adversarial acts towards Black people and legal matters. It is also important to mention Uncle Tom has been portrayed in different angles. Uncle Tom has been positioned as a God-fearing man who did not appeal to White society (Turner, 2002) and That he did identify with the Black community but was first and foremost a martyr much like Christ (Moses, 1993).

### ***The Buck.***

The buck is a fearful creation by the white community to uphold the irrational fear of Black males. The buck is generally described as a brute or savage that is, "almost always a tall, dark-skinned muscular, athletically built character and often either bald or with a short haircut. The brute or buck's primary objective was raping White women" (Jackson, 2006, p. 41). The buck was resembled boogey man in that the fear was fabricated and it hinged on the idea that racial mixing was tainting White superiority. The fear was wide

spread to alert White people to the Black male monster who sought to infiltrate the purity of White women (who for all intents and purposes were virgin, divine and gatekeepers to racial superiority). The fear spread so far, the ontic defense manifestation was birthed. The Ku Klux Klan was believed to be in response to this fictitious script. It all began with the movie, *Birth of a Nation*. The character Gus, was casted to be a brute who was a sex crazed renegade rapist. In the film, Gus did not actually rape the White woman, but watched her run from him and fall from a cliff. As a result, White men in white sheets came to avenge her death and to defeat the brute as a signal of White superiority and denial of Black retaliation for raping Black women (Rocchio, 2000; Jackson, 2006). The brute was often a scapegoat for racial supremacy practices giving Whites a reason to fight for all they believed in. Hutchison (2015) details Sonny Liston's movement from the bad Buck to the white hope. The article examines the stereotypes employed by White journalist that depicted Sonny Liston during the 1960's. In juxtaposition to Mohammed Ali threatening nature, Liston moved from the buck to the White hope helping the racist displacement of Ali because he was a bigger threat to White society and heavy weight boxing. This is an example of how the buck is reserved for a threatening person and can be shift based on White context and interest convergence. Placing the image on the dichotomy, the brute was evil. Nothing about the brute, as he was casted, proved to be anything American White society wanted to deal with or tolerate.

### **The Embraceable Versus the Unembraceable Negro.**

This idea of good and evil is an idea that some believe is an ideal we as humans innately practice because we have moral and values. The pressure behind the idea is that one must act within the boundaries of what is socially constructed as good, or favorable.

One might also be alert to what defines the bad or deficient actions that people do. Thus, to be defined as bad one is lacking what society would consider “good” traits or actions. This dichotomy creates an all or nothing mentality among those in society who embody the beliefs. A prime example is the zero-tolerance policies that some schools abide by today. These schools have a list of infractions that would qualify the student to be suspended or expelled, no questions asked. That means if one child got into a fight because the other child was picking on them the zero-tolerance policy would have to suspend them both because they acted on the evil side of the dichotomy. No matter why the child got into the fight, he would still be suspended. In this case, the cause and effect are both against what the policy tolerates.. This same ideal fuels the media’s depictions of Black males. All too often, American society is inundated with negative images of Black males. This is compounded with innate mental processing of good and evil and a sort of brainwashing results. The brainwashing becomes so pervasive that Black people themselves have become victim of believing that Black males fall into the negatives (evil) stereotypes. Huthcinson (1997) furthers this idea, specifically about Black male youth stating,

Over time, the ancient racial stereotypes have been confirmed, validated, and deepened until they have taken on a life of their own. If editors constantly feature young black males as gang members or drug dealers and not as Rhodes, Merit, or National Science Foundation scholars because they [the media] don’t believe they [young Black males] exist, or don’t believe that they [young Black males] are capable of achieving those distinctions then the news becomes a grim self-fulfilling prophecy. (p.47)

The perpetuation of the evil and good boundaries shape and mold Black males, especially young Black males, into the negative behavior patterns described as the self-fulfilling prophecy (Hutchinson, 1997). Those behaviors also have rewards and consequences attached to them. Those rewards and consequences are commonly expressed in the treatment of the individual in question's behaviors. Those who behave in an acceptable manner are generally accepted in society. They stay within the confines of what it means to be respectable by society's standards. Higginbotham (1993) describes this as the politics of respectability or the policing of a social group's behaviors to fit more mainstream (hegemonic) behaviors in hope of gaining their respect or acceptance. Those Black males that participate and ascribe to politics of respectability are often embraceable by hegemonic society and those that do not are labeled unembraceable. Helan Page describes the situation of the embraceable versus the unembraceable Black male dictates how Black males act and the media is a main purveyor of the information necessary to embody one or another. Page also utilizes Bordieu's (1977) work in support for her claim that the media can dictate social behaviors citing that, "...cultural agents who participate in any established social order can be expected to naturalize their own arbitrary codes of ordinary and specialized behavior" (Page, 1997, p. 100). Those codes created are what make the Black male embraceable and tolerated. Notice the author did not use accepted or treated as equal because to embrace someone in this case means to still see a deficit in them but to acknowledge their behaviors minimize the feeling of a threat towards hegemonic norms. The unembraceable Black males, "...are featured in media images that seem to threaten the body politic, including the visible and often invisible bureaucratic and corporate arenas of cultural manipulation..." (Page, 1997, p. 100). The author infers that threat can be summed



up to a fear of difference or preeminent illumination of the hypocrisy of the history's depiction of Black males. Thus, the idea behind being embraceable promotes control of the behaviors and easing the minds of hegemonic society through semi-unbothered free range of society. Meaning, the embraceable Black male is afforded differential access to hegemonic society and may not face some of the physical, mental and institutional harassment as the unembraceable Black male. Some of the recognized Black male figures of being unembraceable are: Malcolm X, Marcus Garvey, Louis Farrakhan, Muhammed Ali, Paul Robeson, Myron Rolle, Richard Sherman, Marshawn Lynch, etc. What many of these figures have in common is there are threats to the established order of society. From opposition to war, military service and international government to the exploitation of Black athletes, the consciousness and socio-political and cultural knowledge of the Black male led to uncontrolled actions and behaviors, threats. The embraceable Black male list follows a general pattern of money, conservative beliefs, and race based self-blaming. Among the most famously mentioned are: Clarence Thomas, Don Lemon, Ben Carson, and some include the controversial Bill Cosby for his views on how Black people blame White people for their problems instead of pulling themselves up by their own boot straps. Clearly the Black men mentioned have afforded a differential level of success in American society and garner embraceable status because of the lack of threat to White ideal and the policing of their own race to be better assimilators into "American" ways. The labeling of embraceable and unembraceable Black male in the media has been theorized in different forms however still the same result, a dichotomized path that is either assimilated or not. The Black males in the media are represented within the dichotomies of: "keep it real" versus the one who are "selling out" (Cornwell & Orbe, 2002), the "house Negro" versus the

“field Negro” (Wood, 2002), and “True African Americans” versus false African Americans (Watts & Orbe, 2005). These media based behavior classifications have played a heavy part in the physical manifestation of Black male behavior. The media, political control, culturally assimilative pressure, and hegemonic compensation for respectability have created a consumer fueled narrative for Black males. That narrative impacts success and identity as will be deconstructed through the dichotomies of tolerated and adversary typecasts.

***Keepin’ it Real versus Sellin’ Out.***

Keepin’ it real is colloquialism generally used by Black people to describe a situation where someone should do what a Black person would do or to tell the truth to another person. The idea behind keepin’ it real can also mean to resist the embraceable expectations of White society. To sell out, on the other hand, is to assimilate to the embraceable expectations. This representation of the good and evil dichotomy is mainly policed by the Black community to expect themselves to keep within the opposite confines of the respectability politics. In Cornwell & Orbe (2002) keepin’ it real was represented through the comments their study’s participants made in relation to what it meant to be Black, stereotypically. Cornwell and Orbe’s study looked at *The Boondocks* comic strip. *The Boondocks* details a story of two boys’ transition from the inner city to the suburbs. The strip encompasses a writer/ illustrator’s vision of self-criticism of the Black community, both socially accepted and not. The participants were asked to respond to the racial nature of the comic strip and the authors examined their responses for their impact on identity. An example can be seen through one participant’s quote affirming his embraceable standards saying,

'White folks must sit at home and wonder why we accept such bull from our own. I know I do brother, I am as dark as they come,' and 'Haven't you noticed that we are the only group who identifies with 'ghetto life' as our passage'. (p. 35)

This participant's response to the comic strip's ability to reinforce negative stereotypes is laced with the idea of what it means to be embraceable. The contradictory tone towards the passage of 'ghetto life' symbolizes they have an idea of what a Black person should and should not do as a rite of passage, while also signaling that 'ghetto passage' is the wrong way to do it. He also alludes to how White people would view the behaviors of Black people by assuming what White folks sit at home and wonder, affirming the belief in White cultures value system. Together, the participant's view of the wrong way of passage separates what they would do (the right choice) and what bad Black people do (the wrong choice). The participant's choice to do what was 'right' also lines up with the cultural values of White society, or as has been socially described as "sellin' out" also known as to be embraceable. To sell out can be socially understood as to move from being unembraceable Black man to an embraceable Black man. To keep it real is to embody an unembraceable Black male characteristics over embraceable characteristics. The participant defined the embraceable space which was regarded as selling out, and the 'ghetto passage' practiced by Black people is essentially keepin' it real or embodying unembraceability.

The negative association linked to ghetto passage and other stereotypes ascribed on Black people at to the uniqueness of the good and evil dichotomy. The one-sided negative ascriptions and stereotypes work to make people believe that Black men behave as portrayed while also creating an idea that the successful Black men who do not ascribe to the negative stereotypes must therefore be assimilated. Consequently, those Black men

that are assimilated receive social reward from the White community while being seen negatively as a sell out by the Black community. This conundrum that stems from the good and evil dichotomy and impacts identity because it conflicts two socially constructed racial value systems. The value systems are varied separately and within adding to an already multidimensional understanding of what it means to keep it real. The central idea of keepin' it real is to do what a Black person would do and the media's construction of this make it dangerous for Black male's interaction with the heinous depictions. One of the least thought about angles is how the writer/illustrator of the comic is foreshadowing the comic's racial identity influence. Cornwell and Orbe (2002) express the ideas of (Omi, 1989) citing, "...the stereotypical nature of these media images has resulted in a heightened awareness in terms of the role they play in creating, reproducing, and sustaining racial ideologies" (p. 39). The illustrator must grapple with the ideals of what it means to be Black, which value system they are ascribing to and how it will be perceived by everyone knowing that it will consciously and unconsciously impact Black male. Enduring this cerebral tussle with portraying racial identity the illustrator is,

...confronted with two ideological questions: Do I create only favorable images of African American culture as a means to counter the abundance of negative portrayals? Or do I produce realistic images of African American culture that include both positive and negative features? (Cornwell & Orbe, 2002, p. 39)

The media depicts Black behavior and it is up to the receiver of the images to read and analyze them for their own understanding. The issue lies within the overly populated negative images and the scarce positive images leading American society's expectance of

keepin' it real to coincide with the unembraceable Black man and physical and ideological consequences from White society.

***House versus the Field Negro.***

The house versus the field Negro dichotomy was widely exercised during American slavery to decide which slaves could be trusted to serve the masters in the house and which ones served in the field. The house Negro was entrusted to uphold the White slave masters' values and to police the field slaves to keep them in order. They worked under the shelter of the "big house" or the master's home while the field Negroes lived in slave quarters and worked in blistering heat picking cotton among other back strenuous tasks. The rewards of shelter and better treatment for house Negroes were in exchange for corporation and surveillance of the racist, genocidal, and immoral acts of slavery. Today, the media represented this dichotomy in its news coverage of Black males. Wood (2002) conducted a study of news media representations of Black males finding,

...the participants believed that this dichotomy [house versus field Negro] is played out in media images when Blacks in news representations are *either* presented as ignorant, criminal, poor, and drug addicted, *or* as someone allowed in the media's 'house' (like Bryant Gumble or Oprah Winfrey). (p. 99)

The positioning of Blacks males as house or field Negroes can impact that individual's success in their given field, thus the media's representation shows a way for people to expect Black males to act as well as be, essentially their identity. Externally, White society expects Black males to the negative space of their valued cultural wealth. Rodney, a participant in Wood's (2002) study observed this treatment stating,

The one extreme with Blacks getting arrested and the handcuffs-this is thrown in for the Whites view of us in order to show them a better self-opinion about themselves. They'll say, look, they [Blacks] are no good...So it makes the Whites feel better about themselves because they see the Blacks not achieving anything. So for their self-esteem. The other end, showing the Oprah Winfreys is a decoy. It is thrown in to mentally control Blacks...to show that things aren't as bad as they think they are, as bad as we portray them to you. (p. 100-101).

Rodney explained the concept perfectly. White society expects Black males to embody the negative space as a form of control and a self-esteem booster. Rodney explained that Black people are casted to behave in a stereotypical White scripted fashion (criminals, thugs, brutes, lazy, etc.) and they are also supposed to recognize that there are successful embraceable Black people that exist so you all can be like them. Another way of understanding this phenomenon is seeing Oprah, who technically comes into the homes of many White Americans (among others) everyday, as a house Negro and those Blacks getting arrested, in jail, and committing crimes are field Negroes.. The Oprah's of the world get to experience being the guardians between the bad Blacks and White people on the social hierarchy. The mental control Rodney grounds his argument with helps to piece together how the media images that are seen can act as guides to behavior. American society says it all about the American dream where achievement is based off your work ethic so you have no excuse to be the thugs and criminals. They show images to be reproduced with the attached value to them sown to success or the American dream. Ultimately, to achieve it you must be a hard worker and possess the characteristics of a

house Negro. This form of confining embraceable actions boxes what Black success looks like, without the look success may be a mirage.

***True African Americans.***

The idea of a “True” anything is disturbing because it means there is something that is false. The validation of one standard makes another null and void based on the centrality of people ontology and epistemology. When it comes to the media, images are not just shown and reinforced to display reality, media creates its own form of reality by what and how much it features stories and events. This becomes imprinted into the minds of viewers, readers and listeners no matter the true preponderance of the truth.. In the case of Watts and Orbe (2005) what is authentic and truth have molded what it means to be Black but from a White gaze. The authors write about keeping up with a trend as a way of manufacturing what is true. To exemplify their sentiments the authors detail,

When sign value replaces use value as the foundation of being in this fashion, human beings need no longer be concerned with discovering the essence of *Dasein*, for the “true” nature of one’s being is up for grabs; it can be fabricated through *appearances*. In the society of the spectacle, even facets of one’s very body can be manufactured in keeping up with the latest trend. (Watt & Orbe, 2005, p. 227-228)

The fabrication of a body can lead to truth due to the essence of truth being out of any groups’ possession and commandeered by the media. In the case of the Budweiser commercial (which Watt and Orbe investigate) the latest trend is the welcoming gestures of Black men. Even more globally, the trend that has lasted the test of time is to negative cast Black males with the images from the beginning of this section. The pedestaled images of the Black male welcoming gestures and the negative images serve to bequeath authentic

value based on the outsider White perspective. This leads to, “the public consumption the ads triggers an over evaluation and fabrication of Black bodies in living spaces represented as ‘real life’” (Watts & Orbe, 2005, p. 228). The representation of “real life” becomes reality for many non-informed consumers of media. The cross-cultural manifestations, by media outlets such as news, movies, and TV, of “real life” create a common experience for viewers, readers and listeners. This seems necessary for companies to simulate these experiences with their products/services as investment.. For the consumer, this common “reality” experience and cross-cultural appeal allows for two things; 1) They buy into their portrayed positions in society through acceptance and imitation, and 2) this “reality” makes it easier to predict the potential roles of those they come into contact with as well as their own. Thus, the manifestations of Black culture in the ad and in stock images seen throughout history garner “real” status because of the repetition and cross cultural common experience to Whites vision of being Black. Watts and Orbe (2005) add,

Conversely, ‘authenticity’ also implicates distinctive black style and culture. The ‘True’ ads explicitly reference a notion of realism that holds in tension differences associated with how spectators see the ‘authentic’ as either colorless or colorful.

Moreover, we content that the operations of spectacular consumption replicate and amplify this ambivalence because the anxiety inscribed in it enhances the market value of black imagery. (p. 239)

The enhanced market value in the ‘authentic’ Black male image is compensated through the comfort and ease that Whites exhibit because the images are affirming their ideals of racial conformity and a capacity to get along (Entman & Rojecki, 2000). This comfort and ease is traced back to the dichotomy of embraceable and unembraceable. To have conformity and



to get along is translation for assimilation and the White community's ability to tolerate the images through their conception of being a Black male. Hence, "True" will be embraceable and false will be unembraceable as long as the media and consumers continue to fabricate and believe fabricated realities.

### **The Black Athlete**

The Black athlete section of this dissertation provides the reader an overview of stereotypes and myths about the Black athlete, media and Black Male athletes, racism and sport, and lastly, the Black athlete pre-collegiate experience. This review is necessary to give life to the experiences of Black athletes and the importance of their portrayals in the media.

#### **Black Male Athlete Stereotypes and Myths**

The acceptance of the Black athlete's physical superiority and the loathing of their intellectual abilities had led way for several stereotypes and myths to frame their existence (Hoose, 1989; Steele, 1990; Davis, 1991; Sailes, 1991). Sailes (1998) posits, "...the success of the [Black] athlete spurred the evolution of specific sports stereotypes and myths in an attempt to explain their success and subsequent attack on the '[W]hite status quo'" (p. 186). Hodge et al. (2008) explain since the instrumental success of early Black boxers, Whites have tried to explain away their success with a mixture of anthropometrical (Spurgeon & Meredith, 1980), biological, kinesiological, and physiological (Kane, 1971), cultural and social (Edwards, 2000; Goldsmith, 2003; Harrison, Azzarito & Burden, 2004) justifications. The attempts to explain away success were plentiful and altogether a racist project to demean the Black athlete to a useable product that was confined to exploitation benefitting White society's fabricated superiority.

Scholars have assessed numerous stereotypes including the one of the most pervasive, the dumb jock. Coakley (2001) explains the dumb jock stereotype can be traced back to 500 B.C. when Greek athletes were condemned for neglecting their intellectual development in preparation for their athletic competitions. Greek philosophers branded Greek athletes as useless and ignorant citizens with dull minds. This stereotype originates with White athletes; however they did not believe the entire population was cerebrally inferior. Edwards (1984b) explains that dumb jocks are not born they are systematically created, and its exponentially worse for Black athletes as they fight the racial ascription of intellectual inferiority and athletic ascription of intellectual inferiority. Beezley (1983) advances the development of the stereotype since its inception has manifested in college football players, although many studies have refuted its existence (Nixon, 1982; McMartin & Klay, 1983; Sailes, 1998). Black males are often characterized as brute or sambo, which is also used to describe the physicality and separate Black male athletes from intellectualism and mental control. Lombardo (1978) found these characterizations in the performances of the Harlem Globetrotters criticizing them for the upholding the racist stereotypes and jeopardizing veracity and positive images of Black athletes and Black people. Sailes (1998) compiled a set of informal myths and theories university students used to justify African American sports dominance. The six theories include: matriarchal, mandingo, survival of the fittest, psychological, genetic, and dumb jock.

The six myths that uphold the beliefs of Black athlete superiority stem from keeping the Black athlete's social positioning within the physical aspect of sports (Schneider & Eitzen, 1986; Leonard, 1998; Coakley, 2001; Eitzen & Sage, 2009). The matriarchal theory explained that Black athletes were superior because they grew up in a home absent their

father helping them to transfer their hostile, unfocused, and uncontrollable emotions to the playing field. The theory gained popularity during the 1970's and 1980's to explain the "epidemic" of broken homes in the Black community (Staples, 1970; Meacham, 1983). The myth also latched on the belief that due to an absent father Black athletes forged a bond with their coach eventually leading to the coach assuming a father figure role and resulting in athletic success. Evans (1978) denounces this myth through their study finding that Black athletes have a distant connection with their coach at best. Thus, the myth is still preserved as the societal belief that Black fathers are overwhelmingly absent from the home (Coles & green, 2010).

The mandingo theory was popularized by Jimmy "The Greek" Snyder as he believed that Black athletes were the result of "breeding" large and muscular male and female slaves (Cashmore, 1982; Harpalani, 1996). The child of the two slaves would be stronger and more apt to produce crops from the fields (Hayes & Sugden, 1999). It is believed that this form of genetic engineering produced the increased size and power of Black athlete's gluteal, thigh, and calf muscles that propelled them to jump higher and run faster. The genetic breeding of physically superior slaves could not have withstood the test of time with the intermixing of races and freed slaves choice of partners (Sailes, 1991; Bennett, 2003). The belief is still present today and impacts the educational an athletic choices of many Black youth (Hayes & Sugden, 1999).

The survival of the fittest theory postulates that when the colonialists captured the slaves from Africa those that survived the middle passage were genetically superior (Hoberman, 1997). This myth has been disproved by many citing that their survival could have been from intelligence, guile, resistance to illness, and ingenuity rather than strength

(Hayes & Sugden, 1999). Franklin & Moss (1994) states that the slaves were barely fed, often became ill, thrown into the ocean, and killed as 65 percent of the slave cargo was lost to dysentery, suicide, or murder. Even if the myth was true the necessary acumen to survive the middle passages depended on more than physical resilience, however the racist legend omits the cerebral pliability required to communicate with other slaves, let alone survive the innumerable shackled days as cargo. Ultimately, in combat of this theory, one would supposed that genetic sustention of superior genes would have been halted by American racial dilution over hundreds of years, however, we still witness Black athletes dominating football, basketball, and track.

The psychological, genetic, and dumb jock theories work together to hypothesize that the Black athlete is anatomically blessed and cognitively deficient. Psychologically, White society asserted that Black athletes were incapable of playing leadership positions on sports teams (quarterback, point guard, pitcher). Geneticists claimed that Black athletes have more white fast twitch muscles that increased their muscle's power enabling them to liberate greater force over a shorter amount of time. These muscle fibers benefitted the athlete's agility, speed, quickness, jumping, and throwing. Socially many believe this falsehood is responsible for Black athletes success in the sports they dominate today. Believing that muscle fiber caused the Black athlete to dominate sports maintained the devaluation of the intellectual capabilities of Blacks in sports. Hence, the dumb jock theory mainly challenged collegiate athletes' academic competence and hypothesized for all Black men. Many believed that Black collegiate athletes did not possess the mental astuteness to be in college. The special circumstances the athletic departments provide for collegiate athletes to be admitted were cited as evidence. However, the three myths' intellectual

inferiority claims are false because of successful quarterbacks, point guards, and pitchers; collegiate athletes graduate at higher rates than traditional students; and Black athletes do not just win sports that require short bursts that engage the white muscle fiber. There have been numerous Black athletes that have excelled in on-field/arena leadership positions including but not limited to: quarterbacks (Doug Williams, Marlin Briscoe, Michael Vick, Steve McNair, Randall Cunningham, Warren Moon, Cameron Newton, Russell Wilson, Donovan McNabb), point guards (Gary Payton, Allen Iverson, Lenny Wilkens, Muggsy Bogues, Isaiah Thomas, Stephen Curry, Chris Paul, Magic Johnson, Oscar Robinson ), pitchers (Satchel Paige, Bob Gibson, Ferguson Jenkins, Mudcat Grant, Al Downing, Dwight Gooden, Sam Jones, Don Newcombe). Long distance running utilizes the endurance red muscle fibers which were attributed to White runners. Contemporarily, Olympic games, international marathons, or long distance races are dominated by distance runners from Kenya and Ethiopia disproving that white muscle fiber superiority in Black athletes and red in Whites.

The myth and stereotypes about Black athletes have major implications on the sports socialization, sport participation patterns, and social confinement to athletics (Sailes, 1987; Sokolove, 1988; McPherson et al., 1989; Stone et al., 1999; Hall, 2002). Sailes (1998) concludes, "...if generalizations about student athletes are continually perpetuated by the mass media in fictionalized depictions (television, movies, books), it is likely that those generalizations will continue" (p. 187). Therefore, this dissertation will help to disrupt these generalizations by adding to the knowledge based society can access.

## **Black Male Athletes in the Media**

There is a moderate body of research on the Black male athletes and media, however there are a number of scholars who have done excellent work regarding the topic. Scholars have researched live basketball coverage and the process of othering (Bruce, 2004), the news coverage of Black NFL quarterbacks (Byrd & Utsler, 2007; Niven, 2005), race and crime (Bissell & Zhou, 2004; Coogan, 2012; Enck-Wanzer, 2009; Mastro, Blecha & Seate, 2011) racial construction and authenticity (Andrews, 2001; Childs, 1999; Hawkins, 1998; Kellner, 1996; Uchacz, 1998) racial descriptors in intercollegiate sports (Rada & Wulfemeyer, 2005), Olympic coverage over representation of Black athletes (Hardin, Dodd, Chance, Walsdorf, 2004), and race and penalized offenses (Simons, 2003) to name a few. The abundance of coverage is about mainly professional and Olympic Black athletes. An understanding of the coverage of Black male athletes at the collegiate level is necessary which will be discussed in the next section. Before we get to understanding why there is a necessity for media pedagogy and understanding, we must first examine the research about Black football players. One article in particular from this body of research (Hawkins, 1998) examines the image of OJ Simpson and how it applies to all Black men in America.

Dr. Hawkins takes us through the historical surge of the stock images for Black men, he explains, “They [the stock images] are based upon certain historical roles of the sambo and the brute nigger that were ascribed to black men to maintain the social order during the ante-bellum and post-ante-bellum periods” (Hawkins, 1998, p. 39). One can only infer that since the creation of these images was to control social order and devalue the social and intellectual capital of Black men, especially athletes, the current use cannot be too far off. As Dr. Hawkins examines the media coverage of Black men in America he uses the stock

images as a theoretical continuum that he calls the U.S. White supremacists continuum of images of Black men. The continuum has polar sides of Sambo and the Brute Nigger (see above section for explanations of images) and the images that fall in between to inculcate Black men into fitting on the continuum, much like a box of representation. Dr. Hawkins sampled 2,656 issues of major magazine covers and his results found Black men were only on 98 of those covers represented as: athletes, criminals, entertainers, political/religious leaders, suspects, and businessmen. Of these representations, there was a heavy presence of the sambo and brute images. Hawkins (1998) details, “the high percentages of photo-representation of black men as suspects, entertainers, and athletes are by no means mistakes but convey a continual working and manifestation of white culture’s continuum of images for black men” (p. 49). The images seen are the direct manifestation of racist ideology and combining that with the undeniable influence of the media, the ideological reach and fight for official knowledge (Apple, 2014) is one of social stratification as well. Dr. Hawkins does a phenomenal job showing the impact of OJ’s historical scripts on Black men in the U.S., however the author proposes that we look at the actual images of the athletes as they are overrepresented in his study as well as in most media today. Because Black athletes are highly visible and sought after for media attention there is a need to examine the representation of them for educational purposes as well as recourse. Thus, the images of Black college football players must be examined as collegiate football following and media coverage is growing exponentially with each season.

### **Media and Black College Football Players**

The author has not found research focused solely on Black college football players’ identity and the media. The author sees this dearth as an opportunity to impact Black

collegiate football players.. Of the research, the author found most of it deals with college football and the following aspects of media: social media (Clavio, 2011), recruiting (Dumond, Lynch & Platania, 2007), broadcasting (Billings, 2004), advertising and academic improvement (Smith, 2009), national rankings and exposure (Campbell, Rogers & Finney, 2007; Funk & McElroy, 2013), and the economic benefits of media deals (Weaver, 2013). These scholars present some spectacular research however, the author suggests adding to the body of work by focusing on the Black college football players and the media's role in shaping their behaviors and identities. The author makes this suggestion this for several reasons: increased media coverage of college football (Byers & Hammer, 1997; Hawkins, 2013; McAllister, 1998; McChesney, 1989; Weaver, 2013), overrepresentation of Black players (Harper, Williams Jr & Blackman, 2013; Lapchick, Fox, Guiao & Simpson, 2014), increased amount of time spent consuming media, especially for Black people (Hinckley, 2014), and the importance of Black football players salient athletic identities (Harrison Jr, Harrison & Moore, 2002; Harrison, Azzarito, & Burden, 2004; Harrison, L., Sailes, Rotich, & Bimper, 2011; Stone, Harrison, & Mottley, 2012). The combination of these elements shows the need to examine the ideological and physical influences of the media on Black college football player. Harrison et al, (2002) included a section on popular culture and the effects of Nigresence explaining that,

Clearly, a link exists between sport and entertainment as the attainable images of success to African American youth. The findings of this study [Johnson et al., 1995] also indicate that exposure to violent rap music videos has an effect on the attitudes and perceptions of young African American males. While not specifically tested in their study, it is logical to hypothesize that the bombardment of African American



youth with images of African American athletes in a few sports can alter, confound, and shape the racial identity development of these young minds, especially when entering or going through immersion stage... (p. 130).

Johnson et al.'s findings suggest that Black youth are susceptible media's influence on their own self-perception. Also, Evans (2015) postulates overrepresentation of crimes by Black males and Black male athletes in the media helps to create the Black male's self-perception and social perception as criminals. Harrison et al., (2002) rightfully calls for the next study to address Black male youth, however, the amount of time BCFPs spend with and in the media also warrants research as well. Coogan (2012) also made the case to examine media representation through the differences in criminal treatment between a Black and White football player accused of crimes. These articles call for a study to address the connections between media influences, Black athletes and identity due to the negative image inundation of the Black athletes and differential racial treatment, and the influence of music on Black youth. Since Black athletes are being covered more in the media, we must align the historical images to reflect the racial progress made by athletes and non-athletes alike. We must also examine the effect on how they behave and influence others to behave on campuses (which are site of social reproduction in themselves). Ultimately, the research on the Black college football player and media representation will help to educate and create a level of consciousness among Black players and the Black community hoping to reach across campuses and the macro-American community.

### **Exploring Racism, Exploitation and Sport**

Several scholars have published on racism in sport, racial discrimination, and racial exploitation of Black athletes (Bailey, 1976; Brooks & Althouse, 1993, 2000; Coakley, 2004;

Edwards, 1973, 1985; Sellers, 2000;). Another well-researched area of racism and sports is within athletic administration and leadership (Brooks, 2002; Brooks et al., 1998; Hill et al., 2001; Shropshire, 1996;). Research on Black collegiate athletes and racism it may impact BCFPs through: academics (Donner, 2005), exploitation (Beamon, 2008), and opportunity and differential treatment (Singer, 2005). Racism is often called upon in college athletics because of the inequitable power structure. NCAA D-I FBS collegiate athletics leadership positions in are overwhelmingly occupied by White men (Lapchick, 2015). Henceforth, any controlling measure coming from top down reflects a White leadership structure and majority Black participants. Racism is defined as individual or an institutional power structure among a hegemonic racial group the inequitably impacts the other races (Martin, 2014). Black collegiate athletes experience racism through exploitation by PWI's denying access to quality education resulting in limited employment opportunities after their athletic career (Meggysey, 2000). Following this notion, the following scholars address racism and exploitation.

Donnor (2005) uses critical race theory to examine the interest convergence in the education of Black collegiate athletes. The author defines interest convergence as the merging of interests of two sides of an agreement based on one side being exploited for the gains of the other party (Bell, 1992). Many of these athletes are promised an education with the commitment to accept an athletic scholarship, however once they reach campus they are denied this opportunity in light of athletic service. Black athletes become part of the agreement where the institution benefits from their athletic talents but they don't get a reasonable opportunity at obtaining a college degree in their chosen field. The impact of racism on the Black athlete as an impediment to his academic pursuits is strikingly similar

to the barriers to education of freed Blacks in the post-slavery south (Anderson, 1988). The author suggests future research should better understand the system that promotes cheering for Black athletes' athletic performance but truncates their opportunity to earn a degree. The next author examines this system's impediments further through her qualitative study.

Beamon (2008) conducted a qualitative study on previous Black collegiate athlete's observation of their institution's emphasis on their athletic talent and education. The study interviewed 20 previous college football and basketball players with varying degrees of athletic success in college and the pros. The author found that the participants felt "used" and exploited by their institutions for their athletic talent and dismissed academically. One participant in particular was quoted stating, "I mean they on um you going to class and making the grade, but that's only because is you don't go to class and make the grade, then you cant be on the field...Student-athlete, that's not how it is, its athlete-student. It's backwards for college athletics..." (p. 358). The participants also expressed that they felt economically exploited lacking a share in the revenue from their sport, slighted because they could not major in their desired academic field due to athletic scheduling and ease of major. Ultimately, these participants felt their inability to properly focus on academics and lack of performance thereof, decreased their opportunities after their sports careers. This left them feeling "used".

Singer (2005) sought to understand racism at the individual level of the Black male athlete. His investigation was conducted with four scholarship football players at a major PWI. The author found two major results of racism in college sports: 1) There is a lack of opportunities in "decision-making" roles in their sport, and 2) Black athletes are treated

differently (less favorable) than their White peers.. The participants agreed that there was little opportunity for Black athletes to play “decision making” positions (e.g. quarterback) and they had to be highly dominant athletically to be given leadership roles and intellectually and academically superior to be given decision making roles off the field.. The participants also agreed that they experience differential treatment from academic counselors who enacted negative stereotypical beliefs about inferior intelligence. Both of these implications can impact how the athletes achieve on and off the field, indirectly impacting their life function. Racism through the eyes of the participants was not limited to playing on the field but also carried over into subsequent life because of racist beliefs among “decision making” people.

Racism in sport manifests itself in different fashion, however with the same impact. The previous scholars have examined some of the common themes of racism but there are other nuanced ways to examine racism in the sport realm, especially when addressing the implications for Black collegiate athletes. All of the works on racism call for further investigation of racism’s impact on all Black collegiate athletes, the institutional forces that perpetuate racism, and ways to create emancipatory knowledge to address racism. One such extension of this work will be the examination of the media as it depicts Black collegiate athletes

### **The Black Athlete Experience Pre-College**

The Black collegiate athlete experience is tattered by segregation, racism, and exploitation, all the while heralded by athletic success garnering social fame. Since the first college football game, Black athletes have infiltrated PWI teams with a measurable level of success. The early athletic success of HBCU sports afford many Black collegiate athletes

access to PWIs circa 1970's. After Sam "Bam" Cunningham and USC's all-Black backfield dismantled Paul Bear Bryant's all-White Crimson Tide football team, college sports have not been the same. The mass influx of Black players has led to the overrepresentation of Black collegiate football and basketball players at NCAA D-I FBS institutions. The recruiting process for many of today's athletes reflects the oscillating migrant workers model (Hawkins, 2010) where they are taken from their communities to go "work" for PWIs as athletes. The pattern of recruitment, transfer and transition from their hometowns and families is similar for the vast majority of athletes.. The major college Black athlete often comes from a segregated community with limited diversity to an overwhelmingly White campus with little Black representation in the student body, faculty and/or surrounding community.. During that same recruiting process many Black athletes are highly socialized athletically and merely "passed" academically leading to academic inadequacy in college (Benson, 2000).

Benson (2000) conducted a study addressing academic inadequacy of Black athletes throughout their schooling experiences. The study collected ethnographic data from eight Black collegiate athletes' perspectives about their racial and academic beliefs. The participants acknowledged their athletic conditioning during high school sports and their recruiting process created a purely athletic expectation once arriving on campus. Thereby, athletic expectations also lowered academic expectations and compounded the negative racial beliefs about intelligence. The participants also noted their social community (peers, coaches, teachers, etc.) funneled them towards these athletic expectations. As a result, the athletes internalized these expectations and representations devaluing their academic responsibilities for athletic service to their institution. The ideology the athletes were

socialized into also operates in the policy and practices of the athletic department (Singer, 2009) encompassing an environment that operates under a White conceptualization of the Black collegiate athlete's purpose and perceived abilities. These experiences are important to this dissertation because it give contextual knowledge to the experiences of Black collegiate athletes prior to arriving on campus where many of the tendencies are learned and fostered.

### **Void in the Literature**

This literature review provides an overview of the areas of literature that are necessary to scaffold this dissertation's study. The areas represented reflect power, the media, race and Black male athletes. This section will illuminate how current research can be enhanced to reflect a niche for this researcher's work. The following sections will be reviewed: Black males in society, media and sports, and lastly the media and Black empowerment.

#### **Black Males in Society**

Black males are often recognized as a troublesome, an American problem, and perpetually in crisis (Young, 2004). For people who do not understand the plight and experiences of Black males their representation in the media as violent, sexually irresponsible, and criminal (Gordon, 1997) can negatively refract their ideology of the Black male. Young (2004) posits,

When poor black men from urban communities are asked to reflect upon their life situations and future goals, one might expect their comments to be riddled either with anger, conflict, and animosity, or with hopelessness and despair. Both kinds of responses would seem to validate the standard portrait of young black men from

the inner city as depicted in the print media, on television and in movies, and in certain genres of rap music (p. 9).

The narrative of Black males is important because the media controls the societal representation. The author is not arguing that Black males are innocent as they are often perpetrators and victims of homicide and have high rates of incarceration, general violence, and AIDS/HIV (Noguera, 2003). Facing social pressures to be angry at their plight, Black males, are often essentialized in the media to represent a group standardized through negative rendition (Brown, 2011a). Black males in America have been negatively ascribed for hundreds of years, however, the late 1800's and early 1900's produced scholars that worked to combat their sinister scripts. Social scientists W.E.B Du Bois and Ida B Wells both tirelessly fought the condemnation of Blackness (Muhammed, 2010). The author posits, "At the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in a rapidly industrializing, urbanizing, and demographically shifting America, [B]lackness was refashioned through crime statistics. It became a more racial category in opposition to [W]hiteness through racial criminalization" (p. 5). The linkage between race and criminality further encouraged the downward spiral of representation for the Black male. The linkage to crime allowed society to blame Black males for their own plight and social positioning at the bottom of the social hierarchy (Brown, 2011b). Their positioning is rarely combatted in the media and often exacerbated as the inundation of deficient Black male personifications permeates society's cognition. Valentine (1971) recognized that these personifications came from society's education through the biological and cultural deficit models which are detrimental to Black males' experiences because the models inform policy, programs, and the treatment they receive. The information transmitted through the deficit models positions the Black male as the

problem of society while ignoring the institutional factors that reproduce the plight that encompasses their troubled personification. The one-dimensional view of Black males silences the positive cultural and racial contributions they have made (Yosso, 2005) and corrodes the connection to past and future achievements of Black males. Ultimately, the representation of Black males is important to creating an authentic narrative of their experiences.

### **Media and Sports**

One source of media, television, has a unique relationship regarding sports, education, and society. The television is one of the main purveyors of negative perceptions of Black males and Black athletes. The marriage between television and sports began on May 17, 1939 which incited a multi-billion dollar ideological tool. According to Radar (1984) television coverage began in New York City when picture impulses were picked up by a transmitter and sent to the Empire state building. Since, then the multi-billion dollar business of media and sports was enhanced. The television was largely responsible for elite athletes becoming international celebrities (Schaaf, 1995). With the increasing media coverage athletes are moving farther into the public eye effectively losing their uniqueness for analogous products to be consumed (Chandler, 1988). The more visual replications of the uniform Black athlete, the less differentiation people can apply to their cognition of Black athletes. Hobson's (1982) study found that audience's interpretation of television could not be separated from the social functions of television. Henceforth, the representation of Black athletes becomes increasingly important as media consumers are interpreting them as negatively homogenized beings.



The Black athlete is often one of the most recognizable role models of the Black community even if the athletes choose not to be. Charles Barkley, one of the greatest NBA power forwards to play the game, contended that he was not paid to be a role model, he was paid to dominate in the game of basketball. Barkley, who is now a sports analyst, is not alone in this individual mindset. The issue with Barkley's comments is that the media does not care if Barkley wants to be a role model the media will position that way and so will society due to his athletic achievements (Caulfield, 2011). The media represents an athlete's situation with whatever ideological slant their producers garner. Unfortunately for the Black athlete the slant is negative and backed by false historical representations. For the media's climate of racism, power, and representation to change there needs to be more reporting of the cultural wealth Black athletes possess (Yosso, 2005). Caulfield (2011) discusses the immoral depictions of Black athletes as role models and the future of athletes stating,

It is unjust for the media to create role models for our youth to idolize without taking into consideration the message they are communicating. Instead of focusing solely on athletes' contributions to their sport, they should take into consideration their academic achievements as well. Until then, our youth will be denied the positive role models that signify academic and athletic success. (p. 22)

The positive representations of Black athletes are not only necessary to change the racial climate but important to the future generations of young Black athletes. It is important for young Black athletes to see their true history and their potential to inspire racial empowerment.

One type representation this dissertation is concerned with that of BCFPs. Black football players have some of the most heinous stereotypes and myths surrounding them. Coogan (2012) analyzed the media representations of NFL quarterbacks Michael Vick and Ben Roethlisberger in their individual bouts with the legal system. The study found that Vick was persecuted and usually race was associated with the story as opposed to the victimization of the raceless Roethlisberger. Interestingly, when news stations reported on Vick they also chose to mention numerous other Black athletes who had or were facing criminal charges in effort to reinforce that Black football players were criminals. The author shows the media's deficit positioning of Black athletes stating, "...the media overwhelmingly emphasized the influence of culture a with racially-embedded language in a manner that could be perceived as condemning a segment of [B]lack culture" (p. 142). Billings (2004) also finds the media's deficit perspective linking it to Black culture through announcer's description of the Black quarterback. Thus, the positive framing of Black football players is imperative for a positive cultural and racial framing of Black people.

BCFPs have tremendous power and agency when it comes to media representation. BCFPs are influential in the media because they are overwhelmingly covered, icons of the Black community, and Black athletes are larger television consumers (Lee & Browne, 2009). The media representation of BCFPs can both be powerful and harmful depending on the source and reporting. Although, this chapter is largely dedicated to negative presentations of Black males and athletes this dissertation labors to help rupture the ascriptions with positive empowering personifications. One such example of positive reporting was from some news channel's display of the University of Missouri's football team. The evidence of a positive message rendered in University of Texas senior linebacker,

Peter Jinkens. Howe (2015) captured Jinkens' calling for BCFP empowerment through voice, "I feel like it's good athletes have a voice and they're using their power to make noise on their campus and let something be known...We have a lot of power. If you don't play or practice, how did the school get their money?" (n.p). Therefore, the empowerment of Black athlete experiences is a vital goal of not only this dissertation but the researcher's niche in the academic community.

Recognizing the dearth of literature dedicated to BCFPs, identity, media, and power, it is imperative to produce this literature. Research recognizing the BCFPs impact in the media, their empowering nature, and how the media influences their identity is crucial honor their voice. Answering the call for research of Harrison et al. (2002) and Caulfield (2011) the investigation of media influences on the Black athlete self-perception and role on campus will be addressed in this dissertation.

### **Review of Quantitative Theoretical Framing**

The review of quantitative literature sections frames the need to examine racial and athletic identity of Black athletes. The following sections present relevant literature, conceptual framings, and quantitative instruments that will be needed to examine the identity of Black athletes.

#### **Self-Concept**

Self-concept is vitally important because it informs self-esteem and happiness in a person. Self-concept has been defined in many different ways and used to slice the pie of how one constructs who they are. Gecas & Burke (1995) posit a person's identity forges much of a person's self-concept because it "refers to who or what one is...to the various meanings attached to oneself by self and others" (p. 42). Some of the definitions include

the: sense of personal worth (Butts, 1963), self-concept of ability (Brookover & Thomas, 1964), self-image (Lansman, 1968), and self-perception (Soares & Soares, 1969). To understand the relationship of self-concept to the Black collegiate athlete this study utilizes a definition based in social interaction. Self-concept is the way a person views themselves with regard to different social situations (Marsh & Martin, 2011). Thus, there may be a link between the social perception of self and racial identity for people.

The link between self-concept and identity is even more intricate when referring to Black people. The early studies in self-concept found that Black children identified negatively with their own race (Clark & Clark, 1918; Goodman, 1952; Raymer, 1969) as well as there being a relationship between ethnic/race concepts and self-concept (Butts, 1963). Although the findings showed a negative relationship, many studies were conducted concluding that the relationship between self-concept and ethnic group membership was at best an equivocal and altogether inconclusive (Zirkel, 1971). The studies were conducted to understand how the social location of people in society and their belief in their abilities. The connection between social location and self-perception is key, and for athletes they are heralded as athletes but often times despised racially when stripped of their athlete identification (Beamon, 2008). Thus, self-concept relies on the social perception of a person, which can be exacerbated with media attention. The media essentially places a microscope over the lives of people to investigate them for their current state. For example, when a star athlete or entertainer says something that is not politically correct they are often times researched for their beliefs and confronted about their lives. The microscope the media places on individuals' has the power to convey whatever meaning the producers can hash out of the story they are given. Thus, media interaction is social, being utilized

more often today, and can shape society's opinions about a person. The opinions of others are important to someone who validates their identity with whatever activity they are covering in the media.

### **Athletic Identity**

Athletic identity is the individual's perception of themselves as an athlete (Brewer et al., 1993). Athletic identity is also the combination of a person's cognitive, affective, behavior, and social aspects in relation to their athletic role. Bimper (2014) also asserts that a person's athletic identity maturation, "...is inherently linked to the perceptual degree and significance placed on one's psychosocial identity as an athlete" (p. 796). The earlier a person is engaged with athletic participation the faster they have the ability to enhance their athletic identity. If an athlete begins his or her sports participation at a young age they are often largely influenced by their community. Their community influence can also impact the development of their positive embodiment of athletic identity (Payne & Isaacs, 2005; Webb, Nasco, Riley & Headrick, 1998). Internally, athletes who are successful in their sport may also internalize their athletic identity to a higher degree than their peers (Harrison, Smith, Clark, Bimper, Robbins, Miller, Cosgrove, 2014). Thus, as sports continue to be a part of an individual's life their behaviors and roles becomes streamline with other individuals and it becomes part of their social identity (Tajfel, 1978).

Academically, athletic identity is researched as it applies to athlete's psychological condition, retirement, injury, and transition out of sports (Brewer et al., 1993; Miller & Kerr, 2003; Houle, Brewer & Kluck, 2010). As a result scholars have also illuminated the athlete's difficulty transition out of sports career (Alfermann, Stambulova & Zemaiyte, 2004), truncated non-athletic career development (Grove, Lavallee & Gordon, 1997),

sports performance success and academic distancing (Adler & Adler, 1991). Research both has negative findings and positive findings associated with athletic identity. Horton & Mack (2000) assert elevated athletic identity has positive performance advantages such as superior athletic performance, confident psychological consequences during training, and enhanced body image. Conversely, the scholars also reported that elevated athletic identity increases isolation from non-sports activities (Horton & Mack, 2000) negative psychological responses (Melendez, 2008), identity depression and difficulty disengaging with their sports career (Brewer et al., 1993).

### **Athletic Identity Salience & Foreclosure**

Athletic identity salience is when an individual pushes their athletic identity to the forefront of their overall self-perception. For collegiate athletes this process began as youth and has been developed through internal and external motivation. Externally, an athlete's positive encouragement from parents, peers, and close significant others can tunnel them in to their athletic identity and eventually foreclosure (Marcia, 1966). Once in college there is more of an external push to seclude themselves to their athletic role. For a collegiate athlete their schedules normally orbit their athletic endeavors which means they are forced to choose between sports participation and success and a collegiate experience that offers more non-sports endeavors.

According to Erikson (1959) identity foreclosure is a construct used to describe people who have been committed to an occupation of an ideology without first engaging in exploratory behavior. Brewer et al. (1993b) also posits that, "Because of the rewards and demands (both physical and psychological) inherent in competitive sport, student-athletes may lack incentive or opportunity to explore identities other than that of 'athlete'" (p. 2).

Hence, collegiate athletes are at higher risks for identity foreclosure as many of them have been playing sports since a very young age. Hinitz (1988) study also found that retired gymnasts who had potent identities as a gymnast considered their role in their sport central to their definition of self and experienced difficulty retiring from the sport. Even further Kleiber & Brock (1992) added that collegiate athletes who experienced career-ending injuries with dreams of playing professionally experienced a decrease in self-esteem. These findings are important about when talking about late high school and collegiate athletes due to the increased want to understand themselves and the critical period for identity development (Erikson, 1968). Also including Brewer et al., (1993) findings, athletic identity and identity foreclosure will increase with athletic involvement. Altogether, a person's athletic identity salience comes from multiple factors in their athletic experience. Once they have reached salience they are usually over committing time to their sports, which can also lead to identity foreclosure when the opportunity to be an athlete is no longer available.

### **Athletic Identity and Contemporary Black Athletes**

For African American males, sports are seen as a rite of passage and crucial to their social capital (Harrison, Harrison, Moore, 2002). From a young age Black males are socialized towards sports and develop deep athletic identities through extended years of participation. Athletic identity, like any identity, encompasses both negative and positive attributes to a person's overall identity (Brewer et al., 1993). For Black males the positive association with athletic comes through successes and social capital. The negative association roots from the athletic losses and lack of social capital when they are playing athletically. The more athletic success a Black male experiences the higher the chances

there is a large association with athletic identity. To achieve a collegiate scholarship many Black males overly dedicate time and effort into their athletic craft often taking time away from the other roles (Adler & Adler, 1991). The minimization of a Black male and Black male athlete's identity to exclusively athlete becomes dangerous when framing the current NCAA and NFL players.

For Black collegiate athletes they vie for a small number of openings in the professional ranks each year. The likelihood of them making it to the elite level of their sports is slim, however they have dedicated years on end to this craft and have wrapped themselves up in the role as an athlete. Harrison et al. (2002) study emphasized future research examining the eclipsing of racial identity and its intersection with athletic identity. The authors posit that Black athletes, "...are shielded from racism and discrimination, which allows their athletic identities to come to the forefront..." hence, "much more work needs to be done involving valid and reliable measures of both racial and athletic identity" (p. 128). Harrison et al. (2011) continued the previous study of the intersection of racial and athletic identity concluding that Black collegiate athletes had higher athletic identity scores than their white counterparts. The study also postulated the importance of Black athletes being perceived as athletes by others, experiencing a handicapped academic environment, dealing with stereotype threat, and "sports [are] the only important thing in [their] life" (p. 99) as compared to their White counterparts. The findings of this study suggest that Black athletes rely on sports as their "meal ticket" and they are socially confined to their athletic role. This confinement and internal focus on their sport can also lead to identity foreclosure.

The progressive nature of a Black athlete's athletic identity while competing in



collegiate athletics can lead to identity foreclosure. Beamon's (2012) study explored identity foreclosure in 20 former Black D-I athletes. Her study reported the respondent's self-identity was heavily constructed by athletics and their social identity was also relegated to athletic status that lead to identity foreclosure. As a result the athletes had a difficult time transitioning out of athletics, experienced loss of "self", loss of status, and hindered career maturity. Elevated athletic identity and identity foreclosure are both social constructions and the community is a major part of how Black athlete's perceive themselves and how other perceive them. The influence of media in these cases was not alluded to but can serve as an omnipresent educator. Thus, utilizing the lens of the media will help to explain how Black athletes continue to be socially seen as athletes.

### **Black Racial Identity**

Racial identity is a person's self-perception of in-group membership based on shared history and experiences of a certain racial group (Helms, 1990). Race is based on both biological and socially theorized throughout history. The debated nature of race's origin has led to numerous scholars' research the process by which Black people develop their identity. Black racial identity has been studied to understand its complexities as it comes to formation and solidification (Cross, 1971, 1995; Parham & Helms, 1981, 1985; Sellers, 1997; Jackson, 1975; Fanon, 2008). Cross' (1971) seminal work laid the landscape for theories in Black racial identity development. His work placated self-perception and in-group identification through the self-hate as one can experience in society. A person's experience in society is also tailored through racial oppression and other historical perspectives of race (Winant, 2009).

Historically, Black people's racial identity was forced on them with negative ascription (Jackson, 2006). Black people also have their own positive perception of themselves which often times led to double consciousness (Du Bois, 1903) or the innate complex of the other (Fanon, 2008). X & Haley's (1992) *Autobiography of Malcolm X* details the racial experiences of Malcolm X through his stages of life. The authors expresses Malcom's negative experiences of bring Black early on in the book when he was berated by being called nigger so much he thought it was his name. The book also details social barriers between races and inferior career aspirations that society places on him just because he is Black. After being incarcerated and joining the Nation of Islam, Malcolm developed a pro-Black lens and began to see the value in himself and his race against social perception. Du Bois (1903) also describes this problem of the color line and how race has made Black people feel like a problem. Du Bois' own perception of self was highly esteemed and through his scholarship a valuable conceptualization of Black racial identity. Du Bois suggested Black racial uplift through what he called the talented tenth, clearly suggesting that exceptional Black people existed even in opposition of early societal ascriptions (Du Bois, 1903). Black racial identity is negotiated socially which means the developmental process grapples with oppression, racial ascriptions, cultural influence, racial heritage, and one's own empirical knowledge.

### **Black Athletes and Black Power**

Sport is one of the most watched entertainment products internationally. The spectators amassed during the Olympic Games make them prime showings of international racial tolerance. The Olympics were a perfect stage for dismantling racial intolerance, oppression, and developing racial solidarity in the midst of nationalist pressures.

Contemporarily, events such as the Clippers' protest of previous owner Donald Sterling and the Missouri Black football players protest have built on the progress of the early athlete's activism.

The 1936 Olympics were branded by Adolf Hitler's Aryan supremacy, which made it a monumental testament to the falsity of White supremacy (Large, 2007). During the games Black track athlete Jesse Owens won four gold medals beating White athletes from various different countries, including Germany. The international spectacle of a Black athlete beating White athletes was discredited by racist eugenic convictions that claimed Black athletes naturally had anatomical advantages. However, this international demonstration provided proof that Black people were not inferior, at least in the athletic realm.

The racial discrimination protest of John Carlos and Tommie Smith at the 1968 Olympics was a significant historical event not only for the African American community, but also for America as a whole. That Wednesday October 16<sup>th</sup> would produce one of the most iconic images of the Civil Rights period in the United States. The empowering image of the two African American males, John Carlos and Tommie Smith, standing dignified with their fists clinched in solidarity after the gold and bronze medal finishes in the 200-meter finals. Carlos and Smith's image branded in the minds of many resembled salient themes of unity, struggle, and agency. The unity of African American people in America during the 1960's, the struggle for civil rights during the Civil Rights Movement, and agency and effort needed for Carlos and Smith to overcome threats of having their potential medals revoked and expulsion. Renowned scholar and social activist, Dr. Henry Edwards, organized the OPHR in 1967 to help the resistance of racial segregation in the U.S and South Africa as well as general racism in sports. The committee consisted of mainly African American athletes

and community leaders and stood for four central demands. The four demands were: restoration of Muhammad Ali's heavy weight boxing title, hiring more African American coaches, revoking the invitation of Rhodesia and South Africa from the Olympics, and the replacement of Avery Brundage as the IOC president. The four demands were attached to a threat boycott of the games. The OPHR inspired athlete-activists John Carlos and Tommie Smith as well as others to expose the racial injustice through their demonstration on the international stage. Numerous athletes had planned for weeks prior to demonstrate the same way as Carlos and Smith had. However, threats from the IOC derailed many of the athletes from participating in the demonstration in fear of being exiled from the games or having their potential medals revoked. Ultimately, setting an even more influential stage for Carlos and Smith. Prior to the 200-meter final, Carlos and Smith planned to demonstrate pending a trip to the medal stand. With a successful conclusion of the race, Smith set a world record and Carlos placed third. The demonstration took place during the national anthem while the American Flag was being lifted up the flagpole. The complete demonstration consisted of: the two men sharing black gloves each raising opposite hands with their fist clinched tightly, a OPHR button worn by all three medal winners, the absence of shoes to protest international Black poverty, and scarves and beads to protest lynching in America. The successful demurrer of racism cost Carlos and Smith their medals and they were given 48-hours to leave the Olympic village. The 1968 games were important in displaying the racial injustice America denounces internationally and commanding respect for the Black Power movement in one of the most iconic sports demonstrations. The 1968 games and the Black power movement also incited the creation of racial identity theories

that would serve as the foundation for development studies (Thomas, 1971; Cross, 1971; Jackson, 1975; Milliones, 1980)

Contemporarily, sports culture still deals racism, often hidden, but withstanding time through institutional practice. The Clippers one time owner, Donald Sterling was forced to sell his team due to racist comments made about the vile nature of Black people. The Clippers were and are overwhelmingly comprised of Black players and have a Black head coach. In response to Sterling's vicious words against Black people, the players protested by wearing team warm-ups inside out to not display the team logo, Dropped their warm-ups at center court prior to beginning the game, and wore Black socks and arm bands during the game in Black solidarity (Johnson, 2014). The players also threatened to not play if Sterling was not forced to step down as owner. The protest resulted in Sterling being fired and banned from the league until further notice. Similar to the Clippers protest, Black collegiate athletes protested the campus ignoring ongoing racial incidents.

Most recently, the University of Missouri football's Black players refused to play in their next game until the president was fired or leave. The team acted in solidarity with Black graduate student Jonathan Butler in response to a series of racial incidents that went unresolved or addressed by the university administration. The boycott garnered major media attention and even a Missouri House Bill 1743 by representatives Rick Brattin and Kurt Bahr. The university president eventually resigned and the players eventually returned to football related activities (Pearce & Raab, 2015). The state of Missouri is where Black teenager, Michael Brown, was shot and killed and left dead in the street for hours, which incited a riot. The state of Missouri has been news worthy in terms of race relations and the football team's boycott added to the national spectacle. Both the Sterling and

University of Missouri incidents were located in the national BlackLivesMatter movement and the politicization of social media. The national movement has reached numerous cities and is being pushed forward through athletics such as the 1968 Olympics and the Black Power movement.

These experiences do not cover the breadth of racial protests, movements, and powerful showing towards progressing and empowering Black self-image and identity; however, it is noteworthy to represent a sample of the power Black athlete garner in the larger power structure. The power and agency Black athletes amass prove internationally helpful to racial movement and understandings of race and racial identity. Black athletes using their power to shape racial ideology is not only important but also necessary and will continue to be a space where Black people have agency and power to express their beliefs.

### **Original Conceptualization of Nigresence**

Black identity's social nature helps people gravitate towards in-group membership through a process called Nigresence. Nigresence means the process of becoming Black in French (Cross, 1978). The theory was advanced through Cross' (1971) work detailing a Black person's progression from a Eurocentric ontology and epistemology to an Afrocentric one. Cross' theory initially recorded five stages that were purely theory until Hall, Freedle & Cross (1972) tested it. The five stages are: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, internalization, and internalization-commitment.

Pre-encounter literally refers to an individual who has not encountered an Afrocentric viewpoint. The individual operates within a Eurocentric worldview often being socialized anywhere from race neutral to anti-Black and oppositional views to someone who has an Afrocentric frame of mind. In this stage the individual is also characterized by

their allegiance to Eurocentric values and assimilative attitude as the best way to live. They may either ignore their African decent or adopt a view that it is a negative trait eventually developing a self-hatred that can cause lower self-esteem. They will seldom be prideful in their race and tend to attribute societal successes to Whites rather than Blacks. In this pre-encounter stage the person regularly has an inaccurate understanding of Black history and Black people.

The encounter stage is generally characterized by a sequence of racially awakening events, episodes, or circumstances that abrade their outlook. The person's encounter must emotionally impact their personal information of how they see the world. For example, someone could be called a nigger by a White person or be followed around a store because of their Black skin, persuading them to rethink their location the Eurocentric view. The encounter also instigates feelings of bewilderment, apprehension, and dejection. Cross (1971) explains that during this stage individuals both experience a personal encounter episode and begin to reinterpret their Eurocentric epistemology and ontology.

The immersion-emersion stage encompasses a person's desire to be immersed in an Afrocentric identity by fully detesting their previous identity concurrently. In the process of replacing their old identity, they are unable to clearly define their who they are becoming. A person in this stage gains vigor to learn Black history, read Black authors, wear Black hairstyles and clothing, and join Black organizations. Through their transitions they develop a Black worldview in opposition to the White worldview, resulting in a dichotomized Black-White perspective. At this stage individuals begin to segregate themselves by race and develop revulsion for Whites. They lean on other Black people to

support their development of Blackness complete through an enthusiastic fixation with anything pro-Black.

The fourth stage, internalization, is described as a sense of commitment to the internal Black self-perception that dissolves the ripples from the previous stages. Reaching this stage is not guaranteed as many people stall in the third stage never progressing. Once in this stage the person is inundated with authentic connection and love for Black communities. To reach this stage a person undergoes an analysis of the Black community and the Black experience with a devout appreciation. The internalization of Blackness supplements the mollifying psychological stress and restructuring of their personality. At this stage the individual is secure in their Blackness and has a positive self-perception.

The final stage is internalization-commitment. During this stage the individual has internalized their Blackness and Afrocentric worldview. Once the person reaches the final stage they are sympathetic and empathetic to fighting racism, combatting hegemony, and promoting Black liberation through Black pride. An internally committed individual also committed to a social justice oriented transformation of their communities.

Two major assumptions were addressed during the test of the Cross (1971) Nigrescence model; one, it overlooked that black people do not have to experience a Nigrescence process at all and two, Black identity development linearly occurs from stage one to stage five. Cross (1991) stated a person's advancement between Nigrescence stages was in response to the various forms of oppression facing Blacks during the Black power movement. The model also assumed that Black people had analogous racial development. It was not until Hall et al. (1972) that Nigrescence was tested to reveal the assumptions impact.



Hall et al.'s empirical investigation of the Nigresence model included 90 Black and 90 White Princeton University students. The study sought to test the model to prepare it for generalizability among larger populations. The researchers divided the participants into six different groups hypothesizing that clustered beliefs would be representative of any pre-existing stages of Nigresence. Some of groups were asked to first bunch together and name descriptive statements about identity. The rest of the groups were asked to regroup the statements, rename them, categorize them into four different groups and chronologically order the groups. The study recognized correlations between Nigresence statements that were groups by the participants. However, even though successful, the study's assumptions were ultimately harmful to the correlation. The researchers found two issues to be mainly harmful, one of which was that the participants who had undergone stages of Nigresence were readily able to identify the other respondent's Nigresence process through their perspectives of their own development. Secondly, the participant's verbalization data as opposed to individual feelings was uncharacteristic of what someone would apply to a Black person in America. The two issues in conjunction with a small sample size, limited diversity, reliability issues, and lack of longitudinal implications lead scholars to push the development of the Nigresence scale and eventual revisions.

### **Revisions and Expansion to Nigresence**

Parham & Helms (1981) developed a racial identity scale designed to assess Cross' original model. The Racial Identity Attitude Scale (RAIS) was an amended version of the Q-sort items used in Hall et al. (1972) study. The RIAS was highly criticized but was extremely important in the early research on Black racial identity

(Parham & Helms, 1985; Cater & Helms, 1988; Richardson & Helms, 1994; Bagley & Copeland, 1994; Helms & Parham, 1996; Neville & Lily, 2000). The criticisms emerged from the lack of peer review and the mixed findings of psychometric properties among the numerous versions (Cokley, 2007).

The criticisms were heard and understood by Cross as he would later develop revisions to his 1971 Nigresence model reflective of the critiques of (Akbar, 1989; Nobles, 1989; Parham, 1989; Smith 1989). Akbar (1989) noticed the simplification of the Black Nationalist identity to the immersion-emersion stage devaluing the Black Nationalist identity during the last two stages (Nobles, 1989). Parham (1989) criticized the linear process of the model arguing that there could be individuals who may recycle through the Nigresence process. Internalizing the critiques of the Nigresence model, Cross (1991) modified model reflected a decrease to four robust stages and differentiation between personal and group identities. The differentiation between group identity and personal identity is important because of the social nature of racial identity. Cross (1991) argues that Black racial identity happens at the level of reference to group orientation (RGO) rather than on the level of personal identity (PI). The RGO is concerned with the social membership of a person such as athlete, gender, or race versus the personal identification, which is attributed to self-perception. This distinction is important because it factors for individual personality throughout Nigresence. An individual's personality may be unchanged by the end of Nigresence despite their pro-Black attitude and association with the Black community. The pro-Black attitude and association with the Black community can also be changed through re-socialization. The following stages are germane to the new

conceptualization of Nigresence: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, and internalization.

The revamped pre-encounter stage accounted for the rage of racial attitudes and identity. During pre-encounter an individual may experience racial attitudes ranging from low-salience to social opprobrium. Their Black identity can also encompass an assimilationist or anti-Black identity (Cross, 1991). The changes reflect race as a non-important factor for someone who acquiesces to an American Nationalist RGO. Conversely, self-hatred and the miseducation of the individual may be central to the anti-Black identity. This person's jaded view of Black history and Black people can produce self-hatred leading them accept the Eurocentric perspective, cultural norms, and values (Cross, 1995). This person is however, potentially interested in joining organizations and grouping with other Black people who have the same level of race consciousness (Cross, 1991).

The second stage, encounter, has remained similar to its original conceptualization. Originally, the model described an event(s) or episode(s) that happened to an individual that instigated their transformation from their previous ontology. Cross (1991) adds that the encounter must force the individual to question their allegiance to the American RGO. This encounter episode now can be either positive or negative based on the person's ontology prior to the encounter. The previous model suggested a negative encounter that formulated the movement to the second stage, such as being called a nigger by a White person. Now the revised model recognizes positive transformative encounters such as listening to a motivational Black speaker or taking a Black history course. These experiences can also help a person navigate to the second stage of Nigresence.

Immersion-emersion, as the third stage of Nigrescence, encompasses a person's inundation with Blackness and Black culture. Simultaneously, as the individual is inundated with Blackness they are also repelling a Eurocentric ontology and Whiteness. This stage is powerful because person develops a new frame of reference that helps them move towards motivating their internal Black identity (Cross, 1991). They may have amassed a pro-Black standpoint from their previous stages and during this stage that information becomes central to their overall internal identity. This process may be an emotional one for the individual. The emotional repercussions may cause one to regress back to previous stages, develop a lingering pessimism towards non-Black people, or neglect a racial stance altogether (Cross, 1991). For an individual to continue to the final stage they must recognize their emersion into Blackness is not fully satisfying their black identity. They must progress towards applying their emersion towards other part of their existence, daily life and worldview (Cross, 1995).

The final stage, internalization, is characterized by an individual's willingness and fulfillment of being Black in daily life. This individual garners a Black worldview and core identity complete with a positive attitude about being Black. The stage also has added variations of identity (Black Nationalist, Biculturalist, and Multiculturalist) broadening the scope to encompass the intersectionality of identities. Thus a commitment to their identity and social justice oriented uplift in their communities is extended. The intersectionality of identity is recognized through commitment to the sections of their identity (e.g. Blackness and sexuality, ethnicity, culture) (Vandiver et al., 2002). However, during this stage the person's racial identity is considered salient to all other identities. The model revisions have reflected the criticisms of various scholars, most notably Parham (1989).

Parham (1989) criticized the original Nigresence model for its inability to allow individuals to experience the stages in a non-linear fashion with no recourse. Thus, Cross (1991) provided that through the stages and individual can be recycled due to emotional stress, encounters, or even neglecting a racial stance. An individual may experience multiple encounter episodes throughout their life, which can also cause a recycling to previous stages or even cause them to question what it means to be Black. In addition, Cross also recognized three functions of Black identity that have access to all of the stages. First, the defensive function postulates that an individual that lives in a society of racism will use this function to defend himself or herself against negative psychological stress. Second, the reference group function works to provide the individual with a sense of community with other Blacks providing support, understanding, and purpose. Lastly, the bridging function seeks to aid the individual's integration into no-Black spaces and aspects of society (Cross, 1991). Although more inclusive of criticisms, the Cross (1991) model still had room to be extended to encompass the multiple ways Black identity can be preformed in daily life (Vandiver et al., 2002).

The Cross (1991) model revision has also been reworked to now include eight Black identity classifications, including five from the revision model. Cross & Vandiver's (2001) extended Nigresence focuses on moving through the stages in Black identity clusters. The extended model is representative of variation in Black identity in the pre-encounter, immersion-emersion, and internalization stages. The pre-encounter stage now incorporates three different identities: pre-encounter assimilation, pre-encounter miseducation, and pre-encounter self-hatred. The other five identity characterizations rolled over from the revised model: immersion-emersion (extreme Black involvement and

anti-White identity) and internalization (Black Nationalist, Biculturalist, and Multiculturalist) (Vandiver et al., 2002). Of the eight different identity characterizations only six are included in the updated version of the model. Cross & Vandiver's (2001) introduced the Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS) which combined two of the eight identity characterizations (Biculturalist, and Multiculturalist) due to indistinguishable properties resulting in the following measurable subscales: pre-encounter assimilation, miseducation, and self-hatred; immersion-emersion anti-white; and internalization Afrocentric and multiculturalist exclusive (Cokley & Vandiver, 2012).

### **Racial and Athletic Identity Research**

The growing research on racial and athletic identity of Black athletes sets the foundation of this dissertation. Many authors have examined athletic and racial identity empirically helping to divulge implications of the experiences of Black athletes. Jackson, Keiper, Brown, Brown & Manuel (2002) examined the relationship between athletic identity and racial attitudes of first year Black and White collegiate athletes. The authors found a significant relationship between athletic identity and racial attitudes stating athletic identity influences Black collegiate athlete's racial attitude. Brown et al. (2003) utilized the same data set to analyze athletic identity and racial centrality impact on Black and White freshman athletes' experiences with discrimination. The authors found that Black athlete's had a negative relationship between athletic and racial identity. The Black participant's high level of athletic identity was believed to lead them to believe racial discrimination did not exist. Thus the study's findings added to the understanding that athletic identity subsidizes racial self-perception. Honing in on the convergence of athletic and racial identity

studies examine its impact on the athletes academically and socially.

Harrison et al.'s (2002) synthesis and application of Black racial and athletic identity examining Black youth, paragon Black athlete intersectionality research. The authors utilize the revised Nigresence model (Cross, 1995) to assess sporting patterns and preferences of Black youth offering theoretical implications. The theoretical implications of the Nigresence stages suggested Black youth: may stall in the pre-encounter stage because their social fame and athletic success has shielded from negative encounter events, their sports participation is patterned into socially "Black" sports, participation in European American sporting activities may no longer created dissonance in them, and they can participate in traditional European activities without losing the love for and perspective of their own community. The authors also called for future studies on the intersection of racial and athlete identity stating, "much more work needs to be done involving valid and reliable measures of both racial and athletic identity before we really understand the interaction of these constructs." (Harrison et al., 2002, p. 128). The article's seminal and informative nature is still not without limitations. The important limitation to consider is the use of a dated Nigresence scale (Cross, 1995). The revisions to the scale should help scholars to better assess the identities of Black athletes.

Harrison, Sailes, Rotich & Bimper (2011) built on Harrison et al.'s (2002) call for more work on the intersection of race and athletic identity. The authors used the Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS) with 109 Black and White collegiate football players. The results showed that Black athletes had a higher athletic identity compared to their White counter parts. The Black athletes in the study suggested they were more internally focused on their sport, felt the social perception of them as athletes only, and they saw

sports as the focal point of their lives. The study suggested that faculty and peers viewed as an only an athlete was likely to damage the athlete's academic identity and self-perception as well as the Black athlete's narrow focus on sports is exacerbated by their coaches, administration, and stereotypes confining and conforming them to the dream of reaching the professional ranks in their sports. The article was lucrative and advanced the knowledge base in the field, but they were limited by sample size and specific geographic focus. Hence, the authors call for further study "to investigate the impact of athletic identity and stimulate continuing dialogue about the race based cultural differences between African American and Caucasian American athletes participating in college athletics" (p. 100).

Bimper & Harrison (2011) furthered the examination of racial and athletic identity. The authors used the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI, Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998) framework to investigate racial and athletic identity centrality. They utilized the framework's racial ideologies to break down the theoretical implications. The authors explain that racial ideologies are comprised of, "...four distinct dimensions: 1) assimilationists, which highlight the similarities between [Black] and American mainstream society; 2) humanists, which highlight the similarities between all humans; 3) nationalists, which highlight the exclusivity of being of African descent; and 4) oppressed minority ideologists, which stress the similarities between [Black] and other oppressed groups" (p.279). Through the racial ideologies that authors postulated that Black athletes: may instill an assimilationist ideology when facing the structure of college sports allowing their athletic identity to be salient, enacting a humanist ideology can influence the relationships between fellow players and coaches preventing bonding



relationships, may not active an oppressed minority ideology in the athletic domain but may use it as a coping strategy in the classroom, and activating a nationalist ideology may be derailed as their athletic schedules prevent non-athletic participation in pro-Black groups and organizations. The authors also direct future research to, “continue to investigate the existence of multiple ways athletic identity may be possibly associated with racial identity and the various ideological dimensions” (p. 284) which was taken up by Bimper’s (2014) study.

Bimper’s (2014) study examined the importance racial and athletic identity play on academic performance. The author surveyed 255 participants using CRIS (Vandiver et al., 2002), which is the 40-item scale created from and to operationalize Cross’ (1991) revised model. The study found Black collegiate athletes had: string identification with athletic roles, negative correlation between athletic identity and grade point average, and they subscribe to dominant racial attitudes of assimilation and miseducation. The author also suggested that more work be done with revenue earning sports and women’s sports to expand the study of race and identity. However in support of this dissertation, the author seeks to examine the influences of the media on Black athlete identity to help, “...Black male [collegiate] athletes in high- profile intercollegiate athletes to develop meaning of their identities that best enable proficient learning and healthier personal and educational growth...” (p. 805).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The idea behind this theoretical framework is simple; it is made to examine Black male athletes specifically as their experience is unique from other male and male athlete’s experiences. An example of this ideology was used by Patricia Hill Collins use of three key

themes to explain the Black feminist experience and thought. First, the framework is shaped and produced by the experiences of Black women have encountered in their lives. Second, although experiences of Black women can be unique there are also intersections and overlap that can be highlighted. Finally, although commonalities do exist among Black women there is much diversity in class, age, religion, and sexual orientation providing multiple contexts and experiences that can be divulged and understood (Collins, 1986; Howard-Hamilton, 2003). Similar to Collins' vision, theorizing the Black male athlete provides a framework that is shaped and produced by Black males athlete's experiences both researcher and participants, scholarship already undergirds a commonality among the experiences of Black male athletes, and lastly, the diversity among Black male athletes in today's sports culture is vast and incomprehensible under the current theories.

There have been multiple theories used to explicate the experiences of Black male athletes, one of which is critical race theory (CRT) (Anderson & McCormack, 2010; Bimper, 2015; Bimper et al., 2012; Carter-Francique, Hart & Cheeks, 2015; Council III, Robinson, Bennett III & Moody, 2015; Donnor, 2005; Harrison & Lawrence, 2003; Harper, 2009; Hylton, 2008; Lawrence, 2005; Lopez, 2015; Singer, 2005). CRT was birthed out of the Black Power era of oppression by theorist Derrick Bell founded on the theory of critical legal studies (Delgado, 1984). Bell (1995) outlines his thought process for the creation of CRT stating, "critical race theory is a body of legal scholarship, now about a decade old, a majority of whose members are both existentially people of color and ideologically committed to the struggle against racism, particularly as institutionalized in and by law" (p. 898). The establishment of CRT was to combat the institutional racism embedded in society as normal and to challenge all policy and racial treatment from a critical lens.

Understanding that this framework is useful and encompasses work on all racial injustice makes it both beneficial and also not specific. The need for theories to match the participants and time period as racism is both invisible in day to day life and pervasive institutionally. CRT is a great framework to use, but to extract the minute details of the Black athlete experience there must be a framework to separate their experiences from traditional Black people in society.

Another, useful framework to examine racial injustices is internal colonialism (de la Garza & Cotrell, 1976; Carmichael & Power, 1967; Hawkins, 2010; Martínez, 1982). The use of this framework came from the Black Power movement as well. Hawkins (2010) used the internal colonial model to create “the plantation model” and admittedly stated that the literature that undergirds the framework is dated due its uses during the 1960’s and 1970’s. The Black power movement was birthed out of the crisis of racial mistreatment and the degradation of the Black community and Black poor. Moore (2003) writes, The problems of the [B]lack urban poor required a different set of strategies and tactics...They reveled in the slogan ‘Black Power,’ a rejection of integration, assimilation, nonviolence, passive resistance, and the entire civil rights movement” (p. 4). The establishment of differences of the movement is what characterized Black power. Today, the struggles of “integration, assimilation, nonviolence, passive resistance” remain the same because of the omnipresent forms of racism versus the overt individual racism and segregation faced post Jim Crow. The institutionalized racism facing today’s Black community is like chasing a ghost because it hard to prove racists acts or to find racists in the neo-liberal context (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Today when “racists” are found they are publically chastised usually ending in the loss of their position and dignity. Although this practice dissuades overt

racism, it further pushes it towards racism being invisible as people do not want to change their ideology just hide it from public view. The culprits of overt racism are used as examples to force people to either reconstruct their racist ideology or make it part of their private regard. Either way, racism is not extinct and racist people are scapegoating behind the power of institutions. Mills (1997) claims the Racial Contract has account for this completely institutional shift in racism as part of keeping the White polity intact. Although, CRT and Internal Colonialism were useful to examining the post Black Power racial issues, they are beginning to be overused and outdated to deal with the institutional racism on a micro level of different populations.

Many contend that we are in a post racial period (McWhorter, 2005) suggesting that there are different racial relations than the 1960's and 1970's. However the enemy of racism and social injustice has transformed itself to appear different, yet remains potent even in the dismissal of overt racism. Thus, to understand how the nuanced ways of racism interacts in our social world Wynter (1984) posits if we are going to, "...understand a newer and still evolving world; if we are to educate people to live in that world; if we are to abandon categories and institutions that belong to a vanished world as it is well-nigh desperate that we should...then knowledge must be rewritten" (p. 21). To continually update knowledge about the practices of racism gives those fighting it the best chance to dismantle it. The useful foundations of CRT and internal colonialism will not be replaced, just specialized through The One Dimensional Theory of Identity and Expectations of this dissertation.

The One Dimensional Theory of Identity and Expectations seeks to uncover the unique experiences of Black athletes in America. The Black person in America has long

been a source of exploitive labor and the Black athlete serves as the source of labor for White athletic institutions while being publically rewarded as the Black's communities greatest achievements. The controlling aspect of the labor roots from the desire to control (institutionally), the ideological overhaul of Black people's ontology and epistemology to reflect institutional goals (Mind), and the exploitation of Black people's body to build the physical manifestation of the institutional goals (Body). The theory employs critical perspectives in an effort to unearth power's relationship to racial identity, athletic identity, and deficit narratives in construction of Black athletes. Through critically examining the institution, the theory is useful to provide silenced or nuanced knowledge to rupture institutional racism in the name of social justice.

### **The One Dimensional Theory of Identity and Expectations -Key Constructs**

This theory is widely applicable to Black athletes and various institutional experiences with social injustice; however, for the purposes of this dissertation BCFPs will be examined through the social injustice of the media. Within the realm of college athletics there are various factors that impact the experiences of Black athletes. More specifically, college football has been stereotypically seen as a tool of upward social mobility, achievement, and happiness. The one truth, however is college football does provide an opportunity for a collegiate education that may have not been accessible without sports. For BCFPs the tropes of playing also affect their experience. They are often subject to the triple tragedy: overwhelming pursuit of athletic goals, personal and cultural underdevelopment, and underdevelopment of the community with the lack of careers outside of athletics (Edwards, 1988). Beyond the triple tragedy BCFPs also face agonizing struggles with their identity (Brewer Van Raalte & Linder, 1993; Harrison, Harrison &

Moore, 2002; Harrison, Stone, Shapiro, Yee, Boyd & Rullan, 2009) and their role on campus (Adler & Adler, 1991). The media also acts as a powerful force of representation of hegemonic social identities for all people (Marcuse, 1964), but especially BCFPs. These representations then act as official knowledge to be learned and reproduced (Apple, 2014). Hence, the illumination of the key constructs (institutional, mind, body) will help to make sense of the power of the White society to continually shape and mold the identities and behaviors of BCFPs.

### **The Institution.**

Institutional control is something that cannot be blamed on one individual or place. Institutional power can be described as the institutional force (ex. Media, schools, religion, etc.) having the power to directly or indirectly dictate individuals goals, ideals, and means from the participation in that institution (Dugger, 1980).

Since this dissertation is concerned with the influence of these institutions, the author has to also recognize who is informing the intuitional norms, who reinforces the institutional goals and ideals, as well as who is not represented within those goals and ideals. One example of institutional theory is Dr. Charles Mills' racial contract theory (Mills, 1997). The racial contract theory is one informed by the misrepresentation of race in social contract theories of Hobbes, Locke, Mill, Marx, Rawls, and Machiavelli to name a few. The contract details the plan to divide people among racial lines by purposefully not addressing race and racial differences. The racial contract is a set of formal and informal agreements and meta-agreements between members of White society to categorize "others" as non-White and subordinate on the social hierarchy normed by White ideals. Mill (1997) adds,

...the general purpose of the Contract is always the differential privileging of the whites as a group with respect to the nonwhites as a group, the exploitation of their bodies, land, resources, and the denial of equal socioeconomic opportunities to them. All whites are *beneficiaries* of the Contract, though some whites are not *signatories* to it. (p. 11)

The racial contract is a binding contract that shapes peoples' social being and opportunities which non-White people have no say in and are controlled by White society. Those who have signed the contract and who benefit from it have the power to choose who it represents based on the needs of White society. Accordingly, the agreement is malleable and seemingly unbreakable. The unbreakable aura is aided by the cloaked representation of non-White individuals in addition to keeping the contractual privileges for White people. Mills writes, "...the Racial Contract manifests itself in the white resistance to anything more than the *formal* extension of the terms of the abstract social contract" (p. 75) which includes the façade of equality among White and people of color without changing the fundamental arrangement of the contract. This allows the members of the White polity to deny individual racism and prejudice even though the contract is based on institutional discrimination and subjugation. An example is the American Jim Crow period. During the Jim Crow period Black people were considered citizens, however were subjugated to second class citizenship having to use "separate but equal" facilities. Black and White people having to use different facilities upheld the legacy of racism and dehumanization through de jure segregation while scapegoating White individuals' racism by blaming it on the laws of Jim Crow. Hence, in dealing with collegiate football as a microcosm of society,

BCFPs operate under the institutional control of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), various universities and colleges, as well as the media.

Seeking to understand the experiences of BCFPs we must first acknowledge that they are subject to ideological, physical, and institutional violence against innate cultural and racial epistemologies and ontologies. This violence then goes on to affect the players' hopes, dreams, goals, identities, and social existence on PWI campuses. The racial contract in essence operates institutionally through administrative control, participation of the BCFPs in the institution, lack of perceived agency to rupture the boundary of the contract.

When examining Division-I (D-I) Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS) college sports administration there seems to be a pattern of representation among the stakeholders. In collegiate sports administration the stakeholders include: NCAA president, conference commissioners, university/college presidents, athletics directors, faculty athletic representatives, head coaches (football). These positions are instrumental to the success and guidance of the D-I FBS conferences and schools. These are the institutions that are the most widely known and visible; as a result they have the most influence and power in the collegiate sports world. From top down the representation is overwhelmingly White. To date there has never been a non-White or female president of the NCAA (Walter Byers, Dick Schultz, Cedric Dempsey, Myles Brand, Jim Isch [interim], and Mark Emmert). To further exacerbate the racial inequities and complications of D-I FBS leadership the conference commissioners are 100 percent white (Lapchick, 2015). The importance of these two positions to D-I FBS football and athletics in general is invaluable. Lapchick et al. (2015) infers importance of conference commissioners stating, "They are considered to be some of the most powerful and influential people in college sport" (p. 6). The NCAA president and



conference commissioners have the most power for change and control and they are racially uniform. Lapchick et al. (2015) also cites the following about 2015-2016 leadership positions: university presidents (89.8 percent White), athletics directors (86.7 percent White), faculty athletic representatives (89.9 percent White), and head coaches (87.5 percent White). The overrepresentation of White people in administrative positions does not reflect that of the athletes in D-I FBS, especially the revenue earning sports. In 2015, there were 14, 206 football players and 53.4 percent of them were Black. That means there is an over representation of White people in power or controlling positions, also an overrepresentation of Black players in college football. Ergo, the importance of White people's influence on bylaws, regulations, media coverage, and pseudo criminality are all apparent in the decisions that impact the overwhelmingly Black players. Mills (1997) posits,

One could say that the Racial Contract creates a transitional white polity, a virtual community of people linked by their citizenship in Europe at home and abroad...and constituted in opposition to their indigenous subjects...As European, as white, one knew oneself to be a member of the superior race, one's skin being one's passport. (p. 29-30)

White racial identity and white skin is power once inside of the racial contract. In terms of D-I FBS college football administration the overpowering majority of power players are White. The extension of the White polity bleeds into hiring practices as well. Collegiate athletic administration hiring practices have been accused of discrimination and underrepresentation of minorities (Harrison, Lapchick & Janson, 2009). Brooks (2002)

described the “good ol’ boys network in coaching hires as cited in Harrison et al (2009) stating,

In terms of decision making in hiring, informal networks are a natural part of mobility patterns of individuals seeking to ascend in the coaching profession, and it creates what is known as hiring trees, which are an intricate part of the coaching profession and have historically benefited majority (white) access versus minority (people of color) opportunities. (p. 94)

Understanding that football head coaches are not the only position that operates within the good ol’ boys network, the staggering percentages of White people in leadership could be attributed to the an unwritten agreement to choose the most qualified (White) person for the job to maintain the racial contract.

Hence, college football as a microcosm of larger American society leads us only to question the racial inequities from an opportunity and access lens versus ability. As a result, control comes from the top down in the NCAA and from the different conferences so the BCFPs (and other non-white peoples) have no choice but to adhere to the institutional practices designed to benefit the racial contract. The most insidious characteristic of institutional control, as outlined in the racial contract, is that it is being continually written. The self-reliant structure can mold and move to incorporate the necessary aspects to keep the institution and contractual agreement intact and tacit. The institutional aspect of the racial contract lays the foundation for the cerebral control of BCFPs through the conundrum of being Black in a White institutional construct.

## **The Mind.**

Former head of the United Negro College Fund, Arthur Fletcher, once stated, “The mind is a terrible thing to waste.” The researcher often hears people throw around as if to assume everyone has a choice in how they chose to use their mind. There is one major assumption that is exercised the quote; what it means to “waste” a persons mind. Usually when this quote is used it’s with a certain level of social understanding that wasting a mind is to not use it for what it was intended to do. But this author poses the question, what is the mind supposed to do? Thus, there are normative values attached to terrible ways to use it (to waste it) and a good ways to use it. The following will discuss the norming of space (Mills, 1997) and scripting of bodies (Jackson, 2006) to denote people as human or subhuman which leads the BCFP into dealing with an innate complex of the other (Fanon, 2008).

The social positioning of space and bodies are important in dictating how people think about themselves and others. It is important for many social constructs, especially race. Mills (1997) states,

The norming of space is partially done in terms of the *ricing* of space, the depiction of space as dominated by individuals (whether persons or subpersons) of a certain race. At the same time, the norming of the individual is partially achieved by *spacing* it, that is, representing it as imprinted with the characteristics of a certain kind of space. (p. 41-42)

Mills draws on the idea of European colonization of various countries and the ideological control that is exhibited by the pre-sociopolitical “state of nature” and the post-sociopolitical civil society. The idea that Europeans brought “civilized” society to other

places that needed help to cultivate their people because they are uncivilized in light of the Eurocentric model of civilization. This process of norming and doctrine of control is called epistemological ethnocentrism (Mill, 1997). Epistemological ethnocentrism is not foreign to the relationship between White and Black people in the United States. Slavery as an age old and potent example shows the norming of space by denoting Black people as inferior, unintelligent, savage, brute, and unworthy to be part of White society (Anderson, 1988; Blauner, 1969; Jackson, 2006; Jordan, 1968). This connotation of space and body norming through slavery has created various scripts that apply to Black people and more specifically Black males. Jackson (2006) describes scripting as the process where human beings discursively assigned meanings to other foreign bodies in order to help create understanding of their difference. This process is political in that it is socially confining and there is a scripter and a text or the body being scripted. There are various scripts from slavery that are reproduced today in the media Black males including: the coon, sambo, brute, etc. These scripts are directly and contemporarily applicable to BCFPs as they are often socially referred to as criminals, beasts, pimps/ players (hypersexual), and dumb jocks. These scripts are powerful in dictating how individuals think of themselves and others. Jackson (2006) reminds us that, "One way to maintain dominion over bodies is to police them and treat them as separate; to determine patterns of behavior, then assess penalties that only apply to certain populations that exhibit that *most severe violate* behavior (p. 80). American society today maintains dominion over BCFPs' bodies by controlling their patterns of behavior. More specifically, universities and their athletic departments have created a norming of athletic space which Black athletes subscribe to the conception of White gaze (Yancy, 2008) or scripting. The result of scripting directs the

BCFP towards the dichotomy of personhood then into the innate complex of the other based on the raced space Mills theorizes.

Personhood versus subpersonhood is a powerful ideology utilized by White society to undermine the political viability and reproduction of Black people's culture and racial characteristics. Mills (1997) defines subpersons as, "humanoids entities who because of racial phenotype/genealogy/ culture are not fully human and therefore have a different and inferior schedule of rights and liberties applying to them" (P. 56). Therefore, a subperson also fulfills the negative ideological space of a person who racially, culturally, and genealogically is White. Mills goes on to state that the, "...white body [is] the somatic norm, so that in the early racists theories one finds not only moral but aesthetic judgments, with beautiful and fair races [persons] pitted against ugly and dark races [subpersons]" (p. 61). Not only are people categorized by personhood, but they can only be categorized by White people who unempathically draw a line between race, human dignity and social hierarchy stratification.

College football is no stranger to this classification of personhood and subpersonhood. The stories of college football's early Black players are riddled by racism and segregation. From not being able to lodge with the teams, riding separate busses, not being able to play in certain stadium based on the "gentlemen's rule" (Goldstone, 2006). Second class citizenship for Black players was common and is not eradicated but redistributed to different controlling factors. BCFPs are demoted to subpersonhood by the paternal treatment from universities and athletic departments such as controlling their daily schedule, dictating their classes, their attire, their travel, and how they are treated on campus (Singer, 2005; Beamon, 2008). Singer (2005) conducted a study of racism

experienced by Black collegiate athletes on campus where one participant's interview addressed subpersonhood stating Black collegiate athletes take classes they don't really need and won't help towards a career after college. They treat BCFPs White counterparts differently when it comes to academic pursuits. For BCFPs they guide them towards athletics endeavors of academic ones, and for their White football players they send them to classes that will help them graduate and succeed academically. In this instance subpersonhood is shown through the relegation of Black collegiate athletes to solely athletes. Essentially the participant is alluding to the athletic department's labeling of Black collegiate athletes as academically inferior compared to the White athlete. This labeling is across racial lines and prescribes Black athletes to athletic purposes and Whites the free range of athletic and academic advantages based on "needs". The belief of inferiority goes beyond academics for the BCFP and bleeds into their identity construction and an internal struggle between White norms and scripting of society and their own self-expression.

To be the other means to be something that is different from the focal subject or person. In the case of BCFPs othering means to describe their abnormalities in terms of race, cerebral capacities, and cultural behaviors in relation to the White person. In essence their irregularity defines them as what is not White. Franz Fanon, an Afro-Caribbean psychiatrist, philosopher and revolutionary, details the struggle of the other for the Black man. According to Fanon (2008) to be Black is to be Black in relation to the White man and his world view forcing the Black man to operate under a dual system of reference: the White mans and their own. Du Bois (1903) also distinguished this idea of double consciousness to describe the ability of the Black person to exist as Black but also Black in the White world. Both scholars discuss the idea of fitting into society. Du Bois begged the

question, how does it feel to be a problem?, and Fanon furthers the investigation asking, where does he (the Black man) fit in society, or better yet where should he (the Black man) stick himself? Fanon has wondered where to stick himself because he understands White society has a prescribed racial, behavioral and cultural box that Black people are supposed to be confined to. Fanon (2008) posits,

The white gaze, the only valid one, is already dissecting me. I am *fixed*. Once their microtomes are sharpened, the Whites objectively cut sections of my reality. I have been betrayed. I sense, I see in this white gaze that it's the arrival not of a new man, but of a new type of man, a new species. A Negro, in fact! (p. 95)

Fanon alludes to the white gaze imposing their script of the Black person upon him and wiping away his reality of who he is. He is then forced to be someone who is new to him and constructed by the White man, the other. The script that boxes Fanon in is already fixed before any encounter he could have with a White person due to the understanding of the fear and propaganda the Black body garners. The innate complex of the Black man is to be a foreign body, operating in limbo between his reality of Black and the manifestation of Black in the white gaze. The Black man is then expected to exemplify the behavior expected of them as the other.

The BCFP experiences being othered often when present in non-athletic settings. For example, sitting in classroom collegiate athletes do not get to enjoy being a traditional student, they are othered and recognized by professors and students for their athlete endeavors versus them being a student. Ipso facto, othering took place in the devaluation of their academic presence in relation to the rest of their peers who are there to be students.

They seemingly cannot escape this othering due to their physical stature and perceived mental abilities delineating a line between student and other (BCFP).

BCFPs are subject to subpersonhood status by way of the scripts predisposed by White society leading them to an innate complex of being Black. The mental conundrum of the being the other as ideological control is invasive. When in conjunction with the necessity to attend PWIs as a mode of social and physical advancement to the NFL the institutional control of norming and privileging White ideals forces the BCFP to be Black as the White gaze expects or face being a problem as Du Bois explains. It is a conundrum that effectively pits their professional goals against their racial and cultural expression. The innate complex and the white gaze's mental control on the identity and behaviors of BCFPs cloak exploitation of the Black body in collegiate football.

### **The Body.**

Harkening back to Woodson (2005), "If you can control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his action,"(p. 55) rings true in the case of BCFPs. The athletic industrial complex and the increased commercialization of collegiate athletics have led many universities to purchase the talent of premium Black athletes to fuel their athletic compound (Hawkins, 2010). The search and extraction of Black males from their communities to play for big state universities has created a de facto cyclical relationship between Black athletes and universities. Universities want a nationally recognized and successful programs (which is usually based on their football team's performance) and Black athletes want to have access to resources to propel them to the professional ranks in their sports. For that reason, the relationship between the two parties can be described as the colonizer and the colonized (Memmi, 1965).



The relationship between the colonizer and the colonized is one of mutual dependence because they need each other to sustain the exploitive situation. Hawkins (2010) details the parameters of this dependence positing,

...the colonizer brings the colonized into existence; by initiating the relationship of mutual interdependence. The colonizer property and privileges are directly and illegitimately privileged because of usurpation, that is, the colonizers property and privileges are directly and illegitimately based on the exploitation and pauperization of the colonized. (p. 44)

Collegiate football exemplifies this relationship. Prior to the 1970's college football at PWIs was perpetually Whites athletes only with the exception of several exemplary Black players (Paul Robeson, Fritz Pollard, William Henry Lewis, Jerome Holland, Duke Slater, etc). The introduction of Black athletes in masse came in the 1970's after Sam "Bam" Cunningham and the USC Trojan all-Black backfield dismantled the Paul Bryant's all-White Alabama Crimson Tide football team. The thorough beating of Bryant's team lead Crimson tide fans and faithful to exercise their desire to use Black bodies to win games like USC did against them (Logan, Harrison, Logan, 2015). The introduction of Black players in masse created the colonizer and colonized relationship that we witness today. In combination with the increasing numbers of BCFPs (Lapchick, 2015) athletic identity salience (Harrison et al., 2002) has led BCFPs to be perceived and think of themselves as athletically superior.

Athletic superiority branched from the days of slavery and physical superiority. Hawkins (2010) furthers this hypothesis detailing,

Physical superiority began to emerge but only in the context of undeveloped primate or brute strength that required domesticating to make it ideal for the

physical demands of slavery and profitable for this institution's maintenance and expansion...Thus, Blacks were physically superior in their ability to do manual labor, which later emerged as an experiential factor that became one of the explanations for the disproportionate representation and dominance in certain sports. (p. 63)

The dominance Hawkins speaks of is what Coach Bryant experienced at the hands of Sam Cunningham and USC. Today we continually watch football games and the most spectacular players are Black the best teams are represented by Black players. Whether watching football games from the stadium, at home, or in a sports restaurant/bar the representation of BCFPs in the media in conjunction with athletic domination has led many to conclude that Black players are physically superior and more athletically talented (Harrison et al., 2011). The idea of physical superiority and athletic identity salience has tracked some Black males into a troupe of exploitation of their bodies based on the colonizer and colonizer model.

Athletic identity is defined as the degree to which individuals ascribe to their identity as an athlete (Brewer et al., 1993). To embody a salient athletic identity and claim physical superiority BCFPs are usually at major universities where they play against top-tier teams (D-I FBS schools). These schools are usually cooperative in the commercialization and athletic arms race which leads them to exploit BCFPs (Edwards, 1984a). This exploitation is masked through the social capital BCFPs are afforded due to their athletic talents. BCFPs are valued for their athletic achievements (Beamon, 2008) and thus they seek to maintain that role on campus (Adler & Adler, 1991) because they feel valued and there is not a limit on the achievements they can reach for the team athletically. Even if BCFPs notice the exploitation happening at their bodies' expense they rarely

confront it because of their professional hopes. Collegiate and NFL teams often denounce athletes speaking up against exploitation (ex. Richard Sherman-racial scripts, Myron Rolle-academic exploitation, Arian Foster-economic exploitation, Cain Colter-unionization, etc.). Hence, many BCFPs just fall in line and try not to agitate the collegiate exploitation process with the fear of being labeled insubordinate, social pariahs, or a nuisance to the team. Ultimately, universities are operating immorally when it comes to college football and Black bodies, but the process is hardly ruptured due to the cyclical relationship of the colonizer and the colonized. Essentially, this relationship is rendering the Black body a tool to be used instead of a person. BCFPs are devalued intellectually (Edwards, 1984b) in the student athlete model, consequentially leaving the value of that relationship solely to the athlete role.

The entire process of the institutional control through the racial contract, cerebral control through subpersonhood and the innate complex of the other, and the exploitation of the Black body help to provide an outline of the experience of BCFPs at PWIs. However, the process seems to repeat itself through enforcement of all of the aforementioned ideological understandings of the BCFP. One of the most powerful sources of these ideological understandings is the media. The media uses its power to create social understandings and reproduce others in the parameters of the racial contract to keep BCFPs' minds and bodies controlled and profitable.

### **Importance of Foundational Works**

The theoretical scaffolding of the Racial Contract, Internal Colonialism, scripting, and the innate complex of the other affords this dissertation a theoretical understanding of Black male athletes. These frameworks and phenomena have significance and uses which

will be explicated to give a better understanding of each constituent's astuteness as well as the components of The One Dimensional Theory of Identity and Expectations.

The Racial Contract since conceptualized by Charles Mills has been used to confront the Social Contracts created by prized European philosophers Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau among others. The Racial contract is part of other critical disagreements to the "nature" of the social contract and inequitable treatment thereby. The Sexual Contract (Pateman, 1988) uncovered the gendered mistreatment in the relationship between men and women in the contractual relationship of society. The disagreement Pateman hinges on is the second-class citizenship and control of women that is both explicitly and inherently outlined in the aforementioned philosopher's arguments. The Racial Contract also applies a critical lens to further fracture the philosopher's argument by race. The characterization of subhuman status and the omission of race in the social contract outlines a racial contract to control non-White people based on White conceptualizations of society. The Racial Contract similar to the Sexual Contract critically dissected the unwritten and written ideological beliefs of White society through it prized writers and moral agents. The Racial Contract Theory has been cited in notable books and articles concerning race and racial construction (Cornell & Hartmann, 2006; Gilborn, 2008; Leonardo, 2009; Taylor, 2013). The purpose is to clarify domination in the construction of race and "the state of nature" uncovering a plan to create a White polity that dictates social structure. Thus, the theory is useful to The One Dimensional Theory of Identity and Expectations and this dissertation because it critically examines race and racial construction as it relates to institutional power, normative culture, and official knowledge. The extractable feature from the theory is the institutional aspect because of its changing

nature. As Wynter (1984) suggested the need to keep up with the changing nature of time and the phenomena scholars write about is imperative to the quality of the information disseminated. Ultimately, the Racial Contract's uses show strong philosophical standing and urgent usefulness in dissecting the racial identity of BCFPs through the media.

Internal Colonialism has its historical roots in race and ethnic relations both nationally and internationally (de la Garza & Cotrell, 1976; Martínez, 1982; Pérez-Torres, 1995; Cabán, 2003; Hechter, 1975; Zureik, 1979; Havens & Flinn, 1970; Cruse, 1967; Carmichael & Power, 1967; Blauner, 1969; Allen, 1990; Hawkins, 2010). The Framework is focused on the political, racial and economic exploitation of a colonized. The framework became popular during the Black Power movement to explain urban ghettos and political mistreatment of Black people in America. The Framework has been revamped by Dr. Billy Hawkins to reflect the exploitative nature of PWIs likening them to early American slave plantations.

Hawkins (2010) utilized the internal colonial framework to establish a custom-made theory to explain the experiences of Black collegiate athletes and PWI sports culture. The use of the internal colonial tenet, the colonizer and the colonized (Memmi, 1965) is to inform the exploitative use of the Black body in the contemporary sports model. The tenet is based on Memmi's dissection of colonialism from both standpoints of the colonizer and the colonized. The tenet explains the effects of colonial residue to be an interlocking system of need. The colonizers need the colonized to sustain colonialism's benefits while the colonized depend on the colonial system to survive. This tenet is helpful because the transatlantic slave trade created an internal colonial model in America. The institution of sports is reflective of the colonizer and colonized model as well. From using sports as

model of liberation to using sports for upward social mobility there has always been a controlling nature in terms of Black athlete. The collegiate model is an acute representation of this cyclical relationship Hawkins (2010) posits, "...[T]he majority of elite Black football and basketball players depend on these athletic departments to purchase their talents for the opportunity to utilize and perfect their athletic skills, with hopes of obtaining a degree and/or a career as a professional" (p. 45). The athletic departments are not the only exclusively White "colonizers" that can be representative in the model. We must also take heed to the professional leagues as colonizing agents as well as everyday structures that prophesize the need to Black males to be athletes. Henceforth, The One Dimensional Theory of Identity and Expectations will be applicable to all Black male athletes, youth sports through professional leagues, in effort of describing a vertical experience versus horizontally at the collegiate level. Although, this dissertation is concerned with BCFPs and their collegiate experience as an example, the theory is not restrictive to collegiate experiences.

Scripting is another theme that is represented in The One Dimensional Theory of Identity and Expectations to placate the understanding of ideological forces impact racial and athletic beliefs. Scripting is the foundation of Jackson's (2006) work, which addresses the intersectionality of race, gender, discourse, power and the media. The author hypothesizes, "...the interpretations of mass-mediated inscriptions of the body reveal the hidden contours of psychic and institutional investitures that drive, indeed motivate the producers of the inscriptions" (p. 1). Scripting is useful as it is used to explore the process of the Black body in popular media, which many Black athletes cannot avoid in the age of cell phones. The media is increasing its ideological power everyday through new

technological advancements, therefore, the individuals that inform the content need to be examined for their influence on this process. Scripting does just that through recognizing the historical aspects of race and gender relations affording The One Dimensional Theory of Identity and Expectations a gendered and raced understanding of Black athletes as they are portrayed in the media. Locating who is scripting, what they are ascribing others to, and how it impacts them will help dissect the experiences of Black athletes with identity. Hall (1997) theorizes that identity is important because it names the different ways we are positioned and position ourselves in society based on historical narratives. Leaning on Hall's ideology scripting illuminates the historical nature of the Black athlete and how his life-long racial and gendered experiences relate to power. Scripting adds girth the theory by focusing on power's ideological ascription of the Black male body from a gendered and racial lens. The experiences of the Black male athlete are representative of numerous intersections however, gender and race and two of the most physically recognizable identity categories and power is explicated through representation and reproduction.

Lastly, the innate complex of the other was chosen because it also represents the mental and physical manifestation of scripting on the Black male's identity. Fanon (2008) describes a feeling of being Black in relation to his own characterizations as well as the characterizations of White society. The feeling of never being able to locate yourself in society based on authentic and pure representations has major implication of the social status of Black people. Essentially, Black athletes cannot be themselves in today's American sports culture because they are not representative of White ideals and ascriptions of Blackness. This conundrum is important to the experiences of the Black athlete because they can often be labeled savage and unintelligent thus excusing the treatment by White

institution to civilize their barbarity. Many of the athlete's goals in sports revolve around reaching the pinnacle of their sports. Their goal of reaching the pros is not exempt from hegemony through institutional, ideological and physical control of the Black athlete that goal also requires a cultural, behavioral, and ideological refining.

Ultimately, all together the formulation of The One Dimensional Theory of Identity and Expectations is to explain the conundrum of identity, behavior, and power within the Black athlete experience.

### **Usefulness of the Theory**

Black people have used sports as a form of liberation, education, and social mobility (Wiggins, 1997). Black athletes are overly important to the Black community and often representative of the paragons and role models of the community (Edwards, 2000). Black athletes experiences racial and athletic identity development simultaneously (Harrison et al., 2002) making them more susceptible to having an athletic identity salience. Athletic identity salience is promoted by the athlete's community, peers, and the media (Beamon, 2012). What it means to be an athlete is largely dictated by what will advance the athlete to the professional ranks, which is riddled with infectious racism (Singer, 2005) that shapes how the individual's self-perception. Most of the controlling agents, leadership, administration, and CEOs in American sports are White (Lapchick, 2014) Thus, cultural representation of the hegemonic group will be exercised as the "right" way to do things. In this small illustration of the process Black athletes deal with, what can be extracted are three important factors. First, the Black athlete's representation in America is mainly dictated by their athletic identity. Secondly, the Black athlete is prescribed a correct way to be themselves racially, culturally, and athletically. And finally, the Black athlete is the



paragon of Blackness and Black representation helping to socially reproduce the influenced nature of identity and representation.

This Theoretical framework will support the experiences of Black athletes by valuing their voice and empirical knowledge, highlight the uniqueness of the Black athlete's journey, and deconstructing the implications of power on their representation. The theory is constructed through empirical knowledge, as the originator's positionality is informed by over 20 years of sports experience and graduate study in research on the topic. The tailored nature of the theory will help to connect the web of sports research with specific focus on Black males. The theory is also useful in understanding Black males because sports representation is indirectly used to characterize all Black males. Hawkins, (2010) describes how he as well as other Black males on campus are often mistaken for athletes. In those instances Black males are treated as athletes and the same inscriptions are placed upon traditional Black male students as are placed on BCFPs. The example cases of BCFPs and media representation help to begin painting a picture of the vertical experiences of Black male athletes. BCFPs are some of the most visible sports figures and college football is one of the most controlled sports environments in America. The merging of control, the media, and Black male athletes should be lucrative to understanding how their identity is influenced by confining their race, culture, and athletic identity and behaviors to hegemonic ascriptions.

### **Purpose of Research and Hypothesis**

The purpose of this dissertation and this research is to: examine the racial and athletic identity influences of BCFPs, and understand how the media influence those identities and the role of BCFPs on PWI campuses. Examining the racial and athletic

identities of BCFPs allow the researcher to build a quantitative understanding of the importance of BCFPs racial and centrality. Identity work is constantly pointing to various influences and investigating the origin of them. Of the various influences Harrison et al., (2002) points out the connection to identity development and media representations in rap videos (Johnson et al., 1995). This concept has yet to be examined in Black athlete and could affect their psychosocial and emotional reality (Melendez, 2008), concept of ability (Brookover & Thomas, 1964), and self-perception (Soares & Soares, 1969) ultimately affecting their overall self-perception (Gecas & Burke, 1995). It is important to study self-perception and identity of Black athletes because they are often times “athletes are major characters in popular culture and have a significant influence on how Americans view not only sports, but also ethnicity - specifically, how Americans construct [Black] men and women” (Caulfield, p.22).

The second purpose if this is to then qualitatively understand how the media influences the mediation of racial identity to forefront athletic identity. Through qualitative methods this dissertation will examine the experiences of BCFPs to analyze how sports, media, power, and race all interact. Drawing on their experiential knowledge will allow the researcher to critically analyze the media’s influence on their representation and self-perceptions. Their knowledge about self-perception will then be used to explicate the connection to power of the Black athlete’s representation, the diabolical power that corrodes their true representation of self, and implications on Black empowerment through the BCFP in the media.

Through the data collection process the researcher has anticipated that participant’s racial identity to be similar to the characterization outlined in the pre-encounter stage in

Harrison et al., (2002). Thus, the dialogue between researcher and participant will be geared towards sifting out the experiences that prevented the BCFP from experiencing those encounter episodes. This will allow the researcher to facilitate a critical dialogue that can be meta-cognitive and also empowering for the participant. The hypotheses for both purposes of this dissertation have been founded by previous scholar's research on race, sport, media, power and identity. Consequentially, this dissertation is hypothesizing that:

- 1) BCFPs racial identity attitudes would increase with athletic classification (i.e freshman → senior) in attitudes that embrace afrocentricity (i.e. internalization anti-White and internalization Afrocentricity). Conversely, racial identity attitudes would decrease with athletic classification in the pre encounter and internalization multicultural attitudes.
- 2) BCFPs athletic identity is negatively correlated with participant athletic classification; Athletic identity is elevated for all years.
- 3) BCFP athletic identity will negatively correlate with internalization afrocentricity and internalization anti-White racial identity attitudes.
- 4) Media images and consumption will have a negative relationship with participants racial attitudes and a positive one with athletic identity
- 5) The media acts as a curriculum from which participants treat as a role model for how to develop their racial and athletic identities.

## **CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY**

This dissertation will use a mixed method approach for the study (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Creswell & Clark, 2007). Although separately, quantitative and qualitative research methods have both been useful to investigate various phenomena, the mixing of the methods is way to draw on the strengths of both methodological approaches (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2004). Creswell & Clark (2007) also emphasize the mixing of methods produces a better understanding of research problems and phenomena being address. Thus, a mixed method approach will enhance the researchers understanding as well the interpretation of the data results. The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of media on the identity and self-perception of Black collegiate football players (BCFPs). In researching the experiences and attitudes of BCFPs at PWIs the more depth that can be received from the mixing the approaches will help provide more insight into the connection between power, race, identity and the media. Quantitatively, the measurements of race and athletic identity help to provide a meaning in terms of their influence on each other, while qualitative analysis will provide in-depth descriptions, process, and perspectives providing a more robust depiction of the BCFPs collegiate experience. The qualitative interviews are conducted to critically investigate how the measures of self-perception are constructed and influenced by the media in the midst of a BCFP's collegiate experience. Both the quantitative and qualitative approaches will be collected and analyzed concurrently. Creswell & Clark (2007) describe this approach a triangulation mixed method approach. Ultimately, this mixed method approach is "an attempt to legitimate the use of multiple approaches in answering research questions, rather than

restricting or constraining” the researcher to either approach (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 17).

This chapter is dedicated to this dissertation’s methodology through a mixed method approach. The following sections provide a detailed account of both the qualitative and quantitative parts of the triangulated mixed method approach. The chapter will also explain the research paradigm, list the research questions, and provide the practical rationale of the research. Then finally, the qualitative outline of includes: research design, participant recruitment, site descriptions, and data collection procedure; the quantitative section outlines the following: participants, measures, demographics, data collection procedure, and data analysis.

### **Research Paradigm and Rationale**

The research paradigm that the researcher and this dissertation operates from is a transformative-emancipatory perspective (Mertens, 2003). This paradigm allows the researcher to engage with social categories from the perspective of an underrepresented population. Mertens (2003) suggests the transformative paradigm,

...frames gender, race/ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, and other bases of diversity from the perspective of a social, cultural minority group such that the defining characteristic is viewed as a dimension of human difference and not a defect...Within this paradigm, the category of diversity is recognized as being socially constructed such that its meaning is derived from society’s response to individuals who deviate from cultural standards (p. 145).

The perspective of Black collegiate males as an underrepresented voice in their social representation can be accused of deviating from White cultural standards (Ogbu, 2004).

Henceforth, operating under this paradigm may help to provide voice to the consciousness of this study's population. The paradigm includes ontological and epistemological attachments that are germane to the Black male population. Hardin (2002) suggests epistemological and ontological perspectives that are pertinent to the populations you are engaging with to help aid in the knowledge construction process by generating questions. Knowledge is mutually constructed by the researcher and the participants. Sharing an ontological and epistemological outlook provides both strengths and weaknesses (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2004). Epistemologically and ontological advantages include respect and familiarity from being a cultural "insider" (Morrow, 2005). In qualitative data collection, the researcher is critically important to best understanding and representing the participant's perspectives. Thereby, operating under an insider perspective helps to produce work that is pertinent and engaging to the masses with the benefits for the participant's communities.

### **Researcher Positionality**

Merriam (2002) suggests how the researcher is positioned in relation to his research participants. In avoiding the "crisis of representation" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005) the researcher must be conscious of the similarities and differences between the researcher and participant (Hopkins, 2007). The misunderstandings can root from there not being universal truths in qualitative data collection and analysis. The crisis of representation refers to the distinction between the researcher and the researched to present a fair understanding of the participants' experience and perceptions. Therefore, the researcher acknowledges to their insider position to some perspectives of this study's participants. As a former collegiate athlete at a predominantly White institution some of my

experiences may be similar. My gender and racial identification will be similar as those are part of the participant selection process and target research group. There may also be social categories that the researcher might not be aware of before their interaction. The researcher is making their positionality available to both enhance credibility and to adhere to trust worthiness of the researcher.

In addition to being a former athlete the researcher has played the sport for over 11 years, played at D-I FBS institution, worked in collegiate athletics, and has been a student of sports culture for years. The researcher's family has had several Black male collegiate and professional athletes. The researcher's father was a collegiate and professional football player and his brother was a collegiate athlete as a PWI as well. The familial experience with football runs deep and was a major part of the researcher's development as a Black male growing up in Denver, Colorado. The researcher first played football at eleven years old for a team in the inner city of Denver. The Police athletic league was his first experience with organized football. His uncle and father were both coaches for the team. He began playing tight-end with a big grin and not acumen towards the game. Through his pee-wee years he began to foster football knowledge and athletic prowess as he became one of the stars on the team. His performances granted him a nickname, "Eightball". He wore number eight and was known for making plays that helped to win games. Some of his greatest games were built through the hard work during the season and attention to his craft as an athlete. He would always wear his jersey to school on Fridays because it made him popular at school. His middle school peers played for the teams he would play because they all were from the same neighborhood and he would use his great grandmother's address to attend school. He later years of middle school were spent playing basketball in addition to football

so sports became a larger part of his life and many of his friends played sports with him. His life became encompassed by sports and school and he would attend a high school that was academically prestigious and private. This was his first time at a predominately White school and he got an identity experience that was that of the other.

During his high school years the researcher was one of the only Black people in most of his classes and one of maybe 20 in the entire school of over 800 students. He was often tasked with representing Black all of culture as his white peers expected it to be. The stereotypical positioning of the researcher by his White peers reinforced his Identity as an athlete. Most of the social capital in high school was due to athletics, however within the Black circle, he was known for being academically inclined due to his father's mentorship. In high school he was bestowed with many accolades and earned an athletic scholarship to the University of Washington where he played multiple positions. The researcher was not highly recruited and endured a head coaching change and five different position coaches. The social capital came from athletic in college as well, however he was injured and his relationship with athletics changed. He was no longer identifying as an athlete, but his identity aligned more with retired-athlete, fraternity member, student, and Black male. Through his three years of playing the researcher never experienced identity foreclosure but did experience self-prescribed athletic identity salience. This salience led to a period of emotional strain after retirement, but his support system made sure that he was still focused on what ultimately became the focal point, his education.

The researcher graduated from UW in 2012 and immediately went to graduate school to get a master's in intercollegiate athletic leadership in route of becoming an athletics director. Once in the program, he was able to take a class co-taught by a professor



from the University of Texas who offered him an opportunity to get his PhD in education. Through his master's program he developed strong negative feelings about policy and treatment towards Black athletes. Through Dr. Leonard Moore's connection with Dr. Louis Harrison, this researcher's eventual advisor, he was able to connect his empirical knowledge of the plight of Black male athletes to the theoretical experiences. Over his years of sport he has been deeply a part of his experience with his Black male athlete identity in predominately White settings as well as predominately Black settings. The researcher's positionality was developed over the years of successes and failures through the marriage of athletics and academics. The social spaces those two institutions provided molded the worldview of the researcher and informed his decision to investigate identity in Black male collegiate athletes. Through his experiences he was able to critically examine the perceptions of BCFPs to help use his insider view point to fairly and effectively voice the experiences and self-perceptions.

### **Trustworthiness of Research**

To ensure the most accurate and informative data it must also be honest and trustworthy. By establishing validity of qualitative literature the researcher must not be antithetical to the creative aspects of the participant's. The researcher is also obligated to document his methodological approaches to help others judge the quality of his results and data themes (Patton, 1999). In order to increase validity and trustworthiness the researcher should also: triangulate multiple data sources (Guion, Diehl & McDonald, 2011), conduct member checks of interview transcriptions (Oliver, Serovich & Mason, 2005), and peer review of thematic coding (Johnson & Waterfield, 2004). Considering the positionality

of the researcher and the importance of it to replicating the qualitative expression, the researcher must utilize the other sources of data listed in the data collection procedures.

### **Research Questions**

1. How does the media impact the racial and athletic identity development of Black college football players and how do they make sense of it?
2. What are the implications for Black college football players?

### **Qualitative Research**

#### **Research Design**

A qualitative instrumental case study is employed in the study to gain insight into the perspective and complexities of the BCFP experienced with media and self-perception. Yin (2014) posits that a case study will help provide a detailed description of the phenomena of participants on the same collegiate football team at each given institution. Denzin & Lincoln (2005) emphasize that an instrumental case study also permits the use of multiple data collection methods, which establishes validity in the data through triangulation. Stake (1998, 2000) suggest when choosing an instrumental case study the researcher desire to examine a case (e.g. team, occupation, specific group, department, etc.) from which to make societal inferences. In searching for a case, the researcher has chosen to examine BCFPs from the same football team in concert with BCFPs from their respective institution's teams to make inferences about larger sport and media culture. The use of multiple institutions is to increase validity of the findings, however is not to characterized as a multiple case study (Campbell & Ahrens, 1998) Baxter & Jack (2008) provide that, "The case is often looked at in depth, its contexts scrutinized, its ordinary activities detailed, and because it helps the researcher pursue the external interest" (p. 549: Stake, 1995). The

employment of an instrumental case study is to allow a deep understanding of the BCFPs experience and to investigate the institutional power of the media and its effect on Black athlete's identity and self-perception. The teams the BCFPs play for and their experiences as BCFPs at PWIs bind this dissertation's study (Stake, 1998).

The present study utilized an instrumental case study approach to facilitate a larger understanding of sports culture and Black collegiate football players. Overall, the goal of this study is to investigate macro connections between BCFPs self-perceptions and experiences that allow the researcher to move towards understanding their idiosyncratic experiences with American sports.

### **Participant Recruitment**

The participants for this study are from two different groups that have interaction with each other that may be key to the examination of BCFP identity and self-perception. BCFPs are the first targeted strata and full time athletic administrators are the second. The number of qualitative participants was sixteen. Seven of the participants were Black college football players and nine of the participants were athletic administrators.

#### **Black Collegiate Football Players.**

This subset of participant groups totals seven different Black college football players. The participants for the qualitative portion of the study are selected using stratified purposeful sampling (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and snowball sampling (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Perna, Zaichkowsky & Bocknek, 1996). The combination of these two types of sampling allows the researcher to gather "individuals, groups, and settings" that are "information rich" (Patton, 1990, p.169). Miles & Huberman (1994) postulate a purposeful stratified sampling allows the researcher to find relevant

participants to the study based on predefined criterion ultimately to facilitate connections to other groups. This mode of sampling is used to help the researcher find participants that are: 1) self-identified Black males, 2) are scholarship football players, 3) attend a PWI, and 4) have had at least one season at that given institution. A full list of participants is listed in table 3.

This broad set of strata allows the researcher to select from the biggest subset of Black males that can provide informed experiences about collegiate sports and media. The seven selected BCFP participants will be expected to convey an understanding of their identity experiences, convey a desire to discuss self-perception issues related to media and society, and be willing to dialogue about race and sports culture. The participants will be asked to narrate their experiences to the best of their ability and honesty is imperative. The participants will be approached based on their responses to their pre-screening questionnaire to ensure the accuracy of the targeted strata.

**TABLE 1**

<b>Qualitative Interview Black College Football Player Descriptions</b>					
<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Academic/Athletic Classification</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Major</b>	<b>Media Usage</b>
Cody	Big State University	PhD./ RS- Senior	22	Sports Management	2 hrs/ day
Willie	University of North	M.Ed/ RS-Senior	23	Sports Management	5+ hrs/ day
Dominic	University of North	Soph/ RS- Fresh	21	Math/ Sociology	4 hrs/ day
Jamal	Technical A & M University	Junior/RS- Sophomore	20	Undeclared	2 hrs/ day
Gregory	Technical A & M University	Senior/ Senior	21	Physical Culture & Sports	3 hrs/ day
Ralph	Technical A & M University	Senior/ RS- Senior	23	Physical Culture & Sports	4 hrs/ day
Marcus	Technical A & M University	Senior/ RS- Junior	21	Youth & Community Studies	2 hrs/ day
Note: RS= red shirt, Ph.D = doctoral student, M.Ed = masters student					

### **Athletic Administrators.**

Another participant group that was interviewed is athletic administrators. Athletic administrators include anyone who is employed full time by the athletics department at the given site(s). The study included nine athletic administrators (see Table 4 for descriptions). The researcher was interested in the perspectives of athletic administrators because they work closely with the other participant population in a leadership role so their perceptions of the athletes can also inform their role on campus. Some administrators have contact with BCFPs up to seven days a week and engage with them intimately for various activities. The best example of an athletic administrator for this study would be an academic advisor or someone from the academic personnel because they have contact with the outside of their sporting activities and constantly mentor and impart knowledge on BCFPs. In the experiences of the researcher they are some of the most valued individuals in the athletic department and have an impact on the ontology and epistemology of BCFPs because many of them were previous athletes themselves or have worked in the industry for a number of years. The participants are not limited to athletic academic staff because of diversity of contact with BCFPs and the influence they have on them. Thus, athletic administrators include all positions available on the site's website and anyone else who is a full time employee of the athletic department who has contact with BCFPs. These participants will be selected based on their fit, their availability, and willingness to participate in the interviews.

**TABLE 2**

<b>Qualitative Interview Athletic Administrators Descriptions</b>					
<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>School</b>	<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Yrs. of Exp.</b>	<b>Previous Athlete</b>	<b>Media Usage</b>
Bailey	Technical A & M University	Academic Counselor	6	No	2 hrs/ day
Paul	Technical A & M University	Asst. Director of Football Academics	6	Yes	5 hrs/ day
Bill	Technical A & M University	Asst. AD for Football Operations	7	Yes	3 hrs/ day
Mike	Technical A & M University	Asst. AD for Football Academics	9	Yes	2 hrs/ day
Tracey	Technical A & M University	Learning Specialist	5	No	2 hrs/ day
Milley	University of North	Director of Learning Services	17	No	2 hrs/ day
Patricia	University of North	Asst. Director of Int'l Programs	6	No	3 hrs/ day
Earl	University of North	Academic Coordinator	15	Yes	1> hr/ day
Alexis	University of North	Associate AD for Student Development	23	No	3 hrs/ day

## **Site Description(s)**

The BCFPs and athletic administrators that have been interviewed were from three of the various institutions represented in the study. The researcher collected data at multiple sites with both athletic administrators and BCFPs. All the site's BCFP participants participated in D-I FBS football for all three institutions (Technical A & M University, University of North, Big State University). The athletic administrators at the same site were all full-time employees and only represented two of the three institutions (Technical A & M University, University of North). An IRB was completed to collect data at this institution and the participants all filled out the necessary paperwork and completed necessary processes for the researcher to interview them.

### **Technical A & M University.**

Technical A & M University (TAMU) is located in the Southwestern United States. At the time of the study their total enrollment exceeded 50,000 students. The university is located in a metropolitan city and competes in one of the power five FBS conferences. The university is highly competitive academically and somewhat racially diverse. Of the total enrollment the racial composition of the university is largely White with the Black student population hovering around four percent. The BCFPs that attend this university are largely from the same region in the U.S and garner high athletic accolades according to their profiles on TAMU athletics' website. TAMU's athletic department supports 17 sports and is nationally ranked in many of those sports. TAMU's football team garners top ranked recruiting classes year after year and is always a highlighted game on the schedule of its opponents. The football and basketball teams are largely comprised of Black athletes and it has a reputation for sending their athletes to the professional ranks in both sports.



### **University of North.**

The university of North (UN) is located in the Northwestern region of the United States. At the time of the study the university enrolled approximately 44,000 students. UN is centrally located in a major metropolitan city, competes in one of the power 5 FBS conferences, and is constantly ranked as a top-25 academic institution. UN often is touted for their sports programs having won national championships in multiple sports since the turn of the century. Racially, UN's population is 42.2 percent Caucasian and 2.8 percent African American or Black. Black collegiate football player who attend this university are largely from the same geographic region and have received extraordinary athletic attention according to their athletic profiles on UN's athletics department website. UN supports 20 different sports and over 400 student athletes. The football and basketball teams are chiefly Black. UN often finishes among top in the conference in football and basketball and garners a reputation for sending basketball players to the NBA.

### **Big State University.**

Big State University (BSU) is nestled in the heart of the Midwestern region of the United States. The institution enrolls more than 65, 000 students. BSU recruits and enrolls many of the nation's top football and basketball players. Many of the recruits that enroll at BSU have accumulated numerous national accolades prior to arriving on campus. BSU is constantly ranked in the top-10 in football, plays in one of the more challenging power 5 FBS conferences, and has won a number of national titles since the turn of the century. By race BSU enrolls approximately 5 percent African American/ Black and north of 60 percent Caucasian. BSU is known for their ability to help football and basketball players reach the professional ranks and has boasted several first round draft picks in each sport over the

last ten years.

## **Data Collection Procedures**

### **Interviews.**

Interviews are the primary source of qualitative data for this study. The interviews completed to date were all audio recorded to be transcribed by the researcher. Future interviews will also be audio recorded and transcribed in the same fashion. Interviews are used in this study to generate data that is informative to the expansive experiences of BCFPs and athletic administrators with media interaction. Participants were interviewed with the goal of them narrating their experiences, beliefs, and attitudes about BCFPs, identity and media. BCFPs were asked to detail their interaction with media, express their experiences and personal opinion about their sports participation and identity expression. Administrators were asked to express their relation to media content, opinions about BCFPs, and their engagement with BCFPs.

The interviews were used to initiate dialogue about power, media, identity, sports culture and perception of BCFPs. They are the primary source of qualitative data because it provided an intimate setting between the researcher and participant which allowed for informative dialogue about the intersections of the themes of this study. In its entirety the data from BCFPs should provide the researcher with an understanding of self-perceptions of BCFPs, how media influences racial and athletic identity, implicit and explicit racism and power in sports culture, and detail their experiences as BCFPs. The data from interviewing administrators should provide an external view of BCFPs, the administrator's view of BCFPs in the media and their role on campus, and how the media impacts BCFPs from their vantage point. The interviews are used from both sets of participants to provide a

consistency for the research questions, hypotheses, and empirical understandings of BCFPs, media, power, identity and race.

During the interview sessions only the researcher and participant were in the room and all of them were conducted in-person to ensure accuracy. All interviews were conducted, and will be conducted, in a private room to ensure confidentiality and truthful responses. The intimate setting and privacy were imperative to creating an environment of safety, honesty, and a relationship between the researcher and participant. The BCFP interviews were conducted away from the athletic department to ensure the setting and privacy promoted the desired level of comfort for them. However, if the participant desired that it be in the athletic department building, the researcher followed their request. All current collected athletic administrator interviews were conducted in their offices because it was a safe space for them as well.

Interviews were organized by the researcher in a semi-structured fashion. Semi-structured interviews begin with open-ended questions to develop a relationship with the participants and then move towards prepared questions (Mertens, 2010). This allowed for an interview process that was guided but unbiased, investigative, relaxing, and conversational (Glense, 2006). This type of structure was selected to organically activate the participants' experiences with self-perception, media, power, and BCFPs. The information gathered allowed the researcher to locate the positioning of the BCFP in the participants' sociocultural ontology and epistemology (Creswell, 2003). If the participant expressed something that needed clarification or further probing during the interview, the researcher asked for clarification to create a rich and informative data set. With each interview the research was able to gain insight into themes to help explain and probe

participants to add depth to interviews. The interviews with each individual in both participants group lasted from 35 minutes to 2 hours depending on the session.

### **Other Sources of Data**

In addition to the interviews the researcher utilized research memos, informal interactions, and informal observations to inform and scaffold understanding of the interview data. Research memos and notes were taken to increase understanding of the participants' data to aid the comparative process and theme creation (Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Merriam, 2002). During the interview the research had a pad that was used to take notes, jot down clarification points, and list subsequent probing themes and questions. During and post-interview the researcher checked with the participant based on the notes and what the overall data showed. Once all data is collected and transcribed the researcher will ensure validity by having the participant review transcription. There will also be a follow-up participant-researcher contact to help express and validate voice in the results section of this dissertation.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis for this present study helped to extract critical elements that will be helpful in answering the research question. The researcher is examining the data for the influences of the media on Black college football players. The researcher was able to build a foundation to the data analysis by categorizing major themes established through immersion in the data. Data analysis in this given study required complete attention, persistent and evolving data management lasting from data collection to final analysis. During the process of data analysis, the research reached data submersion (Merriam, 2002) and immersion (Borkan, 1999; Miller & Crabtree, 1994). Borkin (1991) describes data

immersion as the process whereby the researcher has fully immersed themselves in the data they have collected. Miller & Crabtree (1994) detail the ways to establish immersion and submersion through collecting your own data, transcribing the data yourself, and reading and re-reading the data to gain the best overall understanding. Morrow (2005) suggests that the exact point of data submersion/ immersion is often not pin pointed, however it was reached before any analysis was conducted. The researcher was able to gain an exhaustive understanding of the data leading him to the belief that further data collection would not produce any new knowledge aiding the study.

Once this point was reached the researcher let the information crystallize (Miller & Crabtree, 1994) or step back from reading and examining the data in order to reflect on possible themes presented. The individual interviews were audio taped and transcribed verbatim solely by the researcher. During transcription and after the interviews were played multiple times to ensure accuracy and knowledge harvesting. After all transcription was done the researcher provided all participants transcription copies to ensure accuracy of the transcript to be used in the analysis (Member checks: Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Merriam, 2002).

Once the member checks were completed the researcher used qualitative data mining software (Nvivo) and Microsoft word to identify emergent themes throughout data from both BCFPs and athletic administrators. Once major themes were created the researcher began to place segments of the transcripts in the corresponding coded themes with each additional reading of the transcripts. Each theme was color coded and helped the software to disaggregate the data to make the comparisons easier for the researcher. Once the data was disaggregated and placed in the appropriate themes, further sub-coding or

nodes were created as further organization specific placement of the coded data. Once placed in to sub-codes the researcher then was able to coagulate his preliminary analysis of the data into an interpretation of the data to be used for this study's analysis section.

Next, the researcher subjected his data to a peer review. A peer researcher was given all of the raw transcripts and asked to code the transcripts based on the major themes originally distinguished. His peer researcher read through all of the transcripts and coded all of the data into the previously recorded themes. The peer review regulated for researcher bias, provided feedback about emergent themes, validated the researcher findings, and provided some alternative investigative themes. Thus, Lincoln & Guba (1986) suggest trustworthiness of the study was reached through: data submersion, immersion and crystallization (Borkan, 1999; Miller & Crabtree, 1994), triangulation of multiple data sources (Guion, Diehl & McDonald, 2011), conduct member checks of interview transcriptions (Oliver, Serovich & Mason, 2005), peer review of thematic coding (Johnson & Waterfield, 2004).

## **Quantitative Research**

### **Participants**

The researcher quantitatively investigated Black male collegiate football players, older than 18 years of age who are on scholarship at a D-I FBS PWI. The researcher sought a balanced a ratio of participant's field experience and year in school without purposefully filling a quota. The purpose of targeting this population is because they provide the best measurement of racial and athletic identity to supplement the qualitative data. The researcher intended to enlist participants from the same institutions as the qualitative data, however more quantitative participants were necessary to collect enough surveys to

ensure an accurate measure, thus other institutions included. The researcher collected (N=230) survey responses and all but 4 participants completed the entire survey. Thus, the final number of surveys (N=226) were examined. In total, the researcher collected surveys from BCFPs at 28 institutions across representing all of the Division-1 Football Bowl Subdivision power five conferences (Pac-12, SEC, Big 12, Big 10, and ACC) and all regions of the United States. However, a large majority of the surveys collected came from the western and southwestern regions. The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 24 years old with an average age of  $M= 20.72$  ( $SD = 1.45$ ). To aid for control, the research only used the data collected from collegiate football players who identified as Black, male and who were on scholarship to play football at their institution. The athletic classification of the respondents covered all years (Freshman to Senior). The complete sample reflected both redshirt and traditional student athletes: Freshman (Traditional  $N= 20$ , 8.89%; Redshirt  $N= 38$ , 16.89%), Sophomores (Traditional  $N= 9$ , 4%; Redshirt  $N= 42$ , 18.67%), Juniors (Traditional  $N= 31$ , 13.78%; Redshirt  $N= 35$ , 15.56%), Seniors (Traditional  $N= 24$ , 10.67%; Redshirt  $N= 24$ , 10.67%), Other ( $N= 2$ , .88%). Other refers to two non-traditional BCFPs who had a 6<sup>th</sup> year of eligibility due to injury and multiple redshirt years. Academically, the BCFPs were also ranged from freshman to 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> year senior: Freshman  $N= 23$ , 10.18%; Sophomores  $N= 46$ , 20.35%; Juniors  $N= 72$ , 31.86%; Seniors  $N= 62$ , 27.43%; 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> year Seniors  $N= 23$ , 10.17%. The participants were also asked to list their depth chart ranking from first team to redshirt. First Team  $N= 68$ , 30.68%; Second Team  $N= 80$ , 35.71%; Third Team  $N= 47$ , 20.98%; Fourth Team  $N= 8$ , 3.57%; Redshirt  $N= 21$ , 9.38%.

## Measures

The participants will be asked to fill out a questionnaire with basic demographic information about themselves, a racial identity scale, and an athletic identity measure. The Cross Racial Identity Scale (Vandier et al., 2002) and the Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (Brewer & Cornelius, 2001) will be the major instruments of data collection.

### **Cross Racial Identity Scale.**

The CRIS is operationalized through a 40-question survey founded on the concept of Nigrescence. The survey consists of 30 items essential to the analysis and 10 items that serve as filler questions. The CRIS scale (Vandiver et al, 2002) was segmented into six phases through its five-year reconfiguration (Cross & Vandiver, 2001; Worrell et al., 2004). The CRIS is complete with six subscales to measure the participants' racial identity attitudes including: Pre-Encounter Assimilation (e.g. "I primarily think of myself as an American and seldom as a member of a racial group"), Pre-Encounter Miseducation (e.g. "Too many Blacks 'glamorize' the drug trade and fail to see opportunities that don't involve crime"), Pre-Encounter Self-Hatred (e.g. "Privately, I sometimes have negative feelings about being Black"), Immersion-Emersion Anti-White (e.g. "I have a strong feeling of hatred and disdain for all White people"), Internalization Afrocentricity (e.g. "I see and think about things from an Afrocentric perspective"), and Internalization Multiculturalist-Inclusive (As a multiculturalist, I am connected to many groups") (Vandiver et al, 2002).

The question's responses are to be measured on a Likert-style seven-point scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (7). Each subscale is to be evaluated individually for a mean score with the largest subscale scores denoting the participant's Black racial identity attitude. The evaluation resulted in each respondent having six



attitude scores from 1 to 7, however the attitude scores that were the largest denoted the respondents predominate racial identity attitude. This result is then used to express each respondents' Black racial identity (Vandiver et al., 2002). According to Vandiver et al. (2002) the internal consistency reliability of the six subscales has recorded a range of .78 (Pre-Encounter Miseducation) to .89 (Immersion- Emerison Anti-White). Cokley (2002) found the internal consistency ranges to be .74 to .83. Similarly, Worrell et al. (2004) found consistency estimates to be .70 to .85. The six factor structure of the CRIS was validated through the exploratory factor analysis' support of the six subscale model as well as the two-factor higher order model (Vandiver et al., 2002). Sellers et al. (1997) helped reach convergent validity for the CRIS with their racial identity model, Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI). Ultimately, the scores were analyzed as a group and individual in conjunction with the qualitative data to describe the impact of the media on racial identity of Black collegiate football players.

**TABLE 3**

**SAMPLE ITEMS FROM THE CROSS RACIAL IDENTITY SCALE (CRIS)**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>Description (Phase)</b>
<b>1.</b>	I am not so much a member of a racial group, as I am an American.  <b>(Pre- encounter Assimilation)</b>
<b>2.</b>	Blacks place more emphasis on having a good time than on hard work.  <b>(Pre- encounter Miseducation)</b>
<b>3.</b>	Privately, I sometimes have negative feelings about being Black.  <b>(Pre-encounter Self-Hatred)</b>
<b>4.</b>	I have a strong feeling of hatred and disdain for all White people.  <b>(Immersion- Emersion Anti-White)</b>
<b>5.</b>	I see and think about things from an Afrocentric perspective.  <b>(Internalization Afrocentricity)</b>
<b>6.</b>	As a Multiculturalist, I am connected to many groups (Hispanics, Asian- Americans, Whites, Jews, gays, and lesbians, etc.)  <b>(Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive)</b>

### **Athletic Identity Measurement Scale.**

The AIMS will be used to measure the participant's strength in their athletic identity. The AIMS was originally an 11-item measurement before the psychometric analysis removed one item from the survey (Brewer et al., 1993). The AIMS survey expressed convergent validity with its significant correlations between the AIMS and related measure including: level of sport involvement and perceived importance of sports competence. In support of the discriminant validity there was no discovery of significant correlations between AIMS and other conceptual constructs extraneous to athletic identity including: self-esteem, sports skill level, and perceived sports competence. According to Brewer et al. (1993) the 10-item AIMS study boasted an internal consistency of  $\alpha=.93$ , and the test-retest reliability was  $r=.89$  reinforcing the survey's psychometric integrity. The initial conception of the AIMS was to function as a one-dimensional instrument, however Li & Anderson (2008) tested the model finding issues with the one-dimensional instrument due to the misalignment of strength and exclusivity in one dimension. Essentially the issue is that one could have an elevated athletic identity, yet that identity may not be exclusive. Due to this issue several reconfigurations to the AIMS model have been proposed over the years (Brewer & Cornelius, 2001; Brewer, et al., 1993a; Hale et al., 1999; Martin et al., 1994).

Brewer & Cornelius's (2001) study analyzed data that span over 10 years of AIMS model usage. The study employed a large sample (N= 2,856) to help the authors conduct a confirmatory factor analysis ultimately leading to the best model fit since its origination in 1993. Taking in to consideration the three factor solution model (Brewer et al. 1993a), a four factor solution model (Martin et al., 1994), and the modified three factor solution model (Hale et al., 1999), Brewer & Cornelius's (2001) suggested a multidimensional model

with seven items, three first-order factors, and the absence of any cross loading.

The Brewer & Cornelius's (2001) AIMS survey is measured by 7 items on a seven point Likert-scale covering three multi-dimensional factors: social identity (items 1-3), exclusivity (items 4 & 5), and negative effectivity (items 6 & 7). The items will be scored between a strongly disagree (1) to a strongly agree (7) with higher scores meaning a higher identification and exclusivity of identification as an athlete (Brewer & Cornelius, 2001). Factor one, social identity measures the extent to which an individual recognizes their social role as an athlete (e.g. "Most of my friends are athlete"). Factor two, exclusivity shows the degree to which an individual's self is determined only by their performance as an athlete or being in an athletic role (e.g. "I spend more time thinking about sport than anything else"). Lastly the third factor, negative affectivity determines the degree to which an individual experiences negative responses from undesired outcomes in athletic endeavors (e.g. "I feel bad about myself when I do poorly in sport").

The seven item AIMS was found to be internally consistent and highly correlated with the original aversion of the AIMS ( $\alpha = .81$ ; Brewer & Cornelius, 2001). A mean score is derived from the three factors and is used to express the respondent's global athletic identity score. The scores for the AIMS are represented positively by the higher score meaning the respondent has a stronger and more exclusive identification as an athlete. (see Table 2 for example questions from study). The measurement of athletic identity using the AIMS affords the research a valid measureable to compare to racial identity and the qualitative experiences of BCFPs and athletic administrators.

**TABLE 4**

**ATHLETIC IDENTITY MEASUREMENT SCALE ITEMS**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>Description (Factors)</b>
1.	I consider myself an athlete. <b>(Social Identity)</b>
2.	I have many goals related to sport. <b>(Social Identity)</b>
3.	Most of my friends are athletes. <b>(Social Identity)</b>
4..	Sport is the most important part of my life. <b>(Exclusivity)</b>
5.	I spend more time thinking about sport than anything else. <b>(Exclusivity)</b>
6.	I feel bad about myself when I do poorly in sport. <b>(Negative Affectivity)</b>
7.	I would be very depressed if I were injured and could not compete in sport. <b>(Negative Affectivity)</b>

### **Demographics.**

Respondents were asked to record their gender, age, academic institution, grade point average, academic classification, athletic classification, funding status as football player (e.g. athletic scholarship), depth chart position, major, amount of media engagement, type of media most used, and race. Only collegiate football players were given the surveys to be filled out.

### **Procedure**

#### **Participant Recruitment.**

Prior to embarking on any research measure, the researcher applied to approval of their study from The University of Texas at Austin Committee on the Use of Human Research Subjects and appropriate site administrators. The researcher received permission from the committee and proceeded to obtain permission from every Black college football player that agreed to be a participant. As a result, all BCFPs gave consent and no respondent was allowed to participate in the research study prior to or in light of not properly reading, understanding, and receiving a copy of all the paperwork if noted on the survey response.

#### **Data Collection.**

Participants were asked to self-report the answers to the questionnaires. The questionnaires consisted of: demographic information, the CRIS, and the AIMS scales. The length of the was approximately 71 items taking anywhere from 10 minutes to 35 minutes to complete. Because of the personal nature each respondent was supplied with a secure link to the questionnaire to ensure that only one respondent was allowed to complete each questionnaire. Questionnaires were designed and distributed through the University of

Texas at Austin Qualtrics surveys. Each questionnaire was complete with a full listing of the participant's responsibilities, options, concerns, and all IRB information that they had to agree to before entering the actual questionnaire. Each participant was assured that participation was strictly voluntary and they had the option to quit responding to the survey at any time. The items of the questionnaire were strategically arranged to provide easy flow and time conservation to encourage more participants in light of snowball and network sampling. After reviewing all instructions and agreeing, each collegiate athlete completed their questionnaires. Confidentiality was assured to each respondent based on the researcher being the only person with password protected access to the Qualtrics website and data results. Throughout the entire process the researcher has made himself available and has listed his contact information to answer any questions and concerns. Following completion of the questionnaire each respondent was congratulated and thanked for their participation.

### **Data Analysis**

Before beginning any data analysis all data was screened and cleaned for any missing values and outliers. The researcher also analyzed the data for accuracy of data inputs, observation of plots, influential data, and the appropriateness of the data with multivariate analysis assumptions previously mentioned. All data screening and analysis was performed on Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). To detect the outliers, missing data, and characteristics of the data the researcher calculated the descriptive statistics. The researcher used the following questions to guide the data analysis:

1. How do racial identity attitudes change based on athletic year in school?
2. How does athletic identity change based on athletic year in school?

3. What affect does racial identity have on athletic identity?



## **CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS**

The overall purpose of this dissertation study is to examine the development of BCFP's athletic identity, racial identity and self perception in the experiences playing big time college football in the age of omnipresent media. The study utilized a mixed methods study to deeply examine the participants experiences quantitatively and qualitatively in effort of filling in the gaps of each individual approach. Ultimately, this study hopes to gain an understanding of how the media impacts BCFPs identity development and how to help future BCFPs make sense of and deal with the age of omnipresent media images at PWIs. The following chapter expresses the findings of the both methods utilized in the study and will be broken down into two parts. The qualitative findings section will detail the commonalities of all interviews respondents. The findings were broken into several emergent themes and subthemes to help the researcher to make sense of the experiences recorded. The quantitative section represents the process the researcher went through to screen the data, detail the descriptive statistics, and finally show the primary analysis.

### **Qualitative Findings**

The following qualitative results were examined through the framework, Towards The One Dimensional Theory of Identity and Expectations, as well as case study methodology. The experiences of Black college football players and athletic administrators contributed to the meaning making of the media's impact on BCFPs. The theoretical framework and the methodological approach were enacted to produce a better understanding of many different factors of the Black college football player experience. Various sociocultural (race, gender, and class), psychological (identity, stereotypes, politics, multi-dimensionalism), and institutional (media, athletic industrial complex, and football

culture) factors associate with the media and the development of (N= 7) high profile Black college football players and the perceptions of (N=9) collegiate athletic administrators. The Black college football participants were from three universities across the western, southwestern, Midwestern United States and currently on their school's football roster. The athletic administrators represented two of the three BCFP's universities and were chosen based on contact they had on a daily basis with BCFPs. The emergent themes were combined from both qualitative participants groups to elucidate both the external and internal impact on BCFPs identity. The findings were organized in the following five themes: 1) Media Influence, 2) Black College Football Player Politics, 3) Athletic Industrial Complex and Football Culture, 4) One Dimensional versus Multi-Dimensional, and 5) A Future of Improvements.

### **Theme 1: Media Influence**

The media influence theme emerged by directly targeting the media as a focal point in interviews with participants. During the interviews the participants expressed the media's ability to influence their thoughts and actions. Under the scope of influence the participants revealed: I) media bias and stereotypes, II) media's omnipresence, and III) the internalization of the media's content. Altogether, the participants constructed a picture of the media as a dominant curriculum to be learned from. They leaned heavily on, but not limited to, internet and televisual news reporting, sports broadcasting and social media to elucidate the media's influence.

#### **I. Media Bias and Stereotypes.**

Media bias and stereotypes classifies the participants' understandings of the positionality the media takes on various topics. More specifically, focusing on the BCFP the

participants discussed the media through: a) its proxy to interaction with BCFPs, b) engaging with framing and capitalism, c) experiencing bias, d) misconstruing stories based on bias, and e) drama, the hero, and the villain. Many people do not have physical interaction with BCFPs but they interact with their persona in the media via consumerism. Thereby, the interaction with media personas of BCFPs serves as a proxy for ontic interaction. This concept is exemplified through the testimony of redshirt senior Willie at the University of North (UN). Willie is referring to his knee injury among other adversity he went through prior to his senior year and his observation with the way the media positioned him. Willie states:

The media has a big impact on how you're even viewed. How you're treated, how people feel about you, some have never met you before. The media has a strange way of introducing you to somebody that you have never met in your life, you know I think of my college experience and I had some adversity that I had to overcome, while in this time I had a lot of people who wanted to reach out and show their support and they don't know me they just know that I'm fighting this adversity, um I'm staying positive, I'm smiling, that's what they see through media but they don't see the struggle they didn't see the frowns, they didn't see the anger, they didn't see the frustration, they saw what the media portrayed... you know its just crazy to me they just paint a picture and people just believe it, people believe it and I used to fall into that bubble where anything that I read or seen I believe until I got older and I started to mature and I started to say, "Okay that's a great story now let me look him up and find out more", so.

Willie's representation in the media solely portrayed him in a way that made it easy for people to relate to. The compartmentalization of his identity helped the consumer to utilize the representation to inform their treatment of BCFPs. Willie's teammate and sophomore, Dominic, expressed his observation of people compartmentalizing meaning stating:

Umm because I feel like, one its human nature to try to compartmentalize things and when we compartmentalize things we attach certain meaning to things and I feel like that's where the stereotypes come from and so people are comfortable seeing their own views validated and that's what media does basically like perpetuate stereotypes that validates people views if that makes sense.

Dominic explains that we as people use strata as a way of efficiently understanding BCFPs based on the person's comfort level with the stereotype being portrayed. The validation of people's views often benefit the hegemonic way of thinking towards BCFPs. Both Willie and Dominic explicate that the understandings people get from the media inform a curriculum that efficiently helps to understand BCFPs they may not have contact with. This becomes problematic when the representations of BCFPs are founded in capitalism and hegemonic frames aimed at forcing the reproduction of negative scripts. In an interview with Tracey, an athletic administrator from Technical A & M University (TAMU), she clarifies the marriage of capitalism and media framing on the media content. Tracey was asked if media content is bias and she states:

Definitely. Very, I believe that the media does a great deal of framing to try and lure in viewers and therefor based on viewer which brings in revenue its political...Because I think like everything it's driven by money and I believe that again they have good intentions like they want to report news but I also believe the

bottom line is the more viewers they have the more dollars they receive so they will frame things like I said to have that amount be higher.

The lure of money and viewers builds an agenda for different media outlets. The more viewers the more influence a media outlet garners. Some scholars call this process agenda setting (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007), which refers to a distinct plan to shape thinking towards a political understanding of phenomena or people. Mike, an athletic administrator at TAMU, corroborates Tracey's comprehension of the political nature of the media, positing,

...I think people in general indirectly and directly put in spins for some type of agenda maybe to benefit themselves individually but also maybe to benefit some type of group organization especially when you're getting paid to produce material that is going to sell that's going to promote yourself and further yourself along in your career, um, there's some type of agenda to that.

Mike also alludes to the benefit of agenda setting to an organization, namely a collegiate athletic department. The agenda that benefits most high profile athletic departments is one that positions BCFPs as one dimensional beings or solely athletes (Edwards, 2000). The game of football sells the persona of a football player according to hegemonic standards, thereby accompanies the understanding consumers subscribed to. Dominic also explicates the media's bias, representation, and the need for drama to be entertaining, which also brings in the money. He responded to the question if the media is bias or not stating:

I would say so yeah because at the end of the day it's a money making machine so I feel like it has certain interest that it is going to try to cater to...Uhh well yeah just like I was saying earlier like just to try to portray all the drama and things like that

so because of that they might portray certain people, especially Black people in a certain light that the masses will find entertaining.

This notion of entertainment Dominic mentions is enlightening because, historically hegemonic society has casted Black people based on the moral judgments of White people. The drama casted in the media leads the consumer to a dichotomy of the hero or villain, or to choose sides between sides of an altercation. Dominic furthers his positioning on drama and the media positing:

Well I think part of the nature of media is people like gravitate towards dramas and things like that so a lot of the times like you'll get a story about how successful somebody has been in college and how they turned their life around and really pulled themselves out of a bad situation but I feel like the majority of it is about people messing up and things like that, so like when Johnny Manziel was in college they would always talk about things he was doing wrong but Trevone Boykin he was having an amazing yeah and you didn't really see that but as soon as he makes the mistake of having that bar fight he was all over ESPN so you know just the nature of people wanting to see the drama and other people fall rather than be successful, I think because of that someone who isn't really from here and doesn't know the nature of the media they will probably only see the bad and think that that's all that their really is.

Patricia, an athletic administrator at UN, furthers the ideas of drama and the hero-villain portrayal likening it to the reason people watch soap opera. She states:

...so its more enticing, um, and exciting and it makes...they will always write like a hero and a villain and in a way that if you can make this one person look like

someone who made a bad choice and had a poor decision and make it look like the worse decision of their entire life and make it define who they are as a whole it just makes it more interesting for people to read and want to know more and ask.

questions and so the more juicy something is just like a soap opera as much as it is a guilty pleasure people will continue to watch it and people will continue to read it.

Cody, a BCFP and doctoral student from Big State University (BSU) explains why he believes the media focuses on drama and negative portrayals using the example of bad graduation rates for Black student athletes. Cody says:

I mean the media loves to talk about bad graduation rates that was all over the news the last couple of weeks with march madness and everything talking about graduation rates for basketball players. That's all they would talk about is low graduation rates they wouldn't talk about the troubles of being a basketball player or why there are low graduation rates and what we can do to help. All they wanna talk about is just the graduation rates themselves, but again that's the medias job is to get that out because that's what people want to hear....they love to talk about the negative but most of the time, I would say 99 percent of the reporters and journalists have never even played division I sports or collegiate sports, so they don't even know what its like to go through that process and everything which is real frustrating as an athlete when you're reading that, so yeah.

Cody made it a point to recognize not only does drama and negativity fuel the media, but it comes from sources that may not have had the experience of being an athlete, let alone a Black athlete. The negative portrayal of BCFPs controls the representation and subsequently the way people essentialize all BCFPs. A couple of the participants voiced

reading or hearing media bias first hand. The media outlets the participants are referring to focused on BCFPs that were at their institution. Patricia states:

Ohh because it was so blatant like, the details, the descriptions, the allegations, um it was very evident and pretty ridiculous because I knew the facts of, um, situations that they would talk about in the article and I had known the person personally for a very long time and I mean their definitely parts of it where I could be like okay that can possibly be true but there were definitely there were definitely clear aspects that were not true. Um, and was very, I donno, it made me very disappointed in what media and what reports do, I donno it was just, it was hard to see that on a first hand basis. Sometimes just because of the field we work in, also seeing like articles of what reports will write about specific student athletes as well just...that's not their personality, that's not actually how they are in real life but that's how they are presenting themselves, how when you interview them so it can be um a lot that's gets changed and fluctuated off of that persona or the way the angle that they are trying to take it.

Patricia's response showed the inaccuracy of the media's portrayal of the BCFP they spoke about and the only way she knew was due to her interaction with him. Milley, another administrator at UN, details her bad experiences with the media's incongruent portrayals forcing her to ignore responding to requests from the media. Milley expresses:

Umm, I have the unique ability to sometimes know the story first hand when it comes to certain stories, especially athletic stories, um I have been interviewed sometimes for those stories I don't talk to the media anymore because I have had bad experiences where I have felt in two cases the stores were written pretty much



before they talked to me and they were just trying to get a quote that they could just insert to support their story and in those two cases where I didn't give them the quote they made one up and yes....and in one case it was bad, I never said anything close to what they said and it was about how a student athlete having nothing to go home for when that student athlete had a very great loving relationship with his mom and a really close relationship with his two bothers and it was kinda offensive that they would say that I said that because its not true.

Much of the offensive content she referred to dealt with the character judgments of BCFPs after an incident or fabrication of their expressions to fit a pre-selected story. After an incident media outlets use these stories to paint a picture that can often turn into a blanket understanding of all BCFPs who may be in the same predicament. But the story is often counter-positional for White college football players feeding the hero-villain dichotomy.

Marcus, a senior football player at TAMU, writes:

Never has been. I think Blacks are always looked upon as the negative ones where as you have the issue of Johnny Manziel, White kid that stays in a lot of trouble umm does a lot of bad things you know but he's still in that position to be successful and you have umm, Black quarterback at Florida State, and issue with him and he's kicked off the team and both of them are quarterbacks ones Black and ones White. I mean that goes to show like how media looks at Black people in general, just "oh he's ruthless, he's gonna do it again" and the White kid, "oh it was just a mistake, he's not gonna do it again" that's exactly how media portrays everything to be.

According to Marcus, to be a BCFP that may be involved in an incident is to be ruthless and a telling act of their character. However, for White college football players it can be seen as

a mistake and not a tribute to his character. Understanding that the negative aspects of BCFPs are constantly highlighted, as a consumer it is then difficult to counter balance the positive aspects without seeing them. Patricia corroborates this logic through her example of how the UNC academic fraud allegations highlighted that BCFP were dumb jocks stating:

...it is very disappointing to see what happened at UNC but they really played to the point of, this was what negatives were happening with these student athletes but they never really highlight the positives of other student athletes and athletes who may have also been on that team or with other sports that don't necessarily follow that same stereotype. You never hear about the engineer or the person who is going to med school or any of that piece. You always here about the typical ones that fall into that stereotype of the dumb jock and not saying that there are no unprepared student athletes because I know that that can be the case but each program has different support services to help them be successful and they of course highlighted an institution that didn't do it very well but the media really went with that for both of those cases, played on the stereotypes and just kept going.

The stereotype of the dumb jock was very apparent in the way Patricia viewed the story of the UNC allegations, but her knowledge of the BCFPs she works with affords her a full spectrum of BCFPs to learn from. For the general consumer there may not be another example of a BCFP, especially to interact with in-person, so the negative reporting of incidents can stick in their consciousness making it hard to know the story without bias. Alexis, an athletic administrator at UN, explained her experience with media political nature bias and how it takes a critical eye to notice there is more to the story that what is reported. She states:

Yeah for sure, I think part of my education and my own experience is having to look at what media and what things are coming at me with a critical eye because I think if you don't do that for both side of a particular argument or understand fully what the message is that is being delivered intentionally or unintentionally, most of it I guess is intentional I think it would be easy to get swayed in that specific direction, but yeah I think a fair amount of it both written word and talk radio for sure, even TV broadcast, Magazines commentary, newspaper, all of that I think has a political direction and or purpose at some level.

The combination of a hegemonic understanding of BCFPs and a hegemonic portrayal of them creates an acceptance of the way they are positioned. Alexis as well as many of the other participants have alluded to the nature of media bias, portrayal of stereotypes, the hero-villain dichotomy, and media serving as a proxy to interaction. The following subsection describes the media's coverage of BCFPs and the importance of the availability of media.

## **II. Media Omnipresence.**

Media omnipresence illuminates the repetition of media images of BCFPs as experienced by the participants. The data collected has been arranged into various topics within the subsection. More specifically the interviewees allude to: a) the repetition of BCFPs, b) the fear of sexual assault and domestic violence by BCFPs, and c) individual incident used to essentialize all BCFPs. The omnipresence of media has reached a level that it is considered irregular to not see a news report, read a story, repost something on social media, or hear a broadcast on a daily basis. The marketing directors at various media outlets understand that daily repetition of a message increases the strength of it whether

it's truthful or not. Dominic speaks to the multiple ways to interact with media and the inundation of their message leading to think about their world in those parameters asserting:

Umm well I'll say its [media] part of daily life just because there are so many ways that you can interact with it, one just being on your phone that you have on you all the time, you know, you have social media and then most people love watching TV and there are certain messages that are projected from that and so I would say the way it creates norms and values is like the...certain things that are put on media repeated over and over again, so like I said like one big way is like with music and all the messages that are given by like certain rapper and country singers will be hearing that stuff over and over and over again and I feel like we internalize those things and that's how it becomes a norm and value and so for my dad he always made sure that even though I listened to music that would objectify women that that's not the actual view point that I should actually take towards women.

He highlights that the repetition of messages creates our norms and values of our society, especially they way we think about what is normal. Unlike Dominic, many people do not have people to monitor their media intake and counteract it with other portrayals. These repetitive representations can also become rituals that garner major attention as well.

Cody was asked about the inundation of images and he used national signing day to exemplify the use of athletic images and values of BCFPs, he avows:

I can give you a prime example, every early February every single year national signing day in college football. Now I think its just out of control, they have an 8 hour ESPN special on ESPN, not ESPN 2 its just on ESPN 8 hours coving national signing

day all day. They put recruits on Sportscenter like recruits high school kids on Sportscenter to make their college choice and again kids are seeing that thinking “oh that gon’ be me here in a few years, I wanna strive to be that” and obviously the hand hovering over the that making it like a game a really it’s a huge decision of where they will spend their next 3 to 4 years and I donno what they’re gonna get out of it but I mean fans eat that up because they are just concerned about tier athletic ability, they aren’t worried about what they’re gonna major in or go on to do later on in life um, or anything like that so I think just national signing day blowing up on ESPN and recruiting websites like Rivals, 24/7sports are pretty much all over the internet...

The occasion of signing day has become of the largest spectacles in college sport to help welcome the future athletes of different schools. The coverage national signing day garners multiplies the spread of the norms and values the media chooses to represent. In most cases that norm is that Black males are athletic beings, rarely do they strive to represent the athletes as stellar students or even bring attention to the top recruits for highly academic institutions and HBCUs. As Cody alluded to many Black kids coming up look at the broadcast in admiration in hopes of becoming the next athlete to announce their decision. Although they consciously make that decision to say they will be next, there is also a subconscious thought that values their athletic performance over all other endeavors. Paul, a previous student athlete and current athletic administrator at TAMU, was asked about the repetition of media images. He responded recognizing the influence of repetitive portrayals emphasizing:

Yeah I think it [media] has to [influence], I think that sometimes it may do it subconsciously where you don't necessarily even know its happening, but I think anytime that the media, whether its on TV or print, constantly pits images in front of you or ideas in front of you um, that has an affect on your thoughts and sometimes your actions.

Paul's and Cody's sentiments about inundation and influence tie back to the money that drives the content. With drama and negativity driving content of BCFPs, there were several stories of domestic violence and sexual assault that dominated content while conducting this research. The fear that was rekindled as a result was reminiscent of the fear that sparked the Ku Klux Klan to protect White women after seeing the screen play, *The Birth of a Nation* (Duru, 2004). TAMU Athletic administrator, Bailey, was asked about any specific content she saw about Black football athletes at the time the interview was conducted. She responded asserting:

You know I cant say a specific article but I think right now you know you look in the NFL and you look at domestic violence and everything you see if African American, African American, African American and I think once you start putting those articles back to back to back you're saying without saying that African Americans are the ones who are predominantly doing this that a lot of African Americans aren't doing it but once you put in the media that way and it's the same paper and every other week there's not an event you go back and you reference a previous event just to keep it fresh, um yeah...

Bailey speaks to the hidden curriculum and the connection the media is trying to make by blasting the stories of domestic misconduct back to back. They are insinuating that Black

football players are the ones to be feared because they are the main perpetrators of domestic violence. In addition to domestic violence being attached to Black football players in the NFL, sexual assault became a major focal point for BCFPs. Alexis recalls her interaction with media content with BCFPs expressing:

So I would say a couple of things come to mind a lot of just debates about, well coverage of stories around sexual assault on campuses and crime so what's really relevant and recent is everything from the allegations against Jameis Winston and Florida State and sexual assault allegation to within the last week the scandal that's going on at Rutgers with the 5 African American student athlete football players who have been charged with criminal actions so those are two, one not so relevant so new, the other within the week are your examples of both kinda the ongoing evolving story in both of those cases.

Criminal activity seems to be the most visible content of BCFPs for the administrator participants including sexual assault, domestic violence and robbery (Rutgers). Although the incident Alexis is referring to is one incident, the media uses those incidents to question all Black football players. Bill, an athletic administrator from TAMU, cites his disgust for the media's blanket statements regarding Black football players and his dissent for athletes who commit crimes due their representation of him stating:

You know I think personally I kinda look at it from two sides, I think I get angry at both groups and when I say both groups I mean the writers and the actual individuals involved, um just because, and I'll start with the athletes, they are a representation of me and we all played and we like to say the NFL is a fraternity so we all played in the same fraternity and once an athlete does what he does he

speaks for me and I'm lumped into a group of NFL players and, you know, this is what's going on right now this is what they are doing and that's not me. I don't agree with it but now that guy kinda speaks for me. Then the second part of it I get mad at the media because that's a isolated situation that is not something that the team is known for, that's not something that all players from a particular university are known for, that's a single instance but once you start putting those single in stances together you say, you know, 4 Florida players have done this well yeah that's 4 out of 5000 Florida players and it was at a small time when they may have been there together but now they just say Florida players and that's not right.

The fact that he recognized the connection that links him to all other NFL players as normal reinforces the fact that the media has lumped all Black football players together, in large part by negative characteristics and stereotypes. The inundation, fear of BCFPs, and the essentialization of BCFPs based on isolated incidents have primed media consumers for internalization of the messages hegemonic society framed. The next subsection will cover the participants thoughts on internalization of media content.

### **III. Media Internalization.**

This subsection illustrates the participants experience with internalizing the content they see in media. The data was mined into three different sections. More specifically the participants described: a) Belief of the media content turns into participant point-of-view, b) the essentialization of BCFPs as a result of that belief, and c) sensationalism, desensitization, and prejudice result from the process of internalizing media images. With media being almost inescapable and riddled with stereotypes and bias there is almost no



defense against reciprocating the level of normality for the portrayals. Dominic reifies this stance citing:

...considering like there are multiple TV's in, I don't know how many homes across America, whatever message you put in front of that TV I feel like is going to be internalized by that viewer so if like all the rappers and things like that promote a certain lifestyle, like for example Future is just like all about drugs and the way he treats women, um, that's what's portrayed on such a mass scale I feel like people can internalize that and that's like where the stereotypes come from about certain Black people and like there are other things that can happen with that like for instance with the LGBT community and their recent movement that have a more positive outlook and portray them as like regular people in TV shows and stuff like that for instance like Modern Family, so I think you just like I said media has its pros and its cons but just on such a mass scale I feel like we internalize those things.

Dominic uses the examples of the TV show Modern Family, which has two openly gay parents, to represent the level of normality that has been associated with being gay. He argues that those images, just like the negative ones seen about BCFPs and Black people are also internalized because they become normal. Patricia felt the affects media coopting her point-of-view as Dominic described. She states:

...um about a year ago where a friend of mine had when accused of something, and there was an article that was written up on this specific person and it was then when I really realized how media will twist and turn any little thing into something completely different and we will never really get a full story, because of that I tried to really limit how much media information influences me and my own personal

opinion based off-of public opinion but I will admit that improbably just as guilty as everyone else who reads an article that has a quote that someone has said and end up some what taking a view point of the writer so I try but I would be lying to say I don't get influenced with just a little bit of the information that was presented in front of me.

Again, her resistance to hegemonic scripting was due to her interaction with the person in question in the article. For normal consumers however, this is rarely the case, which make them dangerous because they can be swayed based on what they see rather than what they know. Tracey furthers this standpoint positing:

Does the stereotype affect the audience that doesn't have contact? Yes, yes. Because we absorb what we are around so if you hear that and see that its what you're pouring into you so the only way you're going to, I should say the only way but, one of the only ways that I can think of you're going to not have is to have personal relationships with somebody to realize that's not the case.

Alexis also talks about how she finds herself drawn into the argument of a story and then has to check what was being said against her core values stating:

I think you cant really absorb that information and not have it influence you in some way, I think I'm a big user of ...I love to learn new things and so I try to get my information from a variety of sources maybe about a particular issues that I'm interested in or maybe something I want to learn more about, different perspectives that's kind of how I operate, um but I often find myself depending on who I am reading about and the particular issue my natural tendency is to almost believe that until I read something different that may give a different perspective or opposing

view and sometimes I feel that way so I think a lot of times I don't often have a black and white view of an issue or a really clear focus or an unyielding. I think in my intake of information and how I process information a lot of it has to do with um the perspective I'm paying attention to at the time and then I hope by looking at different perspectives it broadens my perspective on that

Alexis alluded to the media drawing her in based on arguments that align with her core values. This leads many people to create what is called, the court of public opinion. She uses the Jamies Winston allegations of rape as an example of something that struck her because of her identity as a woman further states:

...admittedly when you're looking at headlines when the story first broke there is a sensationalism about it and so its easy to kinda lead a reader and I found this myself it leads you down a certain path so I made assumptions base don what I was reading that the culture was out of control, he was privileged in that he was getting breaks from the police because of who he was and where he was living in a college town that is fanatical about their college program. I think kind of those negative stereotypes of how a culture, a football culture can protect folks and let people get away with certain things, my mind...I was being drawn down that path by what I was reading because quickly after that it was how the police department did or didn't investigate and you know some of the bumbles that appeared to be around the legal system, maybe in the campus process when you have a victim whose, alleged victim, that's telling her side of the story or not telling her side of the story all that kinda thing.

Alexis, was drawn down a path of believing what the media portrayed because it was tied to her belief. Immediately she thought Jamies was guilty based on sensationalism of the actions. This same process happens for many consumers even for BCFPs as they view sensationalism in the media. While still constructing core values and learning ones self, the media can be a powerful ideological force to overcome, especially if there are not many counter examples to hegemonic portrayals. Mike talked about BCFPs being visual individuals so their core values are affected by representation stating:

I think the bubble that we have on campus and the way the media portrays the guys, you know men and women, I think that you start to distance yourself from the main stream student population and I think you see a disconnect not only with the African American population but just the regular population as a whole because you identify your self just as an athlete. I think media, you know, influences you because most of our athletes are visual individuals and what they see I think they internalize and it becomes their value system.

Taking a similar position from her knowledge, Bailey, admitted she wouldn't be able to empathize with BCFPs but can use her experience as a substitute to explain the media internalization. Bailey states:

...I just feel as a woman there is in society there is a certain way society feels women need to look or be or act, body shape, appearance, clothing and I see lots of photo shopped photos of how people think people should look. I don't always know if I say them in person if that's what they would look like but then I think women, especially young girls that I work with that's what they wanna look like and be like and its not real.

A similar story line to Bailey's previous statement was felt by Willie. Willie asserted:

The media affected me just because I believed what they were telling me. You know a lot of the stuff that I was seeing on TV and a lot of athletes are African American, so when the media provides you a picture and an image and there is nothing else to contradict it that's what you're gonna believe and for me being young and being immature, um, being naïve these are some of the things I just seen and I naturally just believed they were real, you know but as you get older you start to do your own investigation, you know, you look up things and say, "You know that's cool, but what was his background?" and you find out that things weren't as glamorous as the media made it seem...

Once a person believes the media's framing of BCFPs it becomes a vehicle for someone's treatment of BCFPs. Thus, sensationalism leads to prejudice and desensitization of content for consumers. Dominic was primed to answer the question if the media practiced sensationalism and prejudice. He answered by using the example of Black actors boycotting the Oscars stating:

Uh yeah I would say so because I was actually watching an interview on the issues with the Oscars with Russell Simmons and he was saying that the reason why you don't see enough of us is because there's no Black people anywhere pushing buttons and if its all White people who are in control of the media then their own interest are gonna carry over into what they portray and into what they want to be on the air is what's gonna be shown and their own feelings about certain people are what's gonna be shown and when that's all you have basically their feelings become the norms and values of a society.

Marcus also focused on the media and the aspects they highlight to create prejudice in our society emphasizing:

The media tries to pin everything on Black people whether it's good or bad they try to find the worse in every aspect of a Black human being possible. They're goal is to instill in the minds of people that Black is bad and that's constant. Its been going on since slavery until now because mentally we are free...I mean physically we are free but mentally we are still slaves and that's how I look at it and its bad because when you look it all the police really do is just try to treat us like slaves. I'm talking about when I'm at home sometimes people at home really don't know I play football unless I have to tell them so they see me and I get pulled over or just going through a road block they wanna immediately search me just because I'm Black but someone who's White passes through they just wave them off and let them go through.

Marcus described the process of image, sensationalism, and prejudice in his example with police and the interaction with Black males, especially BCFPs as this was his experience.

The way the media sways their positioning on BCFPs and other targets can create the blanket internalization of that positioning as a norm and value. Patricia describes:

If I didn't work in the field that I do I think it would, I think it would make me feel like wow, this stuff does happen, maybe they are all like this, UNC is like a great institution, if its happening at somewhere like that why wouldn't it happen at the University of North? Um, they made it very easily able to generalize to world class institutions, um which I think was one of the most difficult pieces for sure is to see something where someone has a great reputation to be having that same type of

investigation for those same things to happen. I think it would easily be able to be influenced by that media content.

Again, she speaks from a position of privilege to know some of the things being portrayed are not true but without that understanding she easily may have generalized all schools that have BCFPs to have the same issues as UNC did. Bill also reiterated Patricia's point about essentialization by media consumers stating:

Yes, you know, you try to say that it doesn't but I think there are so many parts of the world and what's going on around the world that I'm just not in contact with so when I see something in the media you kinda take it for fact just because you aren't completely interested in it or getting to know about it so you just assume that's what's going on so I think that's a big issue and that's more of personal issue. But then once you see media and you see athletes in the media and I think the world automatically says, and you look at articles, "African American athletes go broke", you know I think now that's just becoming a given like that's just gonna happen when that's not always true but I think the media just really publicizes those big name guys and those guys kinda speak for the group with what they are doing.

Bill breaks it down to the big name guys representing the group, which means the media only focuses its attention on those guys and how they fit the script of norms and values of hegemonic society. One of those focuses highlights "going broke" after making a lot of money because Black athletes don't have the financial intelligence to save money, their masculinity is rooted in how much they can buy, and their families want out of the ghetto as well (Corben, 2012; Torre, 2009). Paul talks about the affects essentialization directly causing desensitization of the phenomena in the media stating:

Yeah I think it has to, I think that sometimes it may do it subconsciously where you don't necessarily even know its happening, but I think anytime that the media, whether its on TV or print, constantly pits images in front of you or ideas in front of you um, that has an affect on your thoughts and sometimes your actions....Well I think one, I think sometimes it can desensitize you so if you're constantly looking at killings and murders it kinda desensitizes you to think that is a normal occurrence or if we're constantly dealing with racial issues it may make it seem like its not as big of a deal as it really is because you're constantly hearing about it and so it kinda desensitizes you to the fact or the nature.

Lastly, Bailey describes the internalization from the sensationalism of the stories, the essentialization of the bias towards BCFPs, and the prejudice as a result asserting:

...I think they are automatically when they go anywhere put into this, when people see them in the world, they're just, you know, a Black male athlete and they are all different and they are all unique and special in their own ways and so its one situation that happened with one person and its not all of them but I do think people are quick to judge and I mean in life in general they want a story unfortunately which is why the education for all the boys needs to continue because you want positive stories or no stories but the people are just quick to put anything negative out because that's what society likes is drama.

### **Theme 1 Discussion**

Media influence is insidiously imprinted in the mind of consumers and translated to body politics and performance of Black college football players. The following discussion



relates the participant data in theme one to the key constructs of the theoretical framework Toward The One Dimensional Theory of Identity and Expectations. Each subtheme will be connected to the necessary key construct of the theory. The subthemes represented are: media bias and stereotypes, omnipresence and media internalization. The key constructs do not operate in isolation, yet they act as a non-linear sequence that corroborates the mission of the hegemonic society. The casting of Black men, especially as athletes comes with meanings from the institution that are carried out in both the mind and the body. The images and messages that are transmitted through the media act as a proxy for the interaction with Black college football players. The content frames and negatively distorts the understanding of Black college football players. The distortion leads the consumer to the dichotomy of a hero and a villain based on one-dimensional standards of athleticism.

The media serves as the institution at work in this theme. Their main goal is to create a space of representation that does not involve interacting with Black college football players. The proxy proceeds to control the behaviors and actions of BCFPs based on the consumers understanding of other people and is translated into how they view and treat you. Participant Willie states, "The media has a big impact on how you're even viewed. How you're treated, how people feel about you, some have never met you before. The media has a strange way of introducing you to somebody that you have never met in your life...". The strange way of introducing people Willie alludes to is the proxy. This proxy acting as a third space is believed and implemented by the consumer. The proxy is a direct representation of the institution's planning and staging of Black college football players and is translated into ontic actions. The major players in the construction of images are the media companies, reporters, and other purveyors of content. According to Lapchick (2015)

the large majority of AP reporters, those who cover major college football, are overwhelmingly White in the leadership positions. This is important to note because those who edit and assign content are those in leadership positions. They also hire people to work they believe will push their ideas and vision for the company. Thus a top-down operation immortalizes a hegemonic attitude, not just because of leadership influence but also because the content is being sold. The consumer is also dictating the content based on what they want to see. Consumers want to see what is most familiar to them, unfortunately, many times that means hegemonic castings. Understanding this controlling process, the next key construct dives deeper into the mind control the media exerts on the consumer.

The mind is easily influenced through repetition of similar images, especially for those who constantly interact with media content. The inundation of stereotypes and scripted images merge into facts when replayed and socially believed. Participant Alexis states, "I think a fair amount of it both written word and talk radio for sure, even TV broadcast, Magazines commentary, newspaper, all of that I think has a political direction and or purpose at some level." The political direction becomes an illusionary truth (Zaragoza & Mitchell, 1996) and through its hollow meaning the mind utilizes it to create understandings of others. In terms of the Black college football player they have occupied the oppositional meaning to traditional White heterosexual men. Mills describes this mental process as line being drawn on the spectrum of White and Black. Black carries the ugly savage subjugated meaning, while White is the pure, beautiful opposite. The shortcomings of the hegemonic community are cast upon the Black community as well as the negative meanings to keep them subordinated. BCFPs are constantly thought of as athletic, dumb, and criminal because they represent a combination of oppositional

positioning that can be molded to benefit the White polity. BCFPs bodies are thus treated as such and made out to either fit the oppositional meaning or they are casted as villains, which impact their body politics.

The hero villain dichotomy is familiar to subjugated peoples. There is always a good and bad when people are incongruent culturally. For example, during the crusades Christians sought to fight barbarism by instituting Christian values. By instituting Christian values they would clear people of villainous mentalities, religions, and actions. These actions were seen as forcing the bodies and minds of people who were culturally incongruent to be congruent, if not they would still be considered savage and treated as less than. Once the incongruent meanings are forced on people an internalization process can begin. This is where people begin to believe what is being said about them. Paul described the hero villain dichotomy as it pertains to BCFPs stating,

...they will always write like a hero and a villain and in a way that if you can make this one person look like someone who made a bad choice and had a poor decision and make it look like the worse decision of their entire life and make it define who they are as a whole it just makes it more interesting for people to read and want to know more and ask questions and so the more juicy something is just like a soap opera as much as it is a guilty pleasure people will continue to watch it and people will continue to read it.

According to Paul when BCFPs make a bad decision it could lead people use that incident to define who the BCFP is. Bad decisions are seen as character marks on the BCFP and their bodies are treated as such due to the media blasting of those types of incidents. Jackson (2006) informs us that one way to continue to control others bodies is to police them as

separate by determining their behavior and to exert penalties based on those who are the most unlike White hegemonic society. Thus, the BCFP body is policed as oppositional. Their behaviors are determined based on the casted meanings ascribed for them not by them. Ultimately, this means media bias and stereotypes exert control BCFPs mentally and physically through their stereotypical framing, and the hero-villain dichotomy.

## **Theme 2: Black College Football Player Politics**

This theme arose from participant discussions around policing of BCFPs experiences. The media does a good job of laying out negative stereotypes for consumers to choose from to inform their understanding of BCFPs. During the interviews the participants articulated the media's political affect on BCFPs experiences in three subthemes. The subthemes consist of: I) Policing, II) Black college football player stereotypes and III) Moral judgments- good vs. bad. The political judgment from hegemonic culture pushes for identity negotiations to fit their representations in the media. As a result, the policing, value statements about the BCFP experience, and some affects of media stereotypes are revealed in this theme.

### **I. Policing.**

This subsection centered around the participants experiences with the policing of BCFPs experiences. Within this subtheme the data was organized into three different sections. More specifically ,the participants detailed: a) following the system, b) silencing BCFP opinions, and c) protecting the university brand. Following the system refers to playing politics of respectability (Higginbotham, 1993), especially when it refers to aesthetic characteristics. Earl, an athletic administrator at UN, acknowledges this conundrum while referring to BCFPs that come back to school to graduate. Earl stresses:

...if you rewind 10-15 years you had your pants hanging, you had dreadlocks, you wouldn't shave, you have earring and you're tattooed up, you know, all that matters and the media captures all that and then people see that as you're just not very bright you're, just a football player I hope you can play, you know, you're not a real human you're just a football player and the media will put that out there to the

public and that's all we see is a student who is not gonna make it after football he better make it, and that's what a lot of people say, he better make it in football and they only seeing that on TV when they are making those comments, they don't even know you they just see your dreads, they see your pants, they see your tats, and they say look at him he got tattoos on his neck he better play football because he got tattoos up to his ears you know, how you gonna get a job with that...

Earl pointed to tattoos, earrings, and dreadlocks as symbols for media consumers to link with BCFPs level of intelligence and status as a human being. He acknowledges that the consumers are making these comments about BCFPs they may know nothing about.

Thereby, to not receive those types of comments and be considered intelligent and human, they must follow the system or adhere to hegemonic standards. Ralph, a red-shirt senior from TAMU, described following the system in his experience stating:

I think if you just follow the system the way its designed you kinda just get here and get your degree, well let me back up, a positive aspect if you're here for four years, three and a half, you got your degree and you're going to go work, you got your own company or you're working for a fortune 500 company, things like that, that's positive. But if you're here and you came from nothing and it's taking you 5-6 years to get your degree that's kinda a negative aspect on it because they are gonna look at it like, okay why is it taking you so long to get your degree? Like what are you doing, are you just partying? Or are you too busy protesting at these rallies, like why are you not getting your degree?

Not only are BCFPs judged on their appearance but the speed at which they complete their degree and their civic activism. Following the system also leads way to be controlled by the

system. Meaning, the opinions of BCFPs on many issues affecting them may be constrained in effort of pleasing their university's administration. Ralph continued his previous stream of thought asserting:

...you know speaking out about issues like Black Lives Matter or any other issues that are going on in the US I think we continue to stay to ourselves and we don't voice our opinions on it because we don't wanna be, dunna na na on ESPN, we don't wanna be the feature story saying such and such was attending a rally and was the main leading voice of it and now you know you have all these different phone calls, you know, you have to report to the president and other part of campus, the athletic director, head coach, you have to report to all these different people and they are asking, you know, like why are you doing this? why are you not going to class doing football stuff like you're supposed to? So I think to a certain extent like we don't want our scholarships taken from us so we just do what we're supposed to do and if questions are arise then we may answer it but its gonna be a skewed answer...

Ralph alludes to the control of their actions and comments regarding racial prejudice in America. This control wagers protection of the University's brand for an athlete who can benefit them. The brand is meant to uphold hegemonic standards by staying away from what they would deem as negative press, as Ralph described. Jamal, a junior at TAMU, was asked if universities controlled BCFPs voices and opinions, he added:

Yes. Because anything that happens firstly you're gonna hear it in the media. Um whatever they want to portray even if it's not the right story or what they think they know. And like were told by coaches not to get on media, don't listen to media, don't tweet or voice your opinion against anything even if you feel like its right or you

should voice your opinion, we cant....I guess because anything we say is associated with the school or the programs so I think that's why....I mean cause, you know, everybody has different views, whatever the school's view is on a situation is not my view but um, I can go against the school which is not good to...I think its just for their views, you know?

Forcing BCFPs not to go against the schools brand/stance on issues is essentially limiting their agency and the person they are. Gregory, a senior at TAMU, describes the connection between not being yourself and protecting the university brand affirming:

Uhh as far as like being ourselves I mean like there's probably something that you know we want to retweet but we cant because we will get in trouble or somebody will say something and we cant tweet what we want to tweet sometimes because you know we'll get in trouble. And with the whole brand thing its when were on social media were not only representing ourselves but the university that we're at so of course when something goes bad its gonna be Dawgs [university's mascot] slash your name and how ever you got in trouble so its not just your name that pops up when something goes wrong its also the university's name.

The connection to BCFPs being football a player from their university is strong enough to force them to choose to not engage in what they believe is right. The participants detailed their experiences with policing of BCFPs for their physical presentation, their opinion on civic issues, and their adherence to the university's brand and stance on issues. One of the factors that creates what is normal are stereotypes. The following subtheme will discuss the importance of stereotypes and stereotype conformity as a political tool.



## II. Black College Football Player Stereotypes

This subsection calls attention to BCFP and Black athlete stereotypes and their use as a political tool to shape their image. The participants detailed their experiences with stereotypes and conformity to those stereotypes. The subtheme was organized in three different sections: a) general stereotypes, b) stereotypical expectations of BCFPs, and c) stereotypes and non-conformity. The sections present the political climate of stereotypes and BCFP's conformity to them, or not. Athletic administrators described their understandings of stereotypes that impact BCFPs. And the BCFP participants also described their experience with the playing politics of stereotypes on campus. Ralph informs us of his idea of stereotypes he has faced claiming:

Umm, we always get the stereotype that we never do our own work, we don't register for our own classes, I mean that's not true. We do our own work um, sometimes so of us actually register for our own classes when there is a class that we don't like we go in there and find the classes that we do like if it goes with our goals and you know our graduate plan or whatever its called. Um, so I think some of the stereotypes they have about college athletes is just in general not true. Um, the one stereotype that I do think may be true for Black college athletes, we sometimes tend to think we aren't smart enough to get to college so this is the only way we can get to college is through sports, so we know that why not do something that you love to get to college to get you're degree...

Much of Ralph's issue with the stereotypes is that people on campus denigrated his intelligence and agency because they believed he had no control over his academic career.

Gregory also discusses the stereotypes he faced that made his environment and experience political asserting:

I mean lets just go with the stereotype of a typical Black man, we're just angry and aggressive and you know stuff like that so that could really have an impact on people all the time. I mean just being Black you have that stereotype and just being an athlete I guess just adds to it...I mean like...But its like people see you and okay you're Black but you're also an athlete so people already think that oh things were like handed to you because you're an athlete then with that people already don't like you because you're and athlete they feel like you don't work for what you got and stuff like that, which is not true at all whatsoever, but it like then that on top of oh you're Black and all the negative stereotypes that fall along with that also.

Gregory and Ralph both felt the weight of people discounting their academic preparation and intelligence because of their athletic status. Tracey details some of the stereotypical projects of BCFPs as she understands them stating:

What the media frames, you know, thugs, violence, not very intelligent, you know, um, again for the most part when I watch Sportscenter or 30 for 30 obviously those are exceptions but I'm talking about the news...I'm sorry just making sure I got you right. Just the same thing violent, um, only able to succeed in music or sport, aggressive, physically strong, scary, intimidating...

Tracey's recall of the stereotypes that people believe was directly correlated with media portrayals. This connection between what the media supports as a BCFP and what people expect a BCFP to be. Mike also weighs in on the stereotypes that BCFPs face recalling:

Uhh I mean pertaining to athletes I think there are stereotypes out there about their backgrounds, education, socio-economic statuses, I think there's a stereotypes that they all come from lower-middle class backgrounds, um not educated, not motivated to do more than just be an athlete, I think there's stereotypes amongst different races, both positive and negative that I think the public feeds into.

Alexis also recollects her understanding of stereotypes inserting:

Yeah, I can't believe, I can't begin to imagine the scrutiny that a lot of our, well student athletes in general, but high profile student athletes face on a campus and community environment. I think people that don't have an understanding or knowledge of that individual person its easy to group people in as a certain type so do I think that there are people who probably walk by some of our football players or other student athletes of color on campus and say, oh I bet he's just like Jameis Winston, or well I'm surprised to even see him on campus because he's getting a scholarship paid and he's obviously just trying to go to the league, I hear that more than anything. Why are you even here you're just going to the league, Um when that could be the farthest thing from the truth...

The stereotypes in general have created a political environment through expectations, frankly from people who do not have much interaction with BCFPs. Through creating the environment people set expectations of BCFPs to be someone they casted. Marcus discusses the expectations placed on him explaining, "Umm...some I can say, as far as you know. I've seen some posts where they say Black college students are lazy some athletes don't apply themselves, you know that's never the case and it does affect me a lot seeing

people say that about college students or student athletes.” Marcus was then asked if it impacted him personally and he stated:

It does because you're just stereotyping based off some experiences they've had with some other Black guy and they wanna categorize people of every sport or Black person, you know what I mean, its like when they say that every Black student doesn't do this every Black student does do that, where you can say some don't or some don't apply themselves rather but when you go to say every Black player or student doesn't do this, that's messed up. I'm definitely not the stereotype so I don't fit in that. I feel like I give my all when I'm in a class or outside of class I still give all I got, so you know it kinda affects me and has me down sometimes because you got so many people downing you but you don't wanna fall victim to that little stereotype they got going.

Gregory talks about his recruiting process and negative expectations of gang involvement being placed on him reporting:

...there was this time when I was getting recruited and me and my mother were I guess throwing up 'gang signs' and it was like when I was like in the 7th or 8th grade and they brought that up and they were like 'oh we have a gangster on our hands, we don't need to recruit him', he's, you know, gang related or gang affiliated or something so we don't need to recruit him and stuff like that but that was like when I was in like the 7th or 8th grade and its like 5-8 years from then they saw I wasn't doing any of that and I wasn't doing it then anyway....yeah it I think it made them look at me like I was something that they didn't want on campus because they had

the thought that I was gonna be trouble for the team and cause the team problems and stuff here but I did pretty good my last year so I must be doing something right. Even as early as 7<sup>th</sup> grade Black males are scripted as deviants and thugs by recruiters. The expectations are ultimately negotiated by the BCFP and conformed to or opposed. Bill discusses how stereotypes are not warranted but by way of special admits people feel justified in their treatment of BCFPs:

Yeah, I think for sure they [stereotypes] exist and I will say that they are not warranted just because, and ill take a lot of universities across the country and the school that we're at, um, a lot of our student athletes wouldn't get into this school on their own academically so I think that kind of feeds the whole you're not supposed to be here, you're a piece of meat you're just here to make money I think that just fuels that because really they probably should be at a community college and in some cases just hoping to get to some 4 year school, um, yeah.

Along the lines of being treated as a dumb jock, Cody answers the question about non-conformity to the stereotype positing:

The uhh, well it depends, it kinda depends how you show yourself, If I'm wearing athletic gear then I will introduce myself as a student because of the dumb jock stereotype its easy to take it out of context and to assume you're there just to play sports and that's it.

Attune to the treatment of BCFPs, Marcus described how he has been described and his feeling of having to conform to the stereotypes when White players do not have to stating:

...for the most part, he look like a thief, he look like he will hurt you, you even have students sometimes when you walking they will move to the side just because you

are big or your Black, you know, that's kinda messed up you know. You could have a big White guy, you know what I mean he might hurt you, so just because I'm Black doesn't mean imma hurt you.

The participants described their feelings and experiences behind stereotypes and the creation of a political environment. Thereby, the next subtheme refers to the dichotomy of judgments placed upon BCFPs as a result of the stereotypes, hegemonic standards, and policing.

### **III. Moral Judgments- Good vs. Bad.**

This subsection acknowledges the dichotomy of morality in the experience of BCFPs. The participants described hegemonic social castings lined with socio-political value. To best analyze the data the subtheme was organized into two different sections: a) the box dichotomy, and b) identity challenges. Both of the sections represent some of the identity politics BCFPs must entertain due to media consumers. Paul describes the meaning of the box and the social context of it emphasizing:

So when I say a box I mean I think all of us have stereotypes of various individuals so I think a lot of times the majority will have a Black male football student athlete in college in that box, um, they have a certain picture of what they may look like, how they carry themselves, are they overly aggressive, um, how they act in the classroom. Do they seem like they care about their education, do they seem like they are here for anything other than just playing that sport, are they here for just a good time. And so when that box has already been constructed before you even arrive on campus, you know, you may play right into it because it so hard to constantly try to prove myself, you know what no matter what I do they are gonna still think of me

that way so I'm gonna act that way and you have other people that say, you know what that's not me that's not how I was raised that's not my beliefs and I'm gonna constantly go out of my way to prove that, hey I'm not that stereotype, I don't fit in the box you're trying to put me in, I'm gonna show you what I'm really about.

Jamal discusses his experiences with the box dichotomy and social context stating:

...it depends on the type of person you are. For me it's just like going against the stereotypes of what a football player to the general public is. Like I try my best in class and I try to act right and I don't act like these ghetto whatever, just presenting yourself well, just going against stereotypes, you're a football player you're just here to play football, oh you're dumb, you're not here for school so I'm just doing the opposite.

Jamal's fight to counteract being placed in the box, especially being labeled as the dumb jock. Ralph comments describe his feelings of being judged and being placed in a box on a predominately White campus:

If your on a predominately White campus and if you're African American and its not many of you on campus where if you go to a classroom there is only like one or two of you in the class room I think the teacher is gonna give you a hard time because they are gonna try to figure out why you made it here or how did you get here and why are you taking my class, why did you enroll in my course, especially if they see you're an athlete they really give you a hard time....umm, they are gonna try to weed you out of their class, they're gonna you know, first time you miss they are gonna email mail you and say "hey, I noticed that you weren't in class today, that's five points off or a letter grade deducted", of if you try to seek help like, "hey professor

such a such came up so I wasn't able to turn in my paper on time, is there any way I can get an extension?", I think that would give them a hard time, I don't think they would be able to like, "no I don't give extensions" but they can give Sally or Joe an extension on theirs.

Ralph's recall of his experiences serves to challenges his identity that he is being prescribed as a BCFP on a predominately White campus. Identity challenges for BCFPs come in many forms as their culture is treated as incongruent to that of hegemonic society. Academically, they must prove themselves before being treated as a student. Patricia describes her sympathy for BCFPs experiences as she recalls what people say to her about the intelligence of BCFPs. She states:

...I can't imagine being a Black football student athlete and not feeling that people are looking at me that way. Um, I'm sometimes surprised what people will ask me. They are like, "he so like do you write their papers for them? Like are they really that dumb?", um, "so that's what your job is?" its very much they all think its about eligibility getting them through and that's just the persona on my job and so if other people are looking at me that way I would just assume that's the persona that they have for them on campus...there are some faculty who will feel that way if they see them walk in and sit down in the back of the classroom dressed in all their gear...so I think when media produces more and more stories like this its makes it easier for people on campus, faculty, students, to look at that student athlete and be like, "What right do you have to be here and why do you deserve it? Just cause you can play ball?".



BCFPs are expected to adhere to the dumb jock stereotype so many of them are being challenged to not be smart to fill their scripted identity. Their physical sense of identity is also being challenged as they are expected to appear almost opposite of what they have been for 18 years. Earl describes the hegemonic expectancy of appearance asserting:

...at the end of the day you wanna be portrayed as someone that they would come pluck you out of Microsoft, like Russell Wilson for example, here's a guy in the media everyday and you don't see tattoos all over him, he speaks well, he dresses well now that's a young man that if football didn't work today every company in this area would say hey we would love Russell Wilson, now you look at a person like Marshawn Lynch okay if he tears his knee up and cant play again, is Microsoft coming and saying hey can you work with us?

Earl's position on the hire-ability of Black football players is often in-line with what hegemonic society desires to be hired. They want the person to be visually pleasant as if to make up for a deficit for not being White. Paul echoes Earl's understandings stating:

Umm...I think that when individuals here, Stanford, Harvard, Princeton schools in that those categories there is a certain perception that comes to mind and when you see Richard Sherman those two images or identities don't always pair to the average American citizen and so I think that the fact that he is outspoken about his upbringing and outspoken about his experiences I think that helps it kinda change their perception but we still have a long ways to go in terms of that being seen as the norm...

Paul then goes on to describe what is not the normal look for someone who is more than a football player and one that is telling of a perception of success and higher socio-economic status:

Ummm...Black, dreadlocks, um, NFL player, I mean I know I'm doing a poor job but when you see Andrew Luck and you see Richard Sherman they were on the same team but you immediately have a different perception of who that individual is based on their appearance whereas Andrew Luck has more of the clean cut all-American look when he doesn't have that scruffy beard and he is actually shaved whereas Richard Sherman doesn't give off that same image in the media.

Milley describes the challenges of fitting into a predominately White campus for a BCFP expressing:

Because it can be a pretty big culture shock for some people and I think sometimes and I don't wanna be apart of the stereotype for some of the guys that come from lower socioeconomic communities that may have a lot of gangs issues and violence issues, what was some of the skill sets that helped them get here and to be successful then they get here and we want them to not do any of the, you know, okay now you're here, totally change every thing that got you here, like everything that you needed to do to survive and be successful in that environment now let go of it and embrace this whole new culture that has different ways to be successful and I think there is a tear there and it can tear some students because they feel like to be successful in this new culture they have to let go and were denied part of their identity and what's important to them and there's probably a lot of need for staff training on how to really let them, let the students feel proud and celebrate who

they are and where they came from yet understand how to be successful in this new environment if that makes sense.

Milley's description of culture shock and what makes BCFPs successful dials down to their ability to deny their identity or to minimize it according with hegemonic standards.

Gregory also discusses incongruence with predominately White campus culture and adjustments made to be successful stating:

...yeah I mean when I first got here it was a culture shock because I'm from a predominately Black and Hispanic neighborhood and school system all that so when I came here I knew that I couldn't act the way that I did when I was at home so I had to kinda sorta alter my personality a little bit to fit within this system. Uhh usually im pretty loud so I couldn't be loud around people and, you know, I couldn't say certain things that I would say when I had my friends around so I had to watch what I said and watch the way I conducted myself.

As normal as that may seem there is still a large discrepancy of normality for BCFPs versus a traditional White student at PWIs. The next theme furthers the differential experiences of BCFPs through the lens of the athletic industrial complex and the establishment of football culture.

## **Theme 2 Discussion**

This theme represents the politicization of the Black college football player experience. The policing of the stereotypes as inscribed on the identities of BCFP serves to confine them to prescribed boundaries, which one participant described as "the box". The intersection of moral judgments, stereotypes, and policing in the experience of BCFPs will

be discussed as it applies to the institution and the mind key constructs of this dissertations theoretical framework. Some parts of the theme are representative of one of the key constructs, however please note that none of the issues brought up in the themes are secluded to one key construct. Rather, the evidence from the theme is used to highlight parts of the key constructs in the experience of BCFPs.

The institution was represented in this theme through the acts of policing described by the participants. By adhering to the institutional policing many BCFPs are being compliant in protecting the universities brand. The purpose behind protecting the universities brand is so they will not be singled out as a troublemaker or a deviant who does not want to play football. This use of football as a privilege is deleterious to the effort and hard work put in to get BCFPs to that point. Now that they have gotten there it is treated as a privilege that they just happened to get and if they do not comply with the system outlined by the White polity then they are striped of their playing “privileges”. Ralph details following the systems means to go to all assigned tasks, go to class, to not speak out about injustice and just get your degree. He also asserts the flip side of not following the system stating,

But if you're here and you came from nothing and its taking you 5-6 years to get your degree that's kinda a negative aspect on it because they are gonna look at it like, okay why is it taking you so long to get your degree? Like what are you doing, are you just partying? Or are you too busy protesting at these rallies, like why are you not getting your degree?

This level of policing attacks the actions of BCFPs from an institutional standpoint because in the eyes of hegemonic society they are to just do as they are told. Anything outside of

those actions is deviant and now they are being cast against an institutional brand. The brand requires BCFPs not to bring negative attention to the university by staying out of the media for “negative” reasons. In Ralph’s quote he states that spending extra time on your degree was related to participating in protests that have swept the nation the past two years. Essentially, to protect the brand BCFPs must not be politically active because it doesn’t look good in the media to have BCFPs who support justice for unarmed Black people killed by the police. The brand feeds into the institution because it protects the White polity. Mill’s racial contract describes the White polity as a group of signatories who protect White society’s way of living, thought process, while molding all other non-White peoples to their will in effort of keeping White supremacy intact. Thus, this level of policing keeps BCFPs compliant in fear of not protecting the brand. The brand, which is representative of the predominately White university’s image, does not want racial tarnish on it due to how many signatories of the racial contract support or remain silent on the killings of unarmed Black people and are against social justice for the Black community. The more the university can stay away from the media for “negative” instances, the more the donors are willing to contribute to keep the institution running. Ralph laid this out on his level by describing the different characteristics of BCFPs who are policed by the institution.

Secondly, the mind key construct is represented within the box dichotomy and the identity challenges that arise as a result. This box defines the morality of a BCFP based on their compliance with its boundaries. Participant and athletic administrator Paul describes the box stating,

So when I say a box I mean I think all of us have stereotypes of various individuals so I think a lot of times the majority will have a Black male football student athlete in college in that box, um, they have a certain picture of what they may look like, how they carry themselves, are they overly aggressive, um, how they act in the classroom. Do they seem like they care about their education, do they seem like they are here for anything other than just playing that sport, are they here for just a good time. And so when that box has already been constructed before you even arrive on campus, you know, you may play right into it because it so hard to constantly try to prove myself...

The box is a reflection of the institution that operates in the mind of BCFPs and others on campus because it was constructed already before the BCFP steps on campus. They already have prescribed images of what you are supposed to look like, how you are supposed to behave, and they play right into the stereotypes that trap BCFPs as just athletes. The institution benefits from BCFPs overly dedicating themselves to football because it generally makes the team better the more time spent towards athletics. By spending more time towards athletic endeavors there is also a minimization of outside influence, which can mean less opportunity to tarnish the university brand. The box dichotomy can lead a BCFP to face stereotypes threat, or a conundrum that one faces when attempting not to fulfill a stereotype that others have about the group they belong to. The othering of BCFPs as Mills and Fanon describe is the pattern of filling the negative ideological space of White people. The box was created with those negative ideological characteristics in mind and the identity challenges, such as stereotype threat, then affect the BCFP because of the campus climate. Participant and athletic administrator, Mike, describes this stating,

I was working with a Black male football player student athlete and he had come from an area where he hadn't interacted a lot with White people and I just remember him saying I feel like somebody put me on a rocket and shot me to mars because this culture couldn't be anymore different and he was really struggling with how to navigate through the system and I was thinking then how we really needed more help with doing identity work with students especially when they're feeling like a huge culture shift and not understand the culture of the university...

Mike sentiments represent the challenge many BCFPs face when coming to a predominately White campus. They often feel the difference of coming from an area with people that look like them to a big campus where many of the students are White. In conjunction with the pre-constructed box, they are still struggling to develop their identity in a new place that has old ideas about them. Seeing that Identity has two major components (internal and external) the struggle comes from how people view them externally. Internally they can feel a myriad of different ways about themselves, however one feeling is going to remain true, they are going to be treated and thought of as athletes on a predominately White campus. This is problematic because that increases the development of their athletic identity and dislocates other identities in the process. Fanon describes this as the innate complex of the Black man. The Black man is fighting to decipher the meaning of being Black in a Black world as well as Black in a White world. The different environments that BCFPs come from and when they arrive on campus present the counter-positional worlds. Not only does it dislocate other identities, but they are also silenced as to what those other identities are to them in light of what they mean to other people on campus. The combination of protecting the brand, fitting in the box, and policing BCFPs

based on their hegemonically scripted roles leads BCFPs to be compliant in the system of college football at a PWI by protecting the brand and minimizing parts of themselves. All this happens for the hopes of becoming a professional football player.



### **Theme 3: Athletic Industrial Complex and Football Culture**

The athletic industrial complex and football culture theme arose from sifting through the overall experiences with football and the pressures to be an athlete. Its connection to the media is one that perpetuates the understanding that football is the main and only goal for young Black males. The interviews revealed three major subthemes in effort to address the athletic industrial complex and media's influence in BCFPs. The subthemes consist of: I) Athlete possible student, II) Treatment from "outside" and III) Upward social mobility, rags to riches. Football culture is one that is founded in entertainment and money. As evidenced by the coaching carousel in college football, wins and losses control job outcome. That same pressure forces BCFPs to be solely football players to be successful at the various levels of the sport. As a result, this theme resembles the stresses of the athletic industrial complex and the media's replication of the rules to be successful within the complex. The NCAA details their student athlete model, however many BCFPs describe an experience that emphasizes they are athletes before students. The first subtheme deals with this realization.

#### **I. Athlete Possible Student.**

This subsection represents the heavy emphasis placed on football for BCFPs at power-five conference institutions. The participants described the power of football to orbit everything around it. To best analyze the data the subtheme was organized into four different sections: a) Football is king, b) Community, culture, and education, c) Athletic isolation, d) Hyper surveillance. Altogether the sections present the impact of being athletes first and foremost and students when necessary. Earl describes the level of importance football garners acknowledging:

I think the college game has evolved to big money and I think its important for colleges to recruit athletes that are going to bring them the most success and a lot of those athletes happen to be African American because a lot of those sports happen to be money driven and these athletes that we see on TV are the chosen ones and that's what you get and its no if's, ands or but's because if the coach don't win games he don't keep his job and he has staff members there that's relying on him to say hey, we need to get this kid here on campus and that kid may happen to be an African American and the next kid may be an African American, I don't think they see color, I think they see W for win or a winning season.

Although Earl disagreed that race is used in recruiting the best football player, he recognized that many of them are Black and that winning pressures are greater than they were when he played in the 1980's. Thus, football has created a win-at-all-costs mentality which is detrimental to BCFPs. Mike describes the inequity that results of the athlete-student relationship at power-five institutions:

The college athletic system or our whole foundation of how we purse a college, um, athletic programs the way we approach dealing with student athletes as a whole. Our focus at universities especially when dealing with athletes talk about academics we talk about student growth but there are millions and millions of dollars being fed into heightening the programs and building athletic programs from an athletic standpoint and not building them from an educational standpoint. There is more money being funneled into athletic pursuits more than academic support pursuits.

Recognizing that football pays the bill for both BCFPs and coaches, the extreme focus on sport leaves BCFPs feeling like they have been fooled in terms of the experience they were promised. Marcus explains:

It [football] takes a toll on it that [academics] too. Just say you're not playing, you're not getting the things you were promised in recruiting on the academic side your performance starts to go down because you're thinking so much about this and so much about that, you're mind is so bothered that you begin to lose focus and lose sight on what is really the main goal because academics is really the key.

The understanding for a BCFP to come to college and not get the chance to take advantage of academic opportunities that were promised when they were recruited. Because of time and energy dedicated to football their academic focus shifts to compensate the imbalance. Jamal alludes to the athletic and academic imbalance while discussing the restrictions from his athletic schedule, affirming:

Ummm.....I guess opportunities or...Opportunities to grow in whatever field you wanna work in and stuff. Yeah like after class regular students get to go home and take a nap or whatever or have that time to study, with us like, when I'm done at like at 1 or 12:30 I gotta go eat real fast then I gotta lift at 1:15 then after that we have meetings and then practice and so we don't really get to just relax or anything like that and practice don't end until 6:30 so...And when we get out of practice, you know, we gotta study and some of us just want our free time so we don't study.

The imbalance in opportunities to enhance their academic careers could have been a result of expectations passed on through their time prior to coming to their university. Mike discusses lowering academic standards in high schools across the nation:

...looking at minority enrollment in schools and the drops in enrollment in both public high school level but also the collegiate level where individuals are lowering the standards for opportunities to play athletics but also be involved in academics. I donno if that's a positive thing because we are lowering the standards for individuals who participate in high school athletics but also we're raising the standards from a collegiate standpoint for these individuals to get opportunities to go to the next level and get an education. And that's, you know, I saw that happening in New Orleans, Louisiana and I think Indiana is also starting to pass laws where people are lowering the standards for GPAs to allow people to participate in high school athletics but from a collegiate standpoint we're raising the level for them to participate here.

Lowering academic standards could be a catalyst for lowered academic expectations resulting from football outweighing academics in the student athlete relationship. The lowering of academic standards for participation in sports shows the true intentions behind expectations for an athlete student. Marcus discusses how a lot of BCFPs feel like their athletic career is most important, asserting:

...absolutely, its a lot of guys that feel that way, they begin to look at one thing and put all their apples in one basket and just don't think of long term they think of short term and when you begin to think of short term it screws you over in the long run because you gotta have short term, medium, and long term goals to succeed in life itself.

When asked why he thinks they have such a heavy athletic focus, Marcus talked about the differences in socioeconomic classes pertaining to goals of solely athletic focus versus a true student athlete focus. He says:

More or less its probably the environment and how they were raised, because okay you have a guy that wasn't brought up with a lot of money was less fortunate than other and believe it's the only way he can get it. He's not very intelligent in the classroom but strives to get the grades that he needs to obtain his goals and he's like okay I just need to get out of here to get this money, that's short term. If he's very good on the field, "oh imma do three years and come back and get my degree" really not serious about it but just saying it so that he can get where he needs to be. Make that money then you know he gets hurt but he looks at it like I need money now. Where as somebody else that's fortunate comes along with a good mind set, probably less talented but knows how to get what he wants and knows he can make it with or without football he think about it long term. He's doing well in class, giving it all he got on the field, stays 4 years and gets his degree, he has a plan now.

Cody also comments on the athlete student focus coming from socialization and the recruiting process over the years and how it impacts higher education stating:

Umm that's deep, so they [Black male athletes] really don't know what college is about and why it's because of the recruiting process. I think the recruiting process has really totally just messed up the value of higher education to not just have athletes but African American men over all and um like I'm talking about guys who get recruited and end up not going. So when you're told something from 8th grade to your sophomore year of high school and in junior high school that you're gonna

go to college to play ball, that's all you know that's all you believe in so why should you take advantage of anything else while you're there? I mean recruiting is not the issue it just the manner in which its done at an early age and its especially with basketball and AAU is just ridiculous now there bringing the top middle schoolers across the country so its just unbelievable how the early identification of talent has impacted the value of higher education.

This complete trust in athletic dreams solely is also reciprocated though Black culture and communities. Cody finishes his statement about socialization asserting:

What I meant by our culture is, like its sort of the way were socialized growing up about how sport is probably king over many things in our lives and uhh, that kinda includes or bleeds into social media. So we wanna post about football stuff and basketball stuff and see how many followers we have and all that, this that and the third, then, I donno I think as far as the media part its part of our culture.

Mike also discusses the incubation of BCFPs focus on athletic dreams solely, stating:

I think that as a whole if our educational system doesn't change and I think if our family structure from an African American standpoint doesn't change we're gonna be at a critical point where we're not gonna be involved in opportunities of success from an academic standpoint. We're gonna limit our chances to excel in certain environments and its gonna be detrimental to our society because our workforce is gonna change and you're starting to see a shift in socio-economic statues for African Americans especially males and then I think with the racial tension going on in this nation right now its only gonna heighten things and I think with the educational opportunities if we don't change things its just gonna go down hill

To seek educational opportunities BCFPS would have to spend more time on the academic side of campus. Unfortunately, athletic compounds are segregated from “upper” campus promoting isolation from their traditional student peers. Cody agrees positing:

...so early on id probably say my freshman year at Iota University I made the mistake of hanging out with other student athletes and other football players and I became very one dimensional, and unfortunately I think probably 90 percent of my team and a whole lot of other guys across the country do that and hangout with just who they see in the locker room and other student athletes, which and really hinder someone’s growth and development.

He went on to further express how this mentality is instilled by self and the institutions built around Black football players. He states:

...the way Nike is doing the opening now and taking kids up to Oregon to do a 7 on 7 tournament and the Sparq tournament or whatever you call it, and now even uhh, once place im talking about in my presentation is IMG academy out of Florida. They turn their sports performance facility into a high school or really a college prep school and now they’re taking kids from all over the country and basically giving them a collegiate athlete’s schedule at a high school age and they are like one of the best teams in the country, they have like 10 five stars on one team and they are just blowing everybody out, which is crazy. And they had one of our new incoming freshman, early enrollee, came from IMG academy so I talked to him about that and he said IMG was harder than our schedule at Big State so that just told me right there that they are just blowing kids out that can lead to burnout early and that’s a whole different topic.

The athletic focus and isolation has become normal for BCFPs. So normal that their own community subscribes to the athlete student ideologies. Even Black traditional students on campus treat BCFPs as solely athletes. Jamal explains his experience positing:

One thing I found interesting is just like the Black community like they think like we love White people or were just for the White people but its not true. Like I feel like Black students here don't look at us as students, like everybody looks at us as athletes. I feel like they are wondering if like were just here to play football and they actually earned the right like academics, scholarship or whatever and they feel like they are better than us so. They uhh...I get this a lot in class but "why don't yal mess with us?", "We're both Black" and its like this little barrier.

The sequence of events leading to a BCFP becoming an athlete solely is one of social and operant conditioning. They are taught now from little league to place football above academics because they receive more spotlight and praise from it. Due to this mentality of athletic first and athletic isolation, once BCFPs are spending time on "upper" campus they are highly visible causing them to operate under a microscope so to speak. Bill speaks to this thought asserting:

Yes well I think one they are usually in athletic gear so a lot of them look like athletes they are more muscular than the average human, um so when they walk in they feel like automatically they know were athletes so umm.. I think they feel like they are being watched more and they say often, "why cant I just be a regular student?" they don't contact a regular student's counselor or whatever, you know, and its not usually to say so and so is making A's like it usually they're late their doing something wrong, you know no news is good news but when they're acting



like something is wrong then they are contacted and I don't think that is fair. And I think that would be for our team just in general but the population I work with is Black so that's the experience that I hear a lot and its not fair and they feel like they are looking for stuff at times and I don't know if its more the race piece or being an athlete I don't know which one for them.

Not only are they visible on campus, but they operate under a microscope in the age of mobile phones and social media. Bill goes on to allude to this stating:

Ummm I think it is interesting time they are living in. I'm glad I wasn't in college in the same time period just because they get videoed and you know you'll read that they are in bars and they just don't live like everyone else and people, um, you know I think there is a stereotype of Black males athletes that some people think is true and then they use the media and things that they do on social media to make that stereotype real.

Marcus describes this from a BCFPs perspective emphasizing:

You know with that whole ordeal, you get into something like that and the coaches have no other choice but to bring reinforcements in, you know what I'm saying, move you or so something they really don't wanna do but they are forced to do just because of the media and because of how people view it because being a student athlete and being Black you got this scope over you that everybody look at and as soon as you mess up, which everybody is waiting for you to mess up they go in for the kill, they ready to kick you out the system so yeah, absolutely they treat you differently based off media

Any kind of reification of stereotypes of BCFPs can go viral with someone on campus capturing it with their recording device. Gregory answers the question why BCFPs are under a microscope inserting:

Uhh just view us as athletes and nothing more nothing less, they just want us to be viewed as athletes and you know when someone gets in trouble they just make this whole big deal about it so we're under a microscope really because people are really watching us so we have to really watch what we say and what we do especially pertaining to the media.

The high level of scrutiny of BCFPs comes from multiple levels. They are often held accountable more than traditional students and that frustrated Marcus while discussing hyper surveillance, he states:

Basically the whole football program or the school itself too, you know what I'm saying the school finds out too, and you have the dean and he looks at it like "well you know I don't want you to represent my school" because of what you did or just because like you said earlier. It's people who are out there that do it but if you're not a football player or some sort of athlete you're not looked at the same because of that scope that everyone has over you they look at you in a different way and they judge you differently.

This level of hyper surveillance is much like a controlling mechanism. BCFPs are forced to navigate a mine field of people waiting to see them make a mistake so they can record it. In addition to people watching BCFPs with a microscope, the next subtheme will describe the participants experiences with treatment of BCFPs by fans, administrators, and peers.

## II. Treatment From “Outside”.

This subtheme details the treatment BCFPs receive from people who are not BCFPs on or around college campuses. The participants discuss interaction and expectations from people who are not BCFPs. The data as a whole furthers the premise that BCFPs are useful as athletes and most of their relationships are built on an athletic foundation. In order to organize the subtheme the data was split into treatment from: a) Law enforcement, b) Fans, and c) Administration. The treatment from law enforcement may be a favorable one, unlike what is being experienced by many Black males currently in the United States.

Patricia describes this interaction through the legal issues of Jameis Winston postulating:

...um because he is a football player he can be kinda wiped clean of these allegations his court dates and his sentencing can be pushed so he can play games, um, they will sweep things under the rug just so someone who is successful can continue to be a successful piece of an entire program.

Marcus concurs with Patricia’s assertion stating:

Being an athlete you do have that kinda edge to situations that occur when something is big and it comes about involving police, you have that edge to where okay it can get brushed under the table or you know I’m saying you can get off easy on something like speeding, intoxication, like you said, while driving or a lot of things but if you’re not in athletics then, you know what I’m saying you’re on the street and this happens its an automatic DUI and an automatic ticket, you know what I mean, especially if you’re Black its so easy to just grab you and give you a ticket or cite you for something just because and people in the media portray us to be such brutal and bad people I don’t understand it. Its crazy how Black are just bad

to people and the Whites can get off. I feel like White people that are non-athletic get off as Black athletes do and that same thing is right there.

The differential treatment between Black people and BCFPs is apparent. The athletic status of BCFPs is paramount. This is recognized as the police respect importance of BCFPs and their university's athletic pursuits and treat them differently than a normal Black man.

There is cheering from fans when BCFPs are on the field however, once they leave the stadium there is a fear that surrounds them. Dominic alluded to this stating:

Umm...yeah I would say so, I would definitely say so because when you're a player and they can root for us everything is good but you know just from my own personal experiences when it gets to like outside of the sport there are stereotypes that they feel towards us are still pretty prevalent, you know I'm on the football team but I have seen women switch their purse to the other side and even though they want to love us in our sport when it comes to like being a functional member of society I feel like they don't really see us as that at times. That's not to say everybody thinks that way but I feel like there is enough of them for it to still be significant.

Athletically BCFPs are heroes, but in subsequent life they are to be feared and avoided. This speaks directly to their purpose, entertainment through football. Once fans get the slightest feeling that a BCFP won't be able to help on the field they switch their attitude towards them. Cody's teammate experienced this in his example:

Um yeah, this is gonna sound bad, but this is my guy so just keep this inline, he's my good friend Roger Starhouse [Pseudonym], so when he had that charge this past season. Before that he was like America's quarterback, the whole city loved him and then that happened and all of the sudden everyone in the city hated him and it was

unbelievable to see the reaction from fans, people who were loving him a week ago now cursing him out and saying he's a terrible person, they didn't even ask the context or how it happened, why it happened, what exactly went down. I mean I know all that so I know Roger and what happened. He's a good guy it was just a simple mistake, but the fans reaction to that who situation was blown out of proportion.

He later goes on to explain how it affected his teammate stating:

I know it tore him up, it tore him up as a person. After that he went a sought actual health help, I know that's public information so its not anything like secretive, yeah he went to get help for that and it had a really big affect on him. Thank fully he has now used it to learn from it, also from some mentors and some other guys on the team he tried to make a positive impact but during that process it was really tough for him...I mean I wasn't with him all the time when he was walking through campus but I know from talking and my guess is that would be incredibly hard to now walk around campus from being the man to now people are upset at you or like trying to make fun of you or something.

For BCFPs their athletic role might be the only expectation fans have for them. Ralph describes how fans only care about BCFPs athletic performance stating:

...umm, the fans usually I think it would be more of "okay, when is this guy coming back?" umm, he's hurt "okay we truly miss him but hey the team won so you know they may not...I'm not necessarily gonna say they think that we don't need him but they can so okay we can win with out them. He helps the team to win as a team but if he goes down we know we can still win without him. I think most of it is because I

don't think fans are interested in whether or not they get a good education I think they wanna just see whether or not their college wins or their favorite team wins, I think that's all that matters, whether or not the players win at the end of the day.

Gregory describes a situation that took place on twitter between a BCFP and a fan which illuminates how fans view them as just athletes. He explains:

He [Cardale Jones] recently tweeted, well I donno if it was recently, but he tweeted about all the things that have been going on with Black males and the police in society and stuff then a fan came in there and told him don't worry about that just worry about winning us more championships and he replied being sarcastic and talking like a old slave and was like "Okay massa izz jus goes play foosebal for ya massa". I thought that was pretty cool. He was just saying like that all we are good for is football and were not people, I mean yes we are athletes and yes we play a sport but there are others things happening in our life its not just always think about sports all the time like we have political views, social views about things were just not, you know, objects that you can just you know like, or slaves I guess you could say to just like just make us do what you want us to do and just say what you want us to say all the time.

I then asked Gregory if the fans treatment of BCFPs bother him and he stated:

Umm yeah because like its just annoying when all fans think about us is football and we can't be who we are on social media because its not what the university wants or its not what the fans want so its kinda annoying that we cant fully openly be ourselves on social media because we have to also protect the brand that we're behind.

Cardale Jones was opposing the various killings of Black males by the police and he was redirected back to football by fans. It's as if the fans don't want BCFPs to be Black men, but just a Black football Players. Whether the fan that responded to Jones' tweet was aware of his treatment or not isn't the question, but the emphasis here is on the minimization of a BCFP's role by fans. Cody attempt to explain why perpetuate athletic culture for BCFPs stating:

Other students don't recognize this because they are apart of the culture as well, I mean Big State has the largest student section in the country, we have 30,000 students who come every single week and they are crazy and they are eating up the media like we were talking about earlier. We got a fight on 11warriors.com that blows up everyday on football and basketball news and recruiting and all that and people live for that and they will read it everyday like it's the New York times but really its just Big State news. So I think the students don't see that because they are apart of it as well and they don't even know it, so I think that plays a big role into too.

Fans feed into the positioning BCFPs as solely athlete by asserting the media's view expecting them to only play football and dismiss all other responsibilities. Coaches follow a similar pattern as the fans and law enforcement when it comes to the focus BCFPs should place on football. Dominic describes a positive relationship with his administrators and coaches stating:

I feel like my administrators and peers took the time to actually get to know the person and I feel like the University of North does a good job of hiring open minded people who believe that everybody has something to offer and that stereotypes

don't define who a person is so I wouldn't really say as far as like my peers and administrators that that's the case but I can't really speak on other places .

Marcus also speaks positively about his coaches and administration, "for the most part they try to keep us sound like as one and they try to treat us equally amongst each other so I wouldn't say they treat us differently but sometimes you can kinda tell when they are trying to treat you different." In the same experience he also recognizes his coaches treat their relationship like a business:

Actually, I mean with the coaches we have and knowing that all of them think that this is a business, which it is because I mean they tell you all the time this is a business and this is how they eat so I understand where they are coming from when the best is gonna be out there. Yeah its not fair sometimes when you have better players behind someone in front of them and everyone sees it but the coaches have the final say so, but yeah it makes me feel kinda uneasy about it, because if I'm better than somebody put me in you know?

The coach-BCFP relationship resembles a business partnership that the number of wins and losses dictate. Because of this mindset the coaches mainly care about the BCFP's athletic performance and less about what they see in the media surrounding the athlete.

Cody furthers this line of thinking asserting:

...and coaches don't really, as far as their own players, don't really pay attention to the media because they know what's going on with them in-house and they judge you based off your performance and who you are as a person rather than what the media is saying because they know you and see you.



Marcus was also asked about his relationship with his coaches and if their treatment changed based on his athletic performance. He stated:

Absolutely, Absolutely. When you're performing well they are all on you high and mighty but as soon as you begin to get a decrease in play and start performing bad or poorly they begin to talk down upon you sometimes, you know, do away with you, like move you to the side and stop coaching you, you know what I mean and it kinda bad when that comes about but like they say all the time its always somebody one play behind you ready to take your job so you just gotta live by that.

The inability to perform also extends to how coaches treat players the are injured. Jamal also felt his coaches push him aside due to his injury and inability to perform. He posits:

Uhhh like during practice for injured people there this thing called the pit, you know, its where we go, we're not around the team, we cant talk to the team. It just isolates you and makes you feel like you're nothing, you know? You're injured, you can't do nothing for us. And like with the coaches some of them would come up to me like, "hey how you doing?" blasé, blasé, but like others they just walk past me and you know, and look at me like "you're not contributing to the team so why should I talk to you?"

This feeling of invisibility after being injured is apparent in Jamal's experience and adds to the business first mentality. The culmination of all the testimonies leads one to believe that the main reason Black males are on campus is to play sports. This expectation that Black males on college campuses are there to play football is also apparent in Alexis's example. She states:

...there's a very respected civil engineering professor, African American civil engineering professor here on campus, he has a son who is an outstanding mechanical engineering student here um, he said it was unbelievable the amount of times his son, um who is taking engineering classes on campus was walking around campus and if he was having a struggle practically in class even professor would say, well the athletic department has really good tutors. Again made the assumption that because he was a man of color that he must be an athlete and therefore he should avail himself to the resources we have in athletics, but he wasn't an athlete, he had no identity as an athlete, his identity was as a mechanical engineer but there you have even professors that are making the assumption that the only men of color are athletes and so I think the intent was, well here is where you can get some support, but what about this young man other than the color of his skin let somebody believe that he was an athlete...

The experience for BCFPs on campus is framed by how their coaches, administration, fans and peers treat them. The data has reinforced that BCFPs are mainly athletes and are treated as such. This treatment does not begin in college but is solidified as Black male athletes increase levels of competition in football. The idea that football can also provide economic security increases as they progress through the levels.

### **III. Rags to Riches: Upward Social Mobility**

This subtheme examines the athletic industrial complex's connection rags to riches stories and dreams of upward mobility. The participants experiences with rags to riches stories focused on their ability to get their families out of undesirable economic situation and the highlighting of those stories. The participants discuss how football culture exposes

the flash and glitter of playing football in effort of selling a dream to young Black males of fame and fortune, if they only put everything they have into it. Paul describes this phenomena while watching College Gameday stating:

...every week on Gameday they will highlight probably 3 to 4 different individuals a week and tell their back story and so it may be...I remember last year they talked about Missouri's defensive end and his up bringing where he came from and the struggles he had to overcome in dealing with his father and drugs and a single parent household and how he got to the University of Missouri, I remember that piece, but there has been several others that they will try to tell something that is beyond football...but it also kinda saddens me because you see people who are the odds are so far against them but they are still putting their eggs into making it to the NFL when you know, they either played at some small school, um and don't really have a legit chance and it just shows them putting all their energy and their drive, sometimes it shows their family how involved they are in them making it and some do and some don't

Dominic also explains this rags to riches mentality inserting:

I feel like they have a very narrow view of it [the Black male experience] because they only show the rags riches story in music and in sports, but they don't ever show like the kid who used his education and became like a lawyer and I really don't feel like you ever see that side of the story and I feel like because of the way the rags to riches stories are told that's how you pigeon hole those people because that's all that they see and those are the only role models that they can identify with so I think its over done in a way its packaged is what I would say...I feel if we took time we

could find like African American Supreme Court judges or just judges like people who have been successful in other fields but I would say part of the reason is probably because those people live such a glamorous lifestyle and through social media that is promoted every day, you know, the big houses and the really nice cars all the jewelry and stuff and that's a much more palatable way to try to try present to people then somebody who just worked hard.

Willie also describes his experiences with the rags to riches mentality and sports being his way out of a poor living situation, positing:

I didn't grow up with the nice things, I grew up in the ghetto where, you know, several cousins we all lived in the house, it was a great time to be around family and I value that but when you watch television, you know, and you see kids that are living in homes, they got they own room, they own video game system, and they grow up and they get their own cars and I wasn't fortunate enough to have that stuff so watching TV, I see these athletes and I wanted that and I said "Okay how do I get this?" ... I think I wanted it just because when I was little I thought that was the quick fix you know and I want to take care of my moms, my pops, I wanna take care of my brother I wanna make sure that they get rewarded because we struggled together and that was kinda my main motivating factor, how do I take care of my family that I struggled with, you know, when I get older and that was the quick fix and I was good at it at a young age and I just rode the wave.

Willie highlighted how sports were a quick fix and the only way to get out of his neighborhood. This story is often replayed in the media to the point where it became a traditional narrative. Football has become such a respected and valued transition that

people treat it as positive because it aligns with a hegemonic value system. Ralph discusses his experience with rags to riches stories stating:

...you can have a media outlet come and do a story on an African American male who came from nothing to get to something and came to college and they will look at it in a positive aspect, but if that same male got here but the next thing you know is he is in a rally for something else that is going on for like Black Lives Matter or something they can also portray that in a negative way. Like he came from nothing but he's going back to that nothing, like he's doing something not positive with his life, they can kinda do stuff like that.

Media consumers value the rags to riches story as evidenced in Ralph's quote. Football culture has heralded athletic scholarships as the savior for Black males. The athletic industrial complex is fixated on targeting Black males from low socioeconomic areas. The complex benefits from the one-dimensional athletic dreams of Black males who think it is their only way out of their neighborhood. Thus, the reification of the ideal that football is the only way to get out of undesirable socioeconomic situations sustains a culture of exploitation of Black males. Ultimately, leading BCFPs to an environment framed by a dedicated to football and a negation of other opportunities. The next theme will discuss the participants' experiences and understandings of one dimensional versus multidimensional BCFPs.

### **Theme 3 Discussion**

Theme three discussed the athletic industrial complex through the prism of the athlete student problem, treatment from others, and upward social mobility from sports

participation. In terms of the key constructs each of them will be described through certain subthemes, however they all may run concurrently through out the entire theme. None of the key constructs work in solitude, they all work together to create an environment dominated by hegemonic ideals and structures.

The athlete student subtheme describes the socialization and collegiate reality of BCFPs athletic and academic priorities. Institutionally, the athletic industrial complex thrives of athletic success of Black males because they are the premium talent schools look to purchase to fuel their empire (Hawkins, 2010). At PWIs the athletic department is generally what many people identify with. Because of their strong identification with the school's athletic teams many students do not chastise the exploitation of BCFPs in exchange for their school winning games. Essentially, this heavy focus on athletics from the university community is also reflected in the experience of BCFPs before and during college. Cody makes a impactful statement about Black culture stating, "What I meant by our culture is, like its sort of the way were socialized growing up about how sport is probably king over many things in our lives". The fact that the Black culture treats sports, especially football as dominant over many other endeavors is tragic. Edwards (2000) describes the issues related to the funneling of Black children into sports endeavors through the degradation of other human development. One of which, the academic expectations of a BCFP coming into an elite level PWI are lower then other students. In some instances if the Black male is one of the best in the country schools will bend every admission standard they have to enroll that individual. The schooling of BCFPs prior to college reflects that as well. Participants describe the lowering of academic standards so that many athletes can continue to play their sports. There is also the development of

schools like IMG Academy that are dedicated to sports first and academics second, if that. The athletics first model is known and obeyed in college due to the level of athletic competition and the amount of attention it receives globally. This model of the athlete first student second is beneficial to the university and hegemonic society through its economic and cultural development. Economically, PWIs are profiting exponentially from the athletic labor of BCFPs. Simultaneously, Black culture is being seen as one that only produces athletes and entertainers not the intelligent people of the world. Mike statement, “We’re gonna limit our chances to excel in certain environments and its gonna be detrimental to our society because our workforce is gonna change and you’re starting to see a shift in socio-economic statues for African Americans especially males” speaks to the cultural underdevelopment of the Black community. The underdevelopment of the Black community through the athletic industrial complex directly benefits the White community because they have casted them as the oppositional community. Mikes statements represent issues for the BCFP through following the institutional guidance of the athletic industrial complex. Those issues are to the benefit of the hegemonic society and the White polity because they confirm the stereotypes and myth about Black males and Black athletes. To keep the athlete student model in action BCFPs are under strict hyper surveillance. Hyper surveillance serves to keep BCFPs confined within the ideas of the box mentioned in theme two and to help authenticate the otherness of BCFPs. As a result, the treatment of BCFPs is a mirror reflection of how hegemonic society scripts BCFPs.

The treatment of BCFPs is both physical and ideological. The ideas about BCFPs that inform treatment of BCFPs on a PWI campus come from multiple sources. From the data in

theme three we understand that the treatment from peers, fans, law enforcement and other university personnel is predicated on their athletic status. Participant Dominic states,

when you're a player and they can root for us everything is good but you know just from my own personal experiences when it gets to like outside of the sport there are stereotype that they feel towards us are still pretty prevalent, you know I'm on the football team but I have seen women switch their purse to the other side and even though they want to love us in our sport when it comes to like being a functional member of society I feel like they don't really see us as that at times"

This treatment of BCFPs on campus is indicative of the fear of the Black body but praise of it when its powers are put to hegemonic use. He alludes to the fear White women have of the Black body that dates back before the movie Birth of a Nation that depicted Black males as dangerous rapist that wanted to ravage all White women. By the woman in example crossing the street it highlights the political positioning of Black bodies as well as the cyclical relationship of the colonizer and the colonized (Hawkins, 2010). The Black body in this instance is representative of the fictitious fear hegemonic society created as a result of the fear of the Black physical stature. The stripping of his athletic status to just a Black body demotes him to a functional member in the hegemonic societal order. The Black body is also necessary for PWIs to win football games. To this end Dominic states, "they want to love us in our sport" meaning they root for them in the stands but when they're not on the field they are feared because their physical stature isn't being used for hegemonic gain. The politicization of the Black body in this example marks it as only beneficial when they are exercising their physical strength for the benefit of PWIs and detrimental to White women when not doing so. The treatment of BCFPs by others is confined by the athletic service



they provide. This is also apparent by law enforcement's turn the other cheek mentality towards BCFP infractions, peer and fans athletic expectations solely, and administrators' interaction only when something happens that will impede athletic participation.

The theme also discussed the stereotypical story of upward social mobility through sports participation. The rags to riches story is replayed on many media outlets as the only reality of BCFPs. This story controls the narrative of BCFPs and people make it part of their mental equipment that all BCFPs were ghetto or savage and lack couth. The narrative allows hegemonic society to other BCFPs while seemingly trying to help them get an education to refine them on their path to riches. This through process is believed by many, including BCFPs, and is acted upon as the only way to get out of the defective environment they came from. During Black male's rags to riches stories the media always highlights being an athlete or entertainer which is deleterious to the belief and faith the Black community has in other modes of upward social mobility. Dominic represented this in his comments,

I feel like they have a very narrow view of it because they only show the rags riches story in music and in sports, but they don't ever show like the kid who used his education and became like a lawyer and I really don't feel like you ever see that side of the story and I feel like because of the way the rags to riches stories are told that's how you pigeon hole those people because that's all that they see and those are the only role models that they can identify.

The pigeon holing that Dominic alludes to is that of one-dimensionalism. However, to circumvent that troupe means to act against the will of hegemonic society and exercise multiple identities and endeavors. If a BCFP does that they are considered unembraceable.

That means the boundaries that have been defined for BCFPs as the oppositional other have been breeched and now they must demonize that individual to send a message. The message is received by others showing that if you go against the defined path, the athletic industrial complex, you won't be successful because they control the narrative and institution that Black athlete desire to participate in. The narrative of rags to riches is employed to control the thoughts of BCFPs as well as those who interact with them. It attempts to dissuade them from squandering their athletic hopes of money from playing in the NFL. Dissuading BCFPs means also encouraging them to be compliant to the system and athletic first football culture at PWIs.

#### **Theme 4: One Dimensional Versus Multidimensional Black College Football Players**

To be multidimensional is to have several dimensions to a persons existence. In the case of BCFPs the narrative they are taught and expected to follow is that of one-dimensionalism. In this theme the participants discuss some critical components of what it means to be one-dimensional and what it means to be multidimensional. The data revealed six subthemes that constructed the reality of both types of BCFPs. The subthemes consist of: I) Blackness and Media Consciousness, II) Social Capital in Athletics, III) Careers Outside of Athletics, IV) Role Models, and V) Becoming Multidimensional. Being Black and a football player is unique in that they often get conflated to the point of synonymous understanding. The first subtheme discusses aspects of Blackness that are apparent for both types of BCFPs.

##### **I. Blackness and Media Consciousness**

Racial identity is important to many people, especially in the United States. To be racially aware is often time to be conscious as well. For a BCFP their Blackness can be formed from various sources, such as their community or the media. The participants also discussed their evolution of critical thought and media consciousness. Defining where Blackness and media consciousness come from, the participants discuss their experiences with: a) Black families and culture, b) Gaining Media Consciousness, and c) Evolution of Critical Thought and Exposure. Paul begins this subtheme by discussing Blackness through how the Black family is portrayed expressing:

Uhhhh...I mean I think it all goes back, I mean image, media and how we portray ourselves goes back to our families and I think that your guided through your family or lack thereof as to how to carry yourself and I think that a lot of times because of

the breakdown in our family structure in African American culture that a lot of our males have not been taught how to carry yourself or how you will be perceived by your actions or by your parents and then that ends up hurting them because they learn that stuff from the media, from social media, from their friends rather than learning the right and wrong way to handle themselves which will then ultimately impact them for the rest of their lives.

Dominic discusses how his family and community influenced his understanding of being a Black man, asserting:

Umm...I would say a lot of my feeling towards what being a Black man is comes from the way I was raised and more from my own family experiences but I would say that if I didn't have that and if all I was to ever take about being Black was just from media then I would feel like it would probably be very negative. It would be a lot of misogyny being a Black man, um a lot of recklessness with money, a lot of drama in my life, and oh I just like feeling like an irresponsible adult because those are the things that are really portrayed in the media and also just with the way that the news portrays Black men I would probably feel like I was a danger to society as well and I feel like that view point on Black men has penetrated into law enforcement and because of that I would really feel like I was somebody that was dangerous so it would probably be like really negative overall.

Dominic mentions the false narrative the media portrays about the danger of Black men.

If this portrayal is neglected it can become insidiously infused in the development of BCFPs.

Earl discusses the need for BCFPs to gain media consciousness asserting:

...I think that the media portion is a really big topic that a lot of people miss out on. I've been around athletes and athletics all my life and I can tell you its not a lot of people talk to me about the media and how these athletes are being portrayed through the media, you know, its always something in the negative light of cheating or drug and alcohol or domestic violence or fighting, stealing, did I say drugs (laughter) so this topic is very important topic and I think you're hitting it right on in regards to putting this out there and doing a study on it because its something that's neglected in our youth and I think its an awesome topic and we can talk in terms of media and how kids are being portrayed.

Dominic has exemplified Earl's wishes for young Black males. He discusses his distaste for media through being critical suggesting:

I had a bit of distaste for social media and its kinda weird to think that way as like 12 year old but I had a distaste because I didn't like the way that people would try to portray themselves and I also felt like they may develop an opinion about me and I have never really been a vain person and I also felt like there is a little bit of vanity in the whole social media thing and that was just like in that whole area of media. But another reason for my outlook on media came from watching wrestling when I was little I use to be a really big wrestling fan but as I got older and started learning about stereotypes I started to realize that a lot of the characters that they created were really just perpetuated certain stereotypes and then with all the reality TV shows I started to realize that people just want to see a bunch of drama so just over time as I really started to pay attention and I got a little older and a little wiser that's where my own opinion came from.

Willie also discusses a process of growth and understanding of the media's false expectation for college and for him as a Black athlete. He emphasizes his expectations coming from the media and his family holding those same expectations maintaining:

When I got to college, you know a lot of it was when I got to college I was expecting it to be like what I saw on TV and some parts were, some parts weren't and I think surrounding myself with the right type of people when I got to college, doing things that I did when I got to college kinda allowed me to think outside the box and When I say that I mean for such a long time growing up I thought that sports was a way of life and sports was the only way to make it, and growing up where I grew up that's all that you know because your family members are banking on you to play a sport they are not talking about academics.

Willie then goes on to talk about the reality of getting to play sports in college, after he learned the value of academics and his grades

...It [being a good student] was hard but I was able to do it and then when I got to college I kinda started to see okay, in college all they care about is sports, you know, um just a way to get to the NFL. No one cares about school if you're a good athlete and things of that nature and that's not the case. That's what you see on TV but when you get there that's not the reality of it, you have to go to class, no one is telling you to go to class either by the way, no one is telling you to do your homework, no one is telling you to do any of those things that's all on you so I think college made me a mature quicker than I was ready for but it opened my eyes to being a responsible young adult. College helped shape the man that I became, um, it

gave me told that I can use the rest of my life, but when I got to college I started to realize that everything seems to be

Bill takes this idea of growth a step further while discussing how BCFPs should shift their thinking to promote success outside of football. He adds:

I think we have to shift that thinking and put it where it really belongs and I think that takes years and years and, you know, you're gonna have to have first generation college students who continue to force feed that into their family but I think that's something we have to change. I think also something we have to change is the way our student athletes identify themselves. I've always told people and I'll use myself again, that I'm a successful man, I'm a successful business man, I'm a successful administrator, but I just happened to play football and I think the world and so many other student athletes I'm around is they are football player first and they just happen to have a second career and that's not how it is. Everything you do and, I tell all of our NFL guys, you're lucky if you can retire at 30 from your first job, but that's not normal to retire at 30.

Mike supports the growth of critical thought and differentiation between the negative media images of BCFPs and their positive reality stating:

I would say just especially being a Black male in this society you gotta set yourself apart, you gotta understand that its okay to be different and being different is something that the media doesn't, in our society, doesn't promote as being good. I think that we tend to fall short by giving in to being common or being the norm and I think right now a young educated motivated individual that plays a sport but also has endeavors outside that sport is not being seen as the norm and when you're in

our culture right now and you're not part of the norm you're and oddity, you're something that is not fitting in and I think for us to change we need more of those individuals to just be different and different means maximizing this opportunity. Different means not giving in to the societal stereotypes of how you should be and the awkwardness of someone identifying you as being not part of them.

Gregory discussed his growth of consciousness up to his senior year and how his sense of self is stronger while answering if the media still influences him like it did when he was a freshman. He states:

Uhhh I mean no, I have a strong sense of and belief in who I am and I'm not a very judgmental person although there are things on the media which portray a certain race a certain way and I don't too much get involved with that because I know that that might not be the case for all races all the time.

Cody suggest that BCFPs write their own stories and become the people in the front office of sports organizations by shifting their critical thought, consciousness, and representation.

He posits:

...that most of the people covering sports are white and all the guys putting in work are Black which I don't think is a coincidence unfortunately. Again I mean it goes back to education and exposure, Black athletes could be the reporters or they could be the agents, they could be the owners of teams and GMs and work in the front office and do all that so I think the issue is an education and exposure issue.

For Ralph this idea of being at school to play football and shifting his focus for his academic endeavors wasn't something he had to refocus for because it was his goal all along. He was asked if his role on campus was to just play football and he answered:



No, um I'm here to get my education so no matter what, I've actually been here for five years and I'm walking out of here with two degrees. So you know them saying I had a horrible game or, you know, they think I can make it to the next level I have to pick it up weight wise or this wise just, I'm not worried about that. I'm worried about did I come here and do what I was supposed to do, not just on the field but off the field? Did I get my degree?

Ralph's focus is what should be on the minds of many BCFPs. The multidimensional focus with academic endeavors first is thinking outside of the box that many BCFPs are confined to. Having a stronger sense of self and stronger academic goals can shift the outcomes for BCFPs. Shift outcomes in conjunction with employment in the administration level of sports, not just the athletes can dislocate the idea that Black males are strictly athletes. However, the next subtheme examines participant responses about the social capital attached to athletic status and why football means so much to BCFPs and the Black community.

## **II. Social Capital Within Athletics**

Capital is something that all people jockey for. Whether it be economic or intellectual, people seek the feeling of being revered and belonging to a community. The data for this subtheme was organized to represent why BCFPs and the Black community place high social value on football and athletes. The participants discussed the normality of Black males being football players, the admiration and emphasis for Black males to participate, and the innate competitive nature of Black males. Cody details his admiration for sports figures while answering where he first chased the dream of playing in the NFL stating:

Ernie Davis, Jim Brown, Syracuse that's when it started to take recognition and then that whole movement and everything in the 60's came about and really once the segregation started to go down and African Americans started getting more opportunities to play in college in the early 70's and 80's I think that's when it really started. People started to notice and athletes just started popping up every where and now guys are in the league making money, ya know, early 90's Randy Moss blowing up and then basketball Al blowing up, Kobe blowing up and then young kids my age felt it, like when I was a young kid growing up, my favorite player growing up was Jerome Bettis, Notre Dame to the Steelers making money and everything so I was like "I wanna be like him" and so I think it started in like the 70's and 80's and the 90's and my generation, people who grew up in the late 80's early 90's saw that and I think that it just took off from there.

Cody's description of blowing up and desiring to make money came during the wave of media showing the benefits of playing professional sports. The media made it seem easily accessible and Cody fed into that career path for the fame and success. That expectation of garnering the social capital that comes with athletics physically manifests in the overrepresentation of Black males on football teams. As a result there is level of notoriety and normalness of a Black male participating in football. Earl speaks to the normality of having BCFPs on a team expressing:

A majority of the teams have Black athletes that populate the team, they have more Black athletes so I don't feel a certain way I feel that its you see what you get there is no feeling that I have pro or cons in that regard because Black athletes arte more prevalent on college team so I don't see it in anyway or have any opinion on that.

Earl's has normalized and accepted that BCFPs are and should be populating a majority of the college football teams. This entire process of socialization of the value in football begins with the media and the Black community and progresses in to the normal expectation of Black males to attempt to reach the NFL, a career seemingly impossible according to the statistics. The next subtheme will discuss the participants experience with their institution's opportunities for careers outside of athletics.

## **II. Career Outside of Athletics**

Per the NCAA statistics there are more than 90 percent of the college football players that go on to go pro in something other than sports. Thus, a career outside of competing athletically becomes a stark reality for those 90 percent at some point in their playing career. The participants discuss what their institution does to promote careers outside of athletics and how the participants react to these opportunities. Marcus reflects the attitude of a multidimensional BCFP while discussing focusing on the bigger picture, stating:

Absolutely, even with my team you know, you're getting your degree, just get your degree that's the main priority just get your degree, you know what I'm saying.

Academics is the main priority, football is okay and everyone wants to go to the NFL, the NFL actually stands for not for long because you're not gonna be there for a long time and you gotta think about the main part, you gotta think about the bigger picture because once that's over what you gonna do then? So you gotta look at it like that because of you don't look at it like that then you'll be stuck, you're gonna be lost as soon as everything is over with, where you gonna go?

Jamal, speaks about using his athletic success at his institution to lead him into a job post playing career. stating:

Yeah its really just about leaving your mark. How you impact the team is gonna impact your life so if you're a good player and everybody knows you of course you're gonna get the job, maybe its not guaranteed but you have a better opportunity to get that job and if just nobody knows who you are and you trying to get a job and nobody really knows you around here, in the Howard area and nation wide too because of TV and stuff like that.

With athletes like Marcus and Jamal focusing on the bigger picture, the question is how do schools support his bigger picture dream? Cody describes his experience with his school's opportunities to explore careers outside of athletics expressing:

Yeah so uhh, we actually have a whole student athlete career services department but we have a program director specifically for student athletes that does career consultations, helps put together career fairs, job shadowing, internships, and every once in a while bring in guest speakers for us. So I know her personally she does a great job working with our guys. She contacts each athlete individually, so yeah....to answer if they promote careers outside of athletics, yes and no. yes they do but it's up to you to take advantage of it and their not gonna walk you through that process, they're gonna say its available to you and good luck to you in that playing that out. And if you show interest in it they'll help you out but for the most part their not gonna like throw it on you, its kinda up to you to take advantage of that... [at] Big State, you're trying to go to be a pro, that's pretty much the whole purpose of coming here.

Cody recognized that his career office exists but they will not make you take part in it. However, knowing the rigors of playing football on a BCFP's schedule if something is not mandatory than it more than likely will not be done. Schools do offer chances to network and many of the participants took advantage of those opportunities. Willie affirms his experiences with networking stating:

I think the university that I'm at now they did a great job of tying me into networks wherever they just cared about who I was as an athlete or whatever. Did I use it to get a great network out of it? Absolutely. So I think that this university has a lot of rich tradition behind it, a lot of people that actually care about the institution, if it's only that they care because of sports hey that fine but its allowing me to develop a relationship outside of sports so now when I think about the impact that sports had while I have been here its opened up a lot of different doors for me to where if I was to stop playing sports tomorrow, um, I have networked and met a lot of people through playing sports here so I feel like imma be fine regardless of what I get into

I asked Willie, how his school tied him into opportunities and he stated:

...um, they try to connect the donors and athletes with each other and have them sit down and kinda talk with each other about what's next in your life, what do you see yourself doing after sports and just a way for people to kinda connect with each other and I think they do a good job, I think that the problem lays with the athletes. The athletes don't care enough to do it and it may be also on the university to better educate the athletes on what the events are for and what they can do for you years on down the road, but I don't think every university is like that, I don't think every university utilizes donor support or the people that wanna give back I think that's a

big drop off in terms of how do we better prepare students for life after sports and I think these events are the first part of that the first step, its kinda connecting the dots and connecting the missing pieces.

Ralph expresses his content with his athletic department's opportunities articulating:

...yeah our academic staff does a good job doing it. They bring in companies like Frito Lay, Walmart, Nike, Oracle, and different things like that and they bring them in and have us give them our resume and they will look at our resume and sometimes they will contact us about a future job opportunity, some will some wont, so I think our academic side does provide us a different avenue outside of sports...they help us develop resumes and part of the internship is when the company comes over like Nike came over last Tuesday and they really came over here to recruit for some internships so we handed them our resume and they looked over it and you know they kinda say "we feel that you can help us in the summer" um, so I think that's what they kinda do for us.

Jamal also discusses the built-in opportunities that BCFPs can also take advantage of while on campus. Jamal asserts, "Yes. Uhhh at Technical A & M University it's a bunch of opportunities like just students you sit with in class and it's a prestigious university so you have a lot of opportunity to so whatever you want and make connects and stuff like that." The fourth subtheme in theme four represent the importance of role models to BCFPs in the process of becoming multidimensional.

#### **IV. Role Models**

For BCFPs there are plenty of role models that are playing sports or making music, but there is a deficiency of non-athletic portrayals of Black males. This subtheme addresses

the BCFPs' explanations of crucial impact that role models have and the way that they are portrayed. Ralph discusses the importance of his role model to his mindset and career success stating:

...growing up playing summer league basketball my coach was a financial advisor to Mark Cuban and he always stressed to us and told us to always make you own connections, you will never know when you need that person later on down the road so coming to college not playing my first three years here I just kinda got to know different people because I didn't know if I was gonna need them later on down the road when I'm looking for a job or if I can help somebody else connect through them, that was kinda just taught to me growing up that you always connect with different people because you never know when you might need them.

Dominic was very open with his disdain with the current role models as he alludes to the media's portrayal of Black males role models that reify the chase of sports careers explaining:

I feel like one big issue with college football players, mainly African American football players is that the way that media portrays certain people those become our role models and I feel like when we only see certain people that we can identify with make it like become successful in a certain fashion then like we pigeon hole ourselves and you know, kinda just think like this is the only way that I can become successful but that's how it has like that same impact on my own demographic.

I asked him to explain an example of a role model and how it impacts BCFPs he stated:

Well I would say just the football players who are like the face of their program so people like Antonio Brown and like those guys who you always see in the interviews

and things like that, and the ones who they do the whole players profile on I would say those would be the role models and those guys who you know, have the story like that rags to riches story that a lot of African Americans who are disadvantaged can identify with so like that's the only way that they can end that cycle of poverty is to try to use football as their way to try to get to the next level...I think the lack of that representation in the media is what will lead people to think that that's not really an avenue that I can really be successful in...but I'm sure the numbers will show that we would have a much higher success rate of we tried to find other avenues like trying to be a doctor or trying to be a lawyer because we all know how sharp that drop off is with the people who make it top the pros but I definitely think that because you don't see that you might think that's not something that I can really aspire to be because nobody else has really done it so how am I supposed to do it.

Cody discusses having a positive role model and instituting a plan to complete his non-athletic goals asserting:

... I think one of my biggest role models that played into this whole me having a plan thing was Myron Rolle. So he was getting drafted and going through that whole process when I was in high school and just watching him say no to the NFL to be a Rhodes scholar and wanting to be neurologist and go to med school and everything kinda changed my whole perspective on what an athlete can do and I'd like to have the opportunity to connect with him and kinda pick his brain a little bit but he's the one who really laid out the blueprint for me and I kinda just picked up where he left off and now my whole goal is to get on his level as far as exposure and really let people know that its possible to be more than just an athlete, especially for a



division I football player at a big time university, it possible. So I think he laid the foundation and I'm just picking up where he left off.

Dominic also recalls some of his positive role models and their affect stating:

I feel like a lot of times some people are kinda pushed towards classes that would kinda be easier but at the same time once you get on campus I feel like there are enough people like professor Earl Washington and professor Jamal Taylor who can act as a role model to show you that you can be successful in something other than just your sport and who would really like push for that as well.

The final subtheme in theme four illuminates the BCFPs participants process of becoming multidimensional.

#### **V. Becoming Multidimensional.**

The process of becoming multidimensional is difficult and must be planned and nurtured. This subtheme elucidates the recollection of BCFPs' experiences and the advice they propose in effort of becoming multidimensional. Their experiences boiled down to planning and networking to break the athlete student mold. From their experiences playing and going to school, the participants offer advice to future BCFPs on how to become multidimensional. Willie suggest that BCFPs get around the right kind of people from the beginning communicating:

Right kinda of people...um... so when I think about them I compare it back to my own experience when I grew up I was in the ghetto so I was hanging out with kids and adults that didn't have the same goals and didn't have the same ambitions as me and so when I say the right kind of people, when I got to college I was able to kinda pick out like okay these are the type of people I want to be around. These are people

who are driven, who are ambitious, who want to succeed, who wants to succeed in ball, which I wanted to do, and who are also ambitious outside of just playing sports and those are the type of people that I wanted to gravitate to just because they...not only does help me but they can make me better where a lot of my friends today

He then goes on to talk about how he chose the right kind of people in college to continue his quest for multidimensional success, stating:

...when I got to college I started to hangout with guys, yes who wanted to go to the NFL of course, but also I really hung out with guys who say yeah I wanna go to the NFL but I wanna be something more than just an NFL player, um, if that makes any kind of sense but yeah, yeah so a lot of my friends are kinda ambitious outside of just what goes on when I put my shoulder pads and helmet on, um, how do I make investments, how do I network better, what books are you reading, um, you know just people who are pushing you outside of where you are already being pushed, you know I get pushed on the football field, that's cool, but I wanted to really hang out with people who are pushing me to be a better person, who are challenging me to be a better person, who are competing with me to be a better person and these are all things that happened outside of the football field so those are the people that I try to associate with.

Cody urges BCFPs to create plans, execute those plans and don't get used. He posits:

Number one, its not gonna be easy. There is a reason not very many people have done it and I had to face a whole lot of adversity during it, but I will say if you wanted to do it, number one, have a plan and plan early. I knew by the spring of my freshman year, I was a freshman in the fall of 2012 so spring 2013 I made a plan to

graduate in under three years. I used the university website and printed out all of my courses to know exactly how many credit hours I would need and just divvied it up per semester and wrote it up in the summer to where I was gonna graduate early. So have a plan early because if you don't plan and try to get your degree early its not gonna happen. Number two, is don't get used. What I mean by that is you can still have a plan to graduate early but if you don't have like a job waiting for you or graduate school admission or the NFL waiting for you then you just got used so that means meeting with your professors outside of class because those are gonna be the biggest influences, being involved on campus, getting involved in as many ways as you can so you're being exposed to different ideas and thoughts and meeting as many different people as you can, networking is huge.

Cody then proceeds to tie it all together in his third point, execution. He urges:

And then number three is execute. Its cool to have a plan, its cool to be involved but if you don't execute and you don't follow through and all of that, obviously its not gonna workout because at the end of the day you're judged by your actions not your intentions.

Lastly, Dominic advises BCFPs to create connections, build social capital, and to take advantage of opportunities:

Well the advice that I would give them would be you're in a situation where you can create connections and build some social capital that you can use to your advantage after school is over and even if you make it to the pros after your NFL or NBA career whatever the sport is ends, I feel like there is really valuable people that you can meet and if you can take the time and learn how to speak to these people and, you

know, create some real meaningful bonds then they can become useful for you even if you can make it to the next level and just tell them that whatever sport that you play hopefully you won't play it till you die so you're gonna have to think about what you wanna do with your life after that and even if you don't make it to the pros there are so many other things that you can pursue while you're on a college campus, you know, it can be very valuable to you but if you don't take advantage of it then you basically just like missed out on a huge opportunity for yourself.

The final theme elucidates what the participants believe schools can do better to help BCFPs become multidimensional.

#### **Theme 4 Discussion**

This theme dissected the components that participants explained were necessary to break the one dimensional cycle. Many of the subthemes are representative of the mental and physical changes that take place when BCFPs exercise their agency and control of their own identity expressions.

The construct of Blackness was discussed as something that was heavily influenced by the media's scripts. The participants also discussed their Blackness being molded by their family and community. In terms of the key construct, the mind, the participants expressed how their families were able to provide counter examples to the common scripts the media portrayed. One participant, Dominic explains that had it not have been for his family showing him how to be a Black man he would have defaulted to the media as his prime example. He states, "my feeling towards what being a Black man is comes from the way I was raised and more from my own family experiences but I would say that if I didn't

have that and if all I was to ever take about being Black was just from media". This is a powerful aid to the development of the participant because he was able to rapture the media's influence through real life counter examples. Dominic then goes on to state how the media made him feel about himself and had he not been told otherwise he would have fulfilled the casts laid out for him. The mind of many Black male football players is easily influenced through hegemonically coded messages in commercials, game broadcasts, social media, magazines and so forth. By Dominic calling out the false narratives and consciously acting how his family raised him to be a Black man versus the media's rendition, we see an avenue of mental liberation for BCFPs. However, social capital that being an athlete brings can force some BCFPs to just mimic those that came before them versus critiquing them based on their own values and understandings of being Black and a BCFP. Cody, alludes to Jerome Bettis' influence on him stating, "I wanna be just like him" because he had the success Cody was fighting for. This helps to display the importance of role models for BCFPs throughout their journey.

Role models provide both physical and mental examples for BCFPs. Dominic and Cody both express their concern for the media positioning of role models for BCFPs and their alternative role model's positive impact on them. They detail their positive role models forcing them to defy one dimensionalism by exploring non-athletic endeavors. Because their mentors influenced both BCFPs mentally to be different, resulting in physical changes within them. Cody discusses how Myron Rolle changed his whole perspective on what BCFPs can do with their college career and beyond stating, "he's the one who really laid out the blueprint for me and I kinda just picked up where he left off and now my whole goal is to get on his level as far as exposure and rally let people know that it's possible to be

more than just an athlete”. Now his mindset is different in terms of his level of success and that has translated into his body and actions being an example helping him to rally others to find their multidimensional paths.

Theme four represented some avenues for changing the cycle of one dimensionalism by embodying the influence of counter positional role models and family members. The result is then a change in the goals, behaviors, actions of BCFPs which can dislocate their body from hegemonic media scripts, thereby assigning new meaning through resistance.

## **Theme 5: What Schools Can Do Better**

NCAA power-five institutions have made strides in terms their support for student athletes overall. However, those strides have less of an affect on the non-athletic endeavors of BCFPs. In the final theme the participants advise and suggest to the power-five schools how to better foster multidimensional BCFPs. The data was organized into two subthemes: I) Media Education, and II) Resources, Self Growth, and Holistic Development. The participants answered the question, what more can schools do to help BCFPs become multi-dimensional?

### **I. Media Education**

The first subtheme discusses the importance of media education and training to help BCFPs realize the impact the media has and how to use the media to their advantage. The participants discusses how media education and training will help to reshape the identity of BCFPs, help them exercise their agency, and help them use the media for their betterment. Earl expresses his suggestion positing:

I think we as educators need to educate athletes in regards to make them understand that this is how you are being viewed and its gonna take a hand-picked staff to understand how to educate our young men on the media because all they see is attention, getting more girls, I see myself on TV lets post this on Facebook you know, I don't think they see it as anything other than that, I think in reality they are being portrayed as dumb jocks that they get in trouble a lot, that's gonna get in trouble or he looks like trouble, or look at his hair, you know, look how he dresses. I don't think our athletes really care about that but if we had educators in line to

mentor kids to say the media will make you or break you and get these kids to understand that because that is so true the media can make them or break them...

Earl then expresses the impact of media on the images of these young men after they have exhausted their sports careers, stating:

...your appearance [is important] in everything because you're not gonna play football all your life and if football don't work out you know, we want you to understand you're gonna have to move really fast to the next phase of your life to get where you want to be financially so that you can have a family so that you can self sustained, so you can buy yourself a home and do that in a hurry rather than go back to your neighborhoods and figure it out in 10 years and then you're 35 and now you wanna come back and get your degree you know and your 40 now you figured it out

Mike adds:

I do think schools need to educate the student athletes on media and expectations. I've heard right after the game when they're interviewing student athletes trying to get them to say something and I think they are pretty savvy because usually they don't bite and talk bad about the other team or about a coach or about another player and you hear that all the time especially post game when the energy is still high and the adrenaline is still pumping you hear the interviewers right after the game trying to do that all the time and I think there does have to be significant training and honestly I'm not aware...Umm, so I do think there has to be training on what to expect from the media and how to handle it to protect themselves and I know that it probably goes on to protect the schools a little bit too but I think it



should be about not putting themselves in a bad position and then they have to try to kind of go backwards from and get themselves out of.

Tracey argues for media courses outside of communications courses for communications majors stating:

Just education and courses, you know, that how I feel like I know about media framing because I have assisted many student athletes through the major of communications and so its just really that they would have to take a class in that, I mean that's how I learned I don't think that I would have ever heard of media framing until I took a communications class in media framing, so...exposure, but I mean you're certainly not gonna learn that in the media, "Hey we frame stories so that we can suck you in" but I think its truly a class, I cant think of anything right off the top of my head where they would learn about media framing besides a communication class.

Patricia also emphasizes media training and education expressing:

I think it would be great if we could create some type of just media training and that really goes to perception, the whole box thing goes back to perception that a lot of times our football student athletes give off and people judge you off that first perception so if you walk around with clothes that don't fit, bad personal hygiene or just you know the way you carry yourself that perception is really hard, no matter if you're a Rhodes scholar with that perception, people are not gonna see the Rhodes scholar they are gonna see the perception of what you are showing them and so I think a lot of times what happens in the media is that the individual gives them a perception that may not even be them like Richard Sherman might have a

perception but if you didn't know that Richard Sherman was a Stanford graduate would you know that?...I really think we can do them a great service if we can go through and just kinda media train them, which can also relate to how you carry yourself, how you are perceived in the media, and how you are perceived by your peers and what you can do to really combat stereotypes and kinda how to promote yourself in a positive manner and how to sell your brand which in turn will also improve the schools brand.

Bailey is also a critic of the media and urges schools to further educate BCFPs affirming:

Well I think just educating them on continuing to educate them on how powerful media is and I know they know to some extent but I think until things happen to someone close to them they don't realize how powerful it is and how it really is out there all over the place and then there is this judgment of you, and I think sometimes things happen when they put something on twitter and they can erase it but somebody has it screen shot and I think sometimes unfortunately they have to learn that by making some I'm not even in the line-up comment or I donno, you know, some of it is political and some of it is just them being kids and young and them having to mature.

Gregory intently focused his media education suggestions to social media and self regulation positing, "Uhh I mean I feel like when you're an incoming freshman you should have like a social media class and somebody to give you advice on how to work social media, the do's and don'ts of social media you know and stuff like that." Dominic suggests media training can help to change the portrayals of Black men, but he also proposes a course specifically for networking. He adds:

Umm...If I could change anything I would honestly change the portrayal of African American role models because I feel like so many times guys will place all their eggs in one basket because that is all that they see, um, and another thing I would try to do is have a program that really teaches African Americans how to network because I feel like due to the backgrounds that they come from that's just a word that you hear but not an actual skill that has been learned, um especially like when you consider like their White counterparts I feel like it's a skill that you know they have grown up learning and coming from that world. So like those are the two things just trying to give them more role models in other areas of life and success and teach them how to network.

## **II. Resources, Self Growth, and Holistic Development**

This subtheme suggests how resources, self growth and holistic development can increase the number of multidimensional BCFPs. The participants use their experiences and their knowledge of what is lacking to address the process of BCFPs focusing on more than athletics. Mike focuses more on the 18 years before BCFPs get to campus and explains that it might be a cultural shift and professional growth that eventually lead BCFPs to being multidimensional. He proclaims:

I think personally it starts before they get to college. Its difficult once they get here to change 18 years of habits, but I think from a educational standpoint if we can continue to hit home that they are more than just athletes but I think that's a cultural shift more than just how you relate to the media or how do you portray what the media is saying, its more of shifting the focus of their days and the importance of academics or the social growth or the professional growth in their

lives more than just focusing on athletic performance. A lot of these kids spend half of their day focusing on getting better in their athletic pursuits, we spend maybe 2-3 hours of other stuff and that's professional growth, that's academics but that's the way the system is and we gotta change that system. If we don't change the system the media is gonna continue to feed the beast.

Cody challenges schools to honor true amateur and less business like expectations with football to create an environment that can foster holistic development for BCFPs asserting:

I would make it less of a business and more fun. Will that happen, no, but I think just because of the nature of revenue now and how schools are kinda relying on athletic departments to bring in money to the university its so cutthroat...One thing I could change for the athletes themselves would be greater emphasis on personal development and leadership ability because so many of our young men and women are just going through this college student athlete experience and that's it, that's all they are doing is just going through it so they don't really get the complete holistic development that maybe a regular student does and they don't have the chance to...I think we can overcome that time demand and burden with greater emphasis on personal development value identification and self identification and leadership training.

Alexis is an advocate for increasing agency by cultivating the non-athlete person within the BCFP. She states:

I think the most important message we can give and I think from different angles is around control and permission to create your own identity and being accepting that for some young men as an example, their athlete identity is what's most important

to them at that phase in their life and I'm okay with that as long as they get to control that and they get to make that decision. What I think universities need to do and portray and reinforce and some of it is simple as planting seeds, like you just witnessed me do with that student athlete that was in here, is to provide opportunities for them to think of themselves or opportunities that they would have considered by just making some suggestions and hopes that maybe one will stick and they have an idea and come back for more information.

She then goes on to suggest seeking support for BCFPs through authentic patience and relationship building stating:

I think universities need to continue to be patient and build relationships with those students, provide them with resources and opportunities to meet with others whether its on an athletic front, academic front or whatever their goals are and I think we have to be careful not to set up dichotomies where they have to decide between one or the other...I think its helpful to say and to give options and acknowledge that if his dream is still playing football at the next level there is nothing wrong with that...So I think the universities and the people around these students need to plant the seeds, and he [the student athlete meeting before the interview] may not be heating it right now about getting a doctorate but you've planted a seed and who knows six months from now he might call you and say tell me more about the PhD program...Take opportunities to provide information and plant seeds so that students are making their own decisions about what their identities are long-term or in the short term they can see themselves multidimensionally, that's what I think the most important piece is.

Bill, as a previous student athlete, believes in the benefit of role models and mentors that have similar circumstances or experiences. Thus, Bill is a big proponent of ex-athletes mentoring to change culture of BCFPs that believe they are athletes only. Bill states:

I think you have to bring ex-athletes and continue to force those ex-athletes on the current student athletes to let them know, "I'm in the real world now and this is how I'm perceived, this is how I was perceived" so you are not different and this is how the world look at you. I don't think you can get too far removed like to bring back someone that's 20 years removed I think you have to stay in a 5 year range so that the student athletes can identify with those guys and I think you need a range of guys who were drafted in the first round to a guy who's out just trying to grind and, you know, working a 9 to 5 so I think you need a spectrum of guys that can say this is how you're perceived so no matter where they fall somebody is touching me and somebody is telling me, you know, what it looks like for me.

From a BCFP perspective, Jamal, felt slighted that he did not get a chance to be a student and study abroad like many of his non-athletic peers. At the end of the day he still emphasized providing BCFPs with support to get a degree being the most important thing schools can do. Two of those ways to provide support is through internships and studying abroad. He stresses:

All I can say really is just getting a degree. I think that's the only things like...We cant do nothing in the summer we cant do internships or you know like...travel, like Dr. Griffin got the little South Africa thing and we can t do something like that because were training and stuff so we don't have outside opportunities to do stuff. Umm, yeah I think so because other students are doing it and they are getting ahead in the

game while we training and waking up at 6 and stuff they over there in a real work environment you know, learning a bunch of other stuff, stuff they need to be better in their field.

### **Theme 5 Discussion**

Theme five was representative of the ways schools can aid BCFPs process of understanding institutional influence and being able to mentally and physically embody multidimensionalism. In order to help BCFPs critically assess the institutional influence of the media courses should be offered. These courses should be dedicated to the various aspects of BCFP experiences with the media and be able to provide an in depth understanding of the influence. To this end, the participants were concerned with how to help BCFPs critically examine their perceptions in the media and how to counter act them. Patricia stated, "I think it would be great if we could create some type of just media training and that really goes to perception, the whole box thing goes back to perception that a lot of times our football student athletes give off and people judge you off that first perception". To challenge the institution there must first be an understanding of the affect it has and how to counter act that. In this sense Mills alludes to the power of the White polity to move its boundaries to keep the polity intact. However, in effort to disrupt the polity and to reconstruct it, BCFPs need media training. The next step is to think of ways to rapture the scripts and to practice behaviors that are authentic to BCFPs embodiment of their self-concept.

By schools offering resources to foster holistic development it can shift some of the focus from being one dimensional to multidimensional. Something as simple as cutting

back on “mandatory” hours BCFPs must dedicate to their sport and giving some of that time to professional development there may also follow a mental shift in importance. Mike discussed the issue of one dimensionalism being a cultural issue as much as an institutional issue and that roots from the level of importance BCFPs and university constituents place on sports. Alexis, talked about planting a seed and not forcing change but encouraging it is also another method. For some BCFPs, if they are forced to do anything against their desires to play there may be immense push back. However, the method Alexis is suggesting can only encourage growth and foster it through BCFP lead endeavors. If a BCFP takes the lead on changes being made there is less push back and more curiosity towards multidimensionalism. This mental shift can also bring about different behaviors and goals for them. Ultimately, the body is impacted because it is reconstructed to be what the BCFP wants it to be. In addition to planting a seed and educating BCFPs about media influence there can be a shift in how the media captures them. When you have a shift in how the media captures them it can add variety to consumer’s understandings and can possibly shift the treatment of BCFPs bodies, minds and aspirations.



## Quantitative Results

### Data Screening

The researcher screened the data before running any analysis. The data was screened for any missing values and any data errors. The data set began with N=230 participants but it was determined that four of those survey responses were missing more than five entries. In addition to the surveys missing more than five entries, the researcher filled in the missing values with the series mean for four survey response with less than five missing values (Agresti & Kateri, 2011; Millsap & Maydeu-Olivares, 2009). The three responses that were missing data consisted of: athletic year (n=3), athletic identity measurement scale question(s) (n=3), and racial identity question(s) (n=3). After mining the data the researcher noticed no major discrepancies with survey responses. After screening for missing values the data was mined for outliers.

When detecting for outliers the researcher screened the data for univariate outliers using the z-score values greater than 3.29 criterion on a variable to identify if the variable has any outliers (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Using 3.29 as the benchmark there was one case detected and was deleted due to extreme values that were higher than the sample population's responses. The rest of the responses were kept due to meeting the z-score criterion and not being identified as outliers. The variables were also screened for multivariate outliers. The researcher used a Mahalanobis distance value of  $p < .001$  to determine if the variable had any multivariate outliers. As a result, no cases were detected as outliers.

Lastly, the researcher screened the data for nonlinearity, homoscedasticity, normality and multicollinearity. Homoscedasticity and linearity were seemingly normal to

the researcher via visual representation on a scatter plot. The skewness and kurtosis of all the participant scores included in the variables were also checked. None of the responses were skewed and seemed to be distributed in a normal manner. Additionally, there was not an issue of multicollinearity due to none of the variables being highly correlated greater than .90 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

### **Descriptive Statistics**

After preliminarily screening the data the new number of useable responses is  $N=226$ . Next, descriptive statistics was used to record the means, standard deviations, correlations, range and internal reliability scores for all the variables used. All of the values are available via Table 5. The participant athletic identity and racial identity means and standard deviation by athletic year are also reported via Table 6.

### **Athletic Identity (AIMS)**

Participant scores on the athletic identity measurement scale ranged from 1 to 7 within the seven questions. The participant mean ( $M=5.73$ ) standard deviation ( $SD=.66$ ) which is telling of the participants high identification with their athletic identity and athletic role on campus. Mean scores on AIMS questions ranged from ( $m= 5.34$ , "Sport is the most important part of my life" ; to  $m= 6.27$ , "I consider myself an athlete"). The participants highest mean scores ( $m= 6.27$ , "I consider myself an athlete";  $m= 6.06$ , "I have many goals related to sport";  $m= 5.80$ , "I would be very depressed if I were injured and could not compete in sport") were in response to questions that related sports to their internal identification and goal setting as well as their prophetic psychological state if not able to play their sport. The participants lowest score came from lower identification with sports being the most important part of their lives.

Perception of athletic identity was consistently high across the participants athletic year in school as well. Across athletic year in school the values reflected: (freshman  $M=6.14$ ,  $SD=.53$ ; sophomores  $M=5.61$ ,  $SD=.63$ ; juniors  $M=5.68$ ,  $SD=.74$ ; seniors  $M=5.45$ ,  $SD=.73$ ). By AIM's factors the means and standard deviations were: Social Identity (freshman  $M=6.37$ ,  $SD=.48$ ; sophomores  $M=5.78$ ,  $SD=.62$ ; juniors  $M=5.84$ ,  $SD=.65$ ; seniors  $M=5.75$ ,  $SD=.68$ ), Exclusivity (freshman  $M=5.78$ ,  $SD=.78$ ; sophomores  $M=5.18$ ,  $SD=.98$ ; juniors  $M=5.41$ ,  $SD=1.06$ ; seniors  $M=4.92$ ,  $SD=1.32$ ), and Negative Affectivity (freshman  $M=6.12$ ,  $SD=.80$ ; sophomores  $M=5.77$ ,  $SD=.74$ ; juniors  $M=5.70$ ,  $SD=.94$ ; seniors  $M=5.51$ ,  $SD=1.06$ ). The participants' athletic identity had a negative correlation with athletic year ( $r=-.31$ ) and CRIS factor Internalization- afrocentricity ( $r=-.21$ ).

### **Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS)**

The various subscales of racial identity attitudes include: pre-encounter assimilation (e.g. "I primarily think of myself as an American and seldom as a member of a racial group"), pre-encounter mis-education (e.g. "Too many Blacks 'glamorize' the drug trade and fail to see opportunities that don't involve crime"), pre-encounter self-hatred (e.g. "Privately, I sometimes have negative feelings about being Black"), immersion-emersion anti-White (e.g. "I have a strong feeling of hatred and disdain for all White people"), internalization afrocentricity (e.g. "I see and think about things from an Afrocentric perspective"), and internalization multiculturalist-inclusive (As a multiculturalist, I am connected to many groups") (Vandiver et al, 2002). The participant means of all racial identity attitudes ranged from  $M=2.80$  to  $4.24$  ( $SD=1.02$  to  $1.32$ ). The pre-encounter assimilation attitude had the lowest mean ( $m=2.80$ ,  $sd=1.15$ ) and the internalization-afrocentricity attitude had the highest ( $m=4.24$ ,  $sd=1.02$ ).

The mean scores of the participants pre-encounter assimilationist attitudes decreased from  $M= 4.03$  to  $2.01$  by athletic year in school (i.e freshman  $\rightarrow$  senior). Similarly there is a decrease in pre-encounter mis-education attitudes  $M= 4.19$  to  $2.41$ , pre-encounter self-hatred  $M= 3.53$  to  $2.39$ , and internalization multiculturalist-inclusive  $M= 4.68$  to  $3.59$ . Conversely, immersion-emersion anti-White attitudes increased by athletic classification  $M= 2.55$  to  $4.20$  as well as internalization afrocentricity  $M= 3.35$  to  $4.93$ . Additionally, only internalization-afrocentricity had a correlation with athletic identity ( $r= -.21$ ).

### **Primary Analysis**

The primary quantitative analysis for this dissertation examined the hypothesized relationships between the variables racial identity, athletic identity and athletic year in school (classification). All analyses were done with IBM SPSS (Version 24) statistical software. To understand the relationship between athletic identity and racial identity attitudes based on athletic classification bivariate correlation, multivariate, and manova models were used. Regression analyses were also used to verify any relationships (Barron & Kenny, 1986). The bivariate correlation is similar to one of the models used in (Phinney, Cantu & Kurtz, 1997) to measure ethnic and American identity. The multivariate model produced the means for each athletic classification according to each racial identity attitude of the CRIS. Post-hoc tests were run to determine the level of significance based on Scheff's test and Wilk's Lambda. The correlation and manova analyses are both outlined in the following sections by hypothesis.

## Hypothesis I

The initial hypothesis for the relationship between racial identity and athletic classification predicted the participants racial identity attitudes would increase with athletic classification (i.e freshman → senior) in attitudes that embrace afrocentricity (i.e. internalization anti-White and internalization Afrocentricity). Conversely, racial identity attitudes would decrease with athletic classification in the pre encounter and internalization multicultural attitudes. Using a manova, the means of each racial identity attitude were shown. The dependent variable was the CRIS attitude scales and the fix factor or independent variable was athletic classification. Primary analysis found interesting differences between freshman and all other athletic classifications, as well as seniors and all other classes. Freshmen were either the lowest or highest mean value for each racial identity attitude. Freshman had the lowest means in the following identity attitudes: internalization anti-White ( $m= 2.55, sd= 1.13$ ) and internalization Afrocentricity ( $m= 3.35, sd= 1.11$ ). Freshman had the highest mean scores in the remaining identity attitudes: pre-encounter assimilation ( $m= 4.03, sd= 1.51$ ), pre-encounter mis-education ( $m= 4.19, sd= 1.42$ ), pre-encounter self-hatred ( $m= 3.53, sd= 1.35$ ), and internalization multiculturalist ( $m= 4.68, sd= 1.08$ ). Conversely, seniors racial identity attitudes were either the highest or lowest means representing the reciprocal of freshman racial identity attitudes. Seniors had the highest mean scores in the following racial identity attitudes: internalization anti-White ( $m= 4.20, sd= 1.49$ ) and internalization Afrocentricity ( $m= 4.93, sd= .93$ ). Seniors had the lowest mean scores in the remaining racial identity attitudes: pre-encounter assimilation ( $m= 2.01, sd= .80$ ), pre-encounter mis-education ( $m= 2.41, sd= .76$ ), pre-encounter self-hatred ( $m= 2.39, sd= .97$ ), and internalization multiculturalist ( $m= 3.59, sd=$

1.07). The inverse mean values between freshman and seniors suggest seniors have a higher attitudes of anti-Whiteness and Afrocentricity while freshman attitudes are more assimilated.

### **Hypothesis II**

The second hypothesis states that athletic identity will be negatively correlated with athletic classification. Primary analysis concluded that athletic identity was significantly correlated ( $r = -.31$ ) with athletic classification. The negative correlation suggests that as BCFPs progress through their career they decrease their association with their athletic identity. A second correlation model was conducted to further examine the athletic classification (predictor) and the athletic identity factors (outcome). The factor analysis reported participant social identity ( $r = -.31$ ), exclusivity ( $r = -.24$ ), and negative affectivity ( $r = -.23$ ) were all negatively significant. Regression analysis was preformed to test the significant relationship between athletic identity and athletic classification (which was set as the predicting variable). Participant athletic classification significantly predicted ( $\beta = -.31$ ) athletic identity,  $R^2 = .09$ ,  $F(1, 224) = 23.00$ ,  $p < .001$ .

### **Hypothesis III**

The third hypothesis states athletic identity with negatively correlate with internalization afrocentricity and internalization anti-White racial identity attitudes. Using the bivariate correlation model, athletic identity (predictor) and the racial identity attitudes (outcome), were tested suggesting that only racial identity factor internalization afrocentricity is negatively correlated ( $r = -.21$ ). Other values reflected ( $r = .13$ , pre-encounter assimilation;  $r = .14$ , pre-encounter mis-education;  $r = .15$ , Pre-encounter self-hatred;  $r = -.12$ , immersion-emersion anti-White; and  $r = .04$ , internalization multiculturalist

inclusive). This significant negative correlation suggests that participants' attitude towards internalization of afrocentricity decreases as BCFP's athletic identity increases. A regression analysis was preformed to test the significant relationship between CRIS factor internalization afrocentricity and athletic identity. Participant internalization afrocentricity scores significantly predicted ( $\beta=-.21$ ) athletic identity,  $R^2 = .04$ ,  $F(1, 224) = 10.05$ ,  $p < .005$ .

**TABLE 5**

<b>Table 5</b>								
<b>Variable Means and Standard Deviations by Athletic Classification</b>								
	<b>Freshman (N= 58)</b>		<b>Sophomores (N= 51)</b>		<b>Juniors (N= 67)</b>		<b>Seniors (N= 50)</b>	
<b>Variable</b>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
AIM	6.10	0.80	5.58	0.90	5.65	0.99	5.39	1.14
PEA	4.03	1.51	2.44	1.21	2.73	1.07	2.01	0.80
PEME	4.19	1.42	3.03	1.24	3.12	1.21	2.41	0.76
PESH	3.53	1.35	2.95	1.11	3.05	1.09	2.39	0.97
IEAW	2.55	1.13	3.90	1.45	3.67	1.19	4.20	1.49
IA	3.35	1.11	4.41	1.07	4.27	0.97	4.93	0.93
IMCI	4.68	1.08	3.81	1.13	3.81	0.87	3.59	1.07

Note: N= 226; Note: Note: N= 226; AIM = athletic identity measurement; PEA = pre-encounter assimilation, attitude; PEME = pre-encounter miseducation attitude; PESH = pre-encounter self-hatred attitude; IEAW = immersion-emersion anti-White; IA = internalization afrocentric attitude; IMCI = internalization multiculturalist inclusive attitude



**TABLE 6**

Table 6											
Variable Correlations, Descriptive Statistics, and Range											
Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	M	SD	Range
1) AIM	-								5.68	0.96	1 to 7
2) PEA	0.13	-							2.80	1.15	1 to 7
3) PEME	*.14	**0.79	-						3.19	1.16	1 to 7
4) PESH	*.15	**57	**67	-					2.98	1.13	1 to 7
5) IEAW	-0.12	**70	**54	**25	-				3.58	1.32	1 to 7
6) IA	**0.21	**80	**72	**50	**75	-			4.24	1.01	1 to 7
7) IMCI	0.04	**67	**46	**26	**74	**65	-		3.97	1.04	1 to 7
8) AC	**0.31	**46	**43	**30	**37	**44	**44	-	2.48	1.10	1 to 4

Note: Note: N= 226; AIM = athletic identity measurement; PEA = pre-encounter assimilation, attitude; PEME = pre-encounter miseducation attitude; PESH = pre-encounter self-hatred attitude; IEAW = immersion-emersion anti-White; IA = internalization afrocentric attitude; IMCI = internalization multiculturalist inclusive attitude; AY = athletic classification; \*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, two-tailed.

## CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

This chapter sums up the entire research project, discussion and implications of the results. The contributions of BCFPs to the institution of college sports is invaluable, thus their experiences must be heard and acted upon to help foster multidimensional BCFPs. Throughout this research the investigator has noticed that college sports culture, especially media directly influences the idea of being a man, Black , and a football player. The indissoluble intersection of identity development within a BCFP at a power five conference institution is heightened by the omnipresence of the media and external scripts. Thereby, the purpose of this dissertation was to examine the psychosocial relationship between identity development of BCFPs at power five conference PWIs and the influence of the media. This final chapter explains the findings and meaning making of the data collected. In effort to do this, the chapter will revisit the research question and strategically summarize the pertinent qualitative themes and quantitative analysis to answer the guiding research question. The chapter will discuss: the summary of findings, interpretation of findings, and practical implications. In addition to the research project results, the first section will discuss the current climate of college football. Following the current college football context section, each of the sections contains subsections discussing essential information to complete the picture of the study. Again, the questions the study is attempting to answer are:

1. How does the media impact the racial and athletic identity development of Black college football players and how do they make sense of it?
2. What are the implications for Black college football players?

## **Current Climate of College Football**

During this study college football and sports in general have seen a lot of crossover from larger societal influence in the US. The numerous nationwide protests over the killings of Black people at the hands of law enforcement has also made their way in to the sports arenas and fields. Numerous athletes from little league to the professional ranks have shown support for the BlackLivesMatter movement as well as various other groups opposing social injustice. Most notably in the NFL many teams have followed Colin Kaepernick's lead and began to sit out the national anthem to bring attention to the police shootings. The silent and impactful protest has swept the nation and almost every news channel, newspaper, magazine, and radio show that deals with sports with both support and furious antagonism. Kneeling during the national was a strategic stance that Kaepernick and others took in hopes of societal and institutional change. Now almost a year later there has not been much change in terms of police shootings and Kaepernick is currently a free agent looking to sign with a team. Others who protested in the same way were reprimanded by losing their endorsements, having seasons cancelled, coaches and administrators being fired, and other leagues planning to circumvent the loss of public support due to the athletes' valiant stance. Along with the large showing on both side about racial injustice, sports have also endured many other types of injustices such as: gendered bathrooms for transgender people, Donald Trump's association with NFL general managers and owners, championship teams protesting visits to the White house, and outspoken players toward injustice in their respective sports (i.e. paying student athletes, Thursday night games in the NFL, NBA resting star players during prime time basketball games) amongst other events.

College football is uniquely situated as the largest number of Black males participating in the sport, especially at the division-I level. The television revenue has increased exponentially by both media deals with conferences and the college football playoffs. The introduction of the college football playoffs has created a more intense business like environment striving to make it to the playoffs because it could mean million more in revenue for the school to be one of the four teams. Economic profits have surpassed many of the other sports in the US and as a result there has been more of an outcry and support for paying student athletes. The NCAA has settled two different cases for which they had to pay previous student athletes for: the cost of attendance that was withheld prior to 2012 and the payout for those players that were in any of the Electronic Arts NCAA football games when they were made using the players' likeness. Beyond economic exploitation, there were two football player-led protests. One was by the football players at the University of Missouri and the other at University of Minnesota. Both are relevant to this study as they deal with issues that BCFPs' universities would rather BCFPs have them keep their opinion silent. The University of Missouri football team protested all football activities until the racial injustice happening on campus, which was a root cause in Ferguson Missouri's protests, ceased. The protest was successful as it prompted an administration change but was met with swift opposition and anger as it could have cost the university millions in revenue. The second protest by the University of Minnesota football team was to call attention to the lack of due process for some of their players who were accused of raping a woman. The protest came to an end when the administration finally met with team representatives and the alleged players' parents. However, it brought much attention to the sexual scandals on college campuses. Other sexual scandals on

campus included Baylor University's deep-rooted issues with suppressing rape allegations by their coaching staff and various administrators. The University of Oklahoma also shook the college sports world up when it released the video of Joe Mixon punching a young woman after she struck him. This video incited a lot of protest against head coach Bob Stoops and administration for not caring enough to dismiss Mixon versus having him sit out for a year. Florida State University also saw a couple of its quarterbacks be accused of rape and assault individually. Jameis Winston was accused and acquitted of rape charges while his teammate was caught on video punching a woman in a bar after she attempted to strike him. There has been numerous players at several universities that have: been convicted on drug charges, assault and battery charges, robbery, and other criminal offenses.

The point the researcher is making by giving all the issues related to college football is to show the aforementioned content has dominated the headlines. The domination of the negative portrayals is what essentially leads people to believe and treat those who play college football in a negative manner. What the media managed to overshadow or miss all together were the positive aspects, some of which the research may have not been aware of due to the national media not finding it news worthy. The list contains several major developments including: Deterrian Shackelford winning the Wuerffell trophy (the NCAA highest honor), Myron Rolle (previous Florida State University defensive back) doing his medical residency at Harvard Medical school/hospital, Josh Dobbs (University of Tennessee quarterback) graduating in three years in aerospace engineering, Deshaun Watson (Clemson University quarterback) graduating in three years with honors, the numerous academic all-conference and academic all-Americans, as well as the hundreds of

players who have dedicated thousands of hours toward community service. The media shows one window into the world of college football, however, there are invaluable positive representatives that are not getting their due coverage because it doesn't sell to the masses.

The contradiction of the Black college football player is one of following predestine paths to athletic success versus blazing new ones. The contradiction can cause players their entire career if they agitate people that have the power to Black ball them. Currently, Colin Kaepernick is vying for a team to pick him up and the United States' president, Donald Trump, is making sure to chastise any team that chooses to pick him up based on his stance against the national anthem and police brutality. The castigation from the president is evidence that Black athletes power in today's context as well as the fragility of the White supremacy. A civilian NFL quarterback has the attention of the president and all national news channels after calling attention to ceaseless killings of Black men by those who are supposed to serve and protect. The power of the Black athlete to embolden the gatekeepers of White supremacy is a symptom of their hollow power. Over the years, the weak points of racial injustice have been exposed by many fighting for social justice, however Black athletes have been at the forefront of bringing the issues to the common public person. This may be due to the iconic status that Black athletes garner in their community as well as the economic value they bring to athletic team owners. The immense power Black athletes have is recognized as a legitimate threat to the White polity. Thus, Black athletes are often diverted to solely focus on athletics because they must choose between athletic success and standing up for what they believe in. Today's athletic climate is increasingly important for Black athlete as the line of demarcation between real life and sports is being obscured.

Hegemonic society is fighting to keep the line drawn, while social justice advocates are encouraging Black athletes to use their platform more and more to create change.

## **Summary of Findings**

The research commitment of this dissertation was to examine the influences of the media on the racial and athletic identity of BCFPs at power five division-I PWIs. The findings revealed that psychosocial, sociocultural, institutional factors are significant in the development of BCFPs preceding and throughout their collegiate career. By employing a mix methods approach the researcher wanted to activate new perspectives toward the influence of BCFP's racial and athletic identities. The social construction of racial (Omi & Winant, 1994) and athletic (Harrison, et al. 2011) identities are intimately linked to the personal development and knowledge of BCFPs. The following subsection will detail the findings and the intersection between the BCFPs identities examined and the media.

### **Racial Identity, Athletic Identity, and the Media**

Regarding the identities examined, there are a few key findings. The findings include: I) high aggregate athletic identity for all years (seniors lower than freshman), II) qualitative and quantitative data supports each other in terms of freshman and senior racial and athletic identity, III) media stereotypes influence the reification of Black male and BCFP troupes, and lastly, IV) the media's portrayal of BCFPs influences how others treat BCFPs. These key factors all lead to the understanding that the media has a potent impact on the identity development of BCFPs prior to and at power five conference institutions.

#### **I. High Athletic Identity.**

Several scholars have run studies measuring the athletic identity of Black college athletes (Beamon, 2012; Jackson, et al., 2002; Steinfeldt et al., 2010). Many of them recorded have reported high athletic identity among the athletes in their study. The



findings of this study have been consistent with previous scholars' determination of high athletic identity in Black collegiate athletes (Adler & Adler, 1991; Harrison et al., 2011). The participants of this study reported having high athletic identity and freshman BCFPs had the highest of the four subgroups measured (freshman, sophomores, juniors, seniors). Additionally, seniors had the lowest of the participants. There are many factors that can contribute to elevated athletic identity (Beamon, 2012; Harrison et al, 2002) including the media. For example, a sizeable number of Black males on television are rappers or athletes (Gary, 1995). By foregrounding athletes and rappers BCFPs may be convinced they have limited career paths to be rich and famous. Those who chose to be athletes do so from an early age and are submerged into the athletic culture. They are often then pushed by their community to develop as an athlete and praised for their success (Edwards, 2000). Internally, many BCFPs are watching their athletic role models make sports the most important aspect of their lives and equate that to how they became successful. The participants in this study praised the older Black athletes for their successes and attempted to emulate them. One participant, Cody, stated,

...when I was a young kid growing up, my favorite player growing up was Jerome Bettis, Notre Dame to the Steelers making money and everything so I was like "I wanna be like him" and so I think it started in like the 70's and 80's and the 90's and my generation, people who grew up in the late 80's early 90's saw that and I think that it just took off from there.

The prominent levels of athletic identity in the participants of this study was fueled by their relentless pursuit of athletic success, to the point of almost feeling like that is all they were known for. In addition, the athletic socialization from the media funneled a transition to a

myopic reality of Black males' talent and worth as athletes solely. The following section discusses further the association between the participants' testimonies and the quantitative results from the CRIS and AIMS survey.

## **II. Qualitative and Quantitative Data Association**

Quantitatively racial identity subscales indicated there was a significant difference between freshman and seniors. Freshman recorded higher scores in pre-encounter (assimilation, mis-education, and self-hatred) as well as internalization (multiculturalist inclusive). Seniors had higher scores in immersion-emersion (anti-White) and internalization (Afrocentricity). Qualitatively, the participants discuss a shift in focus from freshman year to senior year in terms of athletics and non-athletic career endeavors. Once BCFP in particular, Willie, discusses his rise in consciousness and critical questioning of media based on his younger perception of their messages about being a Black athlete.

Willie stated,

The media affected me just because I believed what they were telling me. You know a lot of the stuff that I was seeing on TV and a lot of athletes are African American, so when the media provides you a picture and an image and there is nothing else to contradict it that's what you're gonna believe and for me being young and being immature, um, being naïve these are some of the things I just seen and I naturally just believed they were real, you know but as you get older you start to do your own investigation, you know, you look up things and say, "You know that's cool, but what was his background?" and you find out that things weren't as glamorous as the media made it seem...

The pure zeal of accomplishment from becoming a collegiate football has an immense effect on the psyche of a Black athlete. Jackson et al., (2002) informs us, “...African American student athletes racial identity may be minimized or overshadowed by their athletic identity” (p. 159-160). The authors go on to explain that inter-racial differences are minimized to establish team cohesion. In addition to team dynamics attempting to defy societal issues, Black athletes have been strongly socialized and praised as athletes thus, “...issues of race and racial discrimination may be less salient to college athletes” (Jackson et al., 2002, p. 160). This affectively minimizes the impact of racial injustice to them and in their understanding due to the ideological and physical treatment of them based on their athletic role. Thereby, a freshman may have a distorted picture of how the media impacts their athletic pursuit, how people treat them based on their ability to play football, and how they view themselves. Many freshman athletes come into college with high hopes and still end up being overwhelmed with the attention and spotlight following them (Kelly, 2012). This spotlight can vanguard their athletic identity which could help to explain why the higher scores in subscales with negative affectivity towards Afrocentricity and Blackness.

On the contrary, seniors’ racial identity attitude scores were higher in subscales that dissociated them from non-Afrocentric attitudes. For example, seniors higher scores in anti-White and Afrocentricity factors can be partially explained by the treatment of others toward BCFPs and their raising consciousness toward the end of their career. Beamon (2008) conducted a study that examined the attitudes of former Black male collegiate athletes toward their careers and experiences at PWIs. Her study found that Black athletes felt used and exploited compared to the money the institutions make from them, their opportunities to advance academically, and their progress towards non-athletic career

opportunities. Many of those participants also discuss their disdain for the way the schools treated them once they had no athletic eligibility left. Similarly, participants echoed Willie's statement, having gained consciousness to realize that they were placed on a social pedestal only while they could benefit the schools and fans by playing their sport. Once they realize this, the onset of negative emotions towards those same fans and peers, who are overwhelmingly White, can spur negative feelings towards White people. This may lead to a process of disassociation of anything White (Cross, 1991) catapulting them into an antagonistic and nostalgic phase of racially affirming their Black allegiance. The number of BCFPs that continue to play in the professional ranks is slim to none and many of them see the end of their sports career prior to the actual end of it. Understanding that their life is about to undergo a huge transition returning to "regular" society many BCFPs begin to invert their racial and athletic identities. The loss of their athletic status reaffirms to BCFPs that they are Black just like any other Black male in American society. The zeal is gone and reality sets in, therefore the differences between freshman and senior BCFPs in this study reflected a linear rise in conscious and social reality outside the athletic bubble.

### **III. Media, Influence, and Reification**

The media's goal in many cases is to sell a story. To a consumer, the story must be something "newsworthy" such as a scandal or something that is constant with their beliefs or positionality (Tumber, 1993). Thus, the common perception of Black males on television is one of physical prowess (Wonsek, 1992), criminality (Hurley, Jensen, Weaver & Dixon, 2015), hyper sexuality (Harris, 2006), low intelligence (Steele & Brown, 1995), humorous/buffoons (Martin, 2008). For example, in Hurley et al. (2015) the study details how Black criminal and crime portrayals impact public policy decisions by influencing

those who view the content. The study found that viewers of color who viewed news content portraying Black criminals and the police had significantly lower support for the police and vice versa for White viewers. Similarly, because of the historical scripting of Black bodies many people believe that Black males are innately dangerous and unintelligent (Hutchinson, 1997).

The way that BCFPs are portrayed in media appearances leads audiences to grapple with predefined identities and behaviors. Thus, a key finding in this study is that participants recognized how the media would cast monolithic and harmful images of BCFPs. Many participants found that the media influenced their audience to believe harmful stereotypes and scripts about BCFPs. The social creation of BCFPs as unintelligent (Sailes, 1993, 1998), criminal (Lapchick, 2000) hypersexual, from a low socioeconomic background (Harrison et al., 2011), and as solely athletes (Edwards, 2000). The repetitive transmission and omnipresence of these images leads people to pad their conscious with any narrative of BCFPs present (Zillmann & Vorderer, 2000). The narrative many of the participants adopted was one that Black males are only successful as athletes or entertainers. Even further within the troupes of success for Black males there was a hero-villain dichotomy with social rewards for being an “embraceable” Black athlete (Page, 1997). To be embraceable they must focus solely on athletic endeavors, perpetuate common stereotypes, and quell their opinions on sociopolitical matters.

The way the media coaxes BCFPs to become embraceable through biased framing the production of Black male athlete identity based in common stereotypes. The one-sided framing is often from a perspective that is not congruent with many of the BCFPs experiences at power five FBS institutions. Regardless of the story a, “if it makes money is

makes sense” mentality is used. One of the participants Mike describes framing and this mentality stating,

I think people in general indirectly and directly put in spins for some type of agenda maybe to benefit themselves individually but also maybe to benefit some type of group organization especially when you’re getting paid to produce material that is going to sell that’s going to promote yourself and further yourself along in your career, um, there’s some type of agenda to that.

The affect the media has over a developing Black male through the prism of sports is grounded in the biased framed images they see of Black people, males, and athletes. Willie describes his interaction with media bias and how it internalized through his development process discussing:

I do believe that the media has bias, um just because you see a lot what I have learnt growing up was based on media, TV, newspaper, news and so it’s completely bias. It’s something that only tells one side of the story. Growing up you see all the fame and fortune that comes with being an athlete and you want that but you don’t see the hard times behind it, you know, you see the jewelry, the nice cars, the big homes but you don’t see the struggle in between that. So I do think that the media is bias in how it shapes one view and how it shapes just the person in general.

The learned idolization of fame and fortune fuels a desire to be like the people they see with it. Thus, internalization of those ideals and behavior recreates the current mode of success for BCFPs due to emulation. Through emulating those ideals another generation of Black athletes acting as role models for future generations perpetuates the idea of

embraceability, all the while providing little rupture to the current athletic industrial complex. As Edwards (2000) advises us,

Those circumstances [single-minded pursuit of sports, fame, and fortune] have developed largely because of: (1) a long-standing, widely held, racist, and ill-informed presumption of innate, race-linked black athletic superiority and intellectual deficiency; (2) media propaganda portraying sports as a broadly accessible route to black social and economic mobility; and (3) a lack of comparably visible, high-prestige black role models beyond the sports arena. (p.9)

Many of the participants described this idea of media bias, repetition, and omnipresence which has created a path to be coming rich and famous. Although, there was mention of positive role models some of the participants did not actualize the influence of their role models until later in their careers. Thereby, some of the most influential and formidable developmental years were heavily influenced by media bias leading to reification.

#### **IV. Media Portrayal and Treatment of BCFPs**

Media and Black athletes historically have engaged in a tumultuous fight to represent what it means to be a Black male athlete. The portrayals of many Black male athletes boil down to White gazes and imaginations (Yancy, 2008). Many of the scripts placed on Black male athletes are one to dictate treatment towards them. Many scripts serve to incite fear and others to engender support for athletic feats, none-the-less all of them serve the purpose of casting the behavior and identity production of Black male athletes. Frisby (2016) ran a study on the content analysis of Black male athletes in magazines and news coverage between the years of 2002 and 2012. Her study found that Black male athletes were disproportionately covered more both quantitatively and

qualitatively. In addition, Black male athletes were often in stories that involved crime, domestic/sexual violence, moral failure, and their natural athletic abilities. Frisby explains,

This study found support for the idea that news stories about black male athletes rely on episodic frames, or stories that are more likely to blame the black male athlete for his individual failings, such as being criminal or violent. Thus, data obtained show that journalists use news frames that may prevent most audience members from making a balanced and “objective” assessment of the situation and the black male athlete (Iyengar, 1991).

Her conclusion that the audience was not able to make an objective assessment of Black male athletes due to episodic frames directly impacts how Black male athletes are treated. Many people do not have personal contact with a BCFPs so their understanding of them comes from the media portrayals. Thus, the portrayals act as a proxy to “knowing” or projecting what a BCFP is like. Willie and Dominic both describe the media serving as a proxy for people “knowing” who they and other Black athletes are. This is dangerous as the proxy is heavily laden with examples presented in Frisby’s (2016) study. Adding to the distance from people, the geographic location of many athletic departments and football first focus creates further isolation allowing people to rely on the media’s portrayal even more.

Much of the qualitative data revolving around treatment of BCFPs dealt with the idea that football is paramount. The participants discussed the overwhelming focus on their football endeavors in their experience. They were expected to play football and disregard many of the sociopolitical events that have happened over the past four years. Their academic careers were periphery to their athletic careers as well, similar to the



narratives in many scholars' assessments (Beamon, 2008; Hendricks & Johnson, 2016; Hodge, Harrison, Burden & Dixson, 2008; Nelson, 1983). Academics are not the only periphery aspect of the BCFP experience, but one of the most hypocritical considering they are called student-athletes. BCFPs' private opinions towards various sociopolitical events were also restricted while they played for their institution.

From the data, many participants described being policed when attempting to express themselves or being warned prior to any attempt. They discuss silencing dissent from the "norm" of Black male athlete behavior, opinions on political matters, and trying to avoid bringing negative attention to the school from their words or actions. A key factor in their minimization of voice is to protect the university's brand. Many of the BCFP's institutions were preoccupied with avoiding negative news headlines. Along with this fear of exposure, their institutions fostered a culture of compliance within BCFPs. Ralph, in particular, spoke about the example of attending a protest at his institution was outside of the role of BCFP and it was not following the system set in place to keep them playing and on the field. Ralph's sentiments explain how many BCFPs avoid backlash from fans, peers, administrators, and coaches. Essentially, if BCFPs keeps their opinion to themselves and follows the predestine purpose to play football they will circumvent negative treatment.

The treatment BCFPs described was a convergence of many factors, but was mainly based on other people's understanding of BCFPs. The treatment of BCFPs by fans, peers, administrators, and coaches relied on the congruence of how they believe BCFPs are to be and if the actualization of that belief holds true. The participants described that as long as they were performing athletically there was not much negative treatment. Consequently, that premise foregrounds the importance of their athletic role and the impetus that

encourages interactions with BCFPs. Participants describe positive relationships with law enforcement around the campus because of their athletic status, which is contrary to the current national climate of Black male and law enforcement interactions. They also describe how their peers treat them when they are able to perform athletically, as if their relationship is built on BCFPs' ability to bring the school a winning season. The relationships with the coaches and administrators were founded in the idea that football pays the bills. Essentially, if they can help the team win then their coach or administrator would have a good relationship with them. On the other hand, if the BCFP is injured they become invisible because they serve no purpose to winning the next game. The media fuels the treatment towards BCFPs due to their positioning of their behaviors, identities, and stereotypes. Once the portrayals serve as a proxy for most people's interaction with a BCFP they begin to assess BCFPs based on congruency with the media framed ideals. Forcing BCFPs to be a product of their expectations or endure ridicule and redact much of the social capital their athletic role garners (Lomax, 2002; Rowe, 1998).

### **Athlete-Students, One-Dimensional to Multidimensional**

With this study, the researcher wanted to also address the path of resistance and becoming multidimensional. Many BCFPs at power five FBS PWIs are athletes first and possibly students due to the many pressures and barriers to academic fulfillment. Because of those pressures they can become one-dimensional by focusing their efforts and motivation solely on athletic endeavors. The following section discusses: I) Athlete-Student culture and the importance of football, II) The process of becoming multidimensional, and III) Suggestions for support from universities to foster multidimensionality.

#### **I. Athlete Student Culture and the Importance of Football.**

The importance of big time college football is immense often seeming impenetrable. The importance is shown in many ways, even at the extent of peoples' well-being. The game of football has been protected in the face of known health risks (Montenegro et al., 2017), sexual assault and rape (Luther, 2016), and economic exploitation of the players (Hawkins, 2010). The game itself is such an artful expose to witness but a brutal and unforgiving opponent for social justice. In terms of big time college football, Saturdays are enshrined for people gathering at the mecca of their college towns to root for a team comprised of mainly Black players, many of whom they only know when making a play. The common saying, "just get them to Saturday" has more meaning than just the academic ushering meant to drag players to the next check point of the season. The meaning also shows the importance of what football is to American people. Football is king. Football is the center of many people's universe and that understanding is undeniably peddled to BCFPs that hope to bring their team a championship. The unappealing part of being a "student-athlete" for many college football players is the demanding academic schedule that couples the full-time "reason they came to campus". An athletic scholarship comes with athletic expectations first and foremost but academic maintenance to keep their funding to attend universities they may be academically over matched for when enrolling as a freshman (Beamon, 2008). As a result, the term athlete student is more respective of the experiences BCFPs report in this study. Mike, an athletic administrator, tells us the problem roots from spending and focus on athletic more than anything stating,

The college athletic system or our whole foundation of how we purse a college, um, athletic programs the way we approach dealing with student athletes as a whole.

Our focus at universities especially when dealing with athletes talk about academics

we talk about student growth but there are millions and millions of dollars being fed into heightening the programs and building athletic programs from an athletic standpoint and not building them from an educational standpoint. There is more money being funneled into athletic pursuits more than academic support pursuits. When there is market for BCFPs to just play football and they have seemingly visible success; who would not want to be praised, win, and say they went to school at an elite football school? This became problematic when the losses outside of athletics became a larger epidemic than the gains through athletics.

Dr. Edwards reminds us that the epidemic of focusing on football only for the Black community is detrimental to various crucial factors of life. Edwards (2000) reminds us of the triple tragedy in the aforementioned quote (p. 254). Edward's triple tragedy is reminiscent of the forceful underdevelopment of enslaved Africans in the early construction of America (Anderson, 1988). Personal and cultural underdevelopment in part comes from positioning football as a way out of BCFPs current socioeconomic environment. A rags to riches story is often used and modeled as a catch-all story for young Black males. Confronted with flashy and fortuitously different lifestyles, many Black males single mindedly pursue football. The media leads this charge through presenting and helping to socially reproduce these narratives. To counteract these narratives positive and "unembraceable" role models are vital. Role models of this stock set a different standard outside of sports, as all the BCFP participants discuss.

Cultural and institutional underdevelopment may be the most disturbing about this athlete student mold. Many people see sports as positive and it has positive aspects. However, when exploitation and underdevelopment of some of the nation's best

kinesthetic minds comes at the benefit of an institutional goal of industrial education for all Blacks, it engenders much of the negative aspects. The scale of football cost-benefit analysis for Black males can easily be tipped towards benefit. However, the institutional interruption of natural and holistic development for the benefit of the Black man under the pads makes the athlete student model problematic. The athletic development of many of the Black males subtracts great minds poised to bring different thinking in the law, medicine politics and education fields. Instead many BCFPs are clustered into majors (Schneider, Ross & Fisher, 2010), athletically overworked (Patterson, 2015) and isolated to ensure quarantine from holistic development (Harrison, Jr., Logan, Jr., Moore & Walker, (forthcoming). The process to attain both athletic and non-athletic success is periphery and unimportant to many of the constituents that benefit from the athletic success of BCFPs. Thus, becoming multidimensional and rupturing the personal, cultural and institutional underdevelopment starts from within and is reified through the multiple successes represented outside of sports.

## **II. The Process of Becoming Multidimensional.**

The process to becoming multidimensional is simple in theory but difficult in practice. Many elite football schools boast the support BCFPs receive outside of their sports but rarely fulfill that promise one they have signed their letter of intent (Beamon, 2008). This understanding of becoming multidimensional was created by the participants of this study. The participants suggested: breaking the athlete student mold, not affirming media stereotypes, consciousness and critical thinking, and lastly focusing on a larger picture outside of athletics.

The process of breaking through the athlete student mold is done with daily changes to help reverse the isolation physically and mentally. One of the administrator participants and former college football players describes this process as first recognizing how you are looked at, then putting yourself in uncomfortable situations. By placing themselves in uncomfortable situations they are better able to access their non-athletic talents. Also within those uncomfortable environments are a diverse set of people and skills. Not to say that everyone in the athletic department is the same, but moving into an environment where one must be more than a football player is the goal. The network BCFPs can build being in uncomfortable situations and the cultivation of non-athletic talents can also help BCFPs avoid identity foreclosure and depression once their career ends (Beamon, 2012). Another helping action in addition to being in uncomfortable situations is to break negative stereotypes casted by the media.

Harrison (2001) dives extensively into stereotypes and the Black athlete. He touches on an idea of the self-fulfilling prophecy. A self-fulfilling prophecy is, "The tendency for expectations to elicit behavior that will confirm the expectation" (Harrison, 2001, p. 104; Hamilton & Trolie, 1986; Myers, 1993). Even further there are two different types of self-fulfilling prophecies: true and seemingly self-fulfilled prophecies. True self-fulfilling prophecies are when a person's expectations incite behaviors that are congruent with those expectations. Seemingly self-fulfilling prophecies are expectation that alter or limit a person's response but not enough to say it's non-congruent (Harrison, 2001). When referring to media stereotypes the participants and the researcher are calling for BCFPs to combat true self-fulfilling prophecies. Participants described not falling for the negative stereotypes by confirming them when people are around. Willie described his interaction

with expectations and how he defied them by being who he was, not who others would accept him to be. In similar jubilation, BCFP participants urge future BCFPs to be more than football players by starting their own road towards cultivating themselves. Once this cultivation becomes a crystallization the presence should cause a reification of those images barring the minimization of age-old stereotypes. Part of that minimization comes from gaining consciousness about the media and critical thought.

The mode of critical thought that the researcher has followed in this dissertation is one that questions information and representation. For example, Jackson (2006) paints a historic picture of the misrepresentation of Black males through the dislocation of the authentic meanings of their bodies, behaviors, and actions. Like Jackson, the participants have critically examined their experiences since childhood to paint a picture of dislocation of their original meaning as a Black man. This examination lead to being conscious of the dissent from their reality and the media's portrayal of their reality. That dissent is what the participants are wishing future BCFPs will see. Several of the participants discussed the twisting of history and the rise of the rags to riches story for their relentless pursuit of sports fame. This story is easily believable due to the socioeconomic stereotype of Black people being from lower class. Consequently, those participants also recognized that the media was discrediting everything that helped them get to their success from those environments and praising their switch to "riches" or a refined situation. Focusing on media representations with a critical eye will help future BCFPs to become conscious of their positioning in society based on the interlocking systems of representation. Ultimately, the goal is for BCFPs to "stand back form the trees and see the forest" helping to paint a larger picture of participating in 21<sup>st</sup> century football in America.

It is easy to lose sight of the larger picture when BCFPs are consumed with the rigid daily life of college football. At each level of football there are thousands of people who did not make it. Less than 1.6 percent of college football players have a chance to play in the NFL. Many of them do not play more than three years (NCAA, 2016). This means that within seven years of beginning college 98.4 percent of college football players will have to find something else to do with their life. They have from between ages 22-26 to the rest of their lives to find new passions and careers. Thereby, the bigger picture is more important than many college athletes choose to think about. The problematic part is that the bigger picture is being ignored during crucial times for BCFPs. This is not to chastise all BCFPs, but from previous studies many scholars have reported a rough transition into non-football life for BCFPs (Beamon, 2008, 2012; Hawkins, 2010; Rhoden, 2010; Wheeler, Malone, VanVlack, Nelson & Steadward, 1996). The bigger picture is one that is prepared for during college. The opportunities to network, learn different crafts, and sharpen your critical thinking skills are what set BCFPs up for life after football.

A suggestion from some the participants (Dominic and Cody) was to allow BCFPs to study abroad. Study abroad helps create a global perspective by facilitating BCFPs location of themselves in the larger context, not just American context. The positive effects of studying abroad include increased cross-cultural concern and critical thinking of self and the United States (Carlson & Widaman, 1988). Finding themselves in the larger picture of a global context can also help create a different perspective of themselves as not just football players but global citizens and influential persons. Studying abroad is just one of the many ways to get exposed to the bigger picture outside of sports,. BCFPs must focus on more than football since the clear majority will not play professionally after college.



### **III. Suggestions for Support from Universities to Foster Multidimensionality.**

The participants made several suggestions for support to foster multidimensionality in BCFPs. Common suggestions included: more emphasis and action towards non-sports development, media education and non-athletic studying abroad. These suggestions were made by both administrators and BCFPs in effort to minimize the athletic and academic restraints from playing big time college football.

When suggested that there be more emphasis on non-athletic development participants discussed personal, cultural and professional development as areas of focus. Mike, an administrator, suggested that it requires a cultural shift prior to coming to college. Universities must support that shift by implementing a limit of 20 hours per week that players spend towards “football activities.” This is a mandate by the NCAA, but is not currently followed by most college teams. The extra hours can then be used to focus on chosen areas of expertise for the BCFPs. There are already professional development opportunities for college athletes put on by the athletic department, however these are mainly about jobs and future employment. Mike’s suggestion encompassed more than bringing various companies to come recruit athletes to work for them. This suggestion entailed skills exploration, artistic development, internship opportunities, and possibly some time to meditate and reflect without penalty or loss of time towards athletic endeavors.

Media education is something all people should have, especially those that are heavily covered by the media. 24-hour sports reporting and social media have created an environment where almost nothing is private. The media has various theoretical techniques to influence their audience into believing whatever position they are taking on

certain issues or people. BCFPs must have media education to combat a highly technical force that is the media. Each participant in this study suggested media training or a class for BCFPs because it has immense power to influence their present and future. Helping to combat the images that suggest BCFPs are just football players is also helping to foster multidimensionality in future Black athletes. The exciting and dramatic factors of college football may largely be due to presence, style, and skill of BCFPs. Accordingly, if the media had less stereotypical images to use and less presence of Black athletes there would be a change in the way viewers responded to the media content. However, under the current state of media and capitalism, the benefit of foregrounding Black athletes provides large returns on the hegemonic portrayal because many people agree with it. Thereby, media education can help to provide alternative ways to view media, build BCFP consciousness of media portrayals, and help to counteract coaxing of future BCFPs to be embraceable by hegemonic standards.

Lastly, studying abroad was touched on by a couple of participants in effort to discuss opportunities that were forgone due to them obeying a football first mentality. Jamal uses a missed study abroad opportunity to discuss how he is being cheated out of holistic development. The missed opportunity was something he regrets, but knows that if he could go on the trip there would be consequences upon his return. It was as if he had to choose one or the other when both can be done. Study abroad trips are empowering for many students and can be life changing for many BCFPs. Williams (2006) examined the experiences of Black and White students on a study abroad trip to Southern Africa. From his study the students found a deeper racial understanding for each other, a critical global context and the students felt compelled to fight for social justice by confronting prejudice.

These outcomes would be beneficial to any student, but would be even more empowering to individuals who have the opportunity to influence the next generation of people like themselves. This critical outlook on the world, race, culture, and social stratification can help BCFPs to recognize their worth to their community and themselves. Thus, studying abroad can help to create context that may have been ignored, left out, and misrepresented in American media (Apple, 2014; Lowen, 2008).

### **Interpretation of Findings**

The findings of this dissertation provide important theoretical implications to future research surrounding Black males, Black athletes, media, and college athletics. Studies and literature discussing identity, power, and media representation of Black athletes has been used to build this study and this study hopes to influence research thereafter. This section discusses the theoretical implications from the study and the next section discusses the practical implications. Together, the implication will contribute to the understanding and enhancement of BCFPs identity experiences from culturally relevant and social justice perspectives.

#### **I. Theoretical Implications**

##### ***Nigrescence Theory***

The original Nigrescence Theory (Cross, 1971) was important as it founded a distinct measurement to study the experiences of Black people in the American context. Through reworking and expanding the model new phases were created and identity attitude clusters were also reworked (Cross & Vandiver, 2001). Vandiver et al., (2002)'s study used the CRIS to measure the racial identity attitudes of six participants. The current study used the CRIS to measure racial identity attitudes of Black college football players at

elite college football PWIs. There have been previous studies that measured the racial identity attitudes of collegiate athletes (Bimper, 2012; Steinfeldt et al., 2010). However, this study expands the versatility of the model by using the CRIS measure their attitudes in the age of omnipresent media.

The intersections of sport, media, race and power have provided this study a unique context to measure racial identity of Black college football players. This study helped to explain the influence of media and racial attitudes of freshman through seniors at elite PWIs. The data from the racial identity surveys indicated that freshman BCFPs had significant scores in the factors: pre-encounter (i.e. assimilation, mis-education, and self-hatred) as well as internalization (i.e. multiculturalist inclusive). Seniors recorded significant scores in the factors: immersion-emersion (i.e. anti-white) and internalization (i.e. Afrocentricity). These attitudes suggest that freshman entering college have been primed to believe that sports are post-racial minimizing their dissent from arguments of racism and exploitation in sport. The attitudes may also suggest that freshman BCFPs are blinded by the fame and notoriety from their athletic status, which could also make them form salient athletic identities thereby shifting their racial identity lower in their development importance (Harrison et al., 2002; Jackson et al., 2002). Harrison et al., (2011) explains, "... the very racial identity influences that prompt the development of sport skills and athletic identity may also shield the elite African American athlete from discrimination and thus promote the perception of a post-racial society." (p. 93). This is congruent with representation of Black males' societal positioning (Hawkins, 1998; Hutchinson, 1997) and hegemonic society's tolerance of embraceable Black men in American society (Cose, 1993; Page, 1997).

The seniors' attitudes were similar to previous studies findings (Beamon, 2008). This study's findings suggested Black male collegiate athletes felt deceived and used in their sporting experience to the point of them feeling disdain for university and its personnel. Additionally, within an American racial climate under president donald trump, division among races is much higher. Black males are not as tolerated when not entertaining to hegemonic society. Thus, a reinsertion to being treated as every other Black male for a BCFP can harbor some racial resentment inversely empowering their Afrocentricity. This understanding can also reflect the reasoning for the only negative predictor of racial identity. There is significant correlation between the CRIS factor Internalization-Afrocentricity attitudes and aggregate athletic identity. Essentially, as the internalization of an Afrocentric racial attitude rises the BCFPs athletic identity decreases.

The implications of exploring nigrescence with participants who compete in elite level college football divulges the importance of representation, media conditioning, self-perceptions and treatment from others towards BCFPs. It revealed how sport and media can affect the racial attitude of BCFPs beginning and finishing their careers. The examination of their racial identity development can lead to the understanding of PWI climates. It can also elucidate an understanding of BCFP perceptions of racial issues can help suppress their consciousness with increased athletic involvement. The next subsection discusses the athletic identity of BCFPs based on the athletic identity measurement scale.

### ***Athletic Identity***

Athletic identity in the Black community is one that is praised and paraded. For Black males, it is especially important as some of the most celebrated sports in America are

dominated by Black males. Previous research surrounding Black male athletic identity and the current study suggest that Black male athletes have a strong identification with their athletic role (Bimper & Harrison, 2011; Jackson et al., 2002; Steinfeldt et al., 2010; Stone et al., 1999). The Brewer & Cornelius's (2001) AIMS survey is measured by 7 items on a seven point Likert-scale covering three multi-dimensional factors: social identity (items 1-3), exclusivity (items 4 & 5), and negative effectivity (items 6 & 7). The current study used all 7 items to measure aggregate athletic identity of freshman through senior BCFPs. The researcher chose to use the aggregate due to the sample size ( $N= 226$ ) versus measuring each of the factors. The overall athletic identity was high across each athletic year measured. The highest mean value was freshman ( $M= 6.10$ ) and the lowest value was seniors ( $M=5.39$ ).

The implications show that BCFPs most salient identity is usually athletic because they are constantly recognized by that identity at a PWI (Adler & Adler, 1991). The athletic expectations of BCFPs playing at elite football institutions rarely leave time to explore other identities (Beamon, 2012; Brewer et al., 1993). The salience of BCFP's athletic identity and the understanding of one-dimensional representation contextually situate them in a bind. To win a championship in elite level of college football it takes dedication from BCFPs, many times over everything else. So many BCFPs must choose between developing the athlete or the non-athletic person which can affect their athletic identity. The following subsection discusses the qualitative implications of these identity experiences and expectations for BCFPs.

### ***Towards The One Dimensional Theory of Identity and Expectations***

Analyzing and understanding the complexities of BCFPs experiences with the media, football, identity and social construction is part of the foundational principles of this study. Utilizing the theoretical framework, *Towards The One Dimensional Theory of Identity and Expectations*, the researcher attempts to explain this study's findings in a tailored framework for the intricate experiences of Black males in American sporting context. The framework was also employed to explicate meaning of the intersections of identity development, social cohesion, and media scripting. The role of the media in this sense is implicated in the sociocultural influence of identity development and treatment towards BCFPs. This theory is thus broken down into three key tenets to help better understand the various levels of influence the media has toward one-dimensionalism and multidimensionalism.

#### **a) The Institution.**

The institutional tenet of the framework is focused on the larger systems of social injustice. Dugger (1980) describes the institution as powerful entities that can directly or indirectly dictate individual's goals, ideals, and means from the participation in it. Thus, the media as an institution is examined in this tenet as a direct and indirect influence of BCFPs experiences racially, athletically, and towards being multi-dimensional beings. The institution of college football is situated as part of what Mills (1997) calls a White polity. The White polity is made up of White people as controlling members and all other non-White peoples are signatories of the polity rules and regulations. The controlling positions in NCAA and its members school's administration are largely made up of White people. Thus, the reflection of rules and regulations will benefit the White polity with movable

boundaries. The same racial make-up is also reflected in the media conglomerates that cover college football (Lapchick et al., 2015).

The media in the case of BCFPs is a controlling factor as it represents them in a manner that is conducive to the White polity's economic and political means. It is omnipresent and reflects the images of BCFPs that are congruent to age-old insidious understandings of Black men. Bill informs us that the omnipresence of media is real and constantly displaying the meaning of Black male athletes. He states,

You know I can't say a specific article but I think right now you know you look in the NFL and you look at domestic violence and everything you see is African American, African American, African American and I think once you start putting those articles back to back to back you're saying without saying that African Americans are the ones who are predominantly doing this that a lot of African Americans aren't doing it but once you put in the media that way and it's the same paper and every other week there's not an event you go back and you reference a previous event just to keep it fresh, um yeah...

The omnipresence creates a meaning that is then transferred and understood because people have less and less physical contact in the age of instant media. The White polity in this case is constructing an image of the BCFP as an inherently violent being, especially towards women. Now this may be true for some but with the absence of physical contact, the media proxy has casted all Black athletes in this manner. This understanding then corrodes any counter positional understandings that lead to the changing politics of their minds and their bodies.



## **b) The Mind**

The brain is a complex organ that helps the body function. Through its functioning the body can conduct its necessary life actions (i.e. breathing, eating, drinking, etc.). In similar fashion the mind can be influenced to dictate how people think about something and what they do to actualize those understandings. In this sense BCFPs have filled negative ideological space of someone who is racially, culturally, and genealogically White (Mills, 1997). Thus, a script has been created through the White gaze which fixes BCFPs as anti-intellectual, naturally athletic, hyper sexual, and criminals. Willie states,

The media affected me just because I believed what they were telling me. You know a lot of the stuff that I was seeing on TV and a lot of athletes are African American, so when the media provides you a picture and an image and there is nothing else to contradict it that's what you're gonna believe and for me being young and being immature, um, being naïve these are some of the things I just seen and I naturally just believed they were real...

This internalization of the institutional product creates less space for resistance and more for reproduction. The mind of BCFPs and other media consumers is forced into a mode of thought without critical analysis (Marcuse, 1964). This mode of thought without critical analysis is actively inscribing society with their actions towards others based in thoughts that have the original source of subpersonhood and White racial superiority (Mills, 1997). By essentializing BCFPs through negative scripts the media has desensitized the public to their misrepresentation and afforded people a space to treat them like subpersons. The treatment is inseparable from their status as an athlete but temporarily suspended due to the benefit to the White polity, the school's football team.

### **c) The Body**

The body is controlled through the mind and the mind is controlled by the media. Ultimately this means the media is linearly responsible for the treatment of BCFPs. The interesting spaces the Black body occupies in elite college football leads way to believe that it is strictly for athletic participation. In many instances, Black males on a college campus will be asked if they play sports for the university because of the overwhelming acceptance of Black males as athletes, but not as students. The treatment of their body in this sense is one that is also beneficial to the Racial Contract because they (Black bodies) are social recognized on campus as engines to increase athletic success. This is also reflected in the foregrounding of BCFP's athletic identities. Dominic stresses the treatment of the Black body as an athlete and as a functional member of society stating,

...when you're a player and they can root for us everything is good but you know just from my own personal experiences when it gets to like outside of the sport there are stereotype that they feel towards us are still pretty prevalent, you know I'm on the football team but I have seen women switch their purse to the other side and even though they want to love us in our sport when it comes to like being a functional member of society I feel like they don't really see us as that at times.

That's not to say everybody thinks that way but I feel like there is enough of them for it to still be significant.

By confining BCFPs to their athletic role (Adler & Adler, 1991) the treatment from fans, peers, and the community is aiding the decrease in subsequent identities. Without development of their non-athletic identities BCFPs are facing one-dimensionalism. The one-dimensional use of BCFPs bodies is a result of the institutional and ideological

conditioning to single mindedly chase sports fame and success. This athletic façade uses and benefits from those bodies economically (Hawkins, 2010; Rhoden, 2010) and politically (Hawkins, 1998; Sailes, 1998). The entire process results in the degradation of the Black community and the strengthening of hegemonic culture's White superiority complex.

### **Praxis and Practical Implications**

The concluding section discusses much of the practical implications from the study. The section will address the suggestions for power five FBS institutions to better enhance the experience of BCFPs. The subsections include: I) Mentoring, II) Non-Athletic Career Opportunities, and III) Media Education. Each of these subsections were derived from the data and subsequent research as to how BCFPs and their institutions can better foster multidimensional Black men, not just football players.

#### ***I. Mentoring.***

Mentoring is one of the most essential functions helping create change and progress toward social justice (Colley, 2003). Social justice in the realm of college football reflects organizational changes, higher graduation rates for BCFPs, and a reexamination of what it means to be a BCFP. Currently, Black athlete mentors in the media are mainly concerned with athletic success. Where as many mentors and role models who have a multifaceted focus on athletics and other endeavors (academics, business ventures, traveling, etc.) are seemingly invisible. Many of the participants of this study mentioned role models both physical and in the media invigorating their quest to be a professional athlete for the fame and fortune. On the contrary, many of the participants also called for schools to provide mentors for BCFPs who are intently focused on more than sports. Thereby, an action item

of all schools that enroll a high number of BCFPs should be to connect them with multiple types of mentors. The more spread out the lives of the mentors, the more robust an athlete's vision of themselves and their future can be.

The value of a mentoring program that involves campus partnerships, former college and professional athletes, and community leaders is beneficial to their non-athletic success (Comeaux, 2008). The construction and participation in the program is also one of the most pivotal parts to achieving success for the program. To do this, there must be a concerted effort from all campus partners with a designated official to oversee its efforts. Many schools already have mentoring programs in place, but usually it is run through athletics which means at the end of the day their allegiance may favor athletic success more than anything. Conversely the suggestion for a mentoring program should practice cascade mentoring (Clark, Tanner & Logan, 2015), encompass individuals who practice authentic care for their mentees (Valenzuela, 2005), and avoid deficit perspectives by emphasizing community cultural wealth of BCFPs (Yosso, 2005). Many of these techniques and programmatic efforts are already in place for Black males across the nation (i.e. 100 Black men and different historically Black fraternal initiatives). It may be in the best interest for institutions that have a high number of BCFPs on their teams to build and sustain a relationship with the local mentoring initiatives in addition to their own internal programs. The goal of this is to help BCFPs gain needed exposure to more than being athlete. These sentiments of mentoring are nothing new but are more important now than ever. Black athletes are some of the highest grossing and famous athletes on this planet. Thus, mentoring from current and previous athletes can be some of the most helpful, especially

when they are playing in the professional ranks or have professional success in other endeavors outside of football.

One example, the Super Bowl winning Patriots (2017) tight-end Martellus Bennett took to twitter days after their historic win over the Atlanta Falcons stating in a series of tweets: "...I honestly just want people to look at black kids and not say he's the next Michael Jordan all the damn time...I want to introduce them to new possibilities. You can get scholarships for creative writing, band film school. Not just crossovers and stiff arms. You can literally do anything. I know that being an athlete is a proven method. We have millions of examples of it....Just go through a roster There's a ton of I used to ball to get out of the hood story. Use ball don't let ball use you...You can be anything. You can do anything. Dream bigger. Imagine more." (Bennett, 2017). Bennett's sentiments echo that of the researcher and the participants' call for great unembraceable mentors. The following subsection will address the suggestion of non-athletic career opportunities as a practical implication for BCFP's development.

## ***II. Non-Athletic Career Opportunities***

To foster holistic development of Black collegiate football players there must be multiplicity in the expectations and actions toward multidimensionality. Some of the tangible ways that institutions can better create invite an environment conducive to BCFPs full development of career opportunities is through: encouraging leadership in campus organizations (Harper & Quaye, 2007), provide a supportive non-athletic community (Bimper et al., 2011), networking (Owens, Lacey, Rawls & Holbert-Quince, 2010), and increased internship and study abroad opportunities. These suggestions are not the only

ways to support non-athletic career opportunities but some of the most proven to provide a litany of experiences advantageous to BCFP's post-sports lives.

Harper & Quaye (2007) inform us that for Black students one of the best predictors of academic achievement and racial expression is leadership status in student organizations. From the results of this dissertation, racial identity is suppressed in light of BCFP's athletic identity. With racial identity being a part of self-development and empowerment it can be a powerful tool to help redirect self-esteem to avoid depression as some athlete experience at the conclusion of their sports careers (Ogilvie & Taylor, 1993; Sullivan & Platenburg, 2017). At many of the elite college football PWIs there are influential Black student organizations (i.e. Black student association, historically Black fraternal organizations, national Pan-Hellenic council). One of the most influential and longest lasting relationships built in college for Black males is that of a fraternal bond. Clark et al. (2015) informs us about several successful collegiate athletes who were in leadership position in their fraternal organizations. Their profiles present a compelling case for involvement in fraternal organizations because they expose BCFPs to different student groups, leadership opportunities, and a global network of athletic and non-athletic professionals. The benefits of participating in a fraternal organization are immense and can help to ease the transition to non-athletic endeavors due to empowering non-athletic identities.

The non-athletic community that fraternities may also provide is important because it should be a reality in other sectors of campus as well. Through providing a supportive non-athletic community, BCFPs begin to recognize that athletic spaces are not the only spaces they are welcome and encouraged. In Bimper et al.'s (2012) study the participants

noted that academic success came from their self-determination. Self-determination is encouraged athletically in the athletic compound but discouraged through omission in other areas of campus. The non-athletic supportive community (i.e. professors, non-athletic academic advisors, program administrators, (vice) provosts, directors, etc.) must encourage self-determination towards holistic development. The researcher believes that people are products of their expectations, thus the expectations placed on BCFPs outside of the athletic realm should be as strong as the athletic ones. These expectations should not just take place in college but throughout the athletic socialization of young Black males as well (Edwards, 2000; Smith, 2015). The goal is to incite the level of effort put forth towards athletics to other parts of BCFP's life. With constant reminders and leading BCFPs towards empowering their racial identity and self-determination the "let-down" of not making it to the NFL may diminish. Thereby allowing BCFPs to constructively exercise their skills learned in athletic and non-athletic endeavors towards post-sports careers.

Another important aspect of securing non-athletic career opportunities is networking. Many of the participants of this study recognized the influence networking had on their non-athletic career maturity. Thus, a practical suggestion for elite football institutions is networking mixers with professionals around the community. At the University of Washington, Coach Tyrone Willingham each summer during fall and spring training camps the football players participated in networking mixers with influential leaders in the Seattle, Washington community. This mixer happened during the lunch breaks of training camp, however they provided an opportunity for BCFPs to converse and potentially entertain jobs or internship for the coming years. The mixer was with the Breakfast Group of Seattle. The group was comprised of successful civic minded Black men

who have dedicated themselves to mentoring by ensuring guidance to young Black males in the Seattle area. Similar programs to this one will be able to engender excitement for non-sports careers as well as provide actual opportunities to exercise that excitement.

Networking from outside entities is imperative but also inviting mixers with graduate students of color and various BCFP peer groups can also help to stimulate other areas of exploration for BCFPs. The goal of networking is to create a web of people and resources to help you be successful. In alignment with that goal constructing networking groups and mixers can help BCFPs find new avenues for careers and life success.

Lastly, another aspect of multidimensionality that the participants mentioned is being able to do internships as well as studying abroad. The opportunity of an internship if used correctly is one of the best ways to get a job with a company. The participants discussed that they rarely have time for internships due to their athletic schedules, but also because of the athletic pressures coming from the coaches and administration. There is enough time to intern or study abroad during the summer, however the threat of missing workouts or “unofficial” football activities looms over BCFPs. This conundrum forces them to choose between advancing their non-athletic development and their athletic career. An internship over the course of a couple summers would provide an excellent opportunity to get acclimated with a career path and often provide a robust resume. This can help counteract the many troupes that a football only focus provides; no outside experience and no preparation for non-sports careers. For the institutions, this could even mean internships that were within their institution or with their community constituents. The growth of a BCFP in non-athletic pursuits can come during a study abroad program. Almost every power five FBS school has study abroad programs but the programs do not



have BCFPs enrolled in them. The traveling abroad opportunities that BCFPs are generally associated with are trips to play games (i.e. Cal-Berkeley vs. Hawaii in Sydney Australia, Notre Dame vs. Navy in Ireland, UCLA vs. Oregon State in Japan). Generally these trips do not offer an academic and developmental component which helps to utilize these trips to empower and enhance the person behind the facemask. Therefore, they are business trips not study abroad in the traditional sense cancelling many of the benefits researchers suggest (Schmidt & Pardo, 2017; Simmons, 2017; Trower & Lehmann, 2017). The last practical implication is to increase media education for all student athletes but especially BCFPs.

### ***III. Media Education***

Media education is becoming almost as important as physical conditioning for BCFPs. Due to daily coverage of their lives the training is necessary to just help them cope with the invasion of their private and public lives. Buckingham (2013) explains, “The media do not offer a transparent window on the world. They provide channels through which representations and images of the world can be communicated *indirectly*. The media *intervene*: they provide us with selective versions of the world, rather than direct access to it” (p. 3). The media’s window into the world of BCFPs must be examined similarly to way slave owners tried to use religion as a divine call to confine Black people to slavery. Thus, media education should be critical in nature as to be able to see the entire house instead of the window the media is attempting to show. To form a media education course, it must focus on the literacy of the media and the foundational works that assist the creation of media “reality”. Along with the increasing use of media, learning the language of media should be an essential objective. To use a parallel example, fire fighters learn the

signs of fire when approaching a house so that they can best put the fire out and possibly save people. Similarly, if the goal for BCFPs is to develop them they should learn how to fight negative influences (media portrayals) in effort of saving their true self. The call for media education is imperative because it can make or break a person and their legacy.

As participant Earl alluded to, the media never goes away and can send you into the realm of dichotomous public opinions. Those opinions are important because they dictate how people think of you regardless of your authentic actions. Essentially, perception is reality in the world of media, optics matter. Thus, BCFPs must learn how to reorganize the perception towards their actual reality to convert one-dimensional portrayals to multi-dimensional portrayals. To add depth and recourse to the negative images, they must first know what images they are reconfiguring and why. Most institutions have a communications school and within that a public relations and or media department. These departments should be equipped to offer a course on critical media, race, social castings, image reproduction and power dynamics. These tenets are essential to the knowledge of BCFPs, their peers, fans, and any constituent who will be influenced by media. Ultimately, the call for media education is one that BCFPs may not make on their own because it means more “required” obligations, but is beneficial beyond their knowledge because of the multi-level issues they will face at the hands of the media.

### **Limitations, Future Research, Conclusion**

This section describes the researcher’s limitations to doing this mixed methods study as well as some perimeters or delimitations. After the discussion of the limitations an examination of the next steps for this strand of research and the researcher will follow. Finally, the section will finish with a concluding note from the researcher.

### ***I. Limitations.***

This study was limited by several factors. The first of those issues is the sample. Even though the sample size was considered sizeable enough to run the study, the researcher suggests that generalizations be made with caution. The sample size was approximately evenly distributed from freshman to seniors in terms of athletic classification. The total number of quantitative participants (N=226) is reflective of various regions spanning across all power five conferences, however may not be completely generalizable to the 53.4 percent (13,453) of Black college football players at the division-I FBS level (Lachick et al., 2015). The qualitative finds also warrant the same caution of generalizability as BCFPs were half of the participants (N= 7). The experiences of the BCFPs interviewed are expected to be a representative sample of the institutions they attended, not a random sample of all institutions. The researcher's use of network sampling of the qualitative and quantitative participants may have garnered like-minded participants, but there was no way of comparing as they all were recruited in the same manner. The use of an instrumental case study hoped to help offset some of the clustered qualitative thinking, as it was employed to also examine the larger effects of the media on BCFP's experiences at power five FBS institutions (Stake, 2000).

Another limitation to the study could have been the collection of both types of data. The qualitative data and quantitative data was collected simultaneously, however the survey data of the qualitative participants was not singled out due to not being able to run quantitative measures on such a small sub-sample. The researcher was able to interview participants that have built some kind of rapport with him prior to the actual interview. Many of the participants have known the researcher for more than a couple years. The

relationship built was both a limitation and a benefit. The relationship with the participants was a benefit because the data was richer as a result of trust. The limitation of the relationship came from the participant knowing the general thought process behind the research, which may have had some influence on their responses to the semi-structured questions. An additional quantitative limitation was the collection of the data types. The researcher collected much of the questionnaire data as categorical data versus nominal data which made it difficult to use some variables in more in-depth quantitative analysis.

There were also many delimitations of this study. The purpose of delimitations is to define the scope and the boundaries of the study (Simon, 2011). Thereby, the scope of the study was delimited to NCAA Division-I FBS power five institutions as they were the most nationally recognized and media covered conferences, teams, and players. The target institutions made up the best sample in college football because the researcher determined that the media would have the greatest effect on those BCFPs who are more frequently covered. The examination of this study aligned with many other scholars' works around Black athlete identity (Adler & Adler, 1991; Beamon, 2008; 2012; Harrison, Harrison, Moore, 2002; Meledenz, 2008; Singer, 2005). Additionally, the sample was limited to Black male collegiate football players as the researcher wanted to examine the race that represented the majority of division-I FBS football athletes, especially the "star" and starting players. Moreover, the researcher delimited the study to college football as it is the largest and most economically successful sport overall and in media deals in the past 60 years (Dunnavant, 2004). The scope of the participants also called for BCFPs who are on scholarship and have had at least one year at their institution. Qualitatively, the scope for athletic administrators narrowed the participants to academic personnel who have had five

or more years in their position. This was to ensure that the administrators had contact with BCFPs and they had enough experience at an institution to see the development of BCFPs over the years. The intersection of delimitations for BCFPs by race, gender, sport, year at institution and scholarship status is to assist the with the growing body of literature on Black male athletes. Essentially, the researcher is trying to increase the amount of information available concerning Black male collegiate football players to help construct a larger understanding for all constituents working with and for BCFPs.

## ***II. Future Research.***

This dissertation is both nuanced and building from current literature concerning Black male athletes. The intersection of media of Black collegiate football players has yet to be studied in terms of racial and athletic identity. Thus, this study serves as a stem from the strong and growing literature on Black athletes from youth to the professional ranks. The knowledge garnered by this study helps to create some answers to burning questions about the experience of Black athletes prior to, during, and after their collegiate experience. This dissertation's theoretical and methodological design has built on a foundation to study identity development of Black collegiate athletes. In conjunction with the limitations of this study, there is plenty of room to continue to investigate the media's impact on Black athletes moving forward. The research has generated several suggestions for future research concerning media, Black male athletes, and identity development.

First, the researcher intends to conduct another study that uses nominal data to help create useable variables to measure media consumption and influence. By using nominal data for categories such as, media consumption, the researcher can measure consumption as a variable to compare with various identity scales to help construct an idea

of how media viewing correlates to racial and athletic identity development. Secondly, the researcher intends to create a database of images, videos, and coverage of college football games to quantitatively measure the usage of stereotypes, language, and actions that help to reproduce some of the insidious meanings of BCFPs constructed by the present study. This database will allow the researcher some quantitative data to further validate the claim that the media perpetuates negative images and one-dimensional expectations of Black male athletes. Third, the researcher plans to expand the current study to Black male college basketball players. The impetus behind adding college basketball players is they also garner a significant amount of media attention, especially the Black players. Fourth, the researcher plans to revisit the current study in five years as a comparative measure to the next wave of Black college athletes. This study will help build the literature at the intersection of the study as well as create longitudinal data that can be tracked and used across the research field. Fifth, the researcher also plans to explore individual types of media (i.e. social media, television, gaming, etc.) to understand which type of media is most used and influential. Lastly, the researcher plans to help create a media course from the research that will help Black athletes and athletic administrators to educate themselves on the effect of media and big time college athletics. The goal is to help create multidimensional Black athletes and one avenue to do that is to help reconfigure what it means to be a Black athlete in the media.

### ***III. Conclusion.***

College sports have afforded Black athletes both positive and negative experiences, however at the end of the day we must recognize that sport is separate from the purpose of the media. Media's sole purpose is to entertain and in order to entertain the audience must

buy into a product, idea, or piece of media. The tragic relationship that the United States has with Black males is also shown daily in the communication and coverage of their bodies, achievements, and behaviors. This study hoped to help construct an idea of the affect the media has on Black males in effort to complicate the monolithic manifestation of Black male athletes as dumb, criminal, hypersexual, and naturally athletic. The study also tapped into the complexity of identity, the media, and Black males themselves. This study meant a lot to the researcher as he was not able to see much of this until later in his athletic career and was not directly able to affect change until he started to mentor younger athletes. One of the founding purposes was also to foster further transformative and critical knowledge to afford Black athletes more than the playing field and a playing career. Thus, the empirical findings of the study will help future Black athletes theoretically and practically to find themselves and be able to read the world around them. It is the researcher's goal as an educator and scholar to continue this journey and quest for transformation of the current athletic industrial complex for the well-being of Black athletes to come. Here's to the future and multidimensional Black athletes.

## APPENDICES



# Appendix A: Participant Consent Form

## (18yr.+) Participant Consent Form

IRB USE ONLY  
Study Number: 2015-06-0106  
Approval Date: 08/11/2016  
Expires: 08/10/2017

### Consent for Participation in Research

**Title:** The One Dimensional Black College Football Player: A mixed methods approach to understanding the importance of being multidimensional student athletes for NCAA institutions.

#### Introduction

The purpose of this form is to provide you information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to participate in this research study. You are being asked to participate in a research study. This form provides you with information about the study. The person in charge of this research will also describe this study to you and answer all of your questions. Please read the information below and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether or not to take part. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You can refuse to participate without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You can stop your participation at any time and your refusal will not impact current or future relationships with UT Austin or participating sites. To do so simply tell the researcher you wish to stop participation. The researcher will provide you with a copy of this consent for your records.

#### Purpose of the Study

You have been asked to participate in a research study to explore the associations of identity self-perceptions, administrations perspectives and media depictions and harvest a better understanding of how to aid Black college football players in the process of becoming multidimensional student athletes. The number of subjects to participate in this study will not exceed 435.

The purpose of this study is to understand how media images impact the identity of college football players to help them understand the image and identity expectations associated with college football.

#### What will you will be asked to do?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

- Fill out demographic information
- Fill out a racial and athletic identity survey
- Participate in Focus groups
- Participate in interviews (If chosen)
- 

This study includes focus groups and interviews will not last more than three hours in one day. However, in an effort to gain a sufficient understanding of your sport experiences, interview may last more than a one day and will include approximately 35 participants. Your participation in either the focus group or the interviews will be audio recorded and only accessed by the researchers, stored on a password protected device and you will be assigned a pseudonym to protect your identity. Pseudonyms will also be assigned

for participants that complete surveys.

**What are the risks involved in this study?**

Risk of participation in this study is minimal, meaning the risk associated with this study is no greater than everyday life. Participation in this study may involve risks that are currently unforeseeable. In rare instances, you may be uncomfortable with answering the questions. However, you are not required to answer questions on questionnaire or in interviews (if applicable) and may withdraw from participation at any time. Also, because we are seeking to learn from you, there is no such thing as a “right” or “wrong” perspective. Another potential risk is breach of confidentiality. Since we are utilizing focus groups participants will be asked to keep all information shared during the sessions confidential, but there is still a breach risk present.

If you wish to discuss the information above or any other risks you may experience, you may ask questions now or call Mr. Alvin Logan, Jr., the principal investigator, listed on this form.

**What are the possible benefits of this study?**

You will receive no direct benefit from participating in this study; however the information we obtain may help researchers understand the experiences and perceptions of collegiate and non-collegiate sport participants.

**Do you have to participate?**

No, your participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate at all or, if you start the study, you may withdraw at any time. Withdrawal or refusing to participate will not affect your relationship with The University of Texas at Austin (University) in anyway.

If you would like to participate please return the form to Alvin Logan upon completion. You will receive a copy of this form.

**Will there be any compensation?**

You will not receive any type of payment participating in this study.

**How will your privacy and confidentiality be protected if you participate in this research study?**

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be audio recorded. Your privacy and the confidentiality of your data will be protected by a secure data base only accessed by the researchers. Interviews and responses will be recorded on audiotape. Audiotapes will be coded so that no personally identifying information is visible on them. Audiotapes will be kept in a secure place (e.g., a locked file cabinet in Mr. Logan’s or Dr. Harrison’s office). Tapes will be heard only for research purposes by Mr. Logan, Dr. Harrison, and Dr. Harrison’s research assistants. To make possible future analysis Mr. Logan will retain audio tape recordings. The survey and questionnaire results also will be protected in the same secure data base as the interview data. If necessary to use the individual information from the questionnaire or surveys, pseudonyms will be used and personal information will be concealed. Lastly, the consent forms will be kept for three years.

If it becomes necessary for the Institutional Review Board to review the study records, information that can be linked to you will be protected to the extent permitted by law. Your research records will not

be released without your consent unless required by law or a court order. The data resulting from your participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes not detailed within this consent form. In these cases, the data will contain no identifying information that could associate it with you, or with your participation in any study.

**Whom to contact with questions about the study?**

Prior, during or after your participation you can contact the researcher Alvin Logan at 512-471-1205 or send an email to alo3@utexas.edu for any questions or if you feel that you have been harmed.

This study has been reviewed and approved by The University Institutional Review Board and the study number is **2015-06-0106**.

**Whom to contact with questions concerning your rights as a research participant?**

For questions about your rights or any dissatisfaction with any part of this study, you can contact, anonymously if you wish, the Institutional Review Board by phone at (512) 471-8871 or email at orsc@uts.cc.utexas.edu.

**Participation**

If you agree to participate please return this signed form to Alvin Logan, See above for contact information.

**Signature**

You have been informed about this study's purpose, procedures, possible benefits and risks, and you have received a copy of this form. You have been given the opportunity to ask questions before you sign, and you have been told that you can ask other questions at any time. You voluntarily agree to participate in this study. By signing this form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights.

We may wish to present some of the files from this study at scientific conventions or as demonstrations in classrooms. Please sign below if you are willing to allow us to do so with your tape. I hereby give permission for the audio tape made for this research study to also be used for educational purposes.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

As a representative of this study, I have explained the purpose, procedures, benefits, and the risks involved in this research study.

---

Print Name of Person obtaining consent

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Signature of Person obtaining consent

---

Date

## Appendix B: Participant Questionnaire(s)

### Demographic Information

*Instructions:* If applicable, Please write your answers in the blank spaces provided or check the appropriate box.

#### Personal Information

Your Sex:  Male  Female

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Hometown \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you been playing football? \_\_\_\_\_

How often do you engage with media content daily? (e.g. TV, Social Media, Newspapers, etc.). Check beside category.

\_\_\_ Less than 30 minutes

\_\_\_ 4 hours

\_\_\_ 1 hour

\_\_\_ 5+ hours

\_\_\_ 2 hours

\_\_\_ Other (please specify)

\_\_\_ 3 hours

What was your cumulative college Grade Point Average (G.P.A.)? Check Box.

0.00 – 1.00

1.51 – 2.00

2.51 – 3.00

3.51 – 4.00

1.01 – 1.50

2.01 – 2.50

3.01 – 3.50

Which classifies your RACE? Check beside category.

\_\_\_ American Indian and Alaska Native

\_\_\_ Asian

\_\_\_ Black or African American

\_\_\_ Latino or of Hispanic origin

\_\_\_ Native Hawaiian and/or Other Pacific Islander

\_\_\_ Other

\_\_\_ White/European America

**If other, please explain** \_\_\_\_\_

What is your current major?

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What are your future plans after college?

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Have any of your biological family members (father, uncle, brother, grandpa, cousin, etc.) participated in sports? If yes, which sport(s)?

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What is your favorite media content that involves college football? Why?

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## Appendix C: Survey Example(s)

**Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS):** All Answers are on a scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7).

1. As an African American Life in American is good for me.
2. I think of myself primarily as an African American, and seldom as a member of a racial group.
3. Too many Blacks "glamorize" the drug trade and fail to see opportunities that don't involve crime.
4. I go through periods when I am down on myself because I am Black.
5. As a multiculturalist, I am connected to many groups (Hispanics, Asian-Americans, Whites, Jews, gays & lesbians, etc.).
6. I have a strong feeling of hatred and disdain for all White people.
7. I see and think about things from an Afrocentric perspective.
8. When I walk into a room, I always take note of the racial make-up of the people around me.
9. I am not so much a member of a racial group, as I am an American.
10. I sometimes struggle with negative feelings about being Black.
11. My relationship with God plays an important role in my life.
12. Blacks place more emphasis on having a good time than on hard work.
13. I believe that only those Blacks who accept an Afrocentric perspective can truly solve the race problem in America.
14. I hate the White community and all that it represents.
15. When I have a chance to make a new friend, issues of race and ethnicity seldom play a role in who that person might be.
16. I believe it is important to have both a Black identity and a multicultural perspective, which is inclusive of everyone (e.g., Asians, Latinos, gays & Lesbians, Jews, Whites, etc.)
17. When I look in the mirror at my Black image, sometimes I do not feel good about what I see.
18. If I had to put a label on my identity, it would be "American" and not African American.
19. When I read the newspaper or a magazine, I always look for articles and stories that deal with race and ethnic.
20. Many African Americans are too lazy to see opportunities that are right in front of them.
21. As far as I am concerned, affirmative action will be needed for a long time. issues.
22. Black people cannot truly be free until our daily lives are guided by Afrocentric values and principles.
23. White people should be destroyed.
24. I embrace my own Black identity, but I also respect and celebrate the cultural identities of other groups (e.g. Native Americans, Whites, Latinos, Jews, Asian-Americans, gays & lesbians)
25. Privately, I sometimes have negative feelings about being Black.
26. If I had to put myself into categories, first I would say I am an American, and second I am a member of a racial group.
27. My feelings and thoughts about God are very important to me.

28. African Americans are too quick to turn to crime to solve their problems
29. When I have a chance to decorate a room, I tend to select pictures, posters, or works of art that express strong racial-cultural themes.
30. I hate White people.
31. I respect the ideas that other Black people hold, but I believe that the best way to solve our problems it to think Afrocentrically.
32. When I vote in an election, the first thing I think about is the candidate's record on racial and cultural issues.
33. I believe it is important to have both a Black identity and a multicultural perspective, because this connects me to other groups (Hispanics, Asian-Americans, Whites, Jews, gays & lesbians, etc.)
34. I have developed an identity that stresses my experiences as an American more than my experiences as a member of a racial group.
35. During a typical week in my life, I think about racial and cultural issues many, many times.
36. Blacks place too much importance on racial protest and not enough on hard work and education.
37. Black people will never be free until we embrace an Afrocentric perspective.
38. My negative feelings toward White people are very intense.
39. I sometimes have negative feelings about being Black.
40. As a multiculturalist, it is important for me to be connected with individuals from all cultural backgrounds (Latinos, gays & lesbians, Jews, Native Americans, Asian-Americans, etc.)

**Athletic Identity Measurement Scale (AIMS):** All Answers are on a scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7).

1. I consider myself an athlete.
2. I have many goals related to sport.
3. Most of my friends are athletes.
4. Sport is the most important part of my life.
5. I spend more time thinking about sport than anything else.
6. I feel bad about myself when I do poorly in sport.
7. I would be very depressed if I were injured and could not compete in sport.



## **Appendix D: Sample Semi-Structured Interview Questions**

### **Interview Questions: BCFPs**

Does the media impact you currently?

Is the media portrayal of you accurate? Why or why not? How would you portray yourself?

What do you think is the goal of the media's portrayal of you?

Does the media falsify images of other people (non-BCFPs)?

How often do you engage with media content?

Do you think media images have an impact on how your coaches, administrators, and fans treat you?

Does their treatment change based on your athletic performance and/or participation?

Does your university/ college promote careers outside of athletics?

What is the role of a college football player to you?

Does that role change based on your race?

### **Interview Questions: Administrators**

Do you engage with media content? How much?

Do you think media content is political?

Does what you see in the media influence how you view the world, other people, and/or yourself?

Have you seen media content about BCFPs lately? Can you describe it?

How did it make you feel?

Did it shape your view about the players the media portrayed?

How do you think the example impacts BCFPs and their role on campus?

How do you think schools can help BCFPs understand the media, their identity, and how they are being portrayed?

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## VITA

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