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Crossing Goal Lines and Borders: Engaging Black Male Student-Athletes in Education Abroad

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Many Black male student-athletes suffer from identity foreclosure at rates higher than their white peers as they fail to develop salient aspects of their identity outside of the athlete role (Murphy, Petitpas, & Brewer, 1996; Beamon, 2012). Education abroad offers the opportunity to take advantage of a holistic collegiate experience, which impedes the detrimental effects of the athletic identity foreclosure process. International educational opportunities can positively influence Black male student-athletes' personal, academic, and professional development as they come to see the world beyond the gym and campus. This article examines the significance and value of creating education abroad opportunities for Black male student-athletes as a means of providing meaningful educational opportunities in the realm of higher education.

Keywords: student-athletes, identity foreclosure, race, international education, education abroad, study abroad, student development, Black male student-athletes

Athletics play an integral role at most colleges and universities across the United States. For a majority of these institutions of higher education, sports serve as a critical component to their economic survival. Interestingly, Black male student-athletes have played a major role in the vitality of intercollegiate athletic competition. At many Division I, II, and III schools, they are often the most widely recognized faces of their institutions, due to the importance athletic competition is given as well as their overrepresentation in the televised and revenue-producing sports of college football and basketball. Interestingly, they are a small percentage of the overall non-athletic student body which poses greater problems. While these student-athletes generate millions of dollars of revenue for their respective institutions (especially at the Division I level), they are rarely presented with opportunities to engage in academically enriching programs like education abroad that serve to expand their personal and professional identities. While all students (student-athletes included), can benefit from education abroad experiences, this article focuses specifically on Black male student-athletes as they comprise the majority of both football teams (46.8%) and men's basketball teams (54.8%) within the 65 schools of the Power 5 conferences (NCAA, 2018). However, Black men are only 2.4% of the total under-



graduate student population at these same schools (Howard, 2018). Given their sheer overrepresentation within a multi-billion-dollar industry, Black male student-athletes are more susceptible to academic exploitation and face unique challenges on college campuses that lead to a prevalence of athletic identity foreclosure (Adler, 1991; Beamon, 2012; Bimper & Harrison, 2011; Brewer, Van Raalte, & Linder, 1993; Murphy, Petipas, & Brewer, 1996; Sinclair & Bennett, 2015; Singer, 2008).

Marcia (1966) coined the term identity foreclosure as a process where one becomes defined by a specific identity role without giving proper attention to the wide range of possibilities available to them. Beamon (2012) suggests athletic identity foreclosure, an over-reliance on the role of athlete in one's overall conception of self, could lead to delayed identity development, a decreased academic identity, lower graduation rates, and career immaturity in student-athletes (Beamon, 2012; Bimper & Harrison, 2011; Brewer et al., 1993). While not all Black male student-athletes suffer, or will suffer, from athletic identity foreclosure, Bimper and Harrison (2011) suggest for many Black male student-athletes, "sports is more than merely a game to play, rather it's a means of defining self" (p. 275), and the role of athlete "may dominate their alternative social and personal identities" (p. 278), particularly within the context of a Primarily White Institutions (PWI), where they are readily recognized as only athletes. The pitfalls of athletic identity foreclosure leave student-athletes "vulnerable to emotional difficulties upon termination of his or [their] sport career" (Brewer et al., 1993, p. 241). Further, Black male student-athletes may in some ways contribute to their perceived social status by not capitalizing on other opportunities due to their own overreliance on sport and their desire to become professional athletes (Singer, 2011). Notably, Beamon (2012) found 70% of Black male student-athletes expected to have a career in professional sports. Even more troubling, she found the higher the students' classification in school, the more they were likely to believe sports served as the best possibility of success for them. These findings suggest Black participants in athletics struggle to develop a sense of self and future orientation that does not involve athletics. Future orientation refers to the degree to which individuals are able to conceptualize what their life will look like in the future (McAdams, 2013). For too many Black male student-athletes, the environments they occupy in college limit opportunities for identity exploration outside of athletics and what they see as possible for their future self.

To counter the effects of identity foreclosure, Comeaux and Harrison (2011) designed a conceptual model for working with student-athletes that addressed many of these specific needs. When developing intervention approaches, these research practitioners note it is important not to alienate student-athletes by suggesting they rid themselves of the vehicle (athletic identity) that facilitated their arrival to the university community. Instead, student-athletes need spaces and experiences where they can develop other salient identities without directly minimizing their athletic identities. We argue education abroad can provide Black male student-athletes with a multidimensional opportunity to author aspects of their identities that are challenging to access within the figured worlds of college campuses, in a way that does not posit their athletic identity through a deficit-oriented lens.

Relatedly, there is a growing body of research that focuses on the benefits of education abroad for Black students such as academic engagement (Redden, 2013; Sutton, & Rubin, 2004/2010), identity negotiation and development (Dinani, 2016; Wick, 2011; Young, Natrajan-Tyagi & Platt, 2015), and career maturity and readiness (Norris & Gillespie, 2005; Posey, 2003; Potts, 2015; Preston, 2012). While these studies are not specifically about Black male student-athletes, the recorded benefits at the broader Black student level suggest education abroad programming might effectively offset the deficits of identity foreclosure disproportionately impacting the collegiate experiences of Black male student-athletes. Considering the growing global nature of sport, inclusion of meaningful international experiences for Black male student-athletes may provide the space and opportunities needed for identity exploration, negotiation, and expansion.

We argue education abroad opportunities offer Black male student-athletes the chance to take advantage of a holistic collegiate experience, which can impede the detrimental effects of the athletic identity foreclosure process. Thus, we explore the academic, personal, and career-oriented benefits of education abroad, followed by a discussion on these same issues in the context of the literature that focuses on the experiences of Black male student-athletes. To further ground the arguments presented in this article, we utilize the theoretical concept of figured worlds to highlight the contextualized nature of identity development and self-authoring for Black male student-athletes (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner & Cain, 1998). In doing so, we argue education abroad is a co-curricular experience that could positively impact the academic, personal and professional trajectories of Black male student-athletes and disrupt their perceived expendability on college campuses (Hawkins, 2011; Logan, 2017).

Literature Review

Education Abroad

While scholars have challenged the idea that international education experiences have positive outcomes for students (Willis, 2012, 2016; Zemach-Bersin, 2010), overwhelmingly, they are widely regarded as a high impact collegiate experiences that positively influence student development and career orientation (Redden, 2013; Harder, Andenoro, Roberts, Stedman, Newberry, Parker & Rodriguez, 2015; Posey, 2003; Dinani, 2016; Wick, 2011; Young, Natrajan-Tyagi, & Platt, 2015). Many institutions of higher education, educational associations, foundations, and governmental agencies recommend participation in education abroad programs as a means to develop the personal and professional knowledge needed to compete in today's globalized job market (Preston, 2012; Obst, Bhandari & Witherell, 2007, Harder et al., 2015). In addition to global competitiveness in the labor market, literature suggests the benefits of international education programs include academic engagement (Redden, 2013; Sutton & Rubin, 2004/2010), and identity negotiation and development (Wick, 2011; Young et al., 2015). Some scholars argue those who lack global skills of flexibility and intercultural communication would be, in fact, at a disadvantage (Harder et al., 2015; Trooboff, Vande Berg, Rayman, 2008).

Academic Engagement

Research has shown studying abroad can have a positive influence on a student's academic identity (Posey, 2003; Norris & Gillespie, 2005), which suggests potential avenues for expanding Black male student-athlete's academic outcomes. The Georgia Learning Outcomes of Students Studying Abroad Research Initiative (GLOS-SARI) (Sutton & Rubin, 2004/2010) conducted a longitudinal study that examined international education data by race. They found education abroad impacts Black student's educational attainment at higher rates than other students. Sutton and Rubin (2004) found Black students who studied abroad had a 31.2% higher four-year graduation rate than Black students who did not study abroad. Furthermore, participation in education abroad programs seemingly alleviated the 6-year graduation gap between Black and White students, as both groups who studied abroad graduated respectively at rates of 84.4% and 88.6%. While graduation rates for Black male student-athletes have risen in recent years, they are still less likely to graduate than their White student-athlete peers (Harper, 2018).

Conversely, education abroad experiences also influence students' decisions to pursue graduate education. For instance, Norris and Gillespie (2005) found students who studied abroad were 20% more likely than students who did not study abroad to attain a graduate degree. While all of the cited research indicates an interconnectedness between education abroad and positive academic factors, it is recognized that these are not causal studies. However, based on the suggested academic advantages of studying abroad, research indicates similar patterns of academic achievement might emerge if Black male student-athletes were given more opportunities for education abroad.

Identity Development and Negotiation

In 2003, the National Association of International Educators (NAFSA) issued a special report entitled *Securing America's Future*. This release examined the importance of studying abroad and its relationship to student identity development. NAFSA stated, "In their struggle to learn among other people in distant places, students learn about themselves in ways that simply cannot be replicated in the comforting and familiar confines of an American campus" (NAFSA, 2003, p. 6). With the new and often times dramatically different environments in which students find themselves, identity appears to be highly malleable while studying abroad (Angulo, 2008; Day-Vines, Barker & Exum, 1998; Young et al., 2015). Students develop an increased self-awareness and vested concern for the well-being of others (Spiering & Erickson, 2006). Furthermore, individuals develop more self-efficacy, a transformation in their sense of self, and gain a deeper understanding of the nuances and heterogeneity of their own culture (Milstein, 2005).

When forced to navigate a new country, students better understand the 'other' and themselves (Dolby, 2004). Students of color specifically have the opportunity to reflect upon and re-examine their national, ethnic, and racial identification, and the competing perceptions that come with them (Wick, 2011). According to Wick (2011), studying abroad gave students of color an opportunity "to leverage and build

capital, negotiate their intersecting identities, and develop agency that guided them in their future” (p. 166). Negotiating racial expectations in a global context for students of color led to a renewed self-awareness while adding to their social and cultural capital (Jackson, 2008).

Career Maturity and Readiness

Many institutions of higher education, scholastic associations, foundations, and governmental agencies recommend participation in education abroad programs as a means to develop the intercultural competence needed to compete in today’s globalized job market (Harder et al., 2015; Obst, Bhandari & Witherell, 2007; Preston, 2012). The Institute for International Education of Students (IES), a national academic consortium, found studying abroad positively affected student’s career paths. IES reported 84% of alumni believed studying internationally helped them build valuable skills for their careers including language proficiency, cultural training, adaptability and communication. They found 97% of participants secured employment within one year of graduation as compared to 49% of the general college graduate population. Furthermore, the alumni from IES abroad programs earn on average, in starting salaries, \$7,000 more than the general recent college graduate population (Preston, 2012).

While it is difficult to pin point the exact correlation between studying abroad and career trajectory, existing research suggests education abroad positively influences career development (Norris & Gillespie, 2005; Potts, 2015). Potts found increased employability skills such as interpersonal and communication skills, teamwork, problem solving, analytical skills, and motivation were rated as the greatest perceived benefits by early career professionals who had education abroad experiences. Since a very small number of Black student-athletes have the opportunity to make a living in professional sports (NCAA, 2017), it is incumbent on educational institutions to provide opportunities for them to get exposure in other areas that can improve employment opportunities as they transition out of their athletic career.

Barriers to Black Students and International Education

While demand for education abroad has increased, and resources have been put in place to engage students from diverse backgrounds, the majority of those who do study abroad are white and female. Black students are one of the least likely groups to participate, representing just 5% of study abroad participants (Lu, Reddick, Dean & Pecero, 2015; Witherall, 2016), let alone Black male student-athletes. Such barriers have been identified as a lack of finances, fear of racism abroad, a lack of familial support, and a lack of knowledge surrounding education abroad opportunities (Luo & Jamieson-Drake, 2015; Salisbury, Paulsen & Pascarella, 2011). Given the disparities in education abroad participation for Black students (Witherall, 2016), the benefits of education abroad are not reaching certain student populations whom have been historically low participants and continue to lack access to educational benefits on and off campus. In moving towards developing more inclusive and intentional study abroad opportunities, it is imperative more research highlight the experiences of Black students whom have studied abroad during their undergraduate experience.

The authors of this paper argue the lack of experiential knowledge and study abroad programming catered to diverse student populations, specifically Black students, inadvertently discourage Black students from studying abroad. A problem fueled, at least in part, by the lack of research focused on Black students abroad. More specifically, by focusing on the experiences of Black male student-athletes we fill a twofold gap in literature- student-athlete development and international education.

Black Male Student-Athletes and Academic Outcomes

One of the most cited scholars on Black males in higher education, Dr. Shaun Harper suggests, “perhaps nowhere in higher education is the disenfranchisement of Black male students more insidious than in college athletics” (2006, p. 6). These students are part of a billion-dollar industry for which they are the product sold, and in turn are unable to garner any of the financial benefits from their labor. As a result, many of them are denied full access to the educational opportunities that come with attending a four-year university (Sinclair & Bennett, 2015). In a 2013 report, Harper, Williams, and Blackman conducted a comprehensive study that analyzed the graduation rates of 76 higher education institutions belonging to the six major athletic conferences: ACC, Big East, Big Ten, Big Twelve and the SEC. Harper and colleagues (2013), found “an average of 49.8% of Black male student-athletes on these campuses do not graduate within six years” (p. 7). The findings suggest Black male student-athletes, who compete at the best and most competitive programs across the United States, also have the lowest graduation rates. This is less a reflection of these students’ academic potential, but more closely connected to the value institutions place on the academic development of Black male student-athletes.

Similarly, Comeaux and Harrison (2011) argued, “the college educational experiences of Black student-athletes at predominately White institutions are often times hindered as a result of feelings of social isolation, racial discrimination, limited support and lack of integration” (p. 208). On college campuses, Black male student-athletes resist deficit-oriented narratives that position them as one-dimensional, suggesting athletic superiority and intellectual inferiority (Logan, 2017; Sailes, 2017; Singer, 2008). They are inundated with messaging that glorifies a future in athletics, while simultaneously positioned as “threats” whom have to prove their worth within academic settings (Martin, Harrison, Stone and Lawrence, 2010). In a study focused on faculty perceptions of student-athletes, Comeaux (2010) found faculty questioned the merits of Black student-athlete’s academic accomplishments while White student-athlete’s accomplishments were deemed “normal” (p. 390). However, instead of embracing such stereotypes, Black student-athletes “worked extremely hard to prove they were capable of epitomizing their roles both as students and athletes” (Martin et al., 2010, p. 140). Their findings maintain Black male student-athletes want to excel athletically and in the classroom. Yet, aspects of their environment may discourage them from academic success.

As Black male student-athletes rely on their athletic status for upward social mobility, they often miss out on opportunities to develop themselves outside of athletics (Baker & Hawkins, 2016). Black male student-athletes spend the majority of

their time focusing on athletics, which limits their opportunities to develop professional identities and explore careers outside of sports.

Theoretical Conceptualization of Identity: Figured Worlds

In *Identity and Agency in Cultural Worlds*, Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner and Cain (1998) suggest an individual's identity, or self-perception, is in a constant state of mutation and fluidity as it responds to new spaces or figured worlds. Explicating upon identities in figured worlds, Urrieta (2007) argues people come to understand themselves and "come to 'figure' who they are, through the 'worlds' they participate in and how they relate to others within and outside of these worlds" (p. 107). According to Holland and colleagues, identity is a co-constructed process, an individual's understanding of self is in a constant negotiation between the authoring of self and being positioned as "a particular sort of actor" (p. 108) by others. Urrieta argues, "when positioned, people are not so much engaged in self-making, but rather are limited to varying degrees of accepting, rejecting, or negotiating the identities being offered to them" (2007, p. 111). In figured worlds, identities "are not located solely in the individual, but rather are negotiated in social interactions that take form in cultural spaces" mediated through relations of power (Nasir & Saxe, 2003, p. 17). Within these figured worlds, Black male student-athletes struggle to develop aspects of their identity that extend beyond the limitations of what is expected of them by those with greater institutional power. The socially and culturally constructed figured worlds that are college campuses, and more specifically, collegiate athletic departments commonly referred to as the "athletic bubble," (Menke, 2016) cultivate Black male student-athletes' athletic identity at the expense of other aspects of their multifaceted selves (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011; Hodge, Robinson, Burden & Bennett, 2008).

Holland, Lachicotte, Jr., Skinner, and Cain (1998) argue, for figured worlds to maintain their rules of governance, participants in these spaces must form a collective reality. Black male student-athletes often adapt to the values of the figured worlds and come to "understand themselves in relation to these worlds" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 54). Many Black male student-athletes are complicit in this process as they fall in line with the norms of the figured worlds, as certain acts are "reproduced, forming and reforming in the practices of its participants... a figured world is formed and re-formed in relation to the everyday activities and events that ordain happenings within it" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 53). Black male student-athletes often adapt similar attitudes towards their athletic identities because they are socially isolated, spending most of their time with one another doing activities that reinforce the importance of athletics such as: practice, team meetings, working out, study hall, and even eating and living together (Singer, 2008). Many Black male student-athletes are heavily entrapped in the college sports figured world, and their personal and professional development is limited by the racialized identities made available and imposed upon them within the spaces they occupy (Nasir, 2011).

Studying abroad offers alternate figured worlds, and perhaps alternative identities to those traditionally offered to Black male student-athletes within the figured worlds of college campuses. Figured worlds, especially in the international arena provide physical, psychological, and philosophical spaces for the development of alternative and varied identities (Holland et al., 1998; Wick, 2011). Students who study abroad consistently,

Express a greater self-confidence in their ability to meet new situations, communicate with others not like them, and have a lesser need to be continuously supported by others...Education abroad may be an important catalyst for students developing personal attributes, like a sense of self-direction, i.e., helping students make progress in their journey towards self-authorship. (Braskamp, Braskamp, & Merrill, 2009, p. 112)

The benefits of education abroad directly influence the aspects of identity development Black male student-athletes in revenue-producing sports struggle with due to their socialization within sport, specifically at the collegiate level (Beamon, 2012).

Discussion and Implications

In this article, we made a conceptual argument as to why creating opportunities for Black student-athletes to study abroad could positively impact their academic, personal and professional pursuits beyond the field. In the concluding paragraphs of this paper, we highlight existing collegiate programs that have successfully developed opportunities for their student-athletes to study abroad. It is not to suggest these programs are the solution to institutional problems, instead they underscore the possibilities when colleges and universities choose to address the barriers rather than ignore or reinforce them. There are many challenges to Black male student-athletes accessing education abroad opportunities such as time demands, financial support, and general knowledge about such opportunities, however, the goal of this paper is to bring awareness to education abroad as a high-impact practice they may deter the prevalence of athletic identity foreclosure in Black male student-athletes. Prominent Power 5 conference institutions, such as Vanderbilt University, The University of Wisconsin, The University of Washington and others, have found ways to support the education abroad goals of some of their revenue-producing Black male student-athletes. They have created scholarship funds and developed short-term education abroad programs that fit their unique needs (Baggot, 2017). Instead of focusing on the barriers, it is critical to develop a body of literature that highlights the actual experiences of Black male student-athletes abroad so practitioners working in athletic departments can advocate for similar opportunities on their campuses.

Athletic departments and universities also have much to gain by implementing education abroad options and opportunities aimed at Black male student-athletes in revenue-producing sports. *First*, the academic and professional benefits of education abroad including higher GPA and graduation rates, and higher levels of career-readi-

ness would obviously serve the esteem of the University and its athletic department. Furthermore, the benefits of education abroad as well as the ability to market such unique educational opportunities to potential athletes would likely have a positive impact on recruiting. Not only would institutions be able to distinguish themselves from schools who are hesitant to offer these opportunities, they would also be better suited to recruit the epitome of a student-athlete, one who is equally interested in their athletic and educational attainment. For example, in the Spring of 2017 and 2018, Jim Harbaugh and the University of Michigan football team traveled abroad to Rome, Italy and Paris, France. Not only did the trips provide students with an opportunity to see another country, it also brought the University of Michigan notoriety and constant airtime on ESPN which increased their visibility to potential recruits (Murphy, 2017). We share this example not as the gold standard for education abroad, but as an example to highlight how athletic departments and Universities use innovative approaches to get their student-athletes abroad in a way that benefits the students as well as the institution.

Athletic departments can partner with the international office at their respective institutions to create study abroad trips that emphasize academic focus, provide student-athletes an opportunity to author new aspects of their identities, disrupt the prevalence of the “athletic bubble,” and travel with the general student body. Two to six-week programs, at the end of the spring semester, can be adjusted to meet the time demands of student-athletes in revenue producing sports. These trips can accommodate the times demands of student-athletes in revenue producing sports, while also creating opportunities where student-athletes get to influence and be influenced by students who they do not typically get to spend quality time with on campus.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison led 17 students on a service-learning trip to the Dominican Republic in the Summer of 2017 (Baggot, 2017). Of the 17 students, nine were student-athletes, and three were football players, one of whom was competing for the starting running back spot. It is important to note the investment of such programming on behalf of the athletic department and more specifically the football coaching staff. It is understandable that coaches may not want their best athletes to miss time when they could be preparing for the season, however, there are often valuable lessons learned abroad that positively impact the way a student-athlete comes to understand their status as an athlete. Upon returning from his trip, Baggot (2017) quotes Black male student-athlete, Chris James, as stating, “I think Coach Chryst liked it when I said I’m not going to complain anymore about anything football-wise because I know the reality.” While he realized there was more to life than sports, he also realized what a great privilege, opportunity and platform he had as a student-athlete.

Second, student-athletes are widely recognized by their peers on campus as leaders. Providing opportunities for student-athletes to study abroad would likely have a big impact on encouraging the general student body to take advantage of those opportunities. This would not only develop the presence of a stronger international office on campus but would lead to more global recognition of the University. Studying abroad would be especially impactful for Black male student-athletes in

revenue producing sports due to the challenges they face on PWIs as listed earlier in this paper, however, other student-athletes, athletic departments, and the University as a whole would also benefit from the development of such opportunities.

The goal of this paper was to position education abroad as a viable extracurricular activity that could positively influence the collegiate experiences and career trajectories of Black male student-athletes. When study abroad and revenue-producing student-athletes are put in the same conversation, it is easy to focus on the barriers rather than the opportunities. Yes, they face unique time challenges that limit participation. They will not be able to engage in exchange programs like their non-athlete peers, however, institutions could create opportunities for them to engage in some form of international education like education abroad. Colleges and Universities have created service learning abroad opportunities, short-term education abroad opportunities, or in some cases, like The University of Michigan, the whole team traveled abroad for a week to engage the culture of another country. While some experiences will likely be more robust and enriching than others, it is incumbent to researchers and practitioners concerned with the plight of Black male student-athletes to re-imagine what student-athlete development looks like. Future research should include the experiences of Black male student-athletes who have the opportunity to participate in a study abroad program as well as Black male student-athletes who participate in service-learning programs abroad with their teammates, with other student-athletes, etc. While education abroad in and of itself will not solve all of the challenges facing Black male student-athletes, developing scholarship on the experiences of Black male student-athletes and their study abroad experiences will shed light on how they can best be supported while in college.

Conclusion

To comprehend the space created for Black male student-athlete identity development and production abroad, it is critical to understand how racism shapes the collegiate experiences of these students (Hawkins, 2013). Freire (1971) states “one of the gravest obstacles to the achievement of liberation is that oppressive reality absorbs those within it and thereby acts to submerge human beings’ consciousness” (pg. 51). A Black male student-athlete at a PWI must constantly push back against the White hegemonic ideological power structure that attempts to define who one is and who they are not. Far too often, these athletes are positioned as one-dimensional athletes, with little too offer outside of their athletic abilities, which we know is untrue. Learning about one’s racial identity through a deficit-oriented perspective, where they are seen as athletically superior but academically inferior (Logan, 2017) debilitates the identity development and understanding of self.

Education abroad provides a unique and positive influence because it offers a new figured world where aspects of an individual’s identity can be cultivated, developed and enriched, even if on a short-term education abroad program. Education abroad allows students to see themselves as independent and free from the constraints of the figured worlds they occupy as student-athletes, and uninhibited from

the idea they are simply athletic competitors. Black male student-athletes would be temporarily free from the constraints of their athletic time commitments providing them the space to author aspects of their identities outside of the American hegemonic white lens (Du Bois, 1903) by better understanding the heterogeneity of Blackness internationally. Fanon (1952) and Hall (1993) both suggest through recognizing and appreciating difference we come to understand the true and heterogeneous nature of what it means to be Black. Meeting Black people from other countries and understanding Blackness through the lens of another country broadens one's definition of race and racial categorizations. This repositioning of oneself in the global world pushes back on hegemonic ideologies trying to limit the multidimensionality of Black male student-athlete's identities.

Consistent in the literature about student-athletes and athletic identity foreclosure is the need for student-athletes to find spaces that encourage the development of their multidimensional selves (Beamon, 2010; Bimper, 2016; Harrison, 2011). Time abroad could be especially impactful for student-athletes because it would provide them a space where they are no longer different because they are Black male student-athletes, they are different or 'othered' because they are American students, a much bigger world where they can explore who they really are. Instead of being the "Big and Black" (Beamon, 2012) student-athlete on a PWI campus, these students will be provided with the space to author their identities and the futures they see for themselves.

Given the conceptual nature of this article, future research might qualitatively explore the experiences of Black male student athletes who studied abroad. More specifically, the authors suggest using Critical Race Theory (CRT) as the guiding framework. Critical Race Theory (CRT) would be a viable framework for future research as CRT encourages researchers to not only identify problems as outlined in this article but propose justice-oriented solutions. While this particular article focuses on Black male student-athletes for reasons outlined earlier in the article, future research should also explore the impact studying abroad has on female student-athletes, specifically Black female student-athletes

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