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They're Just Here for Ball: Proposing a Multi-Level Analysis on the Impact of Collegiate Athletics at Historically White Institutions on Black Male Collegiate Athlete Holistic Identity

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They're Just Here for Ball: Proposing a Multi-Level Analysis on the Impact of Collegiate Athletics at Historically White Institutions on Black Male Collegiate Athletes' Holistic Identity & Transition Out of Sport

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Abstract

As the overrepresentation of Black male collegiate athletes (BMCAs) increases in National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I (DI) revenue-generating sports, coaches and athletic staff continue to overemphasize sport performance, while graduation rates for BMCAs remain persistently lower than their peers and research continues to document transition out of sport concerns for this population. Proposing a multi-level approach, we explore the collegiate athletic factors that influence the holistic identity development of DI revenue-generating BMCAs at historically White institutions (HWIs) leading to difficulty transitioning out of sport. At the macro level, the NCAA and its policies on eligibility are analyzed. At the meso level, HWIs' collegiate athletic departments and the impact of organizational practices are examined in regard to their impact on BMCAs' identity development, overall experiences, and transition out of sport. Lastly, at the micro level, we explore research focused on BMCAs' experiences, expectations, and issues at HWIs. By identifying salient factors influencing BMCAs' identity development and experiences, collegiate athletic stakeholders can use this information to create more effective programming and improve campus cultures that foster holistic development on a systematized basis creating an environment where BMCAs are prepared to move into the next stage of life after sport ends.

Keywords: *Black male collegiate athletes; Collegiate athletics; Holistic identity; Multi-level approach; Social Capital*

According to the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) 2018-2019 financial statement, the organization has seen a major increase in revenue with \$3.5 billion in scholarships for 180,000 collegiate athletes, and \$867 million in television and marketing rights fees (NCAA, 2019). With this rapid growth, the NCAA, a "non-profit organization," is part of one of the biggest industries in America. For example, in 2017, men's basketball and football college coaches were the highest paid state employees in 39 out of 50 states, including University of Alabama head football coach Nick Saban being paid \$11.1 million annually (ESPN, 2017). Despite growth in the business of collegiate athletics, it appears Black male collegiate athletes (BMCAs) who play for these Division I (DI) programs are not exposed to Black leadership, as Black coaches are underrepresented in the NCAA at large (Lapchick et al., 2019). When examining collegiate sports such as men's basketball

and football, Harper et al. (2016) found BMCAs made up 50% of those sports teams in the Power Five conferences (Athletic Coastal Conference, Big 10, Big 12, PAC-12, and Southeastern Conference) during the 2015-2016 year. In 2019, only 10% of DI head football coaching positions were filled by African Americans, which demonstrates little to no growth or change since 2010 (Lapchick et al., 2019).

Additionally, between Division I, II, and III, African Americans held 7.8%, 4.7%, and 4.9% of men's head coaching positions (Lapchick et al., 2019). This lack of African American leadership can lead to BMCAs experiencing a disconnection between the player and the organization they are in due to cultural dissonance, which can cause feelings of helplessness, alienation, and unacceptance by their leaders and peers (Martin et al., 2010; Melendez, 2008; Rhoden, 2006). Rhoden (2006) specifically detailed that in order to bridge this cultural disso-

nance, administrators must provide models of black leadership and mentorship, as this allows BMCAs to concretely visualize their own ability to move into these types of leadership roles. Melendez (2008) also suggested coaching staffs can contribute to positive outcomes for their BMCAs by creating “connections with community liaisons, groups, and resources that may assist in fostering a sense of community for BMCAs and reduce their alienation and anxiety” (p. 447). Since African Americans constitute a small percentage of the head coaching positions in these two revenue-generating sports, it appears BMCAs face barriers in acquiring vital social capital to successfully pursue leadership positions in college sport, especially from coaches and mentors that may face similar obstacles as Black men in America (Bimper Jr, 2016; Carter-Francique et al., 2015; Sagas & Cunningham, 2005).

Social capital becomes prominent when it is time to build relationships and success in society (Carter-Francique et al., 2015). As social capital theory explains, this is the network of peers, colleagues, and superiors who are critical to career advancement (Day & McDonald, 2010; McDonald & Day, 2010). Through these social capital resources an individual can increase their influence and expand their network to create access to new jobs or upward career progression (Day & McDonald, 2010; McDonald & Day, 2010). For example, social capital can be used to explain how friends, relatives, or even colleagues can increase the chances of one getting a job through disseminating job openings or indicating your skills to a hiring manager (Day & McDonald, 2010; McDonald & Day, 2010). This influence and status allow an individual to access resources that further or sustain their career (Day & McDonald, 2010; McDonald & Day, 2010). BMCAs have significant trouble gaining social capital in connection to occupations aside from sport due to: (1) a long-standing belief in the intellectual deficiency of Black people, (2) media propaganda portraying sports as the key to upward mobility for Black men, and (3) a lack of comparably visible

Black role models in positions beyond athletics (Edwards, 2000). Thus, a lack of social capital exacerbates the double consciousness that African Americans wrestle as a result of facing systemic oppression and the devaluation of their race in a White-dominated society (DuBois, 2008).

Moreover, BMCAs at historically White institutions (HWI) gain extreme value from their athletic prowess (Hawkins, 2010), but seem to be at a disadvantage when it comes to receiving a well-rounded education due to the intense demands of collegiate athletics. Graduation rates for BMCAs have increased since 2003; however, the gap between BMCAs and their White counterparts has not been eliminated, which perpetuates the presumption that they are athletically superior and intellectually inferior (Hawkins, 2010). Furthermore, BMCAs face numerous problems off the field that adversely affect them in the classroom. BMCAs encounter negative stereotypes from faculty, staff, and administrators, which results in poor academic performance (Bimper Jr et al., 2013; Harrison, 2001; Melendez, 2008). According to Dr. Harry Edwards,

Colleges bring Black athletes to campus to do one thing: play sport. They are not serious about the academic concerns of Black athletes, often providing them with “Mickey Mouse” courses and giving them grades for courses never completed or mastered. (Harris, 1997, p. 327)

Although the aforementioned quote does not apply to all BMCAs’ experiences, it does reflect a common trend in the literature related to their experiences at HWIs (Hawkins, 2010; Melendez, 2008). When BMCAs do not have strong support systems that can encourage them through their college experiences (academically, athletically, socially, psychologically, and culturally), they may find themselves favoring their athlete identity role over their student identity (Melendez, 2008).

The power of the external environment—such as the media, professional sports leagues, corporate sponsors, and governing bodies (e.g., NCAA)—can

(and do) penetrate the core of an athletic department and affect its values and assumptions (Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016). With BMCAs' perspectives heavily influenced by external factors, and with the NCAA's organizational culture structured to sustain mediocrity from collegiate athletes, social capital acquisition often is stagnated or minimized (Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016). BMCAs that meet the minimum eligibility requirements believe their coaches are satisfied with their effort (Martin et al., 2010). Thus, the combination of the aforementioned factors appears to lead to BMCAs thoroughly immersing themselves in sports socialization, often leading to the development of a robust athletic identity but neglecting their academic identity (Beamon & Bell, 2006; Martin et al., 2010). Although transition out of sport and holistic identity have been explored in the literature, our paper aims to focus on explaining how the three levels (macro – NCAA; meso – athletic departments; and micro – athletes themselves) create a “perfect storm” for BMCAs to prioritize athletics, leading to a lack of holistic development causing a poor transition out of sport. As such, the purpose of this manuscript is to explore previous literature related to the macro, meso, and micro collegiate athletic factors at HWIs and explain how these factors are intertwined, affecting holistic identity development and transition out of sport of BMCAs participating in high revenue-generating sports (football and men's basketball). The multi-level approach theorizes the process of BMCAs' development at HWIs.

Multi-Level Approaches in Sport Research

The multi-level approach when involved in sports appears to be used to examine contextual influences that are beyond the scope of the sports milieu (e.g., Burton, 2015; Cooper et al., 2014; Cunningham, 2008, 2010, 2012; Cunningham et al., 2001, 2006; Smith et al., 2019). The multi-level approach consists of the following components used to connect research to cause and effect outcomes: a) macro-level, b) meso-level, and c) micro-level. The multi-level approach

is salient, as the levels cover cultural/socio-cultural elements (macro-level), organizational (meso-level), and lastly individual (micro-level) factors. From here, the multi-level approach can be used to recommend where research gaps exist and how scholars can focus on discussing and promoting growth in the identified areas, gaining a new perspective into the identified issue (Cunningham, 2008). The multi-level approach is appropriate in sport research, as the macro, meso, and micro levels and their relationships that are intertwined and influenced demonstrate how organizations and individuals are impacted. More specifically, researchers have examined sport through a multi-level approach in relation to minorities in coaching positions (Cunningham, 2008, 2010, 2012; Cunningham et al., 2001, 2006), collegiate athletics at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs; Cooper et al., 2014) and the underrepresentation of women in collegiate athletics leadership (Burton, 2015; Smith et al., 2019). As stated above, the multi-level approach allows for external and internal factors to be considered when examining specified issues and trends within sport (Cunningham, 2008).

Specific to this work, the authors will draw on the multi-level analytical contributions of Cunningham et al. (2006), Cunningham (2008, 2010, 2012), Burton (2005), and Cooper et al. (2014). Cunningham and researchers (2006) used a version of the multi-level approach to analyze the factors influencing the lack of DI African American head coaches in football and men's basketball programs. The researchers approach consisted of three prominent factors: 1) how African Americans are constrained by societal and occupational factors such as access discrimination in the hiring process (macro-level), 2) African Americans leaving the coaching profession earlier than their White counterparts (meso-level), and 3) African Americans not viewing coaching as a primary career path (micro-level; Cunningham et al., 2001, 2006).

Following this work, Cunningham (2008) focused on gender and the mistreatment of women in sport by using a multi-level approach to explain the nature of gender-based inequality in collegiate

athletics. Cunningham's (2008) multi-level approach outlined a diversity-related problem that takes into account how environmental pressures for change (macro-level) influence the organization's lack of gender inclusive practices, treatments, and hiring practices (meso-level), as well as the psychological dynamics (micro-level), which all serve as barriers to women and perpetuate the pattern of sexism in sport (Cunningham, 2008).

In 2010 and 2012 Cunningham used the multi-level approach to frame the understanding of under-representation of African Americans in collegiate athletics. Specifically, his work in 2010 focused on the lack of African American head coaches. At the macro level, Cunningham (2010) explained that institutionalized practices of racism in sport and the political climates of major universities promote "Whites as smarter, more ethical, and better leaders than their African American counterparts" (p.397). Additionally, athletic departments are highly influenced by stakeholder expectations, specifically alumni and donors who desire coaches they can identify with (i.e., White male). Under the meso level, the organizational structure and processes of prejudice, discrimination, culture, and leadership stereotypes were explored further, demonstrating that "negative attitudes and emotions toward racial minorities" still very much exist, permeate, and affect decision-making in regard to hiring African American head coaches (Cunningham, 2010, p. 399). Finally, at the micro level, head coaching expectations, intentions, and turnover were explored to demonstrate that African Americans in coaching do consistently experience discrimination and barriers. For some coaches and even collegiate athletes there still is high intention to enter the coaching profession, but a lack of career advancement opportunities and less career satisfaction causes them to leave the field of coaching prematurely (Cunningham, 2010).

Connecting to his work in 2010, Cunningham (2012) used the multi-level approach to explore how macro, meso, and micro levels of occupational segregation contributed to under-representation of African Americans in leadership positions within collegiate

athletics. At the macro level, institutional racism and isomorphic pressures explain that "stereotypes depict Whites as 'natural' leaders with superior intellectual ability while portraying African Americans as possessing 'natural' athletic skills, but as intellectually deficient" (Cunningham, 2012, p. 168). Furthermore, decision-makers prefer to hire largely homogenous groups that have similar experiences and education; coupled with normative pressures, this places African Americans in areas in sport that are seen as more supportive roles (e.g., academic support services) instead of leadership positions (Cunningham, 2012). Expanding the idea of occupational segregation of African Americans, Cunningham (2012) explained that at the meso or organizational level African Americans encounter leadership categorization, where organizations lack diversity efforts or organizations that embrace the diversity mindset in hiring practices but continue to segment African American administrators to support roles to further attract and retain BMCAs. Finally, at the micro level the lack of racial social capital and vocational interests of African American administrators was explored and the perceived desire to work closely with collegiate athletes was used to explain why occupational segregation occurs.

Building from the work of Cunningham (2008), Burton (2015) constructed a systematic literature review addressing the lack of women in leadership positions within collegiate athletics using the multi-level approach. Burton (2015) acknowledged a multi-level perspective is imminent when it comes to studies similar to these, as sports organizations are multi-level entities that shape and are re-shaped by multitudinous factors (Cunningham, 2010). Burton's (2015) research examined literature regarding the institutionalized practices of gender in sport (macro-level); stereotyping and discrimination toward women in leadership positions in organizational cultures (meso-level); and women's leadership expectations in sport cultures and how career advancement has affected women in sport (micro-level). At the macro level, the review focused on institutional practices regarding women in leadership. The review also ad-

dresses social expectations and gendered expectations of leadership by stakeholders, which privilege White men. It appears that the culture of sport is White-male dominated throughout collegiate athletic leadership positions (e.g., college head coaches/athletic directors; Lapchick et al., 2019).

At the meso level, Burton (2015) focused on literature that explores issues of discrimination, leadership stereotypes, and gendered organizational cultures, including those that are unsupportive of a healthy work-family balance. Burton (2015) found that inconsistent practices of normalizing gender inequities also influenced hiring practices and retention rates. The micro level of Burton's (2015) analysis examined scholarship that delved into women's experiences at the individual level and discussed ideal expectations of a woman in leadership, occupational turnover intentions, and symbolic interactionism on career advancement. The individual's experience at the micro level is important because capital is earned through human interaction and experiences within relationships, training, and education (Sagas & Cunningham, 2005). Research has demonstrated in the White male-dominated culture of collegiate athletics that women possess less capital and access to upward occupational mobility than their male counterparts (Katz et al., 2018).

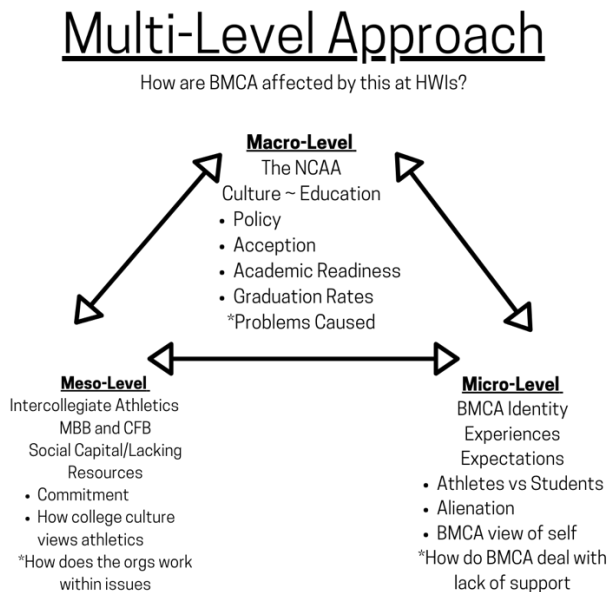
Lastly, Cooper et al. (2014) used a multi-level approach to outline the challenges HBCU athletic programs face within the NCAA system. At the macro level, Cooper et al. (2014) explained the permanence of racism that is interwoven into the fabric of the United States and higher educational cultures, which has resulted in a systematic and racially hierarchical approach to funding HWIs as the priority, leaving HBCUs socially, economically, and educationally underfunded. Furthermore, this disparity leaves HBCUs in jeopardy of losing accreditation, dealing with budget cuts, and financial aid crises that their HWI counterparts do not experience on the same scale or at all. At the meso level, the priorities of the NCAA are critiqued as the authors identify that the NCAA "was not created nor currently structured to benefit

Black athletes or HBCUs" (Cooper et al., 2014, p. 314). Consequently, NCAA practices are designed to protect the top DI HWIs (e.g., the Power Five) by including an inequitable structure of post-season tournaments and bowls, reliance on HBCUs for "guarantee games" with HWIs that ultimately hurt HBCUs' rankings and ability for post-season play, and extracting BMCAs from Black-operated entities to HWIs in an effort to increase revenue and athletic success. Finally, at the micro level, HBCUs deal with turnover, inadequate support and facilities, and many times have to resort to cutting sports to decrease budgetary expenses. Thus, as demonstrated from the research above, the multi-level design may be effective for researching topics where numerous factors or levels are intertwined, connected, and influence one another, such as the topic at hand.

Applying a Multi-Level Approach to Explore BMCAs' Experiences at HWIs

Using the multi-level approach to examine BMCAs' experiences at HWIs involves an analysis of the NCAA (macro-level), DI collegiate athletic departments and revenue-generating programs (e.g., football and basketball; meso-level), and BMCAs' experiences that shape their identity (micro-level). The multi-level approach proposed provides a foundation to demonstrate how BMCAs are affected by their environment, access to social capital, and commitment to their HWI teams, which in turn influences their collegiate experience and ability to smoothly transition out of sport. The multi-level approach also will assist scholars with fulfilling important research gaps. When viewing the multi-level approach and how each level can be beneficial or detrimental toward BMCAs, we also have opportunities to view what connects each level through research. Thus, the following diagram illustrates how this approach will guide this paper (See Figure 1). The multi-level approach outlines each level and the various factors that may impact BMCAs at HWIs.

Figure 1
Multi-level approach for Black male collegiate athletes' holistic development



Macro-Level

Although we recognize there are a multitude of environmental, societal, and systematic factors, “as well as all social institutions (e.g., business, political, education, health, sport, music, and art) that remain deeply embedded with racist assumptions, values, and beliefs that perpetuate a racial hierarchy whereby Whiteness is privileged and Blackness is positioned as the most inferior” (Cooper et al., 2017, p. 208) that influence BMCAs, the focus of this paper is on using the multi-level approach in relation to the collegiate athletic system. Thus, the macro level for this paper primarily will focus on the NCAA and its policies. The multi-level approach can be utilized in the exploration of macro-level factors such as the governing body of collegiate athletics, the NCAA. At this macro level, we focus on cultural and societal influences on BMCAs’ academic readiness and the continuous racial academic performance gaps established by the NCAA. These gaps harm BMCAs, as many times

they attend underfunded primary and secondary institutions, leaving them unprepared and unable to meet NCAA and institutional academic standards (Cooper, 2012).

NCAA Bylaws over the years have been changed to promote a 2.0 grade point average (GPA) to compete in collegiate sports. The aforementioned policies have resulted in a longstanding gap in graduation rates of BMCAs when compared to their White counterparts (Harper et al., 2016). These macro-level influences are controlled by the NCAA and directly affect the academic experiences for collegiate athletes in general and BMCAs more specifically. We argue that the lack of high academic expectations from the NCAA relates to organizational issues for institutions (meso-level) when it comes to their view on academics and how to apply resources to promote value for BMCAs.

Responsibility of NCAA for Current BMCAs’ Issues. Organized sports have been argued to be the first opportunity for African Americans to climb the social ladder in the U.S. and have their presence accepted throughout institutions across the country (Harris, 1997). As the increase of BMCAs has become apparent at HWIs over the last century, the NCAA appears to create different bylaws to recruit exclusive talent that has not met the academic standards of the institution (Donnor, 2005; Sack, 2009). Scholars point to the NCAA’s original indoctrination of a 1.6 GPA rule in 1965, which led to incoming athletes only needing a 1.6 GPA to be eligible to compete (Donnor, 2005; Sack, 2009). This rule led to a sprint to secure athletic talent with no real emphasis on incoming preparation for college education and a lack of emphasis on educational development throughout the college career. The initial and incoming lack of academic readiness for BMCAs as they enter higher education seems to be linked to their exposure to systematic racism, which begins as early as elementary education due to the lack of resources and experiences with different levels of discrimination (e.g., economically, politically, socially, etc.). Furthermore, scholars have noted this systematic racism is

shaped in an effort to keep Whites, particularly White males, in positions of power or superiority over other minority groups (Feagin, 2006).

Despite the increased access to college, African American students in particular remain at the bottom of statistics when it comes to standardized testing in high school (Harper et al., 2018). According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2017), African American students have tested the lowest of all ethnicities in all three sections on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) since 1986. Although this exam has proven to be racially and culturally biased, the same ethos guiding this assessment tool also is ubiquitous within academic departments at HWIs and thus creates multi-level challenges for BMCAs who are not familiar with White, Euro-centric, middle- and upper-class values, norms, and ways of thinking (Cooper, et al., 2017). These scores have shown many African American students have not properly been prepared to attend a four-year institution, yet their athletic ability provides an avenue for them to compete on sports teams at these institutions; hence, the usage of the term “academic and athletic exploitation” (Cooper et al., 2017; Hawkins, 2010).

NCAA Bylaws. Proposition 48 was implemented by the NCAA in 1986 and it appeared to be focused heavily on BMCAs attending four-year institutions (Edwards, 2000). The legislation created a rule where collegiate athletes out of high school needed to maintain a 2.0 GPA in at least 11 core subjects and a 700 SAT score (17 ACT) before they competed in a varsity-level sport (Edwards, 2000). Collegiate athletic coaches, such as then-Georgetown’s John Thompson, began to argue that Proposition 48 would disproportionately impact African American collegiate athletes. Later in 1989, Proposition 42 was introduced and stated that anyone who was academically ineligible would be denied financial aid and eligibility to compete for their first year. This rule affected students who could not pay for college, which mostly impacted Black students who did not receive scholarships (Edwards, 2000). The NCAA saw the potential loss and momentum of bringing in BMCAs and modified the bylaw for partially qualified students (i.e.,

met GPA or test scores requirements) to be eligible for admission and provided with non-athletic, need-based financial aid for the first year. As NCAA rules continued to change, the Academic Progress Rate (APR) was introduced in 2004 in hopes that collegiate athletic departments and teams would strategize the way they recruited collegiate athletes and maintained retention through graduation (Castle et al., 2015).

The NCAA implemented the APR with the purpose of creating a more precise way to measure whether collegiate athletes were making progress toward their degrees (Christy et al., 2008). This policy was supposed to promote more academic success; however, it caused the NCAA to hand out more disciplinary action (Castle et al., 2015). The APR of institutions was scored off a grading system that scaled from 0 to 1,000 points, with a cutoff score of 925 (60% graduation rate). The APR’s rate calculation includes athletic eligibility, student retention, and graduation rates to provide an accurate picture of the current academic status of each sport at an institution (Castle et al., 2015). The APR system only counts students that receive financial aid based off athletic ability (scholarship) and are enrolled as a full-time student by the fifth week of the university’s official census date (Bouchet & Scott, 2009). If teams do not meet the required score, they can face a post-season ban or loss of scholarships for the next recruiting season (Bouchet & Scott, 2009).

Despite the increased sanctions handed out by the NCAA, some researchers believe that it would not eradicate the athletic-centric (and at times unethical) behavior of collegiate athletic departments and teams, but instead only encourage coaches, collegiate athletes, college professors, and athletic departments to cut corners to meet APR standards (Wolverton, 2008). For BMCAs who were underprepared for rigorous courses at DI HWIs in concert with unsupportive and unwelcoming campus climates, this can result in them struggling to meet APR standards (Harper et al., 2018; Melendez, 2008). When education is put at equivocal standards and importance through macro-level policy and requirements, it appears that it can promote a win-at-all-cost mentality where adminis-

trators, coaches, and collegiate athletes place priority in athletic endeavors and success in front of academic success.

When reviewing BMCAs graduation rates and the NCAA's marketing of increased rates for their collegiate athletes, it is hard to ignore the gap between BMCAs and their peers. BMCAs on average, when compared to their non-athlete Black peers, graduate approximately 64% lower across the Power Five (Harper et al., 2018). It is to be noted that BMCAs are overrepresented when compared to Black students enrolled in the student body at HWIs (i.e., at the University of Florida, BMCAs make up 77% of the Black student body that represents 2.2% of the institution; Harper et al., 2018). Harper et al. (2018) stated that on average 44.8% of BMCAs are not graduating within a six-year rate, while also graduating at five percentage points lower than their same-race peers. Within athletic departments, graduation rates between BMCAs and their counterparts are lopsided as well, with most BMCAs reporting lower graduation rates at almost every Power Five conference institution except the University of Miami, where BMCAs graduate at 64% vs 62% for all collegiate athletes (Harper et al., 2018).

Massive amounts of money are invested into collegiate athlete academic success centers, tutors, and other resources that are funded to help all collegiate athletes reach their greatest potential on and off the field (i.e., the classroom; NCAA, 2009). This is concerning because only two percent of collegiate athletes in college football (most BMCAs) transition to the professional sport level. However, 45% of football bowl sub-division (FBS) athletes do not receive college degrees (Jayukmar & Comeaux, 2016; Madsen, 2014). In 2010 the Knight Commission, which was created to "promote reform in collegiate athletics to support and strengthen the educational mission," pointed out the NCAA's business-like model that valued athletics over academics (Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016, p. 490).

The NCAA uses the "entertainment dollar" for a speculative investment, continuously pouring money into making highly successful athlet-

ic departments and justifies it as an educational benefit (Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016, p. 490). Furthermore, the NCAA as described by Cooper et al. (2017) is "similar to the foundation of the U.S., without the racial exploitation of talented Blacks, the NCAA would not exist in its current form (a multi-billion dollar industry)" (p. 206). A model like this can cause unethical decisions when undervaluing education, and institutions have been able to find loopholes within policies to remain free from punishment (Castle et al., 2015), as well as continue to keep racial inequities unaddressed despite the NCAA's claim to be focused on a commitment to inclusion, diversity, and equity (Cooper, 2012). When problems like this arise in an agency such as the NCAA (macro-level), a ripple effect occurs in institutions involved in collegiate athletics, causing inefficient organizational or meso-level practices.

Meso-Level

At the meso level, revenue-generating sports are the focus for DI athletic programs. Within this section it is the intent to compare DI programs at HWIs to their counterparts at HBCUs, and how resources are utilized to promote success on the field and in the classroom. Although we acknowledge there is heterogeneity and diversity among and across these institution types (e.g., public vs. private, different institutional missions and admissions standards, size of schools, faculty to student ratios, campus cultures, etc.), there are distinct differences at the organizational level of HWIs and HBCUs. Based off the graduation rates we saw above for BMCAs, we know there is a specific culture that has been embraced at these HWIs whereby success on the field is prioritized. Acknowledging that BMCAs often are on athletic scholarships when attending these HWIs, we must consider where expectations are placed when it comes to commitment to the organization. Despite mandated policies by the NCAA to protect the academic endeavors of collegiate athletes, there is still a pattern of sports being valued over academics at an alarm-

ing rate, particularly at the DI level. This brings into question how BMCAs, who are overrepresented in the highest revenue-generating sports of football and men's basketball (Harper, 2016), are being treated and viewed in the collegiate athletic culture while trying to meet additional expectations (e.g., academically, socially, culturally). If BMCAs do not have a positive college experience, there are permanent effects on their lives beyond the field that can lead to an identity crisis having both short-term and long-term consequences, as well as problems transitioning out of sport (e.g., Beamon, 2012; Beamon & Bell, 2006; Hawkins, 2010; Kidd et al., 2018; Singer, 2008).

HWI Athletic Department Time Demands. For BMCAs, many arrive on the practice field before they set foot on the actual grounds of the university. DI college football and men's basketball usually enroll their first-year athletes in summer sessions along with transfers. Since both sports start in the fall, it appears to be imperative that BMCAs have enough time to acclimate to the nature of DI sports, new social circles, and academic standards. This period of transition can be challenging for BMCAs due to their strict athletic and academic demands (Hardin & Pate, 2013). During the summer, BMCAs usually take one to two classes while practicing five days a week at the facilities. As the emphasis on athletics increases for BMCAs during this socialization process, poor academic performance increases (Beamon & Bell, 2006). This is salient as BMCAs are more likely to enroll in college academically underprepared and this may contribute to the decline in academic performance during enrollment. With these arising challenges, athletic departments have spent millions on academic centers, advisors, tutors, learning specialists, and lifeskill programs (Stokowski et al., 2017). Despite the commitment to improving academic success centers, BMCAs still experience academic and social isolation among their peers in the classroom due to the time demands of their respective sport (Howard-Hamilton & Watt, 2001; Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016; Yopyk & Prence, 2005).

Beyond time demands entering college, during BMCAs' collegiate athletic careers, head coaches

have the power to dictate players' summers and time off, as they themselves are under pressure to secure a winning team and program (Wolverton, 2008). One in five collegiate athletes said their sport participation prevented them from pursuing the major of their choice (NCAA, 2016). Therefore, it is hard for BMCAs to truly tap into their academic potential when they do not have the time or a support system that encourages them to do so. Further adding to the difficulty of managing athletics and academics, college football leads all sports with 44.8 hours spent per week practicing, watching film, lifting weights, and receiving rehabilitation (Wolverton, 2008). This can become problematic, as the NCAA has placed a 20-hour rule on sports who must document hours and keep sport participation limited (NCAA, 2020; Wolverton, 2008).

This means BMCAs essentially are working a full-time job with nearly five hours of overtime a week, while also balancing academics and social life. Bear in mind, these BMCAs are supposedly amateurs as opposed to being employees. BMCAs have reported the term collegiate athlete as an inappropriate and inaccurate description of who they are due to the imposed organizational level time demands set by their football programs, which do not allow them to develop within their education (Singer, 2008). BMCAs felt as if the time given to their sport disabled them from taking advantage of the "free education" they are provided, once they received an athletic scholarship (Singer, 2008). Despite these realities, BMCAs still enter college optimistically and believing they will be able to succeed in the classroom throughout their college career. However, they move further away from their academic role as early as the second semester due to these salient time constraints and sports demands (Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016). Therefore, an effort to better understand time demand conflicts, knowledge of social capital, and the effectiveness of resources that should be utilized by the athletic departments across DI is imperative. Thus, we look to HBCUs to provide this example of pairing social capital and resources not only within athletics, but the college campus at large.

Meso-level HWIs versus HBCUs. When BMCAs face these conditions described above, it contributes to both academic and social isolation, which exacerbates the stigma of them primarily identifying with their athletic identity and role (Benson, 2000; Edwards, 2000; Howard-Hamilton & Watt, 2001). BMCAs at HWIs face academic and social challenges that tamper with their overall ability to exceed expectations of coaches, peers, and fans. These challenges include reporting a lack of motivation in the classroom, fewer opportunities to interact with faculty outside of class, and lack of time and opportunity to participate in on-campus activities/organizations (Cooper & Dougherty, 2015).

In contrast, BMCAs at HBCUs encounter different experiences when it comes to social norms and challenges while balancing education, sport, and social life. For example, Cooper and Hawkins (2016) interviewed BMCAs at a HBCU to explore key practices that contributed to their positive academic experiences. Stemming from 57 BMCAs in football and basketball at HBCUs, it was found these institutions create a culture of acceptance and a sense of belonging among their Black students by offering culturally affirming and responsive resources and support (Cooper & Hawkins, 2016). Specifically, BMCAs in the study revealed that they felt a “sense of belonging on campus” when interacting with coaches, faculty members, and other social organizations across campus (Cooper & Hawkins, 2016, p. 952).

HBCUs foster a community that produces positive educational outcomes within their institutions for BMCAs (Charlton, 2011; Cooper & Hawkins, 2016). BMCAs at HBCUs also felt that the resources provided to them as incoming students helped shape their experience when first attending. Summer bridge initiatives such as freshman and transfers weekly meetings, study hall sessions, and athletic department-sponsored ceremonies acknowledging collegiate athletes’ academic accomplishments all contributed to the campus culture prioritizing educational success over athletic prowess (Bimper Jr, 2016; Charlton, 2011; Cooper & Hawkins, 2016). BMCAs at HBCUs reported taking on more of a holistic approach with

strong racial identities rather than “just an athlete” role like their peers at HWIs (Charlton, 2011, p. 127; Cooper & Hawkins, 2012, p. 137). This holistic approach was encouraged through a community that prioritized developing value and character, and coming together to provide support to their student body with faculty members, coaches, and social organizations on campus (e.g., fraternities, mentorship programs, student government, social clubs, homecoming; Cooper & Dougherty, 2015).

Further, HBCUs’ institutional practices have been found to embody the sense of belonging for their student body, including BMCAs (Allen et al., 2007). Specifically, in Cooper and Hall’s (2014) study of 57 BMCAs football and basketball players at a single HBCU, participants referred to the positive relationships with faculty, peers, staff, and community members that led to feeling institutional support described as “a nurturing familial environment” (p. 56). Participants detailed that “professors displayed their care by having routine out-of-class meetings with the participants, expressing a genuine concern for the participants’ overall well-being by talking to them about non-academic issues, and understanding their unique athletic schedules” (Cooper & Hall, 2014, p. 57). Additionally, Cooper and Hall (2014) found that participants felt their HBCU promoted the idea of developing well-rounded students that would be effective leaders in the world upon graduation. Participants also indicated they were members of campus organizations, the majority identified as student first and athlete second, and documents revealed a partnership between athletics and academic advising offices and career services in providing and addressing the needs of collegiate athletes (Cooper & Hall, 2014). For BMCAs at HBCUs this institutional support creates the notion that it is about being more than an athlete and exploring who you are for the sole purpose of succeeding in all areas of life.

Despite HBCUs being created to give Black students a space to feel accepted and safe while furthering their education, HBCUs are not perfect, as they work on a very limited budget and many times encounter less resources to provide their students with

an empowering experience, including the athletic department. Additionally, 22% of HBCUs have graduation rates (42%) that exceed the national average for African Americans, but overall HBCUs' graduation rates are historically low (30%) and Black student six-year graduation rates are behind their HWI peer institutions (31% vs 41%) (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 2011). Furthermore, although there are more Black faculty serving as full-time instructional staff at HBCUs (56% compared to 6% at HWIs), there still is a large section of the campus faculty (25%), administration, and staff that are White, causing BMCAs to potentially still have to navigate through a majority perspective during their academic and athletic experience in college (NCES, 2011). Despite these concerns, it appears that being able to provide students with a positive experience – despite limited resources – is salient for BMCAs at HBCUs versus the difficult experiences BMCAs face at HWIs.

All these HBCU initiatives and resources discussed above appear to contribute to creating and maintaining social capital for collegiate athletes, leading to more successful outcomes on and off the field throughout college. Particular to social capital, participants in Cooper and Hawkins' (2016) study commented on their successful relationships with faculty, engagement in classes, and the use of academic support services being prime factors of academic achievement. Again, despite HBCUs not receiving the same revenue from media contracts or donations from boosters, BMCAs valued the opportunity to participate in college sports and have the opportunity to pursue their professional sport aspirations. Thus, a culture that holistically develops students socially, personally, and academically can have a direct impact on their retention and educational outcomes (Bimper Jr, 2016).

For years HWIs in the NCAA have taken notice of their failure to cultivate campus cultures that accommodate and provide positive educational outcomes for BMCAs (Cooper & Dougherty, 2015). Thus, when HWIs' collegiate athletic departments

create a culture and a sense of isolation from academics to produce stronger commitment toward the team, the holistic development of BMCAs often is lost. Despite the awareness mentioned above, minimal changes have been noticeable at HWIs and negative trends continue to persist.

HWIs and Lack of Support. When comparing BMCAs' experiences from HWIs and HBCUs, it is clear the opportunity for developing a successful academic network is not the problem. BMCAs at HWIs are provided with an abundance of resources that may lead to academic and athletic success as measured by the NCAA's standards. Thus, part of the problem could be the lack of visualization in positions of leadership within athletics at HWIs in comparison to HBCUs. When exploring the positions that Black coaches usually are hired for (i.e., assistants, coordinators) instead of head coaches, it becomes evident that BMCAs do not have mentors and role models within their own sport who reflect their identities, and this has a direct impact on the experiences and behaviors of BMCAs (Cunningham & Bopp, 2010).

Additionally, when collegiate athletic departments at HWIs are physically isolated from the rest of the general student body, head coaches and athletic directors have the power to create their own separate sub-cultures with their own decision-making processes and norms (Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016; Schroeder, 2010). For example, BMCAs often are not allowed to explore or take notice of the main campus social capital available to them, as they make sacrifices due to time-consuming endeavors that prevent them from focusing equally academically (Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016). Social capital then is not used to its full potential not because of poor time management, but due to the excessive time demands that collegiate athletic departments have formed by prioritizing athletics over academics. When used correctly, academic and campus wide services can put an emphasis on higher academic expectations and the motive becomes more than maintaining eligibility (Jayakumar & Comeaux, 2016). These services (e.g., routine academic advising and tutoring, mentorship

programs, pretransition and career planning, career fairs, career workshops) can give BMCAs the advantages needed to be successful in life after sport only if the resources can be used accordingly (Cummins & O'Boyle, 2015; Navarro, 2014, 2015; Smith & Hardin, 2018).

It appears that organizational support or lack thereof for transition out of sport leaves athletes, especially BMCAs at HWIs, ill-equipped to move on since their coaches and athletic leaders prioritize athletics first. BMCAs are impacted by this sub-culture due to being the most heavily recruited group in sports with the greatest chance for exploitation (Harrison et al., 2017). For BMCAs in the high revenue-generating sports of football and men's basketball, their focus is shifted more on their athletic career than academic performance, as the joy of playing in competitive sports is fueled by the pressure of the athletic department and peers, forcing academic aspirations into secondary importance (Beamon & Bell, 2006). Identity transitions often become identity crises, which may create a void in life after sport. Collegiate athletes who emphasize their identity primarily as an athlete, at the expense of their student identity, experience negative outcomes such as lower graduation rates, career mismatch experiences after graduation, and overall lower satisfaction with their college experiences and outcomes (Smith & Hardin, 2018; Steinfeldt et al., 2010; Stokowski et al., 2019). Furthermore, the lack of organizational emphasis and resources given to holistic identity development at HWIs can lead to internalized and even long-term negative personal experiences and narratives for BMCA.

Micro-Level

Related to the micro level, BMCAs' personal experiences and how they may dictate one's understanding of identity is integral. Scholars have researched microaggressions, stereotypes, and how the HWI environment impacts the identity of BM-

CAs (Bimper Jr. et al., 2013; Fuller, 2017; Melendez, 2008; Singer, 2008; Stone et al., 2013). However, scant research offers a perspective about how each level of the multi-level approach creates these challenges for BMCA. The BMCAs' daily battle between shifting identities of being a student versus athlete, motivation to develop off the field, and their personal experiences as stigmatized individuals versus their own expectations are all germane at this level. In addition, BMCAs deal heavily with identity crises and troubles in transitioning to a post-sport lifestyle (e.g., Beamon, 2012; Beamon & Bell, 2006; Hawkins, 2010; Kidd et al., 2018; Singer, 2008). Specifically, BMCAs have explained that their tie to athletics has resulted in an inability or struggle to redefine their identities without sport leaving them ill-equipped to move into a new role or career (e.g., Beamon 2012; Beamon & Bell, 2006; Hawkins, 2010; Kidd et al., 2018; Singer, 2008). This is not surprising, as research has found that many times athletes themselves and others in their lives define them through an athletic lens. For example, a former DI BMCA participant in Beamon (2012)'s qualitative study stated, "I would include sports a lot (in defining myself)...because I mean, sports is basically me...so I don't think I can do anything outside of sports" (p. 201).

In addition, BMCAs have expressed their frustrations with feeling alienated at HWIs, as well as unsupported, which can lead to staying within their "comfort zones" and favoring their athletic identity (Melendez, 2008, p. 440). BMCAs' motivation is based on the cultures in which they exist (Bimper Jr et al., 2013). The lack of motivation in the classroom and possibility of an identity crisis are directly associated with the lack of academic readiness that allow high revenue-generating sports to put high athletic expectations on BMCAs (Cooper et al., 2017; Hawkins, 2010). This results in not properly equipping BMCAs for success outside of sports. Many factors can contribute to this finding, such as the lack of commitment to academics, readiness in the classroom, or the motivation to give effort in their studies (Beamon

& Bell, 2006).

An undergraduate degree is critical for the transition into life after sport for collegiate athletes; however, BMCAs are not experiencing opportunities in the classroom the same way they are on the field (Gill & Farrington, 2014). BMCAs have been socialized into sport growing up (macro-level norms), creating a perception that sports are valuable, attainable, and a high-status endeavor that they are best suited for (Edwards, 2000; Harrison et al., 2017). The socialization process, along with societal arrangements grounded in systemic racism (Cooper et al. 2014; Cooper et al., 2017), has permitted BMCAs to embrace a robust athletic identity, causing them to commit less time to develop as a scholar (Brewer et al., 1993; Harrison et al., 2017). Imposed time demands and constraints within sport sub-cultures and/or within the organization (meso level) can entice BMCAs to focus on the development of their athletic identity over their holistic identity development (Benson, 2000; Bimper Jr et al., 2013; Cooper, 2016; Singer, 2008). BMCAs essentially are channeled toward limited sports opportunities while socialized to disregard other opportunities beyond (Bimper Jr et al., 2013).

Individually, BMCAs begin to absorb and believe these societal and organizational narratives and adopt them as beliefs about themselves. For example, terms like “beast mode” and “violent hit” are celebrated by spectators and coaches, but only serve to solidify a complex narrative that causes BMCAs to internalize hyper-sexualized, performative, and anti-intellectual messages (Douglas et al., 2015, p. 4). This reinforces the ideology for BMCAs that becoming a professional athlete is the primary means for upward mobility on the social ladder and to provide financially for their families (Beamon, 2012; Cummins & O’Boyle, 2015; Harris, 1997), creating a cyclical effect of relying on a “performance-oriented brand of Black masculinity” that continues to have “dehumanizing and debilitating repercussions” (Douglas et al., 2015, p. 4). In other words, the social experiences of

BMCAs at many HWIs leads to difficulty in acquiring positive self-perceptions aside from athletics and contribute to holistic development barriers.

Moreover, BMCAs face stereotypes on campus from peers, staff, faculty members, and administrators (Melendez, 2008), as well as describe experiencing “culture shock adjusting to their White environments” (Douglas et al., 2015, p. 18). For example, Douglas et al. (2015) found their BMCA participants described the complexities with racism and stereotypes that included racial slurs from fans, being misread as anti-intellectual, or labeled as “thugs” (p.18). Fuller (2017) surveyed 168 self-identified BMCAs at 13 HWIs to assess the moderating relationships of athletic and racial identity on racial discrimination and academic outcomes; a “tipping point” was found where athletic racial discrimination and academic stereotypes moved from increasing participants’ GPAs to a decrease in GPAs as the participants’ perceptions of racial discrimination increased. Fuller (2017) explained this as African American collegiate athletes “might be motivated to achieve by perceptions of stigma. However, once they are able to identify clear and definite effects of discrimination it appears a tipping point was reached and their academic achievement was hindered” (p. 418).

These stereotypes and conditions foster a lack of engagement and enthusiasm for excelling in academic spaces at HWIs for many BMCAs. Thus, completing the bare minimum of athletic eligibility is sought after not because BMCAs are less capable of academic success, but rather it is a path of least resistance within a racially hostile environment. In addition, for BMCAs, poor academic performances can be reflective of poor motivation, which may develop from oppressed friction with professors, such as the belief that BMCAs are only attending college to further their athletic careers (i.e., being considered a dumb jock by those on campus; Benson, 2000; Bimper Jr et al., 2013; Comeaux, 2010; Harrison, 2001; Melendez, 2008; Oseguera, 2010; Simons et al., 2007; Stone et al., 2012). For example, Comeaux (2010)

used a photo-elicitation qualitative approach where 464 faculty members from one large public university were provided a visual image and vignette describing either a White male student-athlete participating in football, Black male student-athlete participating in football, White female student-athlete participating in basketball, or Black female student-athlete participating in basketball in an effort to elicit perceptions and attitudes toward athletes based on race. Comeaux (2010) found that despite a large amount of faculty participants discussing a strong appreciation and support of collegiate athletes' successes despite their dual roles, there was a difference in feelings and perceptions based on race and gender; BMCAs and female collegiate athletes were viewed as less favorable than their White male counterparts. Additionally, Oseguera (2010) found in her qualitative study of 17 successful BMCAs at DI institutions that despite participants' academic accomplishments, they experienced attacks from faculty, academic counselors, classmates, and teammates about their intellect. Furthermore, the participants felt these attacks were due to their athlete status, not who they were as people navigating through the college experience (Oseguera, 2010).

Thus, stereotyping or stereotype threat is a very vivid experience for BMCAs. As Stone et al. (2012) found through their probing of African American and White collegiate athletes to complete a verbal reasoning test when stereotype threat was implemented (status of scholar-athlete or athlete), African American collegiate athletes performed poorly on difficult test items when probed for athletic identity and performed worse on difficult and easy tasks when primed as a scholar-athlete. Again, these stereotypical beliefs or threats may create the self-perception of not being inclined to academic success and assist in cultivating a heightened athletic identity (Bimper & Harrison, 2012).

BMCAs have negative college experiences at HWIs when compared to their White counterparts, while feeling the need to keep the aspirations of being a professional athlete at the forefront (Cooper &

Dougherty, 2015). BMCAs often feel that despite being highly recruited they are held to a different set of standards than their White "All-American pretty boy" counterparts who are labeled as smart, hard-working, privileged, and come from a good family background; this student usually reflects the ideals of the head coach and the university (Melendez, 2008, p. 435). It is to be noted, BMCAs encounter many of the same difficulties faced by their African American student peers, however due to their visible athletic status their experiences are intensified due to the discrimination they face from peers and faculty (Steinfeldt et al., 2010). With pressure coming from multiple sources, it is difficult for BMCAs to feel as if they can be their true selves and not chastised for displaying their authentic/holistic identity. As a result, BMCAs struggle to express their core sense of self and develop each identity equally, and manage the idea of how to experience the freedom of being Black while fighting to balance race and intellect (Hotchkins & Dancy, 2015).

The college experiences shaped from the lack of acceptance throughout the cultures at HWIs contributes to BMCAs feeling isolated physically and mentally (Martin et al., 2010; Melendez, 2008). In a study by Melendez (2008) a BMCA participant shared his thoughts:

They want to change you, like this is their world and they want you to be in their world instead of being part of it. They want you to be in it. To be in somebody's world you have to change and be more like them... instead of being part of their world, . . . and still being who you are. (p. 434)

This statement reiterates the notion that BMCAs must conform to be somewhat accepted (Bateman, 2010; Hawkins, 2010). Additionally, BMCAs have to overcome many different situations on and off the field (e.g., eligibility, health, sports performance, social life) throughout their college career, forcing them to prioritize or disengage from the multiple identities developed (Beamon & Bell, 2006; Engstrom & Sedlacek, 1991; Steinfeldt et al., 2010). Any one individual can have multiple identi-

ties that result in conflict (Yopyk & Prentice, 2005), especially BMCAs at HWIs that have to acknowledge their student, Black, male, and athletic identities simultaneously, with all of these identities associated with various stereotypes separately and collectively. In particular, BMCAs having to negotiate the dualism of racial and athletic identities find difficulty because both have a rich history of prejudice and discrimination, especially in high revenue-generating sports (Steinfeldt et al., 2010). Thus, the personal experiences and collision of identities of BMCAs at HWIs creates a difficult period of transitioning into, through, and out of college (Steinfeldt et al., 2010), and without macro- and meso-level changes these experiences, issues, and concerns will continue to linger.

Success of BMCAs. Although the above section under the micro level describes areas where BMCAs struggle with negative academic stereotypes, campus climate, and transitioning out of sport concerns and issues, there also are examples of BMCAs who achieve success within their collegiate athletic experience. Specifically, research has begun to challenge the idea that academic success and athletic success are mutually exclusive (Harrison & Boyd, 2007; Harrison et al., 2010). Previous research has found that BMCAs do indeed attribute value to their academic achievement (e.g., Donner, 2006; Fuller et al., 2020; Harrison et al., 2015; Martin et al., 2010). For example, in Martin and colleagues (2010) qualitative study with 27 high-achieving BMCAs from four academically rigorous American universities, it was found that high-achieving (i.e., GPA's 3.0 and higher) BCMA were driven to succeed academically by their own high academic standards set for themselves and due to a desire to negate external negative stereotypes (e.g., the idea that BMCAs are anti-intellectual and do not value academic achievement).

Similarly, Harrison et al. (2015) found through their qualitative interviews of 27 BMCAs who had competed in football, basketball, track and field, and soccer that although the participants encountered courses or challenges academically that tested their self-confidence, they also “took control of their

college experiences” by choosing their own majors that matched their career ambitions, attending campus events, joining organizations, and focusing on attending and participating in class despite their teammates’ apathy toward education (p. 88). Furthermore, Fuller and colleagues (2020) found through their qualitative investigation of 27 DI BMCAs that participants’ core identity was grounded in manhood and masculinity and that these core values guided living their lives “with integrity” and “the courage to do what is right” despite challenges and pressures from peers (p. 820). Additionally, participants in their study refused to be identified and defined by their sport, instead advocated that they had “more layers (i.e., identities) than most people knew about” (Fuller et al., 2020, p. 821). Specifically, the participants cited the importance of their academic achievements and appreciation of cultivating culture through “book signings, lectures, musicals, and theatre,” as well as forming relationships with romantic partners, teammates, and non-athletic peer groups (Fuller et al., 2020, p. 822).

Interestingly, Harrison et al.’s (2015) study participants indicated that they had to advocate for their coursework, class schedules, and majors with academic advisors and coaches, indicating that the athletic department was steering them toward majors and coursework deemed easier, more manageable, and allowed them to commit more time to their sports. Additionally, Fuller et al. (2020) found that participants created identities outside of athletics on their own and the authors advocated in their implications that “coaches, advisors, faculty, and administrators should strive to create a competitive, yet healthy culture for academic success” (p. 828). Again, these articles point to the idea that development of outside identities, learning from other student groups, and grit to manage academic success along with the negative stereotypes, pressures, and expectations of being an athlete are the responsibility of BMCAs (Fuller et al., 2020; Oseguera, 2010; Strayhorn, 2014), demonstrating that the organizational or meso level is a major culprit in the aforementioned section’s problems that many BMCAs face. The meso level is

concerned more with on-field success than academic achievement, leaving many BMCAs to follow advice from their coaches and academic advisors, leading to the perpetual issues and negative perceptions in the classroom cited above, unless they are intrinsically motivated as the participants were in the studies by Fuller et al. (2020), Martin et al. (2010), and Harrison et al. (2015).

Conclusion and Implications for Future Policies, Practices, and Research

BMCAs are heavily impacted by multi-level factors that influence their holistic development and transition out of sport. The NCAA has policies that allow underprepared BMCAs to enter college and perform in their respective sport. University collegiate athletic departments have a system that places BMCAs under the impression that they need to primarily commit themselves to their sport while putting their academic and social life second and third, if at all. This exacerbates stereotypes and friction with not only peers on campus, but also professors and staff. Social capital is not optimized by HWIs in terms of enhancing experiences and outcomes for BMCAs. When compared to BMCAs at HBCUs there is a significant difference, as they feel accepted on campus and do not identify as strongly with their athletic identity. The lack of acceptance at HWIs leads to a negative self-perception for BMCAs, a difficult time transitioning into life after sport, and limited opportunities outside of their sport.

This multi-level review of scholarship, which examined how the holistic development of BMCAs are impacted at three distinct levels, provides an opportunity for additional research. At the macro and meso levels, future research should review eligibility policies and identify if they are being understood, implemented, and practiced as intended, as well as the effects of this implementation in different athletic departments. This is important as GPA requirements coming out of high school and the NCAA's eligibility policies may impact the graduation rates of BMCAs

due to their underpreparation upon entering into college. Suggestions to review the policy on mandatory practice hours and punishments if violated coming down from the NCAA should also be explored. This is important because BMCAs who are forced to participate in athletic-related activities beyond the maximum hours set by the NCAA pushes them further away from developing in the classroom and in the broader campus community. From a policy standpoint, punishments such as the loss of scholarships or reduced practice time need to be handed down to keep collegiate athletic departments honest to the NCAA's rules and provide equitable development for all collegiate athletes in terms of their transitions, post-athletic careers, and post-graduation efforts.

At the meso or organizational level, universities need to implement equitable hiring practices among vacant coaching jobs, as well as administrator positions to improve the athletic and institutional culture from the top down. As mentioned earlier, HBCUs excel in raising holistic awareness and inclusion through their mission statements, social organizations, and campus activities. HWIs need to serve their entire student bodies, and the Black population must have representation in leadership positions that make critical decisions when it comes to changing the institution's environment. For the betterment of BMCAs, athletic departments should continuously enhance their collegiate athlete development programs that discuss the importance of education and transitional skills, while encouraging all their collegiate athletes to spend time on career paths outside of playing professional sports.

At the micro level, research suggests that usually when BMCAs are confronted with an abrupt ending to their athletic career, they have little preparation to successfully transition from their sport, little to no knowledge about job opportunities after sport, experience workplace isolation, and personal alienation due to the lack of social support (Kidd et al., 2018). Teaching and facilitating BMCAs to utilize social capital and resources for upward mobility is essential for positively transitioning into life outside of athlet-

ics. If BMCAs can understand the transferrable skills and social capital created through membership within their teams, they can find motivation in the classroom and explore alternative career paths. Pairing BMCAs with mentors from the university (e.g., administrators, staff members, professors) that also are Black will help with the sense of belonging on a college campus by finding a safe space to resort to outside athletic facilities. BMCAs face individuals in positions of power that are predominantly White every day (e.g., coaching staffs, advisors, administrators) and will feel better supported with a “familiar face” they can potentially relate to on a racial and cultural level.

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