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## The “other” NIL and SportCrit: Narrative Identity and Liminality of Black Gendered Scholar-Athletes

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### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this conceptual manuscript is to advance a new integrated model: the Narrative Identity (NI), and Liminality Model (NILM). The NILM advances narrative as an intervention tool for Black gendered scholar-athletes (BGSAs) by integrating NI theory (Adler et al., 2017) with the Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) model (Yosso, 2005) for positive outcomes intra-intercollegiate career. The developmental characteristic of sense-making of one's life via the life story model and life stage phases (McAdams, 1985, 2011) are paramount to BGSAs' articulation and development during their liminal condition (Sutton, 2017) as athletes in their orientation to sport. More specifically, orienting the NILM as a possible intervention tool for documenting and examining the evolving stories that are pertinent to BGSAs' emerging adulthood storied realities intra-intercollegiate career are vital. Hence, it is compulsory to further the scarce literature composed of narrative identity utility in athlete development through this substantially overlooked methodology. Thus, this conceptual analysis is grounded in a critical review of scholarly literature that employed Critical Race Theory (Bell, 1992), CCW, and NI for athlete development or transition in sport scholarship. Consequently, two questions are posed to investigate scholarship to frame the NIL Model to advance positive developmental outcomes for profit-generating BGSAs.*

*Keywords:* Athlete development, Black scholar-athletes, community cultural wealth, identity, liminality, narrative

*I spent so much time focusing on football it was really difficult for me to compete in the classroom. And so, I started to lose confidence in my intelligence, and it didn't really support me. I wasn't around people that came from where I came from or understood who I was (...) [The University of Texas] wants us to succeed on the football field (...) I don't think they care if we succeed in life like that. (...) Knowing what I know now, especially the quality of the experience [of going to an HBCU]. Like, Texas prepared me to be a great college football player. It did not prepare me for life. It almost anti-prepared me for life.*

*– Ricky Williams, Heisman Winner & Former NFL Player, The Pivot (Clark et al., 2022, 10:01)*

Our narratives usually are so strong and encompassing that we cannot compartmentalize our augmented “story” from truth. Thus, the understanding of how people story themselves, their experiences, and everyday lives are powerful to assess narrative identification. Ricky Williams’ prolific 1998–99 National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) men’s football senior season is accumulatively one of the greatest running back seasons in the modern era of the NCAA (Chavanelle, 2022). Ultimately, this native of San Diego, California, etched his way on the Mount Rushmore of NCAA running backs via his dominance statistically with 2,124 rushing yards and 27 touchdowns and the litany of awards earned during the 1998–99 season (i.e., Heisman Trophy, Walter Camp award, Maxwell award, Doak Walker award, consensus All-American, & Associated Press Player of the Year) [University of Texas at Austin Athletics, 2023]. Hence, this season is illustrative of the dedication that comes with focusing solely on development athletically for Black Gendered Scholar-Athletes (hereinafter referred to as BGSAs). To be explicit, BGSAs are determined as the perceived synergy of racial and athletic identity salience of Black or African American collegiate scholar-athletes conceptualized via the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (Bimper & Harrison, 2011). This also entails the double consciousness (Du Bois, 2018) found in Black college-aged scholar-athletes, that struggle to validate their masculinity or femininity based on social and cultural norms of hegemony (Shaw, 2021; Wesley, 2015) in which they assimilate to the cultural expectations of Black individuals (Dancy et al., 2018). However, in Ricky’s interview on *The Pivot* podcast, he alluded that the perceived lived experiences and sense of community that is found at historically Black colleges and universities (hereinafter referred to as HBCU), was a significant piece missing from his own developmental process during his collegiate career (Clark et al., 2022).

Williams’ interpreted lived experience narrative at the University of Texas at Austin was demonstrative of the “reality” he created (McAdams, 2006). In addition, Williams mentions not having a support system that prepared him for life, that mostly misunderstood where he came from and who he was, during the peak of his success (Clark et al., 2022). These concerns demonstrate the characteristics of the temporal and cultural realms (Turner et al., 1969) or “in-between-ness” (liminality) Williams experienced moving through the geographical and sociocultural margins (Wels et al., 2011) of his NCAA stardom as a Black male at a predominately White institution of higher education (hereinafter referred to as PWIHE).

Therefore, narrative identification and liminality’s possible utility as intervention tools to facilitate positive outcomes for BGSAs in profit-generating sport intra- and post-athletic career is necessary to explore. Thus, the purpose of this study is to advance a new integrated model: the narrative identity and liminality model (hereinafter referred to as NILM). The NILM advances narrative identity as an intervention tool for BGSAs by integrating narrative identity theory (Adler et al., 2017) with community cultural wealth (Yosso, 2005) to assess positive outcomes intra- and post-intercollegiate career. In conjunction, understanding the evolving stories that are pertinent to BGSAs’ emerging adulthood narrative are powerful to assess the storied realities of this demographic. These documented recollections could be pivotal in displaying intuitive sense making for positive psychological development (Rogers et al., 2023) for BGSAs holistic self (McAdams, 2011) intra- and post-athletic career. Further, narrative identity as a methodology for athlete development scholarship (Kidd, 2019; Kidd et al., 2018; Wendling & Sagas, 2020, 2021) is scarce and an underutilized intervention practice for scholar-athletes.

Nonetheless, a strong and usually often overlooked dynamic to this intervention tool, is how do you assess the Black in Black gendered scholar-athletes? McAdams’ seminal works regarding the life story model (1985) and life stage phases (2011) illustrated the developmental process of narrative identity’s defining characteristics of sense-making of one’s life. This conferred the evolving stories that are pertinent in late adolescence and young adulthood (especially Black gendered youth) could prove to be formative for assessing scholar-athletes’ emerging adulthood narrative. Although Kidd (2019), Kidd et al. (2018), and Wendling and Sagas (2020, 2021) are pioneering works addressing narrative identity for the transition of scholar-athletes, Adler and Alder (1987) and Singer (2005) are phenomenological in nature and display the practicality of narrative inquiry for scholar-athlete development scholarship. Yet, elite athletes like Ricky Williams and scholars such as Harry (2021, 2023) propose intriguing interpretations of where intervention tools and methods should be applied for positive developmental outcomes for scholar-athletes.

Harry (2021, 2023) explored the shift in the application of strength-based perspectives in sport research on historically minoritized groups of students. She postulated how to further utilize the framework for modern college athletics to decipher the problematic system that is the NCAA, and in addition how to make improvements to facilitate an anti-deficit approach for scholar-athletes moving forward. Drawing from Yosso's (2005) watershed concept of Community Cultural Wealth (hereinafter referred to as CCW), Harry (2021, 2023) suggested that if correctly utilized, college athletes via their "distinct" capital of contacts, skills, abilities, and knowledge to circumvent aspirational, linguistic, familial, social, navigational, and resistance capital, could counter the narratives substantiated by the NCAA. Further, Harry (2023) echoes the sentiments regarding influence of culturally responsive leadership (Cooper, et al., 2017) and mentorship for social capital and social support for holistic development (Bimper, 2016; Carter-Francique et al., 2015; Fuller, 2017; Martin et al., 2010), established currently in the CCW model for sport scholarship. In concert, indeed narrative identity theory scholarship pertaining to athletes (Adler et al., 2017; Kidd, 2019; Wendling & Sagas, 2020, 2021) in cooperation with former scholar-athletes' accounts has the potential to forge a possible integrated framework to assess developmental outcomes for profit-generating sport Black scholar-athletes moving forward.

Indicative of the shifting perceptions regarding athletics participation at HBCUs, the top-ranked recruit of men's football class of 2021, Travis Hunter chose to enroll at HBCU-member Jackson State University (JSU). Hunter momentarily shifted the narrative and approach through revising a strategy that was the only route to athletic success for Black gendered male scholar-athletes six decades ago (Cooper, 2019), in choosing the community and culture of the HBCU experience. Intentionally, Travis chose then-JSU Head football coach Deion "Prime Time" Sanders' culture, community, and accessibility to ultimately capitalize via cross branding for name, image, and likeness (NIL) policy over supplanting a legacy in HBCU lore. This is paramount as Coach "Prime" is an athletes' athlete. Sanders is in both the National Football League (NFL) and NCAA Hall of Fame, won two Super Bowls in the NFL, and played in the World Series as a Major League Baseball (MLB) player. Therefore, when Coach "Prime" eventually chose to leave JSU after Hunter's first season, Travis opted to follow his coach to the University of Colorado via the NCAA transfer rule (NCSA College Recruiting, 2023). Coach "Prime" is one of a multitude of coaches that have supplanted a culture around the program they are heading. However, he also is being authentically self (McAdams, 2006) and Black, while being a branding pioneer of the pre-NIL era (The Rich Eisen Show, 2018). However, as a coach in the post-NIL policy era, he epitomizes the good life, or the growth, wealth, and social status value orientations (Bauer et al., 2022) of high-profile athletes turned coaches. Thus, Coach "Prime," with dual citizenship, is setting unprecedented access to why addressing the cultural capital gap (Bimper, 2016; Carter-Francique et al., 2015; Yosso, 2005) and controlling the narrative (Delgado, 1989; Kidd, 2019; Singer, 2016) when mentoring BGSAs in profit-generating sport is more important than ever.

Therefore, two questions are posed to advocate for the investigation of this gap in the scholarship:

1. How might Black gendered scholar-athletes' narratives about their development influence the way athletic departments and institutions help engage in intervention?
2. How does focusing on one's life story/narrative facilitate greater awareness of Black gendered scholar-athletes' ability to integrate Yosso's CCW tenets for positive development outcomes intra-intercollegiate career?

### Critical Race Theory (CRT)

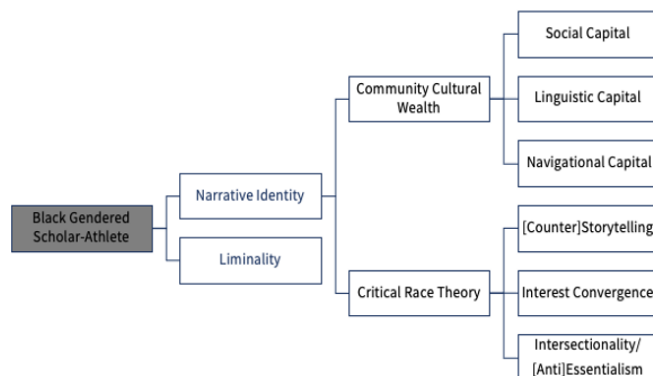
Although the aforementioned works are initial and seminal in interpreting effective ways to use Critical Race Theory (CRT) for assessing systems and identity in sport, CRT's initial efforts built this methodological lens, derived from a grassroots concerted effort during the mid-1970s. CRT's origin is in the praxis of critical legal studies' (CLS) usefulness in assessing the United States judicial system (Bell, 1976; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Unequivocally, it is based in the *souls* (Du Bois, 1903, 2018) and *mis-education* of the Negro/Black folk (Woodson & Gates, 1933, 2023) lived experiences in American society. Thus, an analysis of the literature that shaped the foundation of CRT regarding CLS, CRT in education, interest

convergence, intersectionality or anti-essentialism, and storytelling (see Figure 1) are paramount to the NILM framework.

**Figure 1**

*Narrative Identity and Liminality Model (NILM)*

## Narrative Identity & Liminality Model (NILM)



To simplify, the conjecture of CRT is to critique the impact race and racism have on people of color in the United States via the neoliberalist system of White supremacy (Bell, 1992; Crenshaw, 1995; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Taylor et al., 2016, 2023). Furthermore, Ladson-Billings and Tate's (1995) three confounding principles of CRT – (a) race is a major factor in perpetuation of the inequity in the United States, (b) property rights are the foundation of United States society, and (c) the intersection between race and property forms a critical perspective to understand social inequity (p. 48) – are paramount for BGSAs' utility of the NILM framework. According to Ladson-Billings and Tate's (1995) interpreted principles, CRT established the following five CRT tenets: (a) (counter) storytelling (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Delgado, 1989; Delgado & Stefancic, 2013, 2017; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), (b) the permanence of racism (Bell, 1992; Cho, 2009; Crenshaw, 2011), (c) the Whiteness as property norm (Gotanda, 1991; Haney Lopez, 1994; Harris, 1993), (d) interest convergence (Bell, 1980, 1989; Guinier, 2004), and (e) the critique of liberalism (Busey & Coleman-King, 2020; Dixson et al., 2018; Donnor & Ladson-Billings, 2017).

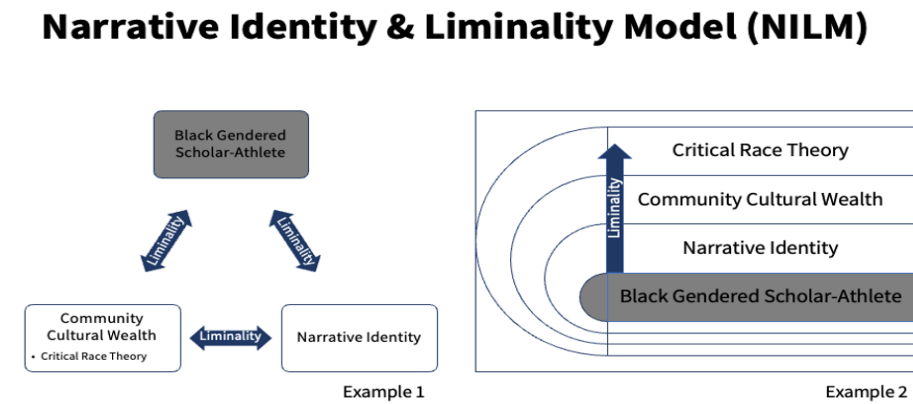
Ultimately, after being interpreted for use in legal studies, CRT was positioned for use in education (Ladson-Billings, 2013) as an academic concept to articulate racial inequity. However, there are some significant characterizations to what delineate what is not CRT that are profound to this methodology. Therefore, it is important to understand “just because a scholar looks at race it does not make them a critical race theorist” (Lynn & Dixson, 2013, p. 36). Consequently, Lynn and Dixon (2013) illustrate that for a CRT scholar it is vital to understand that: racism is the normal order of things in US society (p. 37), it is not about altruism but alignment for interest convergence (p. 38), and they must accept the scientific understanding of no-race or no genetic difference as a social construct (p. 39) are nonnegotiable. Essentially, CRT scholars also accept the power of a social reality that allows for significant disparities in the life chances of people based on the categorical understanding of race (p. 39). Fundamentally, CRT scholarship decries essentialism and guards against essentializing the perspectives and experiences of racial groups (p. 40-41). Finally, CR scholars use storytelling as a way to illustrate and underscore broad legal principles regarding race and racial/social justice (p. 42), and “must be as rigorous as that of any other scholarship (or perhaps more so)” (Lynn & Dixon, 2013, p. 45).

### Narrative Identity and Liminality

The purpose of this extensive literature review is to frame theoretically the possible integration of narrative identity theory through the conceptual frameworks of Critical Race Theory (CRT), the

CCW model, and liminality. More specifically, to bridge the relationships of CRT’s (anti)essentialism/intersectionality, interest convergence, and (counter)storytelling tenets and CCW’s social, linguistic, and navigational capital tenets to be utilized as intervention tools for narrative identification for profit-generating Black gendered scholar-athletes (see Figure 2). Therefore, an extensive review via the Web of Science (WOS) via keywords: “critical race,” “narrative identit\*” (378 results), “community cultur\* wealth” “Black” (52 results), “narrative” (22 results), “athlete” (3 results), and “sport” (5 results) were foundational to converging and conducting this integrated model. This is a systematic review of literature that may avail further theoretical integration based on the synthesis of the findings produced in this article and in practice.

**Figure 2**  
*Intervention via Narrative Identity and Liminality Model (NILM)*



**(Counter) Storytelling, Interest Convergence, and Anti-Essentialism/Intersectionality**

Sport offers similar ideological rationalizations found in human relations' greater existence in society, the need for companionship and competition. Thus, it plays a fundamental role in negotiating and sustaining character based on those relations (Edwards, 1979). Edwards understood the political and cultural tragedy that was Black submergence in sport without building life skills. He was critical of the apparent detriment and detriment of the Black athlete experience for their holistic development (Edwards, 1979). Furthermore, his entrance into the sport sociology space ran linear to the Black Power Movement and the foundation of CLS’ pivot, to become CRT (Cooper, 2021). At the same time, Derrick Bell and the founders of CRT provided insight into the systemic racial disparities subjugated against people of color. Thus, the scoping of anti-essentialism/intersectionality, interest convergence, and counter-storytelling are vital tenets to frame narrative identification theory to critique profit-generating Black scholar-athletes (refer to Figure 1).

**Counter-storytelling**

Solórzano and Yosso (2002) introduced the utilization of counter-story as a method and tool for those on the margins of society to expose, analyze, and challenge racially privileged majoritarian stories. Furthermore, they proposed counter-stories are instrumental to deconstructing the stigma around complacency in “racial reform” (p. 32). Thus, highlighting the necessity of oppressed groups to acknowledge counter-story for their own survival, liberation, and psychic self-preservation and deny subordination under neoliberalism (Delgado, 1989). Last, Solórzano and Yosso (2002) centered four functions of counter-stories that operationalize counter-stories’ authority:

- (a) they can build community among those at the margins of society by putting a human and familiar face to education theory.
- (b) they can challenge the perceived wisdom of those at society’s center by providing a context to understand and transform established belief systems.

- (c) they can open a new window into the reality of those at the margins of society by showing possibilities beyond the ones they live and demonstrate that they are not alone in their position; and
- (d) they can teach others that by combining elements from both the story and the current reality, one constructs another world that is richer than either the story or the reality alone (p. 36).

These functions display the necessity to address the voice of the voiceless, or those from the bottom of society's well (Bell, 1992). In particular, the counter-stories of those voiceless faceless of society's well, detour the embellishing or valorizing of one's history or culture in presentation of "truth," illuminated via the majoritarians' narrative (Ladson-Billings, 2000; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). More specifically, Lynn and Dixon (2013) alluded to the problematic nature of the discipline of history's ability to position cultural narratives about oneself (p. 41) as "real truth" unabashedly validating one narrative while simultaneously invalidating another (p. 42).

### Interest Convergence

Bell (1980) argued associational rights and affirmative action programs following the passing of *Brown v. Board* were all attempts to appease Blacks. While invalidating the notion that "racial segregation is much more than a series of quaint customs that can be remedied effectively without altering the status of Whites" (p. 522). Therefore, the stifling of Black racial progress in the United States was essentially demonstrated in parallel to "fulfilling the needs of powerful Whites rather than altruistic desires to improve the plight of Blacks" (Cooper & Hawkins, 2014, p. 84). This is an example that sheds light on the "messiness" of real life engagement and application of CRT scholarship to understand our society (Lynn & Dixon, 2013). In addition, this addressed that regardless of race there is no monolithic response or opinion in legal recourse in interacting with Black folk (Lynn & Dixon, 2013). Lastly, the interest convergence tenet refers to the idea that a dominant group must benefit for any progress to be associated with or imparted to a marginalized group (DeCuir & Dixon, 2004). Hence, the complexities of race and history cannot be mutually divorced (Bell, 1992). Therefore, the complexities of racial inequity in the United States – that entail interest convergence – are necessary to understand, analyze, or criticize the fluidity of White racism that are embedded in the fabric of the American education and judicial systems (Donnor, 2016).

### Anti-Essentialism/Intersectionality

Finally, anti-essentialism and/or intersectionality are harder to articulate, as these terms usually are interchanged within discourse that discusses either tenet. However, Carbado and Harris (2019) illustrated "it is a mistake to frame intersectionality and anti-essentialism as one and the same thing" (p. 2200). Yet, CRT essentially interacts with social forces or what Crenshaw has detailed as intersectionality, or the intersectional engagement of structural hierarchies (Carbado, 2011). CR theorists suggest that within intersectional engagement there is a discrimination hierarchy determined via "top" (empowerment) and "bottom" (disempowerment) that must be clearly outlined to functionally operate. It is suggested that, "historically, racism has been bi-directional: it gives to Whites (e.g., citizenship) what it takes away from or denies to people of color" (Carbado, 2011, p. 1614). This details the expansiveness of intersectionality as it extends past disciplinary boundaries to engage in critiques that utilize multiple tools methodologically to analyze race and racism.

Harris (1990) defines essentialism via feminist theory as: (a) pursuit of the essential feminine, as gender difference keeps the reality of male dominance in place; (b) epitomizing women via removing the issue of race that further fragments the diaspora of womanhood. Thus, Crenshaw's interpretation to: (a) de-essentialize White-centered representations of gender; (b) disrupt the ease and naturalness with which White woman can stand in for all women; and (c) mark the discursive, political, and doctrinal consequences of the representational practice of treating what happens to White women as the baseline from which to determine what happens to all women – the erasure of Black women's identities and experiences as women (Carbado & Harris, 2019) are paramount to compartmentalize within feminist theory.

### *Integration*

Lastly, social science in the United States tends to devalue the role of storytelling, due to the lack of “empirical” data points or a large enough sample to validate Western science notions of truth (Lynn & Dixon, 2013, p. 42). Yet, CRT’s foundation is built on assessing the systemic roots of the social construct that is race and racism within the United States systems in the legal field and education (refer to Figures 1 & 2). Therefore, a possible iteration should be proposed to assess the sport landscape specifically, as it is a multibillion-dollar conglomerate system that has capitalized largely on the merit of race. Although, iterations have been proposed for Yosso’s CCW model as a representative framework that may help assess critical race theory aspects within the sport landscape (Bimper, 2016; Carter-Francique et al., 2015; Fuller, 2017; Martin et al., 2010). This is an endeavor to further those attempts in addition to recent iterations (Harry, 2023, 2021) incorporating narrative identity and liminality.

Succinctly, anti-essentialism/intersectionality, interest convergence, and counter-storytelling are foundational for reorienting the narrative of Black gendered profit-generating scholar-athletes. Recently, anti-essentialism/intersectionality, interest convergence, and counter-storytelling were assessed in the recruitment of Black scholar-athletes by White head coaches (Samad, 2021); the phenomenological analysis of lived experiences of Black female athletes (Shaw, 2021); and via composite counter-story of Black men scholar-athletes’ experiences (Howe & Johnston-Guerrero, 2021). In each work, anti-essentialism/intersectionality was illustrated via the societal misinterpretation of homogenizing experiences of a group (Delgado & Stefancic, 2013). In addition, not specific to Black women experiences (Crenshaw, 1988), intersectionality was explicitly demonstrated in that racism does not exist in a vacuum but in unison with other forms of oppression (gender, class, and other identities) in the aforementioned works. Still, this tenet is apparent for revenue-generating Black gendered scholar-athletes in most encounters at PWIHE. An explicit example is simply navigating as a BGSA for predominately Black teams in athletics on campus, while being overseen by White authority figures and leaders within the sport setting (Cooper, 2016; Cooper et al., 2016; Samad, 2021). Interest convergence for Black gendered revenue-generating scholar-athletes is demonstrated in the known exploitation of the Black body for university economic capitalism via the NCAA system (Cooper, 2019). Finally, counter-story is utilized to keep Black gendered scholar-athletes confined to the stereotypes invested in by media (and institutions) to keep them powerless rather than empowering this demographic (Oshiro et al., 2021).

### **Community Cultural Wealth Model and Black Gendered Scholar-Athletes**

The Community Cultural Wealth (CCW) model is an OutCrit/spin-off adapted from CRT’s principles (Bell, 1992; Crenshaw, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2013; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) that addressed the deficit-based approach embedded in Black, Latin/LatinX, Native (indigenous people) American, and Asian demographics culturally to display their knowledge, skills, and contacts that are usually unrecognized or appreciated (see Figures 1 & 2) [Yosso, 2005]. Further, Pierre Bourdieu conceptualized cultural wealth related to cultural reproduction and social reproduction. Bourdieu (2018) interpreted cultural capital as “instruments for the appropriation of symbolic wealth socially designed as worthy of being sought and possessed” (p. 57). Further, it is stemmed from the philosophical properties rooted in the dominant culture that is conflated in “White, male, upper-middle-classness” ideology (Carter-Francique et al., 2015, p. 159–160).

The CCW model, in unison with CRT, determined racism and race are integral to the foundation of American society. Thus, people of color have had to persevere culturally, survive, and contribute to society to obtain social mobility in order to be integrated into American society. Simply put, these interpretations of capital are substantive strengths, talents, and experiences students of color bring with them to institutions of higher education. It is significant to illustrate cultural deficiency and the role cultural assimilation has within the CCW model. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) accentuated the culturally deficient story majoritarian storytellers perpetuate to students of color to assimilate to the “American” success story that is entrenched in the dominant White middle-class society’s culture (p. 31).

Appropriately, a framework constituted of six quintessential forms of capital: (a) aspirational [hopes and dreams or resilience], (b) familial [social and personal human resources of the extended



family or community networks; cultural knowledge], (c) linguistic [language and communication skill or speaking more than one language], (d) navigational [ability to move through social institutions], (e) resistant [securing equal rights and collective freedom; oppositional behavior], and (f) social capital [peers and other social contacts utilized to gain access; social networks and resources], are enacted to display how to counter the deficit-based narratives for people of color in society (Acevedo & Solórzano, 2021).

As foundational as Bimper's work has been to facilitate Black male scholar-athletes' experiences in totality, even more practical, action-based research must be done to mobilize opportunities to holistically develop BGSAs. Hence, strategic navigation of PWIHE via the anti-deficit achievement framework focus group interviews to explore modes of athlete activism (Cooper, 2018) are viable options. In addition, implementing resources that illuminate the power of social capital (Bimper, 2015, 2016; Carter-Francique et al., 2015) to empower Black scholar-athletes to experience educational, racial, and socio-critically positive development outcomes via exploring and engaging with their local communities' stakeholders in career paths that are intriguing are paramount for the NILM. Further, Cooper (2018) posited understanding and activating strategic responsiveness to interest convergence (SRIC) for scholar-athletes via finding "camaraderie and sense of belonging with their teammates" (p. 10) and traveling to different parts of the country for cultural exposure via the "vehicle of intercollegiate athletics" (p. 11). Also, the author suggested embracing for the "reality and adjusted expectations" of BGSAs' coaches (p. 15) via a mixed method approach that availed deeper context to the experiences of Black scholar-athletes' navigating "anti-deficit based networks" (p. 19) that counter the deficit-based athletic industrial complex that is the modern NCAA system (Runstedtler, 2018).

### **Black Scholar-Athlete(s) Experiences**

Pioneers in the Black gendered scholar-athlete space (i.e., Armstrong, Comeaux, Hawkins, Harrison, Donnor, and Singer to name a few) demonstrated and exposed the gap in literature around deficit-based approaches used to detour support of Black gendered scholar-athletes in sport. Prominent work regarding Black scholar-athletes' experiences have explored Black males at PWIHEs (Bimper et al., 2013; Cooper, 2018; Martin et al., 2010), identity (Briggs et al., 2021; Cooper, 2019; Edwards, 1979; Fuller et al., 2020; Howe, 2020, 2023), activism (Armstrong & Jennings, 2018; Carter-Francique et al., 2013; Cooper, 2018; Cooper et al., 2019; Cooper & Hawkins, 2016), and HBCUs (Cooper & Hawkins, 2014; Cooper & Newton, 2021; Hawkins et al., 2017; Singer, 2016). However, work has not interpreted profit-generating Black gendered scholar-athletes' narrative identity in the NCAA via theoretical frameworks such as CRT or CCW. Thus, understanding how to aid Black gendered scholar-athletes' ability to articulate the challenges of being self in PWIHE environments (Bimper, 2015; Shaw, 2021), the cultural deference (Briggs et al., 2021; Carter-Francique et al., 2018; Cooper et al., 2017), and varying degrees of identification Black gendered scholar-athletes (Howe, 2020, 2023; Kidd, 2019) must engage throughout the time and space ("Kairos") of their intercollegiate athletic career are paramount for sport sociology (see Figures 1 & 2). Specifically, further analyzing the liminal space when "something appropriately happens that cannot happen at 'any' time, but only at 'that time,' to a time that marks an opportunity which may not recur," (Smith, 1969, p. 1) for BGSAs are key to their holistic development cycle.

Carter-Francique et al. (2015) and Bimper's (2016) works investigated the necessity of social support capital necessary for Black gendered scholar-athletes' ultimate academic success at PWIHE. In accordance, their examination of the counter-narratives imbued through colorblind racism (Bimper, 2015), details the guidance of BGSAs at PWIHE to critique the roles that race and racism play in their lived experiences (Bimper et al., 2013). In addition, the assessment of support systems of empowerment (Carter-Francique et al., 2015) that aid BGSAs' holistic success at PWIHE are vital proven practical solutions thus far for BGSAs. In both works, the need to nurture social capital (Bimper, 2016) and leverage social capital and social networks (Carter-Francique et al., 2015) are substantial for BGSAs reflexivity. Furthermore, it is pertinent to the development of social ties that preserve an appreciation and celebration of one's own cultural consciousness while "finding agency in an ever-changed society" as Black gendered scholar-athletes (Bimper, 2016, p. 125). These pioneers concluded the value of voice for people of color via accrual and meaning-making (Bimper, 2015) and the centrality of experiential knowledge or counter-storytelling (counter-narratives) via

the critique of CCW (Bernal, 2002; Delgado & Stefancic, 2013; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) are paramount to empowering Black gendered scholar-athletes (Carter-Francique et al., 2015).

In sum, Bimper (2015) concluded with the proposition that students given opportunities to gain the ability to think critically availed more nuanced understandings of one's world as a person of color (Ladson-Billings, 1995). This is substantiated via the power that narratives and counter-narratives could provide as an avenue to achieve interest convergence of education as a "property right" (Bimper, 2015, p. 11–16) for BGSAs. In proxy, academic advisers' and practitioners' ability to adopt culturally relevant approaches to support and engage Black gendered scholar-athletes at PWIHE (Carter-Francique et al., 2015) are paramount. More explicitly, prioritizing the "eradication of the notions of athletic superiority and intellectual inferiority," (p. 172) athletic exploitation, and the lack of Black role models and mentors that hinder the BGSAs in the NCAA system are pivotal to the possibilities of successfully implementing the NILM moving forward. Furthermore, accounting for the continued issues of social inequities and engaging with social justice-relevant activities congruent to Black gendered scholar-athletes' experiences are crucial to the NILM. In particular, Bimper (2015) addressed issues such as: racial disparities linked to academic success; campus racism; faculty and community interactions; stereotyping and navigating environments of stereotype threat; and addressing retention at institutions of higher education via the multilevel, disproportionate racial representations (i.e., student-athletes, coaches, athletic, and institutional leadership) [p. 3] are paramount to aiding BGSAs via the NILM.

### Liminality

Although the origins of the liminal period are founded in anthropology, Turner et al. (1969) relatively addressed van Gennep's (1960) work exploring this transitional process as the "in-between or betwixt" undefined phase of the rite of passage between two distinct stages (Turner et al., 1969, p. 95). At length, liminality can be utilized as a flexible model to further understand the liminal condition of athletes and their orientation to sport (Sutton, 2017). To be clear, Thomassen's (2014) work expanded the liminal phase to time frames, groups, and societies providing space for the utilization of liminality in sport for scholar-athletes (Parker, 1993; Rowe, 1998) and Black scholar-athletes (Bonner, 2011; Brottem, 2019). Last, the focus of utilizing liminality for the NILM is to position the mental and physical space that Black gendered scholar-athletes' "occupy" in this in-between space during their inter- and post-athletic career transition (see Figure 2).

Recently, Wendling and Sagas (2021) repositioned liminality as an integrative framework to be approached in the anthropological praxis of liminality, or "the experience of being betwixt and between social roles and/or identities" (Ibarra & Obodaru, 2016, p. 53). Through their reorientation, liminality is assumed to be the foundation to an entire framework to assess developmental outcomes based on management, organizational, and identity theorem (Odio & McLeod, 2021; Sutton, 2017; Waardenburg et al., 2019). Furthermore, their assumption that "narrating the self, changes the self" is significant for illustrating the power of narrative for the NILM (Wendling & Sagas, 2021). Whether it is in identity work or utilizing the combination of principles and tenets that align with CRT and the CCW model, demonstrating and orating self is vital to BGSAs holistic development. Once more, the authors' focused on the social expectations, uncertainty identity, and the severe oscillations between positive and negative feelings in this state of liminality that are seminal to helping athletes navigate transition to the athletic foreclosure and post-athletic career phases. Of impending significance is the finding that the purgatory stage of transition between athlete identity and their next iteration of identity are determined by "societies' treatment of them based on who they were" (Wendling & Sagas, 2021, p. 5). Further, they allude to the difficulties of navigating their transition or "uncertainty identity" (p. 7) when they likely chose "avoidance of discomfort" rather than making any or the wrong choice in their incessant exploratory process as substantial to address for BGSAs' holistic development in the NILM (Wendling & Sagas, 2021, p. 13).

In essence, this work is significant in that this avoidance of discomfort is unavoidable for Black gendered scholar-athletes in profit-generating sports in terms of engaging with their identities that must be ambiguous in their daily interactions at PWIHE. Thus, a consideration of micro- or meso-transactions across the liminal spectrum may help interpret other ways to engage with profit-generating Black gendered scholar-athletes to further positive developmental outcomes and confer with their identities (see Figures 1 & 2). This is substantiated by understanding identity growth and

self-reformation via “meaning-making, exploratory processing, agency, and redemption” that are confounded in narrative and narrative identity work (Wendling & Sagas, 2021, p. 14).

### Narrative Identity and Liminality Model (NILM)

For this theoretical framing, it is intentional to address anti-essentialism or intersectionality, interest convergence, and counter-storytelling due to their significance in impacting the perception and understanding of *becoming* and narrating *self* (McAdams, 2006) for the Black scholar-athlete experience. Hence, critiquing holistically, selectively the tenets of *storytelling/counter-storytelling* and *interest convergence* of majoritarian narratives in higher education are underrepresented research interest veins in sport sociology to be explored (Hylton, 2005; McCoy & Rodricks, 2015). In addition, *anti-essentialism* or *intersectionality* is not directly addressed in either of those works and is pivotal to explore in the sport sociology context. Thus far, CCW model (Yosso, 2005) has only recently been utilized as a possible intervention tool to understand the lived experiences of minoritized scholar-athletes (Harry, 2021, 2023). It was evolved through the *Excellence Beyond Athletics* (EBA) holistic development principles model to focus on Black scholar-athletes (Cooper, 2016). To date, McAdams' (2011) interpretation of using life stages as phases via developmental processes is an attempt at validation of the utilization of narrative identity's defining characteristics of evolving storyline and making “sense and meaning” of one's life (p. 99). More specifically, it is proposed as being an additional alternative for intervention and possible positive development outcomes for Black scholar-athletes' holistic transition intra- and post-athletic career (Kidd, 2019).

Due to the pragmatic nature of global unrest demonstrated in the American societal shift since COVID-19 and the protest of the murder of George Floyd (Ofogebu & Ekpe, 2022), current American lexicon buzzwords include “cultures,” “narratives,” and “identities.” Consequently, the undeterred stock stories (Delgado, 1989) that have become prevalent with Black gendered scholar-athletes (particularly those in profit-generating sport) are propagated by the media. Moreover, in totality instances of (anti)essentialism or intersectionality, (counter)storytelling, and blurring the lines of interpreting true interest convergence as frameworks within CRT have spiked between 2011-2019 to examine race, racism, and racialized citizenship (Busey et al., 2023). Furthermore, the framing of narratives, cultures, and identities are dangerous depending on who is perpetuating these “truths” (Cooper, 2018; Delgado, 1989). Therefore, compiling significant literature to navigate the relatively unbridled pathway of converging these separate, yet, confounding societal interest areas has been challenging.

Illustrating the commonality of the significance of understanding controlling culture, narrative, and identification in sport sociology are: the interests of profit-generating Black gendered scholar-athletes through analysis of colorblind racism's effects on scholar-athlete development (Bimper, 2014, 2015); the value of developing and sustaining social capital for Black scholar-athletes (Bimper, 2016, Carter-Francique et al., 2015); and the power of the Du Boisian' hypothesis of CRT that inspires strategic navigation via strategic responsive interest convergence (SRIC) [Cooper, 2017; Yosso et al., 2021]. Sport is such a unique praxis of the microcosm that is American society. To boot, the NCAA provides an even more abstract framework to view sport through. For profit-generating sport Black gendered scholar-athletes, it is even more difficult to fully construct a full picture of their experience. First, they must consider the effect and affect of the higher education system and how to navigate the landscape. Then, they must consider the sociocultural dynamics of an HBCU or PWIHE and their preparedness for facilitating that transition. Last, they must encounter the undergirding issue of selectively being assessed as Black men and women through the multicultural neoliberalism construct (Cooper, 2019; Edwards, 1979; Hawkins et al., 2017; Singer, 2019). These are paramount circumstances that encapsulate the experiences of profit-generating Black gendered scholar-athletes that determine the need to build a theoretical model or framework for possible assessment to intervene to aid in these developmental processes.

Accordingly, attempts have been made to define Black male “college identity,” their experiences in higher education and the NCAA, and a possible revolutionary critique to enhance the empowerment of Black gendered profit-generating scholar-athletes in totality. In particular, a conceptual framework of identifying Black male scholar-athletes' athletic identity via intersectionality of multiple social identities via their highlighted voices to counter dominant narratives that are determinates of the perpetuation of injustice via developmental outcomes (Howe,

2020) has been attempted (see Figure 2). Thereupon, it is determined that underachievement is a byproduct of structural arrangement (Cooper, 2018; Cooper & Hawkins, 2014, 2016) within the athletic industrial complex (Runstedtler, 2018) as the overrepresentation of Black scholar-athletes is rampant in two of the largest profit-generating sports. Categorically, they are conclusively stifled from authentically being *self* in the NCAA PWIHE ecosystem (Hawkins et al., 2017; Singer, 2019). Likewise, it is assumed that the lack of social connection institution-wide is the reality at PWIHE. In juxtaposition, the ineffective educational opportunity narrative availed in the HBCU experience, found that the deficit-based approaches appropriated for BGSAs in the NCAA are more determinant of holistic underachievement (Cooper & Hawkins, 2014, 2016; Hawkins et al., 2017; Howe, 2020, 2023; Singer, 2019).

To summarize, the cultural incongruences identified by Black female scholar-athletes' experiences between their backgrounds/*self*, identities, and the cultivated campus environments within higher education (Cooper et al., 2017) are significant to explore as well. To a greater extent, intersectionality of oppressed identities of Black women requires empirical examinations to encapsulate their holistic development before and intra-higher education experiences (Carter-Francique et al., 2018; Cooper, et al., 2017; Cooper & Newton, 2021; Shaw, 2021). As a consequence, the forms of capital beyond the original CCW framework that include spatial, structure, and time do not operate in isolation, "but rather different forms of capital are interconnected and influence each other in meaningful ways," like the intersectionality of Black women scholar-athletes' *being* (Cooper, et al., 2017, p. 148-149). In the end, strong consideration to further the synergy of Black gendered "college identity" (Carter-Francique et al., 2018; Cooper & Newton, 2021; Howe, 2020, 2023); detail BGSAs' experiences athletically and academically (Bimper et al., 2013; Cooper, et al., 2017; Cooper & Hawkins, 2014; Singer, 2016); and empower Black gendered scholar-athletes through knowledge of *self* through mobilizing and strategic activism (Armstrong & Jennings, 2018; Cooper, 2018; Donnor, 2005; Hawkins et al., 2017; Singer, 2019) are cardinal to demonstrate the integrated theoretical framework that allows narrative identity to drive transition and developmental outcomes of profit-generating Black scholar-athletes (the NILM) [see Figures 1 & 2].

### **SportCrit**

Origin stories and narratives are intervention tools that should be heavily considered when dictating a person's positionality and conceptualization of their lived experience. Due to accessible research and available studies, more work has been appropriated toward Black men and Black gendered male scholar-athletes in profit-generating sport (see Table 1). However, more critiques of Black identifying males in Olympic (or non-profit-generating) sport, graduate college sport, and all categorizations of Black-identifying women in college sport are necessary to understand the validity of the NILM's utility as a possible theoretical conceptual framework.

**Table 1**  
*Framing Narrative Identity & Liminality Model*

Theme	Author(s)	Title
Reviewed articles with integration of Critical Race Theory in Sport	Armstrong & Jennings (2018)	Race, sport, and sociocognitive “place” in higher education: Black male student-athletes as critical theorists
	Agyemang et al. (2010)	An exploratory study of Black male college athletes' perceptions of race and athlete activism
	Bimper (2014)	Lifting the veil: Exploring colorblind racism in black student athlete experiences
	Bimper (2015)	Mentorship of Black student-athletes at a predominately White American university: critical race theory perspective on student-athlete development
	Carter-Francique et al. (2018)	Measuring African American female college athletes' athletic identity to determine support service needs
	Cooper (2017)	Strategic navigation: a comparative study of Black male scholar athletes' experiences at a Historically Black College/University (HBCU) and Historically White University (HWU)
	Cooper et al. (2017)	A critical race theory analysis of big-time college sports: Implications for culturally responsive and race-conscious sport leadership
	Cooper et al. (2019)	Race and resistance: A typology of African American sport activism.
	Cooper & Hawkins (2014)	The transfer effect: A critical race theory examination of Black male transfer student athletes' experiences
Donnor (2005)	Towards an interest-convergence in the education of African American football student athletes in major college sports	

Theme	Author(s)	Title
	Hawkins et al. (2017)	Critical race theory: Black athletic sporting experiences in the United States
	Jolly & Chepyator-Thomson (2022)	"Do you really see us?": Black college athlete perceptions of inclusion at DI Historically White Institutions
	Keaton (2022)	A critical discourse analysis of racial narratives from White athletes attending a historically Black college/university
	Keaton & Cooper (2022)	A racial reckoning in a racialized organization? Applying racialized organization theory to the NCAA institutional field.
	McCormick & McCormick (2012)	Race and interest convergence in NCAA sports
	Milner (2007)	Race, culture, and researcher positionality: Working through dangers seen, unseen, and unforeseen.
	Oshiro et al. (2020)	Cyber racism toward Black athletes: A critical race analysis of TexAgs.com online brand community
	Singer (2005)	Addressing epistemological racism in sport management research
	Singer et al. (2019)	Critical conversations about qualitative research in sport management.
	Singer (2019)	Race, sport, and education: Improving opportunities and outcomes for Black male college athletes
	Singer et al. (2021)	What Is Blackness to sport management? Manifestations of anti-Blackness in the field

*Critical Race Theory\**

Theme	Author(s)	Title
Reviewed foundational articles of Critical Race Theory	Bell (1980)	Brown v. Board of education and the interest-convergence dilemma
	Bell (1995)	Who's afraid of critical race theory?
	Bell (2003)	Diversity's distractions
	Busey & Coleman-King (2020)	All around the world same song: Transnational anti-Black racism and new (and old) directions for critical race theory in educational research
	Busey et al. (2023)	Critical what what? A theoretical systematic review of 15 years of critical race theory research in social studies education, 2004-2019
	Carbado (2011)	Critical what what?
	Crenshaw (1988/2011)	Race, reform, and retrenchment: Transformation and legitimation in anti-discrimination law; Twenty years of critical race theory: Looking back to move forward
	DeCuir & Dixon (2004)	So, when it comes out, they aren't that surprised that it is there
	Delgado (1989)	Storytelling for oppositionists and others: A plea for narrative
	Delgado (2011)	Rodrigo's reconsideration: Intersectionality and the future of critical race theory
	Delgado & Stefancic (2001/2017)	Critical race theory: An introduction
Fasching-Varner (2009)	No! The team ain't alright! The institutional and individual problematics of race	

Theme	Author(s)	Title
	Harris (1990/1993)	Race and essentialism in feminist legal theory; Whiteness as property
	Howard & Navarro (2016)	Critical race theory 20 years later: Where do we go from here?
	Ladson-Billings (2013)	Critical race theory—what it is not!
	Ladson-Billings & Tate (1995)	Toward a critical race theory of education
	Solórzano & Yosso (2002)	Critical race methodology: Counter- storytelling as an analytical framework for education research
	Stovall (2013)	Fightin the devil 24/7: Context, community, and critical race praxis in education
	Yosso et al. (2021)	A critical race theory test of W.E.B. Dubois’ hypothesis: Do Black students need separate schools?
<b>Reviewed foundational articles of OutCrits</b>	* Acevedo & Solórzano (2021)	An overview of community cultural wealth: Toward a protective factor against racism
	* Dumas & ross (2016)	"Be real Black for me": Imagining BlackCrit in education
	*ross (2020)	Call it what it is: anti-Blackness: When Black people are killed by the police, "racism" isn't the right word
	*Foster (2022)	Time to talk about sport: Creating a space for sport within #LiftingAndShiftingHBCUs
	*Foster et al. (2022)	The college sport landscape, historically Black colleges and universities, and a theory of racialized organizations



Theme	Author(s)	Title
	* Yosso (2005)	Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth.
<i>Black College Athlete(s) Experiences</i>		
Theme	Author(s)	Title
Reviewed articles focusing on Black College Athlete(s) Experiences	Beamon (2008)	"Used goods": Former African American college student-athletes' perception of exploitation by Division I universities
	Beamon (2014)	Racism and stereotyping on campus: Experiences of African American male student-athletes
	Bimper et al. (2013)	Diamonds in the rough: Examining a case of successful Black male student-athletes in college sport
	Carter-Francique et al. (2013)	Black college athletes' perceptions of academic success and the role of social support
	Cooper & Newton (2021)	Black female college athletes' sense of belonging at a Historically Black College and University (HBCU).
	Cooper et al. (2016)	An anti-deficit perspective on Black female scholar-athletes' achievement experiences at a Division I Historically White Institution
	Cooper et al. (2018)	Collective uplift: The impact of holistic development support program on Black male former college athletes' experiences and outcomes
	Edwards (1979)	Sport within the veil: The triumphs, tragedies, and challenges of Afro-American involvement
	Fuller et al. (2020)	That smart dude: A qualitative investigation of the African American male scholar-baller identity
Gragg & Flowers (2014)	Factors that positively affect academic performance of African American football student-athletes	

Theme	Author(s)	Title
	Harrison & Lawrence (2003)	Female and male student athletes' perceptions of career transition in sport and higher education: A visual elicitation and qualitative assessment.
	Harrison et al. (2015)	"Eagles don't fly with sparrows": Self-determination theory, African American male scholar-athletes, and peer group influences on motivation
	Hodge et al. (2008)	Theorizing on the stereotyping of Black male student-athletes: Issues and implications
	Howe (2020)	Manifestations of athletic identity in Black male collegiate student-athletes: Introduction of a model
	Howe (2022)	Black male college athlete identity: A scoping review
	Kidd et al. (2018)	Profit-athletes' athletic role set and post-athletic transitions
	Leigh & Melwani (2019)	#BlackEmployeesMatter: Mega-threats, identity fusion, and enacting positive defiance in organizations
	Martin & Harris, III (2006)	Examining productive conceptions of masculinities: Lessons learned from academically driven African American male student-athletes.
	Martin et al. (2010)	Athletic voices and academic victories: African American male student-athlete experiences in the Pac-Ten
	Martin et al. (2012)	"It takes a village" for African American male scholar-athletes
	Melendez (2008)	Black football players on a predominantly White college campus: Psychological and emotional realities of the Black college athlete experience

Theme	Author(s)	Title
	Oseguera (2010)	Success despite the image: How African American male student-athletes endure their academic journey amidst negative characterizations.
	Singer (2008)	Benefits and detriments of African American male athletes' participation in a big-time college football program
	Singer (2009)	African American football athletes' perspectives on institutional integrity in college sport
	Singer (2016)	African American male college athletes' narratives on education and racism
<i>Community Cultural Wealth in Higher Education</i>		
Theme	Author(s)	Title
Reviewed articles of Cultural Community Wealth integration in Higher Education	Bimper (2016)	Capital matters: Social sustaining capital and the development of Black student-athletes
	Brooms & Davis (2017)	Exploring Black males' community cultural wealth and college aspirations
	Carter-Francique et al. (2015)	Examining the value of social capital and social support for Black student-athletes' academic success
	Cooper (2016)	Excellence beyond athletics: Best practices for enhancing Black male student athletes' educational experiences and outcomes
	Cooper & Hawkins (2016)	An anti-deficit perspective on Black male student athletes' educational experiences at a Historically Black College/University
	Cooper et al. (2017)	Success through community cultural wealth: Reflections from Black female college athletes at a

Theme	Author(s)	Title
		Historically Black College/University (HBCU) and a Historically White Institution (HWI)
	Jayakumar et al. (2013)	Pathways to college for young Black scholars: A community cultural wealth perspective

*8<sup>th</sup> Tenet\* or SportCrit*

Theme	Author(s)	Title
Reviewed articles assessing gap regarding framing possible 8th tenet* or SportCrit	Bopp et al. (2020)	The conceptualization of racial tasking: Uncovering the (un) intended consequences
	Edwards et al. (2005)	Towards a critical theory of sport management
	Morgan (1983)	Toward a critical theory of sport
	Schweinbenz & Harrison (2021)	Inside/out: A cultural prism of Blackness and Whiteness in sport history
	Vadeboncoeur & Bopp (2019)	Applying White dialectics: Exploring Whiteness and racial identity among White college athletes
	Vadeboncoeur et al. (2019)	Is reflexivity enough? Addressing reflexive embodiment, power, and Whiteness in sport management research

*Narrative Identity Theory & Athlete Transition*

Theme	Author(s)	Title
Reviewed foundational articles regarding narrative identity theory and athlete transition	Adler et al. (2017)	Research methods for studying narrative identity: A primer
	Brewer & Petitpas (2017)	Athletic identity foreclosure

Theme	Author(s)	Title
	Burke & Stets (2009)	Identity theory
	Chun et al. (2022)	The intervening effects of perceived organizational support on COVID-19 pandemic stress, job burnout and occupational turnover intentions of collegiate sport athlete-facing professionals
	Côté (2015)	Identity studies: How close are we to developing a social science of identity? An appraisal of the field
	Coulter et al. (2018)	A three-domain personality analysis of a mentally tough athlete
	Dexter et al. (2021)	Extending the scholar baller model to support and cultivate the development of academically gifted Black male student-athletes
	Ibarra & Barbulescu (2010)	Identity as narrative: Prevalence, effectiveness, and consequences of narrative identity work in macro work role transitions
	Ibarra & Obodaru (2016)	Betwixt and between identities: Liminal experience in contemporary careers
	Kidd (2018)	Profit-athletes' athletic role set and post-athletic transition
	Kidd (2019)	"We need dawgs!" Narrative construction of athletic identity among Black high school football players
	Kroger & Marcia (2011)	The identity statues: Origins, meanings, and interpretations
	Lilgendahl & McLean (2019)	Narrative identity in adolescence and adulthood: Pathways of development
	McAdams (1985)	Power, intimacy, and the life story personological inquiries into identity

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Theme	Author(s)	Title
	McAdams (2008)	Personal narratives and the life story
	McAdams (2009)	Power, intimacy, and the life story personological inquiries into identity
	McAdams (2011)	Narrative identity
	McAdams & McLean (2013)	Narrative identity
	Pasupathi & Adler (2021)	Narrative, identity, and the life story: Structural and process approaches
	Sonday et al. (2020)	Case study and narrative inquiry as merged methodologies: A critical narrative perspective
	Stets & Burke (2000)	Identity theory and social identity theory
	Turner (2021)	Narrative identity and the student-athlete experience during COVID-19
	Vignoles et al. (2011)	Introduction: Toward an integrative view of identity
	Wendling & Sagas (2021)	Is there a reformation into identity achievement for life after elite sport? A journey of identity growth paradox during liminal rites and Identity moratorium

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This generation of youth was raised by parents of the Hip-Hop Movement era, through grandparents that were pivotal to the sociocognitive and lived experiences of the Black Power Movement/Civil Rights Movement (Cooper, 2021) – who now are engaging in a society that is in a sociopolitical hurricane (Ofoegbu & Ekpe, 2022) – are prone to cavernous qualitative research to account for their lived experiences and sociocultural encounters to *fully* understand how to support them. For that reason, to believe these cultural and societal interactions will not alter the reconceptualization of scholar-athletes in the information and accessibility age, the interpretations of their narratives, and consequently their stock stories is preposterous.

Dually important to note, critical analysis of sport considering racial dynamics further synthesizes how to attain allyship and resources that support Black gendered scholar-athletes in navigating the athletic industrial complex (Runstedtler, 2018). Directly, utilizing principles of BlackCrit (Dumas & ross, 2016) to counter the anti-deficit/anti-Black approaches indoctrinated within society (Bopp et al., 2020; Vadeboncoeur et al., 2021; Vadeboncoeur & Bopp, 2019) and the NCAA, to prioritize voices and lived experiences of profit-generating Black scholar-athletes are vital to extending the intentions of the NILM. Precisely, addressing issues around spiritual truth or hope (i.e., Faith Crit) [Malone & Lachaud, 2022], being bi- or multiracial (Schweinbenz & Harrison, 2021), or navigating identity salience (Stryker & Serpe, 1994), as other CRT praxis could prove substantial for the total development of Black gendered scholar-athletes. Last, amplifying voices that are calling for change in power structures to reassess and rearticulate how and why research is conducted regarding critical analysis (Singer, 2019; Singer et al., 2019, 2022) is imperative to building out the NILM.

Respectively, converging the thought process to eliminate the “thingification of Black” individuals (ross, 2022) while being cautiously optimistic of the historical significance of the lack of cultural awareness of Western and White values that permeate sport and its origin (Singer et al., 2022), are preeminent to those utilizing the NILM. In time, these interest convergences will be incorporated to properly pivot and extend or reconceptualize the NILM to empower BGSAs in the post-name, image, and likeness policy era. Thus, the intent is to interpret what may be a *SportCrit* of sorts that will unconditionally value Blackness and validate Black scholars to enhance the representation of leaders, faculty, and students in sport management in higher education programs to support BGSAs via deliberately reinvesting in social, cultural, and linguistic capital for positive developmental outcomes (Singer et al., 2022) to substantiate Sport Crit by means of the NILM. And to a greater extent, categorically exposing the tensions between “the given (what exists, what we understand to exist) and the possible” that determine the power we assimilate to in extending sport management scholarship for positive developmental outcomes of BGSAs and Black scholars alike (Skinner et al., 2005, p. 248). Therefore, continuing to assess and address the athletic development space in totality will continue to avail ways to improve engagement of critical analysis for athletes holistically. Nevertheless, a particular focus should be placed on profit-generating Black scholar-athletes and intervention tools for their overall positive development intra- and post-athletic career.

### Conclusion, Limitations, and Future Directions for Research

The late memoirist and poet, Maya Angelou, has been attributed with the quote “you did what you knew how to do, and when you knew better, you did better” (Quote Investigator, 2022). Recently, there has been a shift of current and former athletes controlling their narrative via media outlets and coining themselves the “new media” (Rohrbach, 2022). Within this new ethos, audio visual podcasts on digital streaming services prioritize athletes’ self-narration via first person accounts (i.e., *The Draymond Green Show*, *Funky Friday Podcast with Cam Newton*) or intimate interviews conducted athlete-to-athlete (i.e., *I Am Athlete*, *The Pivot*). These podcasts are prominent outlets displaying initial iterations of how the NILM can be utilized to empower BGSAs to control their presentation in media via the vehicle of entrepreneurship. Although, LeBron James’ *The Shop* and Matt Barnes and Stephen Jackson’s *All the Smoke* shows either were or are currently financed through major cable station distribution. Due to higher visibility for both shows, mainstream audiences are welcomed into the *authenticity* and natural habitat of Blackness (Dumas & ross, 2016) or Black athlete experience (Hawkins et al., 2017) via African-American Vernacular English (AAVE) [Wallace & Andrews, 2021]. This once frowned upon dialect has been embraced in media due to the rearticulation of Black sport media announcers and commentators like the late Stuart Scott. Conclusively, he gave life to the

artistry, culture, and identity of hip-hop and the evolving Black athlete in sport of the early 1990s on ESPN 2 (Harrison & Coakley, 2020) via an early adaptation of AAVE.

As a result, BGSAs are empowered to narrate their lived experiences to seek better support in the predominately White spaces (PWIHE) they navigate daily. This is in accordance to the “new media,” as racially and culturally relatable familiar faces bridge barriers of acceptable forms of *good life* athletes (Bauer et al., 2022; Briggs et al., 2021; Syed & McLean, 2023). This *good life* narrative is further perpetuated via life story interviews (Atkinson, 1998, 2002), which are the documented honest interpreted stories a person chooses to tell about the life they have lived. Thus, for BGSAs, these ordered life narrations could provide the foundation to self-discovery via recollecting life events through detailing their life history (Atkinson, 1998, 2002; McAdams, 2009). More specifically, these life story narratives could foster the use of journaling or other forms of therapeutic relief to capitalize via the NILM (i.e., social, linguistic, and navigational capital). Hence, another limitation of documenting accounts of their life story is being vulnerable with their authenticity and what authority BGSAs have under the guise of the NCAA.

Contrarily, Rosenblum (2021) thoroughly illustrates the shifting landscape of public policy regarding amateurism and employment law through California’s Senate Bill 206 “Fair Pay to Play Act” as a timestamp for the “end of athletic exploitation.” Although this public policy was designated for California, other states reacted with iterations of proposals and policies to navigate what would become the NCAA Interim NIL Policy era (NCAA.org, 2021). Thus, the lines are further blurred regarding the demonstration, acceptance, and limitations of how Black gendered scholar-athletes control and capitalize on their narratives in this new era of college athletics (e.g., Flau’Jae Johnson’s Puma partnership at a Nike Campus) [Earn Your Leisure, 2023]. Therefore, there is a limitation in assessing ways to maneuver this new world of player compensation. In particular, empowering Black gendered scholar-athletes to identify and articulate their lived experiences through social activism with the power they possess in owning their media is imperative of the NILM, especially since commercialization of media usually suggests Black gendered athletes to commodify Blackness, therefore “dulling the potential for radical structural critique” of the everyday Black individual that is necessary for true activism (Wallace & Andrews, 2021, p. 837–838). Due to the evolving nature of the policies regarding NIL, it is paramount for the NILM to be modifiable, particularly as the NCAA, individual states, and universities within the P5 expand and contract what is permitted regarding Black gendered scholar-athletes will shift. Another limitation of this review was the aggregation of Black scholar-athletes across gender, sport participation, and institutional type (e.g., junior college/community college, Division I, II, or III, etc.) backgrounds.

This conceptualization considered the NCAA landscape prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the NILM will be versatile in engaging in the depth of introspective narrative these BGSAs are willing to expose and how to navigate the post-NIL policy era (Borrayo-Gilchriest, 2023). Future research could disaggregate this review to account for differences across gender, sport, and institutional types among other social identity backgrounds (e.g., social class, ethnicity, scholarship status, etc.). A practical application now is to aid revenue-generating sport BGSAs in cross collaboration with scholar-athletes in non-revenue-generating sport to platform their diverse experiences on the same campus. These collaborations could foster relationships that may be fruitful for life beyond sport (Armstrong & Jennings, 2018; Bimper, 2016; Carter-Francique et al., 2015; Cooper, 2018, 2021; Martin et al., 2010). Hence, an additional limitation of this review was the focus on studies of Black gendered scholar-athletes at the intercollegiate level and their experiences at these institutions rather than an integrated analysis of sport educational experiences across the K-20 trajectory.

Finally, there is a stark difference between glorification and narration, as there clearly is some connection between people’s feelings of meaning and the narratives they construct about their lives (Rogers et al., 2023). Again, the beauty of narrative identity’s implementation for athlete development is that athlete’s unintentionally narrate their experience via the arc of the Hero’s Journey (Campbell, 2008). More specifically, the Hero’s Journey is a narration of the journey toward authentic *self* via significant changes in three sequential phases: separation, initiation, and the return (Williams, 2019, p. 527). Through those changes, a counternarrative (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) should emerge that challenges the “dominant ideologies” surrounding BGSAs (Howe & Johnston-Guerrero, 2021, p. 36). Narrative identity provides meaning to events via a coherent story with plot, characters, and themes (McAdams, 2001) through a woven life experience. Selectively, a single narrative for their



purpose and significance in the world (Steger, 2012) is availed through their “coherent story” (Rogers et al., 2023, p. 2). Unfortunately, BGSAs rarely are siloed as quintessential *good life* (Bauer et al., 2022; Syed & McLean, 2023) figureheads of athletics. They usually are commonly heralded for success as an NCAA athlete, not based on their holistic *self* (Bimper et al., 2013; Cooper, et al., 2019; Singer, 2016).

Consequently, BGSAs being exploited in the athletic industrial complex (Beamon, 2008; Runstedtler, 2018; Smith, 2009), historically via the profit-generating sports of men’s basketball, women’s basketball, and men’s football, still is prominent entering the post-NIL policy era. Therefore, reorienting their *master narrative* (McLean & Syed, 2015) to emerge from the liminal space (Ibarra & Obodaru, 2016; Wendling & Sagas, 2021) to thrive holistically is pivotal to validating the NILM as an assessment tool (see Figures 1 & 2). These “master narratives” are culturally shared stories that ubiquitously maintain and uphold the values and history of a given society (McLean & Syed, 2015). Thus, building on the “moral values” and “frameworks” of these master narratives, commonalities and sensibilities are found in the “personal experiences” of that community (Rogers et al., 2023, p. 3). This is significant, as the recent 2020 census marked a shift in categorization socially with more bi- and multiracial births in America (Tavernise et al., 2021), conclusively meaning more bi- and multiracial athletes will be matriculating through the NCAA soon. Thus, culturally accounting for the phenomenological, socio-cognitive, and socio-psychological needs (Robertson & Grant, 2023) of bicultural and multicultural athletes (Deeb & Love, 2018) that are partially Black to story themselves is a paramount limitation of this work.

Accordingly, aiding player development personnel, directors of NIL initiatives on campus, and providing resources that support the overall well-being of Black scholar-athletes are imperative for the NILM’s implementation in athletics. However, considering the high turnover via burnout of collegiate professionals in Division I of the NCAA (Chun et al., 2022), assessing ways to adapt the NILM for sport professionals could prove fruitful. In the end, this is the initial effort to expound on the utility of the NILM, in hopes this is an intervention tool to assess trends, themes, and commonalities to effectively aid current and emerging BGSAs in their holistic development and wellbeing intra- and post-athletic life. Future research also could incorporate quantitative and mixed methods analyses using the NILM and identify nuanced insights regarding BGSAs’ experiences and outcomes.

In conclusion, the late bell hooks, an American scholar and activist whose work examined the connections between race, gender, and class, suggested reflecting on narratives in entirety after documentation is completed. In particular, she determined digesting a complete narrative “not as singular isolated events but as part of a continuum,” is compelling for understanding psyche (Harrison, 2009, p. 129). Therefore, these life events should be documented for current reflection and for later when BGSAs transition to life after sport. Partnership with programming such as *AthleteID* and *Excellence Beyond Athletics* (Cooper, 2016; Jennings, 2023), could prove fruitful for their holistic development. Thus, further development of the NILM to hold institutions accountable for positive developmental outcomes is essential. More explicitly, initiatives to invest in the recruitment and retention of personnel that empower scholar-athletes, to acknowledge the power of exchanging, building, and controlling their narrative to capitalize on name, image, and likeness policy is critical for Black gendered scholar-athletes moving forward.

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